THE CASSONE PAINTINGS
OF
FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO

BY

BURTON B. FREDERICKSEN

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The second person is Federico Zeri, who, if one is fortunate enough to know him, cannot fail to contribute to ones work; in this case he 'lent' me two photographs that I came across in his files, the Milan *Coriolanus* cassone, and the Tosatti fragment. He also identified the subject of the former for me. More important, his acquaintance has led me to the answers of many questions I no longer must ask of him; I must preface all of my work with some mention of my debt to him.

In addition I am glad to acknowledge some timely help from my friend Donald Strong who helped me with questions about the manuscripts of Francesco's *Trattato*.

Lastly I want to thank my wife, Marianne, who spent large amounts of time and energy preparing a catalogue of all of the paintings of Petrarch's *Trionfi,* as well as doing the background work for a study of the subject, which she is well equipped to do. This iconographical material was not included in the final publication because I decided it would be less rewarding than the material relevant to Francesco himself and to his works. Her efforts, therefore, are hardly seen on these pages, whereas at one time they were intended to be their entire substance.

Malibu, October 1969

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THE CASSONE PAINTINGS OF FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO

Francesco di Giorgio's work in the realm of furniture decoration has for some decades been prized as one of the most attractive phases of not only *his* art, but of fifteenth-century Sienese art as a whole. Though certain problems connected with the various pieces have always been recognized, it has not, on the whole, produced much disagreement about its appreciation, its relative position in the development of Francesco's style, its date, or its authorship. It represents certainly one of the most colorful and varied aspects of his production, and there has been nearly unanimous agreement that they are all youthful works datable to the first fifteen years of his activity while he was still in Siena before going to Urbino in 1475. They are, generally, not as exciting nor as forward-looking as his sculpture from after 1475; they lack the finish of his large altarpieces. And they are, with few exceptions, in such poor condition that their original appearance is hardly imaginable any longer. But they show the various facets of the developing artist in a way otherwise not available to us; they are, because of the greater variety of subjects and treatment, of more interest, in some respects, than the larger paintings, almost all of which depict conventional subjects taken from the New Testament. This is not to belittle the stupendous *Coronation* of 1471 in Siena, the very beautiful *Nativity* in the same museum from 1475, and the later *Nativity* in San Domenico, all of which are major landmarks in Sienese art, and all well preserved. They are true monuments; but they are much like the three highest pinnacles on the crown of Francesco's painted *oeuvre;* the bulk and wide range of his genius, so far as one can grasp it from his paintings, can best be explored through the various cassone fragments.

No massive disruption of our general interpretation of Francesco's furniture decorations is planned here: the evolution of

his critical image has been steady and consistent down to the present time and this author has been preceded by such scholars as Allen Weller[1] and Gertrude Coor,[2] both of whom have helped put the list of his accepted works on a solid basis. Indeed, with the possible exception of Neroccio, Francesco has received more critical attention than anyone of his generation. Recent articles have lopped a few cassone paintings from the lists, and the way has been pointed to yet a bit more pruning. More positively, however, at least three new cassoni of importance have turned up, and a few more facts can now be deduced. One of these three paintings, a *Triumph of Chastity,* is in the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, and from it the first concrete date to be connected with a cassone by Francesco has been extracted. All of this, hopefully, should make a new survey valuable.

I propose to deal with all of the applicable material in a chronological manner, as best as I can determine it, omitting works that I feel can no longer be connected with Francesco's hand. (These amputated works will be discussed at the end of the essay, in an appendix.) It must be understood, however, that the details of the chronology proposed here are mostly tentative and very liable to alteration, if new facts are forthcoming. I intend to give the reasons for each supposed date, but none are certain and completely above question; and only a few are even highly probable. Most are only educated guesses.

* * *

It is necessary to briefly survey the early documented works of Francesco to recall once more the foundation that the less secure structure must be built upon. The earliest datable painting attributed to him is not a panel painting, but an illuminated page of a manuscript: the first page of Albertus Magnus, *De Animalibus,* preserved in the Museo Aurelio Castelli at the

[1]Allen Stuart Weller, *Francesco di Giorgio, 1439-1501,* Chicago, 1943, hereafter referred to as Weller.

[2]Gertrude Coor, *Neroccio de' Landi, 1447-1500, Princeton,* 1961.

Osservanza near Siena.[3] It represents an *Allegory of Chastity,* a maiden with a unicorn in a landscape containing a row of surreally cut trees. In addition there are border ornaments and three medallions containing three labors of Hercules. The text of this book is dated 1463, and the same date can probably be assumed for the illuminations.

The same institution has another manuscript (*Super Primo Sententiarum Commentum,* by "Alphonsi summi theologi Ord. S. Augustini") dated 1466 with a illumination representing an Allegory of Theology.[4]

In addition, a third illumination has often been considered the earliest of all of Francesco's works, the *Nativity* scene in the initial N from the Antiphonary B in the Cathedral at Chiusi.[5] This book, one of twenty-two, was made for the monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and the majority of the illuminations are attributable on stylistic grounds to a Florentine hand. The records show that a Lorenzo Rosselli was paid between the years 1458 and 1461 for his work (which also included illuminations for nine of the other volumes), and from this a similar dating has been applied to the one initial that is evidently by Francesco, although Francesco's name is not mentioned in the records of payment. This, however, is a highly uncertain assumption as there is some reason to question whether it was done at the same time; one could as easily argue that Francesco was asked to complete an initial left undone by Rosselli. In the Antiphonary M, which was also illuminated by Rosselli, one scene is by Girolamo da Cremona whose activity there is documented as from the year 1472, eleven years after Rosselli's work. Therefore, although no internal evidence, including the style of the *Nativity,* would contradict a date between 1458 and 1461, it can hardly be taken as a firm starting point, and the illumination could just as well be much later in the decade.

[3]Illus. in Weller, fig. 12.

[4]Illustrated in Bulletti, "Il Museo 'Aurelio Castelli' dell'Osservanza," in *Rassegna d'arte senese,* XVII (1924), opp. p. 49.

[5]Illus. in Weller, fig. 9.

Immediately after these two or three illuminations is the securely dated biccherna cover of 1467, representing the *Madonna dei Terremoti* in the Archivio di Stato in Siena.[6]

This initial group of works, all of them small and, excepting the first, of marginal importance, are followed by the two major altarpieces by Francesco: the *Coronation of the Virgin* done in 1471, probably for Monte Oliveto Maggiore;[7] and the *Nativity* of 1475, done for S Benedetto.[8] Both are now in the Siena Pinacoteca.

There are additional paintings that can be placed in this early Sienese phase on stylistic grounds, but none (excepting the Getty painting described below) can be dated with any high degree of certainty.

There are, lastly, some circumstances of Francesco's development and the influences working on him that have often been demonstrated and that can, however tentatively, assist in building up an acceptable chronology. Francesco's earliest debt is to Vecchietta, as a glance at any of his early paintings will reveal. There is no documentary proof for concluding Francesco was his student, but it has been taken for granted by all recent authors, and is hardly escapable as a basic premise for his most youthful works. Vecchietta's influence is still obvious in the biccherna book cover of 1467. It is also apparent in the *Coronation* of 1471, but very much diffused by other influences, notably those of three artists all of whom play roles in Francesco's evolution and who painted works that can and have been often confused with his. Liberale da Verona came to Siena in 1466; he was primarily active as a miniaturist, but he was highly influential with many Sienese painters. Girolamo da Cremona, whose works are often confounded with those of Liberale, and who was also a miniaturist active simultaneously with him, came to Siena in 1468. His panel paintings are rarer, but they can be isolated from those of Liberale and Francesco, in spite of much confu-

[6]Illus. in Weller, fig. 8.

[7]Weller, figs. 31-32. Its provenance is discussed pp. 97-98.

[8]Weller, figs. 34-36.

sion.[9] Finally Neroccio di Bartolomeo Landi is known to have been Francesco's partner until their association was dissolved in 1475. He is also thought to have been (as with Francesco, on stylistic evidence) a student of Vecchietta, though at a later date, since he was not born until 1447. Francesco married in 1469 a woman who was evidently a cousin of Neroccio, and at some date about this time, the association is assumed to have begun.[10]

All of these three artists, Liberale, Girolamo da Cremona, and Neroccio, were active in Siena with Francesco until the mid 1470's: Liberale and Neroccio were both still there when Francesco left Siena for Urbino in 1475; Girolamo had left two years earlier, in 1473. Since Liberale was the oldest of these three artists and the first to arrive on the scene, one can appreciate the fact that it is evidently his influence one sees most in Francesco's works of the late 1460's; it is still to be seen in the swirling figure of God the Father in the top of Francesco's *Coronation* of 1471. Whatever Girolamo's influence might have been, and apart from the degree it could be distinguished (second-hand) from that of Liberale, it would also have taken place within the same time span. Neroccio's collaboration makes itself felt last, but by 1471 it is already predominant.

Such a description of a steady series of influences by Francesco's compatriots on his work make him sound as if he were an ecclectic, bouncing from one source to another; in fact, it should not be forgotten that to some degree Francesco shows himself remarkably able to absorb outside influences, and perhaps in this youthful period he should not be expected to have done otherwise. But his own style is always recognizable; and especially in

[9]A number of Girolamo's panels have been often ascribed to Francesco, and are still found in Weller's book. Zeri (*Bollettino d'Arte,* 1950) was the first to begin separating them, but confusion between Girolamo and Liberale still exists. Carlo del Bravo's recent book (*Liberale da Verona,* 1967) tends to attribute all of the controversial pieces to Liberale, whereas Luisa Vertova (Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance,* Central Italian and North Italian Schools, 1968, p.xvi), though favoring Liberale, has put them under both artists. I do not feel I am able to distinguish well between all of their works, but the cassone paintings by these two artists can, I believe, be readily separated.

[10]Document reprinted by Weller, p. 339. *Cf.* Coor, *op. cit.,* pp. 3-4.

the case of Neroccio, Francesco probably worked a much stronger change on his partner than his partner on him. Francesco was eight years his senior, and on the whole more inventive.

All of the above, then, can serve as the background for dating and treating of Francesco's cassone paintings. None of the documents mention them, and were it not for the relatively large number that exists, one would not guess that they (evidently) constituted one of his principal activities before parting from his native Siena.

The three Old Testament Scenes at Siena

There has been general agreement that the three small scenes from the stories of Joseph and Susanna in the Pinacoteca at Siena[11] (figs. 1-3) are stylistically the earliest panel paintings that we still have by Francesco. They are the closest to Vecchietta in character, but probably the rudest in execution. Yet anyone who has seen them will have been struck by their vivacity of color, used in a very wide range and with great delicacy. Weller, who has described and analyzed them at great length, concluded his discussion of one by saying: "It is like a Vecchietta which has suddenly become young, wilful, inexperienced, but alive."

The three fragments, representing *Joseph Sold by his Brethren, Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,* and *Susanna and the Elders,* have usually been treated as cassone paintings; there is not much precedent for such subjects on Sienese cassoni, but they are less likely to have been parts of a predella, where Old Testament subjects are almost never found.[12] Assuming, however, that they did constitute a cassone, one must next recognize that it would have been the only three-part cassone in Francesco's *oeuvre,* as we now know it. Further, there is no logical connection between the two scenes with Joseph and the third with Susanna. Perhaps one might postulate that other parts are now missing, and that we

[11]Nos. 274-276, each 11⅜ x 15 inches (29 x 38 cm.). Discussed in Weller, pp. 51-54.

[12]Schubring (*Cassoni,* 1923, p. 73) refers to them as parts of a predella, but so far as I know, no other writer does.

have fragments from two different sets; but there is no way of knowing. The closest parallel known to me is a cassone formerly in the Robert Ross collection in London which might be dated about the same period and might also be Sienese.[13] It shows *Joseph Sold by his Brethren, Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,* and *Potiphar's Wife denouncing Joseph,* which together make a logical sequence as one would expect to find it on a three-part cassone. Why the set in Siena should arbitrarily substitute *Susanna and the Elders* at the end defies understanding.

Other than these questions (which one can raise but not answer), I can add nothing to previous interpretations of the panels' place in Francesco's development. Most would agree, I believe, that the architectural scenes are the most successful and attractive. The multi-colored "Pompeiian" interior of the scene with Potiphar's wife, and the palatial exterior in the background of the Susanna episode are both remarkably classical in nature (especially in the light of the Old Testament nature of their subjects), and done with considerable precision. The figures, however, tend to be less developed and poorly formed. When a single figure (or two, as in the case of *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*) is placed within the architectural ambience, their otherwise awkward postures and low-waisted torsos become very expressive images. When the figures predominate and do not have the stability of the carefully measured space afforded by the architecture, they appear shapeless. One already senses Francesco's eventual and predominate activity as an architect.

No attempt has ever been made to fix a firm date on these panels other than, as Weller did, to put them within the decade

[13]Schubring (*Cassoni,* no. 935, pl. 203) as style of Vecchietta. First published by Borenius, "Three panels from the School of Pesellino," in *Burlington Magazine,* Dec. 1918, pp. 216-221. No one has previously noticed the strong resemblance between the *Joseph Sold by his Brethern* scene in the Ross cassone and the same scene in the Siena cassone. The setting, figures, composition, are all very close. The scene of *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,* however, is very different. I do not recognize the author of the Ross cassone; he is rather nondescript, but probably Sienese. The round temple (or colosseum?) in the final scene is much like those seen in later works by Francesco (see fig. 26).

