



Virgin and Child

Artist	Master of the Esztergom Madonna (painter in Ferrara in the early 15th century)
Type	painting
Material	wood
Technique	tempera
Sizes	magasság: 61 cm szélesség: 41,5 cm
Inventory No.	55.196
Other	Attributed to the Master of the Esztergom Madonna. The painter's name of convenience derives from Andrea De Marchi. The traditional attribution: Bolognese painter.



Description

The Madonna of Humility (Madonna dell'Umiltà) was a popular and widespread pictorial type in late Gothic painting in Central and Northern Italy. In order to symbolize one of the foremost Christian virtues, Mary is shown not seated on a throne, but on the ground, or on a cushion placed on the ground. In the Middle Ages it was widely known, following Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, that the Latin word *humilis* — humble — derives from *humus*, meaning earth. Mary had earlier been represented seated on the ground in scenes of the Nativity of Christ, where an idea predating Christianity — the association of earth, birth, and death — also played a role. From the Nativity as a narrative scene, the Madonna dell'Umiltà became an independent devotional image, first in Siena, in the work of Simone Martini. The flowery meadow likewise has symbolic meaning: it alludes to the Garden of Paradise. While Mary is adorned with the virtue of humility more than any earthly mortal, painters also exalt her with a halo, a gold background, and a richly ornamented mantle — in other paintings, also with a crown held by angels. The naked Christ Child steps forward in his mother's lap; with his left hand he grasps the edge of her mantle, while with his right he caresses Mary's neck. The slightly distorted forms of his body are enclosed by a firm contour, and sharply drawn lines define the eyes, nose, and mouth of both Mary and Jesus. The Madonna's mantle is stylized to the utmost degree. Taking the natural fall and folds of the drapery merely as a point of departure, the painter sought a rich decorative effect, giving the edge of the garment ever new breaks and turns. Vilmos Tátrai, 1993.

Provenance

Acquisition of Archbishop János Simor

Restoration

1996 Sári Gabriella

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