





In the fifteenth century, Tuscany—like most of Central Italy—was dominated by the Republic of Florence. Since the end of the thirteenth century, Florentine merchants had been trading with Northern Europe and with the Orient, and the great Florentine banking houses had branches all over Europe. Along with the rise in Tuscan wealth and power came the flowering in the arts now known as the Italian Renaissance. Painters, sculptors, and architects created masterpieces in a variety of new styles, many of them derived from a new interest in humanism.

Now, more than five hundred years later, The Metropolitan Museum of Art finds itself a great beneficiary of that rich moment in Tuscan history. The Museum owns one of the most important collections of fifteenth-century secular Tuscan painting on view anywhere. The Metropolitan's own holdings of birth trays, cassone panels, and portraits have recently been augmented by long-term loans of several birth trays from The Bryan Collection

of The New-York Historical Society. The objects permanently held by the Museum have recently been cleaned and restored, thereby returning them to as near their original condition as possible.

John Pope-Hennessy, Consultative Chairman of the Department of European Paintings, and Keith Christiansen, Assistant Curator, Department of European Paintings, have written the text for this issue of the *Bulletin*. Their study deals with the principal fifteenth-century Tuscan secular paintings currently housed in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, with the exception of those pieces forming part of The Robert Lehman Collection.

It is with great pride that the Metropolitan offers this beautifully produced publication of scholarly importance. The text was edited by John P. O'Neill, General Manager of Publications and Editor in Chief, and the production was supervised by Joan Holt, Editor in Chief of the *Bulletin*.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

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On the cover: Portrait of a Man and a Woman at a Casement, painted by Fra Filippo Lippi in the early 1440s (see also figure 50 and back cover). Opposite: Detail from a cassone panel of the Story of Esther (18), painted in a Florentine workshop about 1460-70. The church depicted is probably Santissima Annunziata, rebuilt in the fifteenth century according to the design of Michelozzo and the overall guidance of Alberti.



Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany:

Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY and KEITH CHRISTIANSEN

Opposite: *This Egyptian soldier, from the Museum's panel of the Story of Joseph (34), is portrayed wearing parade armor all'antica. Although no armor of this type from the fifteenth century has survived, it is frequently depicted in paintings and busts and thus reflects actual prototypes.*

Introduction

Most of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Tuscan pictures exhibited in The Metropolitan Museum of Art are religious paintings. Some of them are altarpieces or parts of altarpieces, such as pinnacles, pilasters, and predella panels, and some are domestic paintings designed for private devotional use. But in the Early Renaissance this was not the only purpose paintings served. The walls of palaces were decorated in fresco, and their rooms were filled with painted furniture. Comparatively few of these secular frescoes have been preserved. Taste in the fifteenth century changed rapidly (almost as rapidly as it does today), and when the decoration of a room appeared old-fashioned, it was commonly superseded by a decorative scheme that looked more up-to-date.

In Florence and in its neighborhood Gothic secular frescoes can never have proliferated as they did at the courts of Northern Italy, but a few examples survive to show the type of decoration that was employed. In the Palazzo Davanzati in Florence, for example, one of the large reception rooms is decorated with fictive wall hangings painted as though suspended from hooks in the molding above them, and at the top is a frieze divided by little colonnettes with vases of flowers between which runs a landscape with carefully rendered shrubs and trees. In the 1390s, when Francesco Datini built his palace at Prato, the principal room (characteristically, it was an office for the transaction of business, not a place of entertainment) was again decorated with landscape frescoes, but the ratio between ornament and representation underwent a change. Decoration (geometrical decoration on this occasion, not a fictive textile) is confined to the base of the walls, and the area of landscape is deepened so that an entire wood is portrayed, with trees receding into the far distance, filled with birds and animals. Datini had lived at Avignon, where he must have seen French fourteenth-century secular frescoes, and the decoration of his office may have been French in inspiration, like the later, much more complex frescoes planned by Leonardo da Vinci for the Sala delle Asse of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. A notoriously

successful entrepreneur—he dealt in cloth and many other commodities—Datini was able, when transacting business in his office, to pursue imaginary journeys through the forest on his walls.