1457-67. I believe this span can now be narrowed down to one not extending beyond 1463, for reasons which will be made clear in the entry for the cassone in the Getty Museum below. Further, since I have not accepted the Chiusi miniature as the starting point for Francesco's earliest activity, I am reluctant to date any of his paintings before 1459, when he reached the age of 20. I would therefore propose for the Sienese set a date of 1460-1463.

The Coriolanus Cassone in Milan

The previously unpublished cassone illustrated here in figs. 4-6 (presently in a Milanese private collection) [14] is of unusual importance for Francesco's early period and for any discussion of his work, but it is unfortunately difficult to interpret accurately. It is quite obviously close to the Sienese panels in style, but larger, much more complex, and much differently preserved. It might very well even predate the three Sienese fragments.

Before launching into a discussion of it, however, I must emphasize that I have never seen the painting and know it only from photographs; I cannot accurately judge its condition, and I must leave open the possibility that it may have been significantly restored; but from the very excellent photographs available to me, this does not appear to have been the case. This point, nonetheless, is of critical importance.

The subject, which is not easy to recognize at first glance, is the *Story of Coriolanus.* It includes episodes otherwise never shown, and must be one of the earliest depictions of the legend in this medium.[15] The story, which is given most extensively in Plutarch, begins here with the banishment of Coriolanus on the left side, with a group of five men, mostly boys, stoning the fa-

[14]Dimensions 47 x 130 cm. I know nothing of its provenance. I want to express my thanks to Federico Zeri who allowed me to consult his photographs of works by Francesco di Giorgio, among which was the present cassone. It was also Zeri who guessed its correct subject, something I had not been able to do.

[15]I know of one earlier representation of the Coriolanus legend, that of a Florentine artist, perhaps the Master of Fucecchio, formerly in the Otto Kann collection, illustrated in *Art in America,* II, 1914, p. 399.

mous general as he retreats down the path away from Rome.[16] In the center is shown Rome proper, strangely unpopulated, with a square loggia in the center, and various buildings, including a circular temple in the background, and a crude replica of the so-called Marforio, in reverse. At the front, two women and three children are shown, and these are probably intended to be Volumnia and Veturia, his mother and wife (though there is no agreement about which should be which). The city is walled and on the left is the Tiber with two boats, one containing an infant who appears to be rowing it, and followed by the other with a young man. These boats apparently have no significance to the story and I have not been able to find any source for them in the Coriolanus legend.

To the right, the more common episode is shown with wife and mother appealing to the very sad-faced Coriolanus; they are surrounded by soldiers and tents of the Volscian army, and in the background are various riders and a larger body of men can be seen in the upper corner.

Behind all of the scene is another range of hills with towered towns, and an open sky.

If compared to the three Sienese fragments, slight differences can be detected: the figures, the landscape, and especially the trees are all exceedingly close in style, but show some further development. The hills are now laced with fields, tree rows, and a variety of motives that are only hinted at in the Joseph scene. The figures are now elaborate, better structured, and the heads are beginning to show the characteristic features of Francesco's types done later in the decade and into the 1470's, though still with the rough-hewn manner of Vecchietta, and not the finer

[16]Stoning is a traditional form of banishment, and is often mentioned as such in classical literature. But I do not know if there is a specific source for representing Coriolanus' banishment in this way; Livy and Plutarch do not describe it. Shakespeare (*Coriolanus,* IV, 4) has Coriolanus say: "Then know me not, lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones in puny battle slay me!" He is not referring to the banishment, however. *Cf.* R. Hirzel, *Die Strafe der Steinigung* (Sächsische Akad. der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, Abhandlungen, XXVII (1909), no. 7).

technique one associates with Neroccio and Francesco's panels of the next decade. The principal contradiction to this is the architecture, which shows a bewildering confusion of vanishing points and which does not show the same unity and architectural certainty that one saw in the scenes with Susanna and Joseph in Siena. The difficulty might be due to the fact that for the first time he is attempting to show more than one edifice, and he is showing them entire. But there is otherwise abundant proof that, in his paintings, Francesco was not yet a master of perspective, as can be seen in the *Annunciation* in Siena which is certainly datable in the same decade (though some years later) and which displays similar, though not so blatant, weaknesses. Nonetheless, the disturbing contradiction between the lines of the central pavement and the lines of the loggia does cause us to wonder that it could really have been made by someone who was otherwise so much involved with the study of architecture and who had succeeded once already in producing solid buildings with obviously coordinated vanishing points. These in comparison look like constructions of cardboard boxes. Also the scale of the various parts of the composition is confused and jumbled. One might conclude that the Milan cassone is the earlier of the two, and therefore the product of a very young artist, perhaps from the late 1450's, before he was yet twenty, though the figures to my mind, do not permit this. Maybe there is some other answer to be found in the complicated workshop and partnership arrangements that existed at the time (a theme to which we will return later), or in its condition. Whatever the solution, the Milan cassone can only be placed in the closest proximity to the Sienese fragments, and must date before 1464.

I cannot speak of color because I know the painting only in black and white, but I believe the Milan cassone (hoping that its appearance is not merely the result of extensive restoration) can help show us what the series in Siena would look like if better preserved. More importantly, it broadens considerably the range of Francesco's earliest works now available to us and, I believe, documents an important though awkward step away from the

style of his mentor, Vecchietta, and toward his own still imperfect manner.

The Berenson Fragment

The famous fragment in Bernard Berenson's collection at Settignano (fig. 7) is well known in the literature and does not need a lengthy discussion here.[17] The subject has been often questioned, but it might represent *The Rape of Helen,* and this is what it is most often called. It exists in its present form because it was used as the support for a 17th-century painting; later it was cleaned to reveal the varied pastel colors of one of Francesco's most beautiful works, but drastically cut down. The top edge may be the original, but the other three are certainly not.

The trees follow closely those in both the Siena group and the Milan cassone. The architecture is again refined, stabile and reasonably plausible, making the buildings in the Milan cassone seem like temporary prefabricated aberrations. The scale of the figures is more certain, and a feeling of drama and movement is felt. The entire painting is wonderfully delicate, in many ways a more logical step from the Sienese paintings than that in Milan.

For many reasons the Berenson fragment can be called Francesco's finest cassone painting. (If indeed it was a cassone; its height, considering that it has been cut at least at the bottom, makes it unusually large for a cassone panel.) More care and science have been put into it than into any other known to us. For reasons given below under the next painting, I feel reasonably certain that this exquisite fragment must date from ca. 1464.

The Getty *Triumph of Chastity*

The *Triumph of Chastity* (figs. 8-10) purchased in 1957 in Paris by the J. Paul Getty Museum is virtually unpublished in the literature, and has never been discussed relative to Francesco's other works.[18] In style it is so close to the Berenson frag-

[17]Dimensions 16⅛ x 20⅞ inches (41 x 53 cm.). Weller pp. 112-115.

[18]Painted surface 14½ x 47¾ inches (37 x 121 cm.), with end sections 14½ x 66 inches. It was purchased from the Pardo Gallery. Its only appearance in the litera-

ment that one might even entertain some hope that they were originally parts of the same ensemble; but the size of the Berenson panel prohibits any such speculation.

Although the Getty panel is not perfectly preserved[19] (a characteristic common to virtually all of Francesco's cassone paintings), and not as elaborately composed as the piece at I Tatti, it reveals the same coloring, scale, and delicate charm that one sees there. Above all, the figures and the facial types look as if done from precisely the same mold.

The iconography of the painting is in itself interesting, and it must be placed among the most appealing renditions of Petrarch's *Trionfi* that was ever produced. It is also probably the most literal interpretation of the *Trionfo della Pudicizia* that is still known to us.

The figure of Chastity (or Laura) rides on the throne of the chariot holding a shield *(lo scudo)* and another object that is partly defaced and not mentioned in the poem, but which may be a palm branch. The chariot is drawn by the usual two unicorns (who are rather lean and stern when compared to the unicorn in the *Allegory of Chastity* illumination of 1463 in the Osservanza), and before them the youthful figure of Love, his hands tied behind his back, his eyes blindfolded, and his wings clipped, walking, or rather driven, by their horns. In the chariot are almost precisely the figures mentioned by Petrarch: Honesty *(Onestate)* and Modesty *(Vergogna)* are at the front, the first holding what appears to be a bird; followed by Wisdom *(Senno)* and Humility *(Modestia),* Good Comportment and Happiness *(Abito con Diletto),* and Perseverance with Glory *(Perseveranza* and *Gloria).* Two of them are holding large blue balls, like Graces. The four additional virtues, which Petrarch describes as "fore" or at the sides, are omitted, or may be on the far side

ture was in Berenson's lists of the Central and North Italian Schools, 1968, p. 140, and plate 885, where only the right side is reproduced, and the title is likewise abbreviated, perhaps as a result of the photograph.

[19]It has been abraded all over with numerous small losses that have been retouched to the point that very little of the surface is completely free of reworking. However the restoration, which was probably carried out in Paris, is relatively discreet and not of a disfiguring nature.

out of sight. For on the front side, as described in the poem, are walking Lucretia and Penelope, followed by Virginia, seen in profile. Evidently the artist here omits the unnamed German women *(le Tedesche)* mentioned by Petrarch, for the next figure appears to be Judith; she is holding an indiscernible object in each hand, probably intended to be the head of Holofernes and a sword. Then, partly obscured, is Hippo *(quella Greca che saltò nel mare),* standing behind Tuccia *(la vestal vergine pia),* who is holding her sieve. In slightly more disorderly fashion follow Hersilia apparently with two Sabines, Dido (who may be stabbing herself), Piccarda Donati (seen only as a head), Scipio Africanus and perhaps Spurina *(il giovene Toscan),* though this last is not certain.

Behind this latter group one sees Love being held by two maidens with a third making a gesture that may have been intended to represent casting down his arrows. They should include Lucretia, Penelope, and maybe Laura, but the costumes do not correspond to those of Lucretia and Penelope in the foreground. Love himself looks more like Venus, but he has evidently been defaced and incorrectly restored. At the end of this panel, Love's chariot is being consumed in flames, and the horses are dead upon their backs, evidently beaten by two more ladies who whirl in a frenzy of chastisement. Near them flows what must be the Tiber.

To the far left, the procession leads toward the Temple of Chastity, a six-sided classical edifice also reminiscent of the temple in the Berenson fragment, though far simpler. Its contents are not entirely clear, but at the rear is a niche and in the center is some sort of shrine or altar, in gold, which reaches to the ceiling. It is much defaced, but it seems to have been mainly decorative, like a fountain or a monument topped with an ornament, not a statue as in the Berenson piece. The temple itself is of red, violet, and gray stone. The interior is also red, with a niche, or apse, of violet, yellow and gray. The pavement within the pillars is pink and red, and outside it is yellow. The building is surrounded by a violet balustrade supported by bluish pillars and decorated with a series of red ornaments. It is altogether a

very colorful construction whose antecedents in both the Siena and Settignano fragments are easy to decern.

In spite of minor errors (the balustrade at the far side could not be made to meet in the center, and the bases of the pillars are absurdly incorrect), it is a remarkably believable temple and shows considerable attention on the part of the budding architect and student of Roman buildings and motives. When it is analyzed, however, one notices that the location of the entrance is ambiguous and determined much more through painterly reasoning than by architectural logic. The opening in the balustrade toward the viewer is probably the actual entrance, being opposite the apse. But the entrance for the procession would appear to be that at the side which is defined by the extended balustrade, surmounted by a (much damaged) golden statue. Unfortunately a pillar directly in the middle of this passageway makes it of dubious value as an entrance, and this arrangement seems to be explained by the necessities of the composition. The artist's interest appears to have been limited to the more decorative aspects of the construction rather than its mechanics.

The small statue at the "side" entrance of the temple represents a curious detail of iconography that I have not found in any other version of the subject. This statuette, though almost entirely bereft of gilding, clearly represents a horse held in rein by a young man, much like the large marbles of Castor and Pollux that were, and still are, landmarks in Rome. Perhaps Francesco's model was not one of these colossal figures, but it must have been something similar. In any case the presence of a "horse tamer" leads to the obvious question of what its relevance is to a shrine dedicated to chastity, and it seems logical to suppose that this classical motive has been transformed into an allegory not originally connected with Castor or Pollux. Since the horse was commonly held to be a symbol of physical lust during the medieval period, it follows that a horse held in rein could be taken as an allegory of chastity, making it a fit ornament for the temple. Unfortunately its role in the composition has been lost along with its gilding; but its appearance can be easily imagined.

In the background are the characteristic hills with various buildings and towered towns scattered among them.

The detail that gives the Getty cassone its overriding importance, however, is the presence of two wood and stucco reliefs at the ends, depicting large birds, probably swans, around whose necks hang escutcheons with the arms of the two families who sponsored this wedding chest.[20] By good fortune these arms can be identified. On the left is that of the Gabbrielli family: a saltire *(croce di Sant'Andrea)* consisting of a bend dexter of gold and a bend sinister of red. In the chief is a tree, with traces of the roots just slightly visible below. On the right are the arms of the Luti family: two bars of gold with three roundels of gold, two in the chief and one in the base.

