

Master of the Franciscan Crucifixes, active 1260s and 1270s
The Mourning Saint John the Evangelist

**KRESS CATALOGUE NUMBER**

K1358

IDENTIFIER

1864

ARTIST

Master of the Franciscan Crucifixes, active 1260s and 1270s

NATIONALITY

Italian

DATE

c. 1270/1275

MEDIUM

tempera on panel

TYPE OF OBJECT

Painting

DIMENSIONS

82.2 × 33.3 cm (32 3/8 × 13 1/8 in)

LOCATION

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

PROVENANCE

The two fragments (NGA 1952.5.13 and .14) were originally lateral terminals of a painted Crucifix presumably made for the church of San Francesco, Bologna, sometime after 1254 and before 1278; [1] the Crucifix is known to have been in the Lombardi Malvezzi Chapel in that church in 1577,[2] and was transported to the Bolognese church of Santa Maria in Borgo in 1801 (perhaps by which time its two lateral terminals might have been removed); [3] purchased, probably in Italy, by Osvald Sirén [1879–1966], Stockholm, by 1922. [4] Philip Lehman [1861–1947], New York, by 1928; purchased June 1943 by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York; [5] gift 1952 to NGA.

[1] Writing around 1385–1390, Fra Bartolomeo da Pisa in his treatise *De conformitate* describes the case of a friar who was reprimanded by the Father General of his order and went to complain in front of the Crucifix in the church of San Francesco in Bologna, which is said to have

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consoled him in reply. “Frater iste dicitur fuisse magister Joannes Peccam Anglicus,” adds the author (see Fra Bartolomeo da Pisa, “De conformitate vitae Beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu,” *Analecta Franciscana* 4 [1906]: 521-522). The friar in question was the celebrated Franciscan theologian John Peckham, who arrived in Italy from England in 1276 and stayed there till 1279. Lucas Wadding (*Annales minorum*, vol. 5 [1642], ed. G.M. Fonseca, Quaracchi, 1931: 58) also reports the episode, inserting it in events of the year 1278. Albeit with the necessary caution, this year, or at least the period of time covered by Peckham’s residence in Italy, can thus be considered a *terminus ante quem* for the execution of the painting, which indeed seems datable to the 1270s on stylistic grounds. Perhaps 1254, when the apse of the church collapsed, can be considered a *terminus post quem* for the Crucifix, as Silvia Giorgi suggests (*Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. Catalogo generale-I*, ed. J. Bentini, G.P. Cammarota, and D. Scaglietti Kelesian, Venice, 2004). In 1299 it was apparently on the choir-screen of the church (Donal Cooper, *Projecting Presence: the Monumental Crosses in the Italian Church interior*, in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and other Objects*, ed. Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd, Aldershot and Burlington, 2006: 61 n. 42). Miklós Boskovits was unable to see any stylistic justification for dating it to the years 1254-1263, as Giorgi suggested, believing that the completion of the architecture implied that the Crucifix likewise had been realized.

[2] This is suggested by an inscription visible in the church’s central chapel, behind the high altar, formerly that of the Lombardi family and later belonging to the Malvezzi. The inscription mentions the altar erected in the chapel “in hon. SS. Crucifixi”; see Luigi Garani, *Il bel San Francesco di Bologna. La sua storia*, Bologna, 1948: 245-246. That the Crucifix in question is the one now in the Pinacoteca of Bologna is suggested by the ascertained provenance of this panel from the church of San Francesco; the other two painted Crucifixes still present in the church and its adjoining convent were brought there only in the early years of the twentieth century, and their provenance is uncertain (see Silvia Giorgi in Massimo Medica and Stefano Tumidei, eds., *Duecento: forme e colori del Medioevo a Bologna*, Venice, 2000: 189, 200).