The society to which he and most of the prosperous patrons of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries belonged was pragmatic and commercial. Whether they were bankers or merchants, its members were concerned with making money, and with bettering the worldly position of their families. The symbol of their aspiration was the palace, which served, as Leon Battista Alberti tells us, as the physical embodiment of the historic unit of the family. This point must be borne constantly in mind in examining its decorations and its furnishings. The frescoes in the Palazzo Datini and the Palazzo Davanzati have in common an obsessive insistence upon heraldry. On the ceiling of the office in the Palazzo Datini there appear, twice repeated, the arms of Francesco Datini and of his wife, who had been born Bandini, and the fictive textile design in the Palazzo Davanzati similarly has a border decorated with little coats of arms. In this ambitious, rather austere society marriage and childbirth were of the utmost consequence. Marriage could be celebrated by ostentatious expenditure, like that involved in the carving of a chimneypiece by Desiderio da Settignano when Giovanni Boni married Camilla Marsuppini in 1463, or less extravagantly by the purchase of a chest or chests with the heraldic bearings of the bridal pair. Not all cassoni were made for marriages (though the word is now generally translated “marriage chest”), and some of them must have been commissioned for no better reason than that a chest or a container was required. For Giorgio Vasari, writing in the middle of the sixteenth century, the custom seemed an odd, old-fashioned one. “At that time,” he tells us in his life of the painter Dello Delli, “large wooden chests like tombs were in use in people’s chambers with the lids variously decorated. Everyone had these chests painted. The front and ends were decorated with various narrative subjects, and the corners and other parts were enriched with the arms or insignia of the house.” Not only chests, Vasari goes on, but beds and cupboards and moldings were decorated in this way. In his time a number of such works by artists “non mica plebei” (“of no

mean talent”) were preserved in the Palazzo Medici, and there were indeed other Florentine palaces in which the owners had likewise preserved them, and had refrained from replacing them with “*ornamenti e usanze moderne*.”

Childbirth was celebrated by the commissioning of painted trays, generally with a narrative scene on the front and the coats of arms of the parents on the back. Initially, they appear to have been used for the ritual presentation of sweetmeats and other offerings to the mother during the period of lying-in, but they were then preserved (like modern christening cups) by the child for whom they had been made. When Lorenzo il Magnifico died in 1492, one of the objects recorded in his apartments in the Palazzo Medici was his *desco da parto* or birth tray.

In the fifteenth century in Florence the urge toward commemoration was extremely strong; inevitably, it affected not only marriage and childbirth but death too. It was morally incumbent on the heads of families to maintain a family tree, and when portraits were made of members of the family, the impulse likewise was commemorative. To our eyes the profile portraits produced in the middle of the fifteenth century look very little lifelike; but they were not conceived as modern snapshots. Some of them are systematic reconstructions of their subjects’ features, painted posthumously, and some of them are life portraits made for the information of later generations, who would otherwise recall the sitter as a mere name in the *ricordi* of the family.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an exceptionally fine collection of birth trays, cassoni and cassone fronts, and portraits. What do they tell us of prosperous life and privileged taste in the Italy of the fifteenth century?

Opposite: In this detail of a Sienese cassone by Guidoccio Cozzarelli, Cloelia enters a Roman city gate, after having escaped from the Etruscan king who held her hostage (see figures 40, 41).



Birth Trays

Three birth trays, or *deschi da parto*, are now on exhibit, one from the Museum's permanent collection and two on loan from the New-York Historical Society. The earliest, which was bought for the Metropolitan in 1926, has been sawn through the middle to make two separate paintings (1,2). The two parts look well enough in this form, but there can be no doubt that they were back to back, since their shape and their dimensions exactly correspond and since each represents a separate episode in one rather obscure narrative. Like all the earliest birth trays, this one is twelve-sided. The use of a dodecagonal format appears for the first time in a birth tray, now at Douai, made in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, and continued at least till the third quarter of the fifteenth century, when circular birth trays had become the rule. The earliest circular birth tray, now in Berlin, ascribed to Masaccio, dates from the late 1420s, and it seems likely that the change in shape was determined by the interest of progressive artists in the potential of the tondo form, not by any change in the use or function of the trays themselves.