Both families are well known in Siena and important for the city's history. The Gabbrielli are mentioned as early as 1350 and the Luti can be traced from at least 1375. Their arms and names appear on a number of the biccherna book covers in the Archivio di Stato in Siena: in 1467 Bartolomeo di Paolo di Gabriele is listed (though the arms are not shown) on the cover painted by Francesco di Giorgio; in 1473 Tomaso di Mauritio Luti is found on the cover by Sano di Pietro; and on the cover of 1479, one finds both families' arms, with the names of Giovanni di Francesco Gabrielli and "Franciescho di Tommasso di Lutoccio."[21] Other than the biccherna cover of 1467, there are no documents that link the Gabbrielli family with Francesco di Giorgio. But one late document connects another member of the Luti family with the artist: in 1486 both Francesco di Giorgio and Lorenzo Luti were elected priors for the Terzo di San Martino.[22]

An investigation of the Sienese wedding records reveals that a

[20]The sections with the swans appear to have been regilded. In the gilding around the swans' heads is some very crude lettering that may at some time have been legible. On the left side can be read: A( )VD NN. The first word may have been intended to be APUD. And on the right side: MN VRA.

[21]Reproduced in Carli, *Le Tavolette di Biccherna,* 1950, no. 56, pl. 36. The artist is supposed to have been Benvenuto di Giovanni and the scene commemorates the victory at Colle Val d'Elsa, in 1479.

[22]The document is still unpublished. See Weller, pp. 17 and 356.

wedding between a male of the Gabbrielli family and a female of the Luti family is recorded.[23] It occurred in 1464 and involved Gabbriello di Bartolomeo di Pavolo Gabbrielli and Portia di Mess. Francesco di Giovanni Luti.[24]

Gabriello di Bartolomeo di Paolo Gabbrielli is most likely the son of the same Bartolomeo di Paolo di Gabrielo listed three years later on the 1467 biccherna book cover by Francesco di Giorgio.

This provides us with the first date that can be reasonably attached to any of Francesco's cassone paintings (although one should not forget that the attribution of the painting, as well as of the biccherna cover of 1467, to Francesco is *not* documented), and provides the first real proof that previous suppositions about his chronology were not incorrect. Also it helps to be more specific about locating such works within the decade and to provide a basis for determining, however tentatively, which works preceded which.

The influences apparent in the painting are still essentially those seen in the works already discussed. Vecchietta can still be traced in many details, but the personal style of Francesco is increasingly prominent. Moreover, Vecchietta is really the *only* artist who is, as yet, playing a role in Francesco's development, and this is as one would expect it to be in 1464. The style corresponds also remarkably well with the biccherna book cover of 1467, and I believe one can conclude that Francesco's manner did not change significantly within that time.

The Kansas City and Wildenstein Cassoni

The first of the two paintings discussed here has been often published and is usually, though not always, attributed to Fran-

[23]Two marriages between females of the Gabbrielli family and males of the Luti family are also recorded, in 1459 and 1505. That in 1459 involves the same Francesco di Tommaso di Lutoccio Luti mentioned on the biccherna book cover of 1479.

[24]This document was searched for and found by Alexandra Pietrasanta to whom I am deeply grateful. This entire essay probably would not have found its way into print, at least not in this form, if she had not made this happy discovery for me.

cesco. The second is completely unpublished (to my knowledge), and has never been mentioned in the literature on Francesco. Nonetheless I am reasonably certain that the latter is the work of the master, while the former may well not be. They can, however, with profit be treated together.

The *Story of Tobias* (fig. 12), in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City,[25] and the *Death of Virginia* (fig. 11), presently in the possession of Wildenstein's in London,[26] will immediately, I think, be recognized as having one characteristic in common: they both show the pervasive influence of Liberale da Verona, though they do not appear to be by his hand. Rather they look like works made from unequal measures of elements from both Liberale's and Francesco's manners. They are difficult, however, to place accurately in Francesco's *oeuvre,* and together they present a curious deviation from his otherwise fairly consistent evolution as a painter.

The Wildenstein panel shows Virginia's tragic death taking place in an open square surrounded by walls and architecture. At the left sits Appius Claudius on a throne in a four-sided loggia that is closed on two sides. In the square are various figures, both men and women, including soldiers, and directly in the center Virginius, with a furious lunge, stabs his daughter in the neck. To the far right is an open landscape with a man seated by a river, probably the Tiber. In the background are again hills with tree rows very much like those in the Getty cassone.

The best-known renditions of the story of Virginia (from Livy and Valerius Maximus) are those by Botticelli (in Bergamo) and Filippino Lippi (in the Louvre), both of which are much more elaborate, but also much later. (I do not know of any Italian examples earlier than Francesco's, but they may exist.) The Florentine examples were also pendant to stories of Lucretia, whose legend very much resembles that of Virginia,

[25]No. 41-9, 17 x 68¾ inches. Weller, pp. 122-123.

[26]Dimensions 15¼ x 44⅞ inches. From a private collection in France. I am grateful to Mr. Louis Goldenberg of Wildenstein's for allowing me to publish this painting.

but no such pendant exists for Francesco's version. Both women, it must be remembered, are present in the *Triumph of Chastity* in the Getty Museum.

The motives that reflect Liberale in this picture are very slight, but unmistakable. They will be very apparent to anyone who is familiar with Liberale's unusual manner. The figure of Virginius shows it most, primarily in the swirl of his cape and clothing, and in his partly hidden face with but one angry eye. It is also seen in the male figure to Virginia's right who is similarly dramatic, though less so. Otherwise the types are all of the more placid sort that we are used to in Francesco's works. The architecture here too is brightly colored with a variety of reds, etc., but is much more staffage-like than the earlier examples in Francesco's paintings (excepting the Milan cassone), and resembles architectural backgrounds that we will see in the 1470's.

But taken altogether we are forced to explain this mixture in one of two ways: either we have a painting done by Francesco at a point where he was coming under the sway of Liberale and attempting to imitate his violent and intense characters; or we have a work done largely by Francesco but also worked on by Liberale. In my opinion the latter is not possible because nowhere does the technique resemble his crisp, sharp handling; and not even in the figure of Virginius do we see the extremes of billowing drapery that characterize Liberale's own paintings. Rather it looks like that of a Sienese artist who is trying to imbue his figures with something basically foreign to his tradition and training.

I have deliberately treated the Wildenstein painting first because I am able to convince myself reasonably well of my conclusions, mustering at the same time some of the support needed to discuss its "companion." Should I have begun with the Kansas City painting, doubts might have predominated.

The *Story of Tobias* (figs. 12-13) in the Nelson Gallery is divided into four episodes: on the left, again in an open loggia with two closed sides, Tobit is shown being blinded by the dung of sparrows. Immediately next to that is the departure of Tobias

and Raphael from Tobit. To the right Tobias is seen reaching out to catch a large and mean-looking fish, encouraged by Raphael. Lastly Raphael and Tobias are shown passing through the portal of a city. Strangely the curing of Tobit is not shown, and possibly a second half of the story on another panel, including also the marriage of Tobias to Sara, has been lost. The last scene of the Kansas City cassone would, therefore, represent not the return of Raphael and Tobias, but rather their entrance into the town of Rages where Raquel and Sara lived. Since it is obviously a city and not the same building where Tobit was shown, I believe it highly probable that we *have* lost one half of the story; it would also be an odd way to end the sequence.

Once more, I have not seen the painting in the original (at least not recently) and I cannot judge its condition or its coloring, but it appears from photographs to be about as poorly preserved as the others.

On the ends of the panel two stucco figures with family arms are still attached (fig. 13), and there is here a second possibility of identifying the marriage and finding its date. Unhappily this has not so far been successful. The right figure shows Flora (?) holding a cornucopia, and supporting an escutcheon that has been defaced to the point of illegibility. The field is gold, and it has two red bars. But from the Nemes sale catalogue of 1928 in which the Kansas City panel was illustrated and described, one learns that at that time the device could be distinguished: it was the head of a wild boar. Its remains are a reddish brown. In older museum photographs, one can still see the head, but looking more like a pig than a boar, and I suspect it was highly restored. It is possible therefore that we do not really know what the device was, and that it was already hopelessly defaced before the Nemes sale. But if genuine, it could be that of the Capacci family.[27]

The left figure is Hercules, and the escutcheon he holds is like-

[27]Dr. Ubaldo Morandi of the Archivio di Stato in Siena very kindly informs me that the Capacci used this device; I wish to thank him for his help in this matter.

wise so badly mutilated that only half of a gold bend dexter can be made out, and nothing more. The field is dark blue. But again from the Nemes catalogue one reads what is now no longer to be seen; it was an oak leaf, and when one knows what it once was, one can still find the contours. The use of an oak leaf as a device, however, was common to various families, and none of them are known to have been involved in marriage with the Capacci.[28]

The Kansas City painting has always until recently been given to Francesco di Giorgio. The only exception is Carlo del Bravo[29] who attributes it, for the first time, to Liberale da Verona. I must admit that I do not subscribe to Del Bravo's conception of Liberale's *oeuvre,* and I feel he has mistakenly included many works by Girolamo da Cremona, as well as the present painting which I cannot bring myself to accept as Liberale's; but there is a large (and until Del Bravo, completely unnoticed) degree of truth to the attribution that at least must give one pause. There are no other examples of this type of bushy hair in Francesco's work; the hair on his figures is usually blond, but stringy and loose. The bushy manner is a characteristic of Liberale and Girolamo da Cremona. Moreover the figures do not have Francesco's familiar poses and clothing; the angel Raphael is shown three places always with flowing drapery as if he were standing in a wind, and their closest parallel is the figure of Virginius in the Wildenstein panel who, in stance, nearly duplicates the figure of Raphael at the far right. Nor are even the incised patterns on the clothing the same as usual; they are lighter, full of line and movement. And the head of Tobias at the far right looks as if stolen from Liberale's early works. Lastly, the rocks in the middle foreground and the odd volcanic-like hills in the background are also very foreign to Francesco.

But the whole, in spite of its odd appearance within Francesco's *oeuvre,* still does not add up to a product of Liberale's hand. It has no credible position among his works, nor do I see

[28]Dr. Morandi (see note 27) lists the Insegni, the Lucarini, the Minucci, and the Marsili among those using the oak leaf.

[29]Del Bravo, *Liberale da Verona,* 1967, p. CXVIII.

how it can be related to Girolamo da Cremona. It remains, for me at least, a puzzle that I cannot resolve. My inclination is to look upon it as a work of Francesco's in which he is trying very hard to integrate details of Liberale's manner into his own — sometimes to the point of imitation. Or it might be by some, still unknown, artist whose activity was close to Francesco or in Francesco's workshop. Whatever the answer, it stands nearly isolated and without recognizable antecedent or following, excepting the Wildenstein *Story of Virginia.*

For the sake of convenience, I am retaining some connection for both panels with Francesco's list, and also because I think they must still be studied in the light of his works rather than someone else's. To date them, we cannot, of course, go back before 1466, the year Liberale came to Siena. Since we know Francesco was still within the orbit of Vecchietta in 1467, we can probably detain them yet another year or two. They should also predate any connection with Neroccio, and so we are left with a regrettably short span between 1467 and 1469 — regrettable because paintings that one cannot specifically identify should not be so specifically dated.

The Victoria and Albert Cassone

The cassone in the Victoria and Albert Museum[30] (figs. 14 and 16) has never succeeded in winning an uncontested place in the *oeuvre* of Francesco di Giorgio. When first published in 1926[31] it was attributed with hesitation to him. Later at the museum it was called Sienese school for many years, and eventually a work of Francesco; but Weller[32] relegated it to the workshop of Francesco and Neroccio, and specified that it was definitely not by Francesco himself. Most of this negative assessment has been due to the condition of the painted front; old photos show it to have been heavily overpainted, to a point that its character was very

[30]No. W. 68-1925. Dimensions 13¾ x 48½ in. Cleaned and restored in 1950.

[31]Borenius, "Italian Cassone Paintings," in *Apollo,* III, 1926, pp. 132-133.

[32]Weller, pp. 127 and 298.

much obscured. Its present condition is, however, almost equally discouraging. With the overpaint removed, one sees how much has been lost, especially in the center below where the keyhole would have been. Most of the heads of the center group of figures are obliterated, and some of those to the right and left appear to have been again retouched.

The subject, which was doubted by Weller, is probably *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba;* the journey of the queen is shown on the left, with both persons enthroned to the right, surrounded by admiring crowds. The youthfulness of Solomon and his lack of a crown might be enough to throw the nature of the subject into doubt; but otherwise it agrees fairly well with the many versions of this theme painted on cassoni. (Though it might be noted that they are much more common in Florence than Siena.)

The colors are still an important aspect of the painting, but not to the degree seen in his earliest works. The architecture is still constructed from the same models as that in the Kansas City and Wildenstein cassoni, but no longer with the care that one felt had been applied up until that point. Indeed the architecture from about 1468 and throughout the remainder of his career as cassone painter remains strangely repetitive and as if arrived at through a formula. It never again achieves the intricacy and invention seen in the earlier examples.

The figures are still clothed in the same gold and red brocade seen so often before, though the patterns continue to evolve slightly. The facial types are very obviously the same straggly-haired blonds that are Francesco's trademark.[33] The element of Liberale da Verona found in the last two works appears to have completely dissipated. Indeed, there is a stiffness and lack of movement in this work that mark the remainder of Francesco's cassone paintings. It can be typified by the use of nondescript crowds consisting of many unindividualized heads fronted by a

[33]With one possible exception: the balding head to the right of the canopy support near the queen does not look like Francesco and I cannot shake the impression it gives me of the Stratonice Master, an artist whose origins certainly lie close to Francesco. However, the poor condition of the panel is probably the cause for this illusion.

few full-length figures whose repertoire of activity is very limited. It is noteworthy that all of Francesco's cassone paintings (with one exception) from this point on have such a group.