[3] See Garani 1948, 245-246. Perhaps at the time of its arrival in Santa Maria in Borgo, the Crucifix was subjected to interventions that integrated its already incomplete form with the additions visible in the reproduction published by Evelyn Sandberg Vavalà (*La Croce dipinta italiana e l’iconografia della Passione*, Verona, 1929: fig. 536). Here the lateral terminals, evidently lacking, are shown substituted by others, without any figural representations. It is probable, however, that the lateral terminals had been truncated earlier, as happened in the case of various other painted crucifixes, and that the fragments with the figures of the mourning Madonna and Saint John were used as devotional panels by the friars, who were then forced to abandon the convent after the suppression of religious orders in 1798.

[4] Sirén (*Toskanische Maler im XIII. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1922: 221-222, 223, 224, 339, pl. 8) published the two panels as belonging to an unspecified private collection in Stockholm, but Miklós Boskovits had little hesitation in identifying the collector as Sirén himself. Sirén is known to have bought paintings both for his own pleasure and for sale. He also acted as a middleman between art dealers and collectors (see Edward Fowles, *Memories of Duveen Brothers*, London, 1976: 130, 151, 153), even handling the restoration of paintings that passed through his hands (see Roger Fry, *Letters of Roger Fry*, edited by Denys Sutton, 2 vols., London, 1972: 2:400).

[5] Robert Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection*, New York, Paris, 1928: n.p., pls. 59, 60. The bill of sale for the Kress Foundation’s purchase of fifteen paintings from the Lehman collection, including this pair, is dated 11 June 1943; payment was made four days later (copy in NGA curatorial files). The documents concerning the 1943 sale all indicate that Philip Lehman’s son Robert Lehman (1892–1963) was owner of the paintings, but it is not clear in the Lehman Collection archives at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, whether Robert made the sale for his father or on his own behalf. See Laurence Kanter’s e-mail of 6 May 2011, about ownership of the Lehman collection, in NGA curatorial files.

ACCESSION NUMBER

1952.5.14

KRESS NUMBER

1358

PICHETTO NUMBER

11311 or 11424

LEGACY NGA NUMBER

809

1 ACQUISITION

Lehman, Robert, June 11, 1943

2 DISTRIBUTIONS

Loan to National Gallery of Art, January 23, 1946

Gift to National Gallery of Art, October 15, 1952

EXTERNAL LINKS

Related Collection Record

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.41624.html>

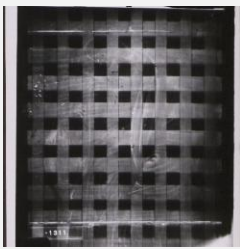
Related National Gallery of Art Library Image Collections Record

https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1p5jvkq/alma991590453804896

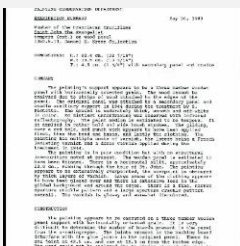
Related National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalog

<https://www.nga.gov/research/online-editions/italian-paintings-of-the-thirteenth-and-fourteenth-centuries.html>

8 ARCHIVAL ITEMS



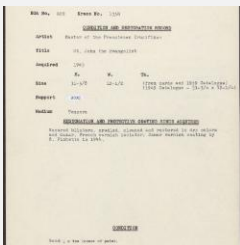
K1358 - Alan Burroughs report, 1947



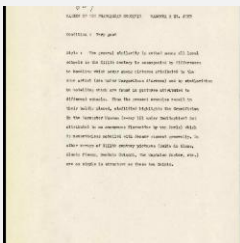
K1358 - Examination summary, 1989



K1358 - Art object record, circa 1930s-1950s



K1358 - Condition and restoration record, circa 1950s-1960s

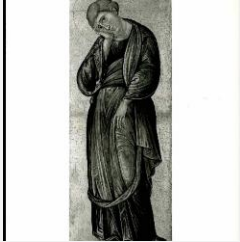


K1358 - Alan Burroughs report, circa 1930s-1940s

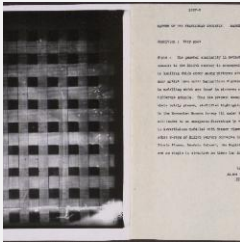
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K1358 - Work summary log, 1946



K1358 - Photograph, circa 1930s-2000s



K1357 and K1358 - Alan Burroughs report, 1947

RECORD LINK

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/1864>