Though the style of the earliest twelve-sided trays is now described as courtly, it would be wrong to infer from this (as some scholars have done) that the milieu that produced them was anything but middle-class. Aristocratic their figurative idiom may originally have been, but like fashions in costume it descended to a lower social level than that on which it was conceived. The Douai tray shows the Garden of Love, with a fountain in the center and nine richly dressed figures, accompanied by a dwarf, disposed round it in groups of three. This subject seems to have been popular; it is repeated, with twelve figures not nine, on a birth tray formerly in the Figdor Collection, Vienna. The source of the imagery of the tray in the Museum has been identified as Giovanni Boccaccio's *Comedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine*, which was better known seventy years after it was written—when the birth tray was made—than it is today. One scene, on the upper face of the tray, shows Ameto, a native hunter who dwelt near the point of juncture of the Mugnone and Arno rivers, encountering a group of nymphs engaged in hunting (1). On the right Ameto appears twice, spying the nymphs over a hilltop and walking toward them, and in the center the nymphs are seen disporting themselves.

The back of the tray shows Ameto seated with two of the nymphs listening to two shepherds, one of whom praises a life of leisure and the other a life of industry (2). The tray therefore has a moral as well as a narrative significance. On the back are two coats of arms superimposed over the landscape. One, on the right, indicates that the mother was a member of a Pisan family, Di Lupo Parra; the other, the father's, is unidentified. The *stemmi* appear to have been added to a tray that had been painted in advance and was available for purchase. This may have been a regular practice, since we know that the painter Neri di Bicci in 1461 presented a tailor, Domenico da Pietrasanta, with a *desco* "dipinto a mia spesa" ("painted at my own expense")—and therefore presumably painted for stock, and not made for the occasion.

The Ameto birth tray has been assigned to the workshop of one of the Late Gothic painters active in Florence in the first two decades of the fifteenth century, Lorenzo di Niccolò, and seems, from the formula employed for the figures in full-face, to have been executed by one of his associates, who is known as the Master of 1416. An attractive, somewhat naïve work, it enables us to reconstruct the way in which people at the beginning of the fifteenth century read Boccaccio, and to visualize the images passing through their heads as they turned the pages of the text.

The second birth tray, on loan from the New-York Historical Society, shows the scene immediately following a birth (4). In the center is the mother, lying in a colossal bed, attended by three maids, and in front, seated on the ground, are a nurse holding the swaddled child, an older woman, and a girl playing a harp. To the right, in an arched doorway, kneels a male figure, presumably the father, and in a corresponding position on the left are two elderly women, one of whom may be the grandmother of the newborn child. Behind them, in a little corridor at the left, are five young men bearing trays covered with sweetmeats and other gifts. The *stemmi*, of the husband on the left and the wife on the right, are so damaged as to be illegible, or perhaps were never painted in. But luckily there is an inscription, which tells us that the tray was made in April 1428. It reads: "*Questo si fe a Di XXV daprile nel Mille Quattrocento ventotto.*" It has been claimed, with a high degree of