In fact it is with this work that one can begin to confidently speak of Francesco's workshop because much of the detail and consequent character of this painting seems unequal to the artist we know Francesco was and already had shown himself to be. It is difficult to imagine the artist who created the *Annunciation* in Siena (painted most likely before this cassone) and the *Coronation* of 1471 (which I take to be later than this cassone) could have also produced this very mechanical composition. Even a little detail like the hills in the background behind the *Journey of the Queen of Sheba* is enough to point up this development. This is not to say that Francesco's use of an atelier did not perhaps precede this piece; it may well have. But it only becomes so obvious at this juncture in his career.

Because I still see no trace of Neroccio in this painting (or at least very little), I am inclined to date it before 1470. And since it certainly cannot predate the still Vecchiettesque works through 1467, we are again reduced to a narrow span of just three years, 1468-1470.

It should not be overlooked that this cassone, which is partly modern in construction, also has two stucco figures on the sides holding shields. The arms on these shields (a rampant lion on the left, and a rampant eagle (?) on the right) are repeated on the end panels (but reversed), and may not be genuine. They both look like modern inventions. The figures appear to be regilded, but are correct in character and are probably original. Especially noteworthy is the fact that these figures are near duplicates of those on a cassone in the Stibbert Museum (fig. 19) which I take (but not for this reason) to be roughly contemporary with the Victoria and Albert cassone. Without having been able to study these figures for authenticity, I am inclined nonetheless to think they are all genuine and produced from a common matrix in the workshop.

More puzzling is a rough drawing on the reverse of the cassone

(fig. 16), depicting a reclining nude. Painting such a nude either inside the chest or on the reverse was a familiar tradition in the 15th century, though only a few examples still exist. I know of no other drawn in this loose and decidedly crude manner. It appears to have been done at the same time as the front of the chest, but I am very loath to attribute it to Francesco. On the other hand, we have no criteria for knowing what a rapid brush drawing on this scale by the artist would look like, and perhaps we see it here for the first time. It is such an unusual and unexpected image that I scarcely trust my feelings about it; but it is not completely incompatible with Francesco's style as it is known to us in his pen drawings.[34]

The Stibbert and Metropolitan *Trionfi*

The odd set of three cassoni which have been for some time in the Stibbert Museum in Florence[35] (figs. 17-19) and in the Metropolitan Museum in New York[36] (fig. 20) — two in the former and a part of one in the latter — has been discussed in some detail by Weller, as well as by previous writers. The subject, which is clearly the same in all three paintings, has never been explained with any exactitude. On the left is shown a triumphal wagon drawn by griffins, and on the right another drawn by swans. On each wagon rides a blond woman with a scepter, and alongside each walks an entourage of young women. In the center, which is occupied by a hill, in front of the right chariot, a stag is being killed by a similar group of young women, and to the left of center the head of the stag is being presented to the lady on the other chariot.

The two complete (i.e. Stibbert) panels agree with each other in most details; the design of the chariots varies, one of the panels

[34]Dimensions 22 x 71 inches. Compare it, for instance, to the Vitruvian figure in the manuscript of Francesco's *Trattato,* Biblioteca Laurenziana, Codex Ashburnham 361, illus. in Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism,* 1947, fig. 2a.

[35]No. 12922, 37 x 111 cm., and no. 4098, 38 x 128 cm. Weller, pp. 124-127.

[36]No. 20.182, 16¼ x 18 inches (41.3 x 45.6 cm.).

is longer than the other, the coat of arms held by the enthroned woman on the right is different in each case,[37] and they are very differently preserved, but otherwise there are no important discrepancies. The section in the Metropolitan Museum agrees with the left portion of both of the Stibbert panels, and it has often been suggested that it is a fragment of a third panel, the remainder of which would approximate that of the Stibbert panels. This supposition is now born out by Zeri's discovery of a fragment from the right side of what was undoubtedly the same chest, and which is reproduced here for the first time (fig. 21). It is now in the Tosatti collection in Genoa.[38] It contains the chariot drawn by the swans and accompanied by the same group of women. It has, however, lost large areas of paint and to the left nearly everything is gone, which was probably the reason for its original dismemberment.

As Weller pointed out, there may not have been space for the central group of figures with the stags, and the new fragment contains no indication of it either. It is possible, therefore, that the center portion was differently composed than the Stibbert panels. It is also notable that the Tosatti fragment shows no coat of arms held by the enthroned lady.

The subject of these three cassoni has been called a triumph of Diana, Beatrice and even Minerva.[39] The first comes from the presence of the stag, which is assumed to be Actaeon, but Weller quite correctly pointed out the difficulties of this interpretation.[40] It would be a highly improbable way of representing such a sub-

[37]I have not made an attempt to identify these arms in the Sienese archives, but the arms on Stibbert 12922 appear to be the same as those on the biccherna covers of 1471 and 1483. From the inscriptions on the covers, I gather they belong to Agnolo di Meo di Gano (Ghano).

[38]Once again I am indebted to Federico Zeri for telling me of this painting which he knew of from his work on the Metropolitan Museum catalogue of Italian paintings. Its dimensions are 38 x 38 cm. Dr. Tosatti, to whom I am grateful for permitting me to publish his painting, tells me that it came from a member of the Falzacappa family in Acquapendente.

[39]Zeri has suggested Minerva as the subject, and I am told it will appear as such in the forthcoming Metropolitan catalogue. I do not know his reasons for this identification.

[40]Weller, p. 125, note 104.

ject. The second possibility, Beatrice, has more to say for it, since the left sides correspond well to Dante's description of Beatrice's chariot (*The Divine Comedy,* Purgatorio, XXIX-XXXI) drawn by griffins. It is possible that some allegory is intended with the killing of the stag, but that does not explain the right chariot drawn by swans. Most likely the woman represented is still some unidentified personage, as Weller was also forced to conclude.

Although Weller was critical of the Metropolitan fragment – which he calls weak, careless and insensitive in details – he did not make a final judgment about its quality relative to the Stibbert pair. He preferred Stibbert 12922 (fig. 17) to Stibbert 4098 (figs. 18-19). In my opinion, all three reflect the increased role of Francesco's workshop and in spite of their widely different techniques and appearances, I believe they were all done about the same time. The Metropolitan/Tosatti cassone seems to me the best of the three, although I would agree with Weller's criticisms. Of the Stibbert panels I think no. 4098 is the most trustworthy and closest to Francesco's tradition as we have so far seen it. Stibbert 12922 appears from photos (I have not seen the original for many years) to be either much restored or much stiffer and backward than any other of his cassone paintings. But these relative judgments are of no great consequence, I feel, if one recognizes them all as primarily the work of assistants.

As mentioned above, the stucco figures on the ends of Stibbert 4098 (fig. 19) are identical to those on the Kansas City cassone, and this helps to support my independent conclusion that these cassoni must also date from a period between 1468-1470. I still do not see much, if any, trace of Neroccio's influence in the activity of Francesco's atelier insofar as it is visible in his furniture paintings, but the Metropolitan/Tosatti fragments show some, and if we are not yet within the period of their collaboration, we are certainly on the verge of it.[41]

[41]Gertrude Coor (*Neroccio de' Landi,* p. 30) has pointed out the similarity between the figure of Cleopatra in Neroccio's cassone at Raleigh (Coor, fig. 13) and the "Beatrice" in the Metropolitan fragment, which might be an indication that both works were produced during the period of their association.

The cassone that was for many years on loan to the Boston Museum and later to the Fogg Museum in Cambridge from the collection of Mrs. Edmund Wheelwright[42] (fig. 22) was first published in 1914 by Frank Jewett Mather as a work of Francesco di Giorgio.[43] Since then it has always been accepted as a work of high quality and no one, so far as I know, has ever questioned the attribution. Though I have never seen the original, from reproductions this painting looks to be considerably finer than the last three works just discussed and probably the best of his later cassoni.

The subject presents no major problems, though it is again much rarer in Sienese art than in Florentine. On the left Paris unconcernedly hands the golden apple to Aphrodite while Hera and Athena stand by. In the center Helen is seen strolling with a bow, and in the hilly landscape to the right, she is shown being abducted by Paris. This abduction scene consists of just the two figures, Paris on his horse, and Helen standing beside them. This combination of scenes occurs in Florentine art, but I know of none in Sienese. Nor do I know of any precedent for the unelaborated *sceneggiatura* of the abduction, without hint of water or ship.[44] But the city in the background is evidently intended to be Troy as Paris and Helen can be seen riding toward the city gate.

The landscape can be used to typify the gap between this work and those we have just seen. It is no longer a background consisting of a row of patterned hills whose effect is largely two-dimensional. It is built up with a logic and solidity that remind one of Florentine landscapes, and which appear nowhere else

[42]I do not know the dimensions of this panel, and neither Weller nor Mather gives them. I have been unable to contact any member of the Wheelwright family, but I am told by the Boston Museum that the painting was sold by them in 1945. Its present location is unknown to me.

[43]Mather, "Two Sienese Cassone Panels," in *Art in America,* II, 1914, pp. 401-403. See also Weller, pp. 115-118.

[44]Mather described the second half of this story as *Oenone's Farewell,* which Weller quite rightly refutes (Weller, p. 116, note 87).

among his cassone paintings to a like degree. The city of Troy is not a hastily assembled box, but a brilliantly colored complex of buildings highly reminiscent of the Troy in the Berenson fragment. The trees have movement and variety. And there is no crowd of indistinguishable females. As a result, one might be justified in concluding that here, once again, we are seeing an undiluted work of Francesco, relatively free of studio assistance; or at least receiving the assistance of an artist much more exacting than, and superior to, any we have recently seen.

It is here, I believe, that Neroccio's influence can be clearly seen for the first time. I sense a need to be cautious on this point to the extent that my knowledge of the Wheelwright painting is limited to rather small reproductions,[45] but I believe to see Neroccio in the figure of Paris — if not his own work then at least his influence. The full round face (with Francesco's usual blond stringy hair) smacks of Neroccio's types, but probably second-hand. I hope I am not merely grasping at straws.

In any case it seems very probable that the picture is not far removed from the *Coronation* of 1471. Weller noticed the similarity between the figure of Helen in the cassone and the figure of the angel just below Mary in the Coronation;[46] both have the same odd stance. Also the figure of Athena (the furthest left) appears very similar to the enthroned figure in the Metropolitan fragment, which I have dated 1468-70. And so, though this is hardly enough upon which to base a strong case, I concur with Weller and Mather who dated the Wheelwright cassone 1470-75, but with the strong probability that it is early within this period rather than late.

The Wheelwright cassone has also two lateral sections with figures of a male and female, probably intended to be Paris and Helen. They hold escutcheons which bear the arms of the Urgurgieri and Bartolini-Salimbeni families. Weller[47] pointed out that

[45]I have had the benefit of a good photograph in the Frick Library, but over the course of time I have had to relay on the reproduction in Mather's article as the Frick photo could not be copied.

[46]Weller, p. 117.

[47]Weller, p. 116, and note 88.

the authenticity of these arms was questionable, and he was unable to find a marriage to correspond to them; I have not tried further. But the similarity of the figures to two close to Neroccio in the Gardner Museum in Boston is worth noting.[48]

The Portland *Meeting of Aeneas and Dido*

The cassone depicting two episodes from the story of Aeneas while in Carthage (figs. 23-25) was for many years considered a work by Francesco's own hand until Weller in 1943[49] relegated it to his workshop. Mrs. Coor[50] followed him in this evaluation. As a result of the former opinion, the painting, which comes from the Kress collection, was eventually removed from the National Gallery in Washington and given to the Portland Art Museum.[51] However none of the writers mentioned has ever given much space to the work, and although it has undoubtedly studio participation, it should not be cast aside so freely.

In the manner and setting so familiar to us by now, the panel is divided into two scenes without physical separation. The left side shows Dido enthroned in a hexagonal temple, surrounded by various figures, mostly soldiers. Aeneas is being ushered in from the right side, and like most of the other personages (excepting those with helmets), he has the usual blond flowing hair. The temple is placed again in an architectural setting composed of the omnipresent classical temples, towers, and walls, most often adorned with garlands. The right scene is set in an open landscape containing another turreted fortress-like construction and bounded on the right by a ship resting in the water. A number of soldiers, some on horseback, surround a rearing white horse and the figure furthest to the right, who is evidently Aeneas, is

[48]Reproduced in Hendy, *Catalogue of the Exhibited Paintings and Drawings*, 1931, p. 334, as influenced by Signorelli. These paintings are certainly by Neroccio's workshop, or an assistant.

[49]Weller, p. 127, note 108, and p. 311.

[50]Coor, *op. cit.*, p. 92, note 325.

[51]*Cf.* F. R. Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection:* Italian Schools, XIII-XV century, p. 154. Kress 530, Portland Museum, no. 61.36, dimensions 14¾ x 43⅜ inches (37.5 x 110.2 cm.).

seen being dragged by another soldier who has his arms around Aeneas' chest. Aeneas appears either very disconsolate or exhausted. This latter episode is evidently the disembarkation of Aeneas at Carthage; one might be inclined to see it as his embarkation for the Italian peninsula and Rome, with Aeneas shown as despondent at having had to leave Dido. The location of this scene to the right of the *Meeting* would imply that it is subsequent to it. However Aeneas *does* enter from the right of the temple instead of from the left, and a similar painting described below (fig. 26) reads from right to left instead of vice versa. Therefore it seems very probable that it *is* the disembarkation.

It should be mentioned that we do not see the suicide of Dido in this panel, and again it is possible that a companion cassone with later scenes has been lost. Nor do I want to exclude the possibility that another legend was intended and not that of Aeneas at Carthage, although nothing contradicts this identification.

The execution of the panel is obviously not on a level with Francesco's best works in this medium. The architecture again reverts to the cliché-ridden stage settings that we have seen in many of his earlier works, and if one accepts a date from the 1470's for this work, as I do, then it is increasingly difficult to explain how a painter who by now was a mature artist of 31 years of age or more, who had produced one of the great masterpieces of Sienese art, the *Coronation* of 1471, and also the beautifully delicate and detailed architecture in the Berenson fragment and the Getty *Triumph* — how this artist could continue to produce the relatively crude staffage of the Portland cassone. It is a great temptation to ascribe these two distinct traditions of architectural rendering in Francesco's cassone paintings to two different hands, i.e. one to the master himself and one to an assistant; but I fear such a solution is much too facile.

To be sure, the vanishing lines of the pavement (of Carthage) in the Portland cassone are generally "correct" and improved over the similar lines (of Rome) in the Coriolanus cassone in Milan (fig. 4) which I have dated in the early 1460's but the

general character is still the same and not much more advanced. The battlement of the central tower gives way in the background to an extended battlement that carries across the entire landscape, like a wall, but without logic. The buildings themselves, though demonstrating a certain awareness of classical edifices, are not only implausible but uninteresting; they are generalities when compared to the temple in the Berenson fragment (fig. 7); and they are decidedly inferior to the buildings painted by Vecchietta, Neroccio and other Sienese artists. Though one can point (and we have) to inconsistencies in his earlier constructions, there was still an invention and awareness of detail that are not anywhere to be seen in the Portland example.

On reflection, one can easily trace the forerunners of the Portland architecture painter: we first see it in the Coriolanus cassone (fig. 6) and next in the Wildenstein and Kansas City cassoni (figs. 11-12); then in the Victoria and Albert panel (fig. 14) and now in the Portland example. We will still see it once more (fig. 26).

In opposition to this are the architectural elements we have seen in the following works: the Siena set (figs. 1-3), the Berenson and Getty pieces (figs. 7-8), and maybe the Wheelwright cassone (fig. 22).

There is perhaps a possibility that the first of these two "strains" is the work of an unidentified architectural painter who assisted Francesco with the backgrounds of most of his cassoni (and perhaps with those of other artists),[52] and that the second "strain" is that of Francesco himself. However the architecture in the Portland cassone (and the next work below as well) corresponds reasonably well to Francesco's drawings for his *Trattato* which is thought to have begun to materialize about this time.

[52]Such as the architecture in Neroccio's *Anthony and Cleopatra* cassone at Raleigh. *Cf.* Coor, *op. cit.*, p. 92, note 325, and fig. 11; also the Jepthah cassone formerly in the collection of the Earl of Crawford, illus. in Schubring, *Cassoni*, pl. CXIII. See also the pavement by Bastiano di Francesco, likewise depicting the story of Jepthah, done ca. 1482-85, which has such architecture. Much of the resemblance, of course, is due to the fact that they all represent fortified architecture.

The equivalent of the turreted fortress on the right can be found in the Turin manuscript[53] and it is not difficult to imagine that other of his architectural sketches when translated onto a painted panel would look approximately like what we see here. Perhaps the answer lies in the execution, in which case Francesco may have been responsible only for the design. Or maybe the better examples (i.e. the Siena, Berenson, and Getty paintings) are simply representative of a phase during which Francesco was more highly influenced by Vecchietta's examples of architectural rendering. Neither answer is completely satisfactory.[54]

To return to the Aeneas cassone in Portland, I believe it is one of the products of that ill-defined workshop maintained by Francesco and Neroccio during the first half of the 1470's. I cannot point to a single painting in which both artists' hands can definitely be seen at work,[55] but in my opinion the Portland cassone comes as close to Neroccio as Francesco ever came. The head of the blond soldier to the right of the rearing white horse recalls very strongly the four early saints by Neroccio in the Johnson collection in Philadelphia,[56] as do also many of the figures around Dido. Most likely this is only an example of Neroccio's influence rather than his direct collaboration, but lacking any documented or certain examples of their mutual production, we can only surmise that the works produced by each artist that most resemble the works of the other are probably the ones done during their known association.

[53]Illustrated in Maltese's edition of Francesco's *Trattati*, 1967, vol. I, plate 53.

[54]Mr. Pope-Hennessy informs me that T. Buddensieg has located a book of architectural sketches that served as models for various Sienese painters. His publication of this book and his comments on it will no doubt be of great value and will help answer some of the questions I have posed above.

[55]It is worth emphasis that, in spite of the documented collaboration between Neroccio and Francesco, not a single painting clearly showing both hands at work is known to us. Many have earlier been proposed, but all have since been recognized as the work of either the one artist or the other. It must be remembered, however, that there is some basis for supposing that Neroccio's predella with scenes from the life of St. Benedict may have been done for Francesco's *Coronation* of 1471. *Cf.* Coor, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38. And opposed to this, see Del Bravo in *Paragone*, Sept. 1962, p. 74.

[56]Coor, *op. cit.*, fig. 5.

Like the Portland cassone, the panel at Richmond illustrated in fig. 26 has been given very short shrift and never considered seriously as a work by Francesco's own hand.[57] I believe however that it ranks at least on a par with the work in Portland and resembles it in many ways previously unnoticed. It may be, as Weller suggests,[58] a product of the workshop, but a large part of Francesco's cassone production could be relegated to this category with as much reason.

The subject of the Richmond cassone has always been given as the legend of St. Scholastica. It is however, quite certainly the legend of Tuccia, as Zeri was the first to notice.[59] (Schubring[60] had already pointed out the similarity between the two stories, but proceeded to misidentify it anyway.) The story again reads from right to left: Tuccia is shown dipping her sieve into the Tiber, accompanied by two other Vestal virgins. On the left she presents it at the temple, surrounded by a large group of followers. To the left are two ladies and in the center are a few Roman soldiers.

The reasons for identifying her as Tuccia and not St. Scholastica are obvious: Scholastica was a Benedictine nun who would have worn a dark habit. The figures here, though nun-like, are clothed in precisely the way Tuccia is clothed in the Getty *Triumph of Chastity* (fig. 10), i.e. in a white habit with a dark hood and dark pendants in front and back. If more proof were necessary, one might mention that Tuccia, who was always a model of chastity (as witnessed by her inclusion in chastity's triumphal procession) is a much more likely subject for a wedding chest than St. Scholastica. Indeed, I do not know of any

[57]No. 46-13-1, 13½ x 40 inches. In spite of various references to it in the literature and repeated suggestions that it is related to Francesco, it is still called just "Sienese School, ca. 1470" in *European Art in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, 1966, p. 13.

[58]Weller, p. 127, note 108.

[59]Zeri pointed out the correct subject to me while we were preparing another publication.

[60]Schubring, *Cassoni*, p. 327, no. 459.

depictions of this episode from Scholastica's life, and Kaftal lists none either. So I believe the former identification can be dropped with no misgivings.

The scene is placed in the familiar architectural setting. The Vestal temple is six-sided again, and to the left one sees another round edifice, this time with three levels of arches. It corresponds remarkably well to the drawings of colosseums in the Turin manuscript of Francesco's *Trattato,*[61] though it is impossible to say if there is a direct relationship.

In general character the Richmond panel comes exceedingly close to that in Portland, and one is justified in speaking of formulas when comparing them. The temples (of Vesta and Dido) are placed in precisely the same place, the groups of two women on the left nearly duplicate each other in stance and position, and the two pairs of soldiers in the center are nearly repetitions of each other. They exhibit about the same degree of workshop collaboration, and I believe that both should be taken to represent the typical product of Francesco's (and presumably also Neroccio's) atelier that we know was dissolved in 1475. Neroccio's direct participation, if any, would appear to be negligible.

I am interpreting these works to be the last of Francesco's cassone paintings known to us, though still predating his trip to Urbino in 1475, and therefore the last examples in a medium that he seems to have discarded after leaving his native Siena. To judge from their quality and the degree of Francesco's own participation, he had already long since ceased to place his principal effort and interest into them.

It has been an uneven course over the span of just fifteen years, from the earliest pieces, relatively rough and in some respects undisciplined, to a youthful sophistication and dexterity that arrived very rapidly but which soon yielded to repetition and formula. That the young artist did not in reality stagnate is proven by his sculpture, his treatises, his drawings, his architec-

[61]Reproduced in the Maltese edition of Francesco's *Trattati,* 1967, vol. II, plates 23 and 130.

ture, and diverse other manifestations of his enthusiastic genius; but all of these things replace his initial preoccupation with painting, and one can argue that *this phase* of his work evidently *did* stagnate by the time he was in his early thirties.

Probably the painting of wedding-chests was a comparatively "menial" level of work that he was not unhappy to leave behind. His talents by this time were widely recognized even outside of his native Siena, and the local production of painted furniture (no matter how high in quality), which may well have been his principal means of support until about 1475, was no doubt beginning to pale next to the possibilities that were now being presented to him. Indeed the adventurous intellect that one sees in all of his work, and especially in his cassone paintings, was likely also what led him away from this medium. The decoration of cassoni in Siena was given over to the more traditional and somewhat more predictable hands of Benvenuto di Giovanni and Francesco's former partner and relative, Neroccio. Within a decade, however, the practice had nearly died out in Siena.

No other artist of the Quattrocento in Siena showed such a concern for the art of antiquity, and nowhere else (excepting perhaps in his drawings and treatises) was he able to demonstrate this better than in his cassone paintings. These works probably did not have a significant influence on later Sienese artists, however, nor on those of any other city. Francesco was the one Sienese closest in nature to the spirit of the renaissance that we now associate more directly with Florence (although his art is very much in the tradition of Siena), and his work as an architect, engineer, and theoretician became well known in various centers such as Urbino, Milan and Naples. But his paintings remained in his home town, and a large part of them, those on furniture, were seen almost exclusively by the families who placed their clothing or linen in them. Their full appreciation is an advantage of only the very recent past and the present.

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CASSONE PAINTINGS ERRONEOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO

The following works are all cassone panels that have been repeatedly attributed to Francesco di Giorgio by various scholars, but which I feel can no longer be maintained as having any direct connection with his hand. This list does not contain every piece ever attributed to him, but only those that have until recently, and with some plausibility, been given to him.

By Girolamo da Cremona

Rape of Europa, Paris, Louvre. First attributed to Francesco by Berenson in 1918, and accepted by numerous writers, including Weller.[62] Zeri in 1950[63] first claimed that it was a work of Girolamo da Cremona and a pendant to the *Rape of Helen* in Le Havre. (Both come from the Campana collection.) I agree with Zeri completely; neither work can be fitted into Francesco's *oeuvre.* The types are quite clearly different, and in spite of general similarities, cannot be confused with those of Francesco.

Unknown Legend with Chess Players, three fragments now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Berenson collection, Settignano; and formerly Wauters collection, Brussels. The first section of this fragmented cassone was published as by Francesco in 1928 by Perkins[64] and he was followed by most writers, including Berenson and Weller.[65] Zeri[66] was again the person who first deviated from this tradition and called them

[62]Weller, pp. 118-122, illus. figs. 39-41.

[63]Zeri, "Una pala d'altare di Gerolamo da Cremona," in *Bollettino d'arte,* 1950, pp. 38-39.

[64]Perkins, "Three Paintings by Francesco di Giorgio," in *Art in America,* XVI, 1928, p. 68.

[65]Weller, pp. 234-242, figs. 97-101.

[66]Zeri, *op. cit.,* pp. 38-39.

the work of Girolamo da Cremona. The bushy-haired figures do not correspond to any of Francesco's (except vaguely those in the Kansas City *Legend of Tobias*) and do resemble those of the Louvre *Rape of Europa* above. Carlo del Bravo[67] has more recently attributed them to Liberale da Verona.

By Liberale da Verona

Triumph of Chastity, formerly Ehrich Galleries, New York[68] (fig. 28). This peculiar painting has seldom been published in reproduction before and has received very little critical notice. When exhibited in the 1930's it was attributed to Francesco di Giorgio. Valentiner[69] and Weller[70] suggested the Master of the Stratonice panels, and I had independently considered the same possibility in 1966.[71] Now I believe it is a very early work of Liberale, probably done in his first years in Siena. It is closely related to the following work.

Triumph of Chastity, Wantage collection, Lockinge House (Berks.) (fig. 29). In spite of considerable differences in details, I am now inclined to think the author of this panel is the same as that above, i.e. Liberale da Verona. To judge from photographs, the Wantage painting is heavily restored in some figures, but other parts that are more probably free of overpainting, such as the landscape, clouds, ocean, unicorns, etc., are nearly duplicates. Since I have seen neither work in the original, these observations can only be advanced with hesitation, but Francesco cannot have been their author. Berenson

[67]Del Bravo, *Liberale da Verona,* 1967, p. CXIV-CXVII.

[68]In the sale at the American Art Association, Nov. 20, 1931, no. 51, and reoffered April 18/19, 1934, no. 39. Exhibited at Detroit, *Loan Exhibition . . . ,* 1933, no. 67, as Sienese ca. 1480, and later at Rochester, *The Development of Landscape Painting through twenty Centuries of European Art,* 1934, no. 24, as by Francesco di Giorgio. Dimensions 14½ x 47½ inches. Present whereabouts unknown.

[69]Detroit, *Loan Exhibition . . . ,* 1933, no. 67.

[70]Weller, p. 301.

[71]Fredericksen, "The Earliest Painting by the 'Stratonice Master'," in *Paragone,* no. 197, 1966, p. 55.

and others have for many years given the Wantage picture to him, and Weller[72] implied it was a shop production.

By Benvenuto di Giovanni

Triumph of David, Siena, Pinacoteca. In Schubring[73] as by Francesco, but considered by most modern writers such as Coor[74] and Berenson to be by Neroccio. In my opinion it is an early work by Benvenuto di Giovanni, and done probably in the late 1470's. I hope to support this attribution at some future date.

By an Unknown Artist

Triumph of Chastity, formerly Cook collection, Richmond (Surrey) (fig. 27). Sometimes mentioned as a work of Francesco's studio (Berenson lists it with a "p"), but seldom reproduced. Weller[75] claims it is by the same hand as the two *Triumphs* above, which seems utterly impossible to me. In fact the painting is an enigma; from the poor photographs available to me, it appears to have no connection with Francesco, but neither can I connect it with any known artist. It does not look like a forgery, but this possibility cannot be excluded. It is in any case a rather poor painting, and is reproduced here primarily to prevent further confusion with the other versions of the *Triumph* by Francesco and other artists.

[72]Weller, p. 311.

[73]Schubring, *Cassoni,* 1923, no. 462, p. 328.

[74]Coor, *Neroccio de' Landi,* 1961, pp. 27-28, illus. figs. 9-10.

[75]Weller, p. 304.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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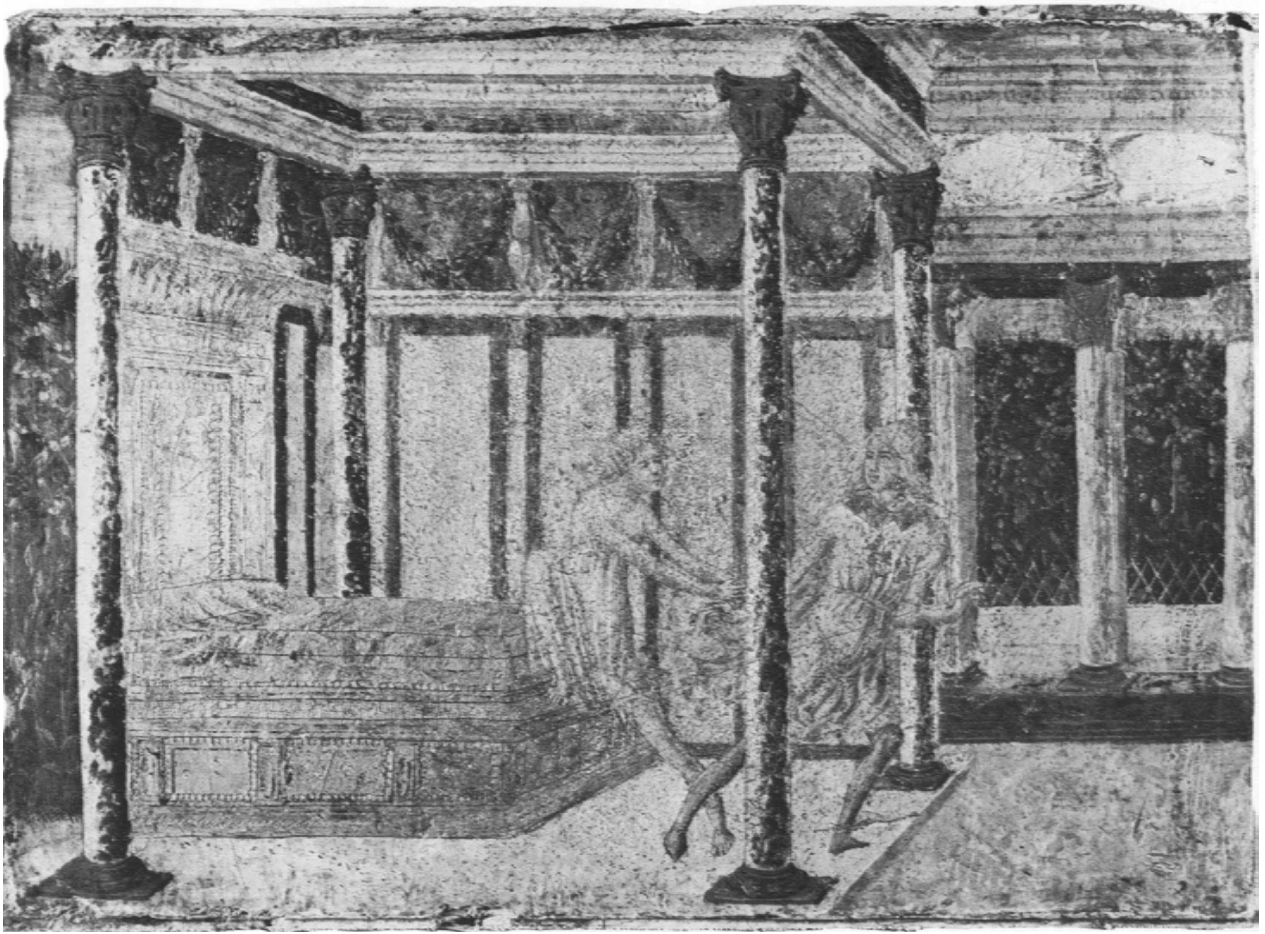
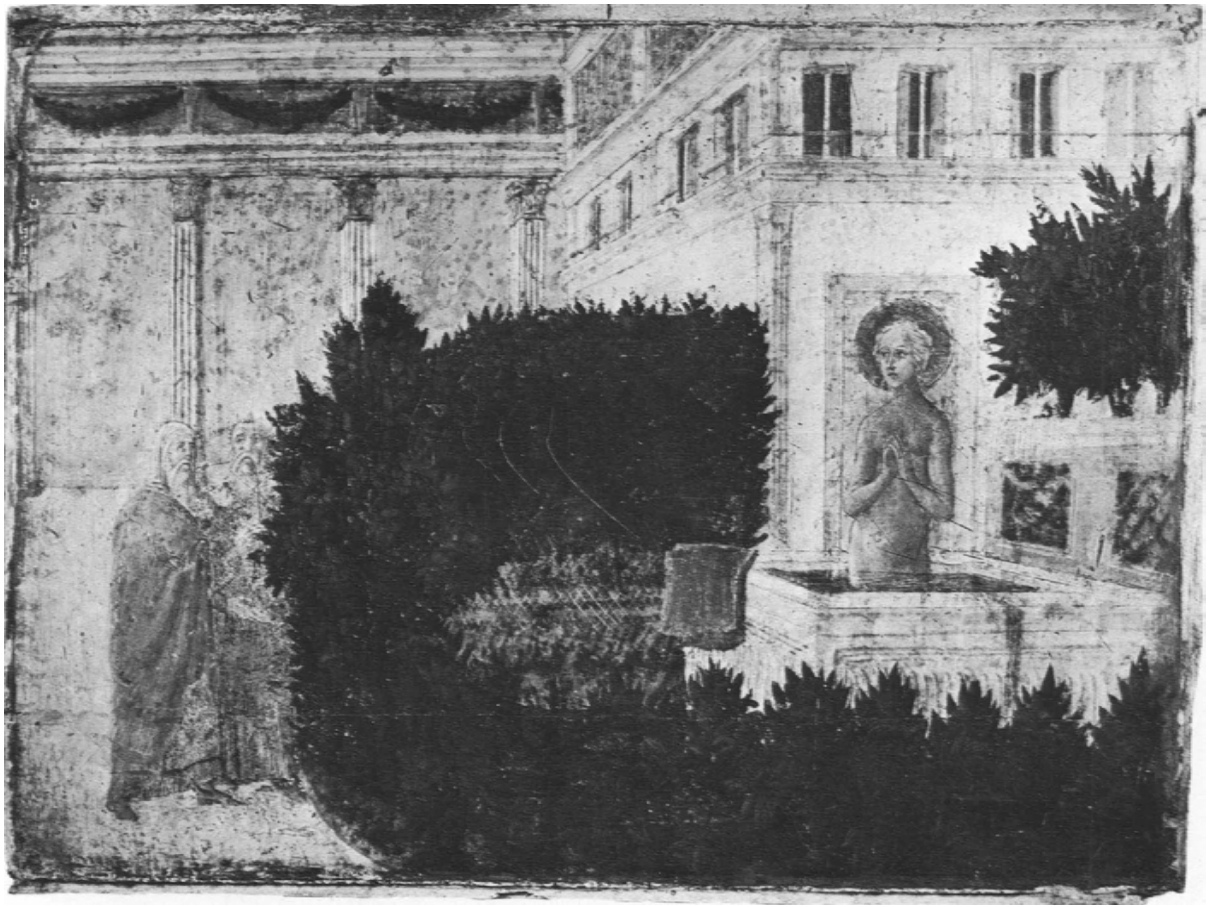
1. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Joseph Sold by his Brethren.* Siena, Pinacoteca.



2. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife.*
Siena, Pinacoteca.



3. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Susanna and the Elders.*
Siena, Pinacoteca.

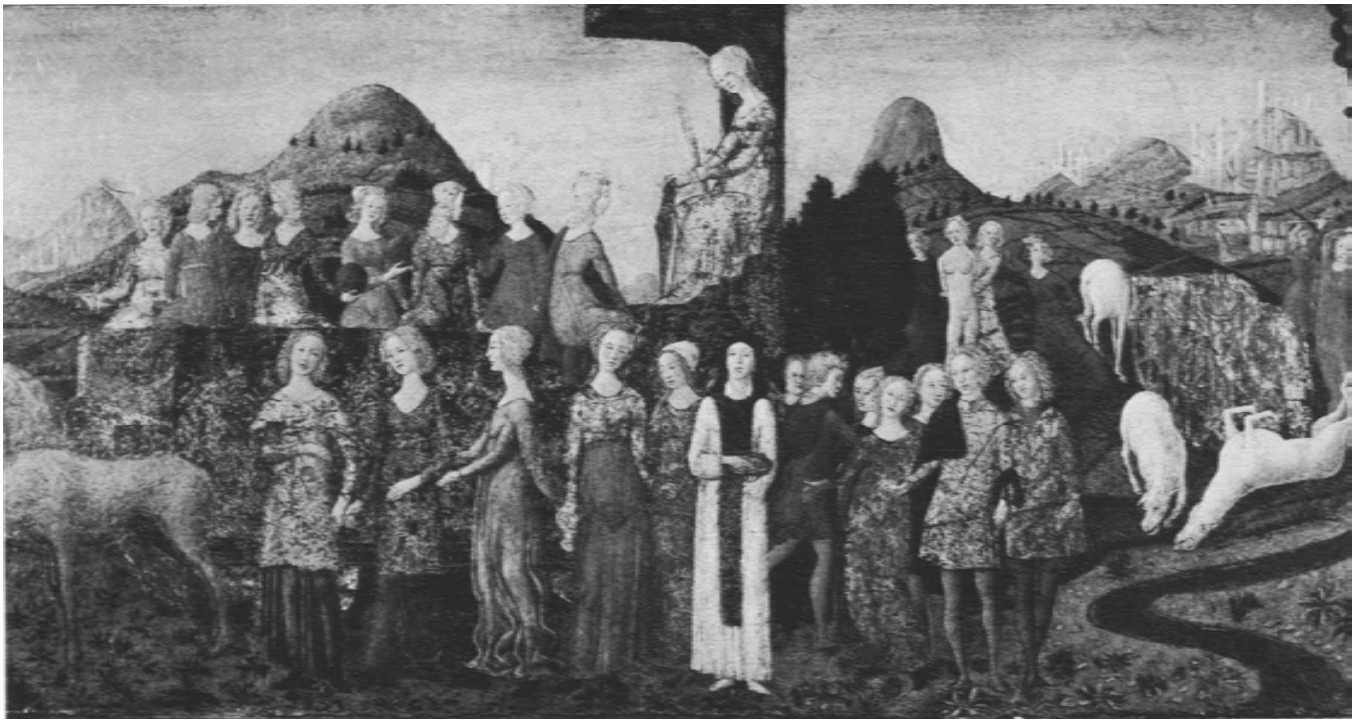
4. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Coriolanus,* detail. Milan, Private Collection.

5. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Coriolanus,* detail. Milan, Private Collection.

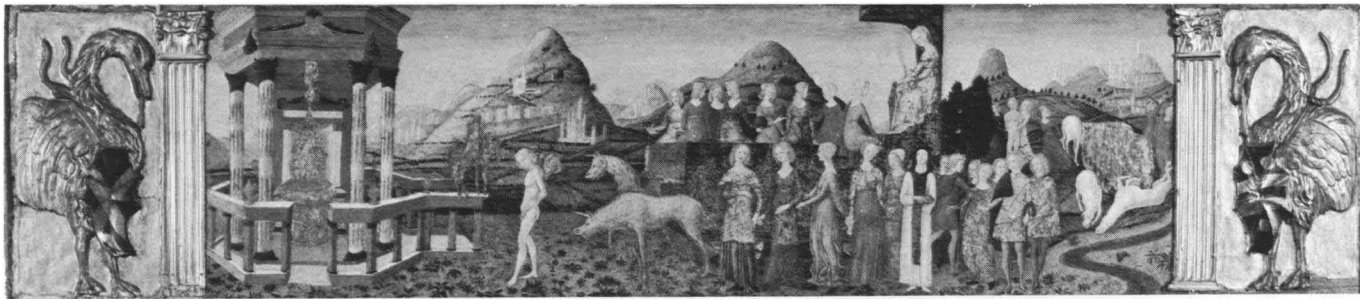
6. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Coriolanus.*
Milan, Private Collection.

7. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Rape of Helen* (?), fragment. Settignano, Berenson Collection.

25. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Meeting of Dido and Aeneas,* detail.
Portland, Portland Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection.

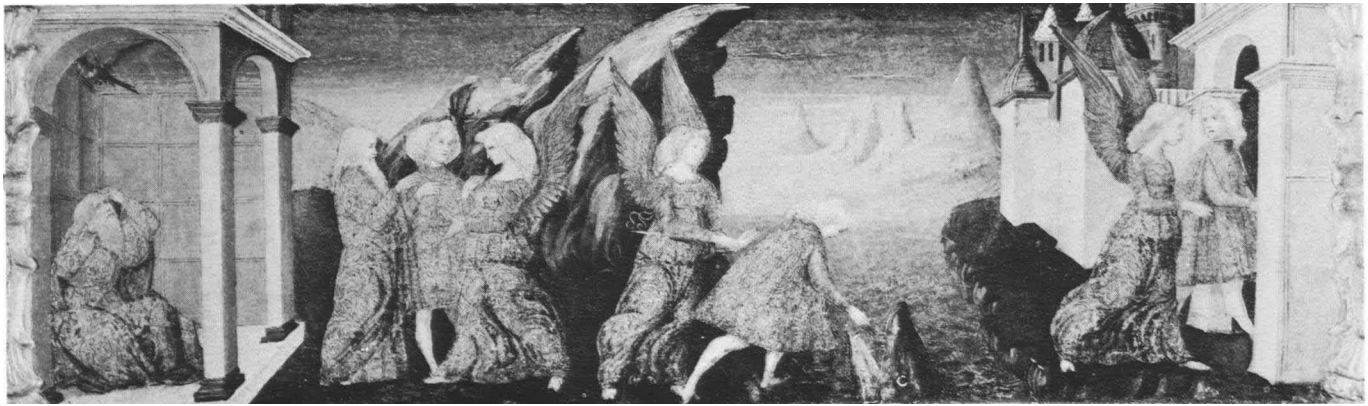


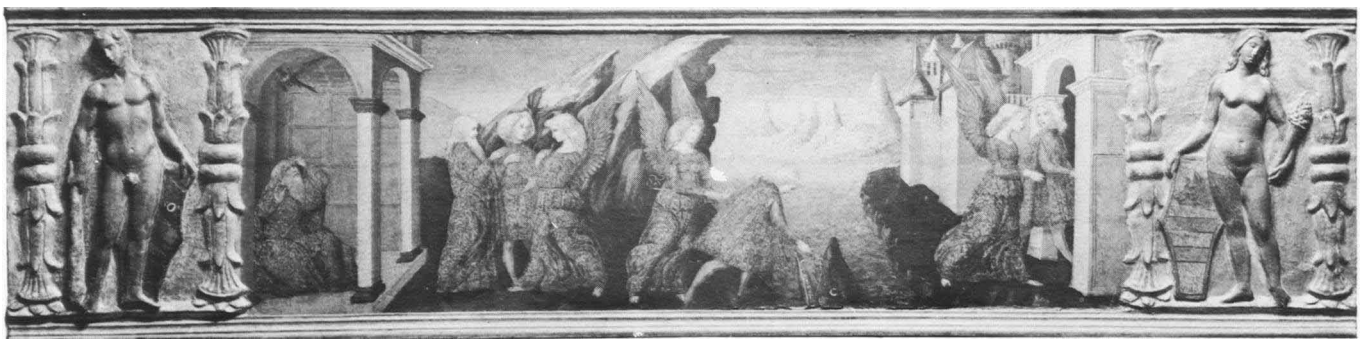
9. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Triumph of Chastity*, detail. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum.



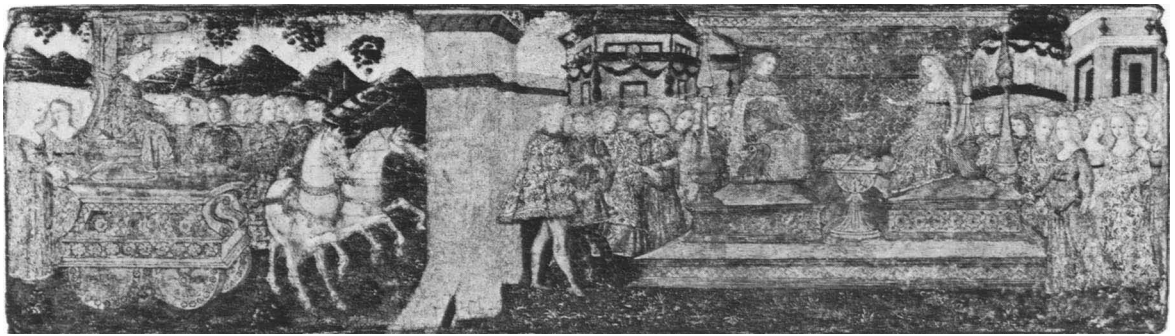
10. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Triumph of Chastity*.
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum.

11. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Death of Virginia*.
London, Wildenstein & Co.

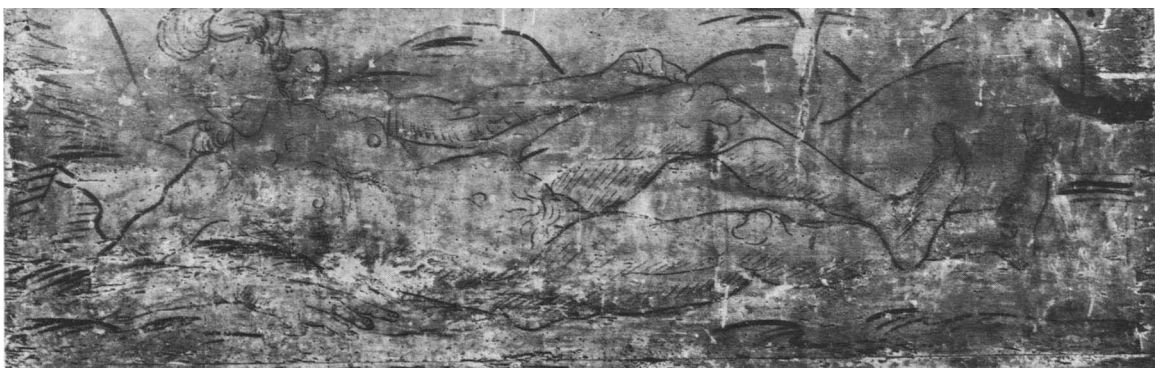




12. / 13. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Tobias.*
Kansas City, William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art,
Atkins Museum of Fine Arts.



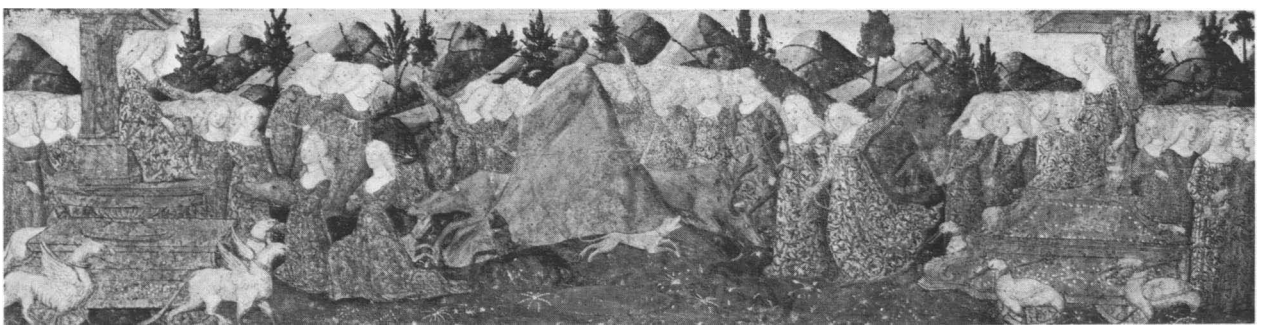
14. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.*
London, Victoria & Albert Museum.



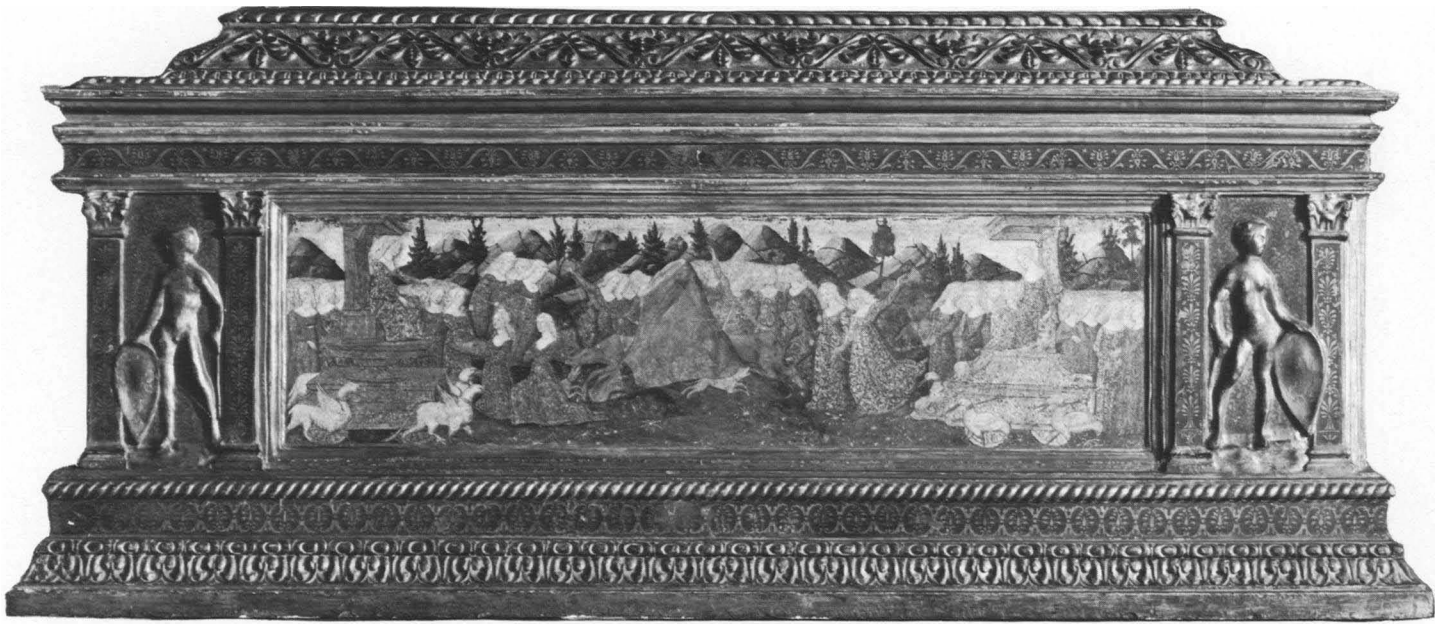
15. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO (?): *Reclining Nude.*
London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

16. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.* London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

17. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Unknown Triumph.*
Florence, Stibbert Museum (no. 12922).

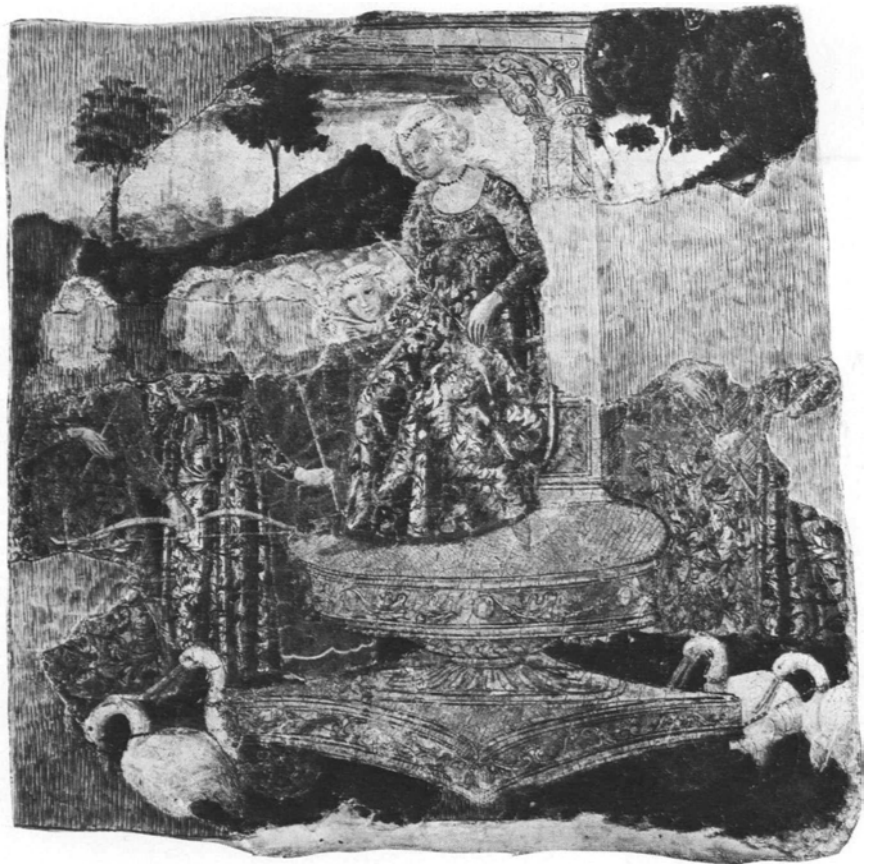


18. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Unknown Triumph.*
Florence, Stibbert Museum (no. 4098).

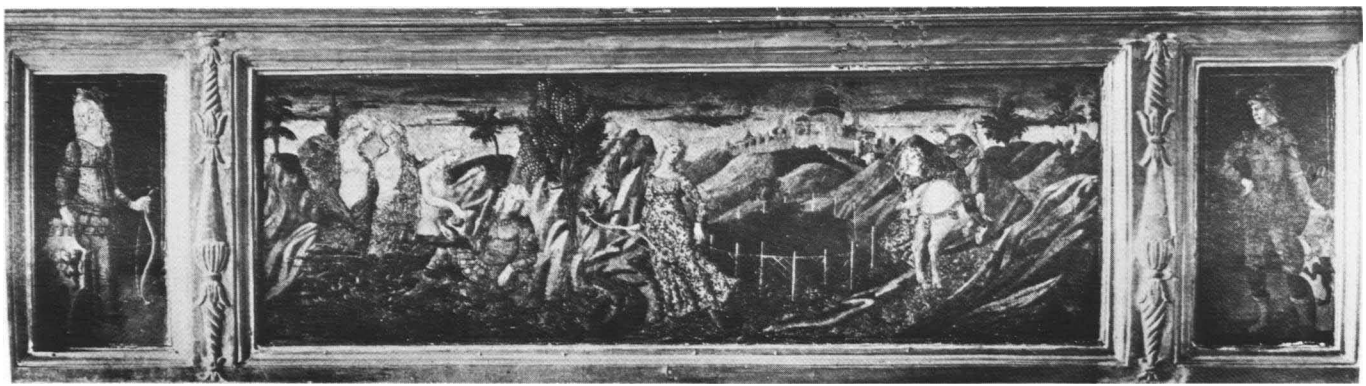


19. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Unknown Triumph*.
Florence, Stibbert Museum (no. 4098).

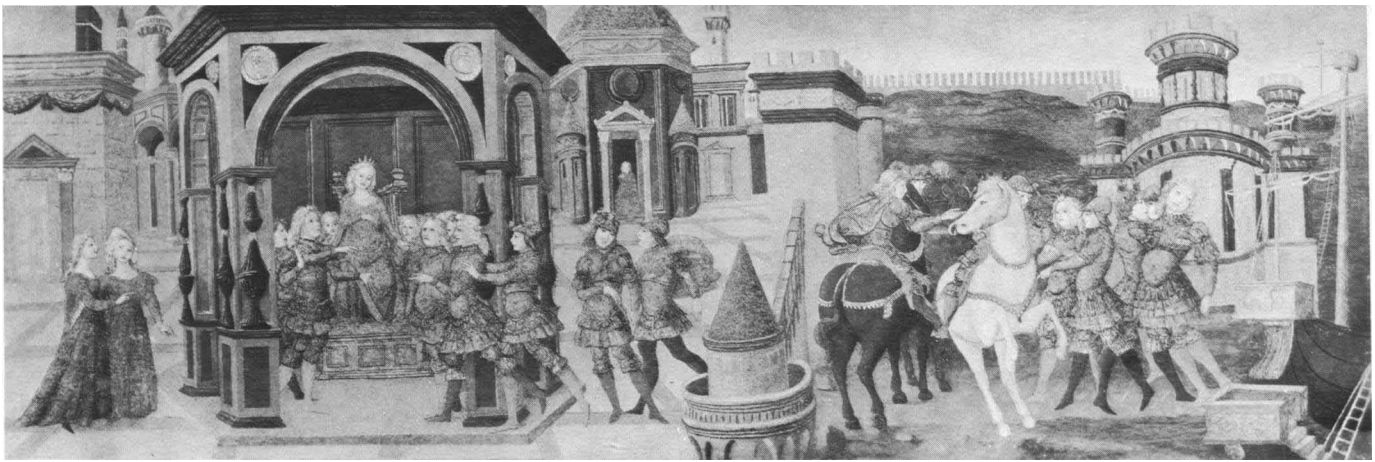
20. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Unknown Triumph,* fragment. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



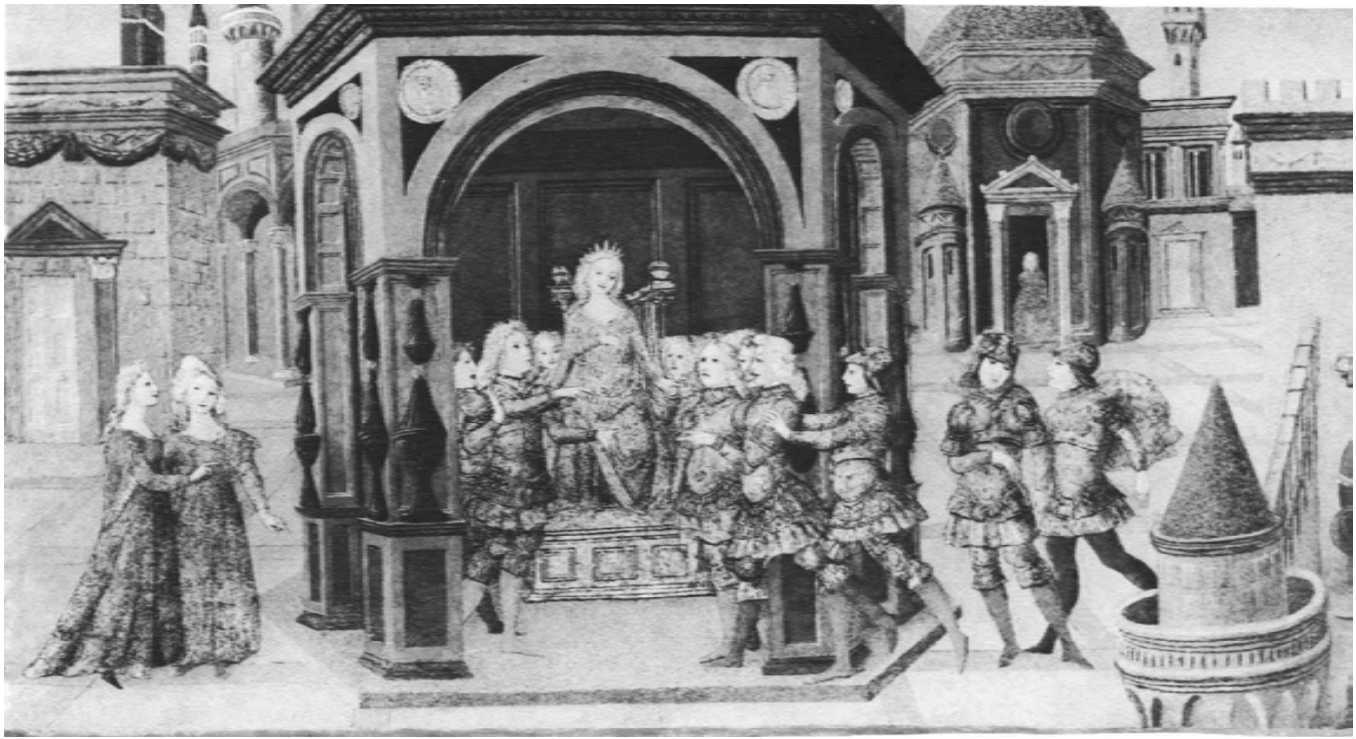
21. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Unknown Triumph,* fragment. Genoa, Tosatti Collection.



22. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Paris.*
Formerly Boston, Wheelwright Collection.



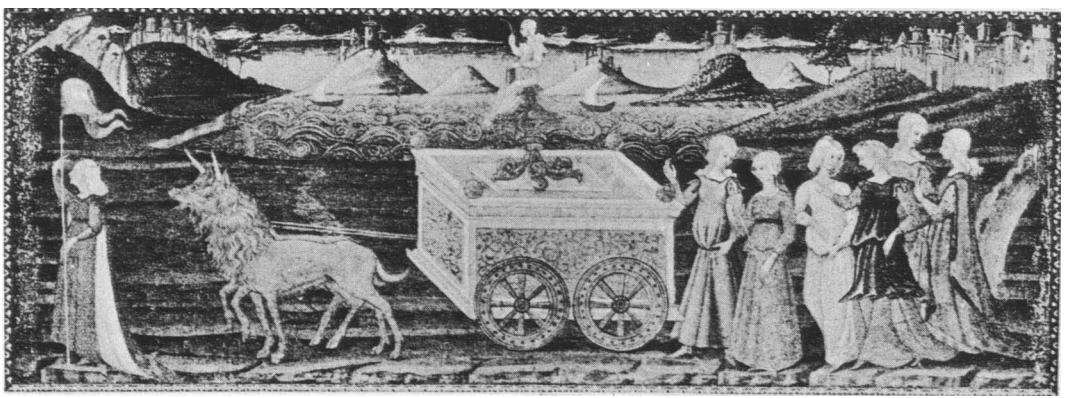
23. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Meeting of Dido and Aeneas.*
Portland, Portland Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection.



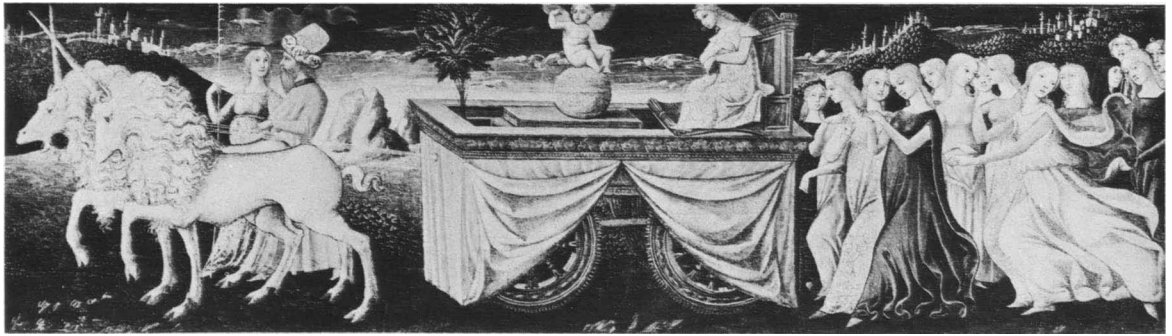
24. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Meeting of Dido and Aeneas,* detail.
Portland, Portland Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection.

25. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Meeting of Dido and Aeneas,* detail.
Portland, Portland Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection.

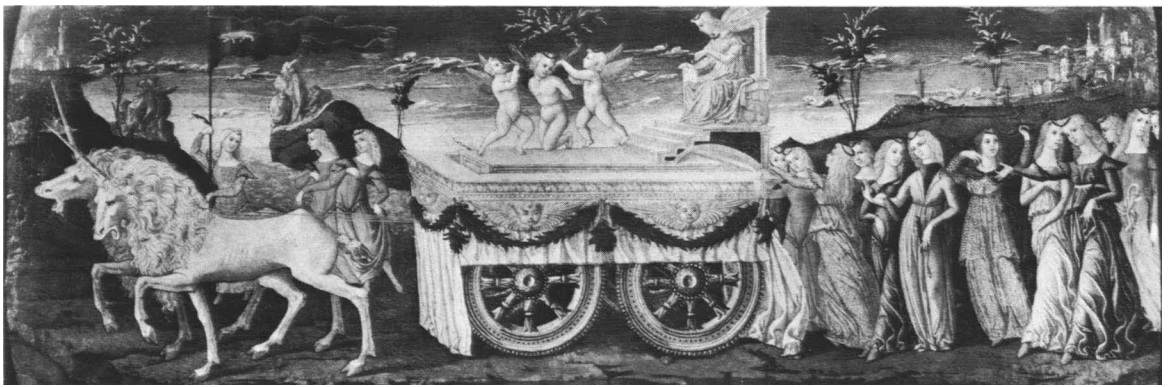
26. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: *Story of Tuccia.*
Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



27. UNKNOWN ARTIST: *Triumph of Chastity.*
Formerly Richmond, Cook Collection.



28. LIBERALE DA VERONA (?): *Triumph of Chastity*.
Formerly New York, Ehrich Galleries.



29. LIBERALE DA VERONA (?): *Triumph of Chastity*.
Lockinge House (Berks.), Wantage Collection.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications of the J. Paul Getty Museum (edited by Burton B. Fredericksen):

1. Howard, Seymour. *The Lansdowne Herakles* (1966) $1.00
2. Fredericksen, Burton; & Davisson, Darrell. *Benvenuto di Giovanni and Girolamo di Benvenuto* (1966) $2.50
3. Bieber, Margarete. *The Statue of Cybele in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (1968) $1.75
4. Fredericksen, Burton. *The Cassone Paintings of Francesco di Giorgio* (1969)

Miscellaneous publications available through the J. Paul Getty Museum:

Jones, Anne Marian. *A Handbook of the Decorative Arts in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (1965) $.50

Stothart, Herbert. *A Handbook of the Sculpture in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (1965) $.50

Fredericksen, Burton. *A Handbook of the Paintings in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (1965) $.50

Getty, J. Paul; & E. LeVane. *Collector's Choice* (1955) $3.50

Getty, J. Paul; & E. LeVane. *Streifzüge eines Kunstsammlers* (1955) German translation of Collector's Choice $2.00

Getty, J. Paul; & E. LeVane. *Vingt mille lieues dans les musées* (1955) French translation of Collector's Choice $2.00