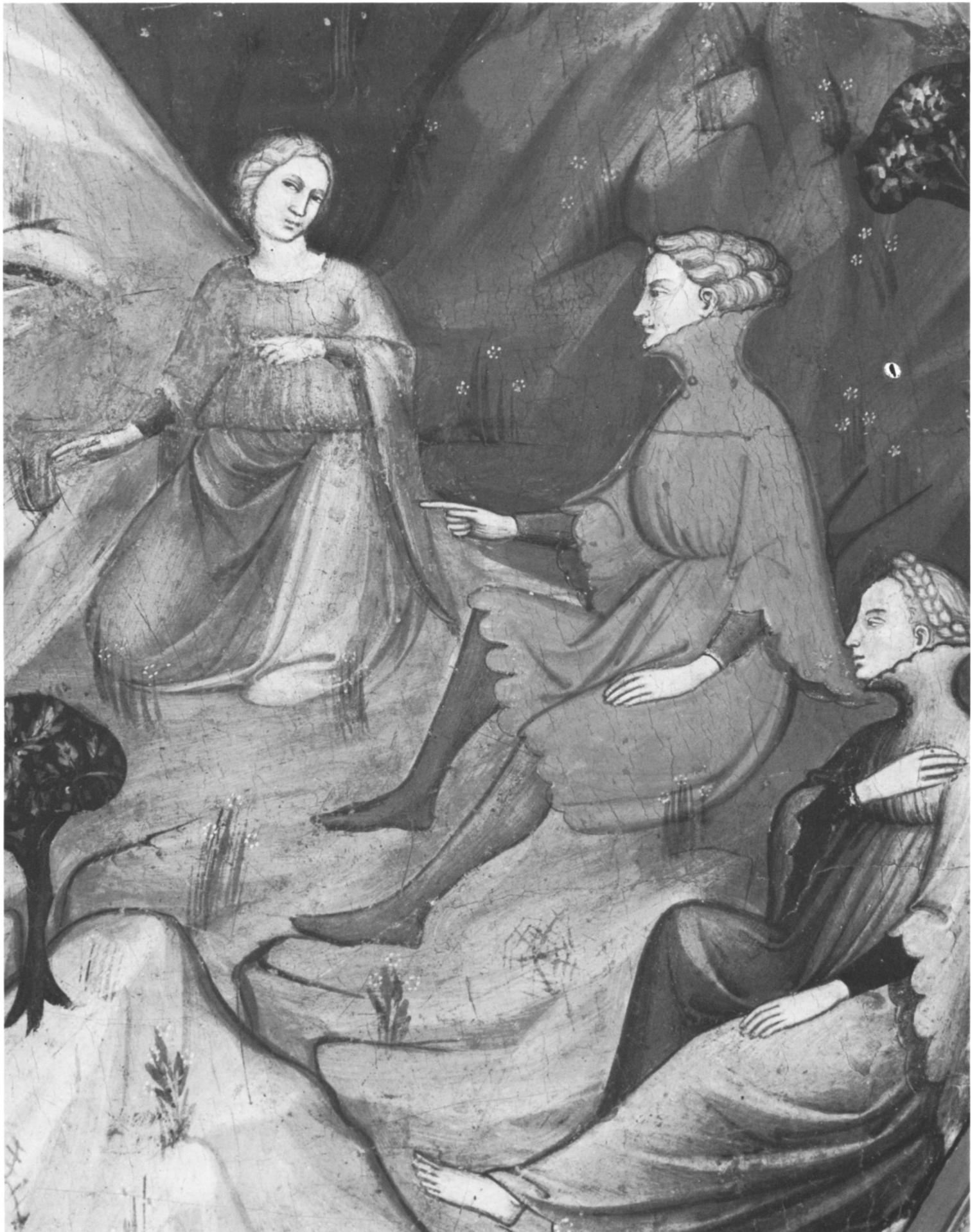
1, 2. This birth tray is apparently the only extant illustration to Giovanni Boccaccio's *Comedia delle Ninfe* Fiorentine, an amatory allegory written about 1342 that recounts how the hunter Ameto is educated in love by nymphs. The obverse shows Ameto's discovery of the nymphs: "Some, displaying their white feet in the shallow ripples [of the little stream], were slowly wading through them this way and that; others, who had laid down their sylvan bows and arrows, held their hot faces suspended above the stream, and having tucked up their sleeves were renewing their beauty with their fair hands and cool waters; and some, having loosened their clothing to let in the breezes, were sitting attentive to what one of them, more joyous than the others, sat singing." In the background Ameto and the nymphs hunt together.

On the reverse (below) Ameto and two nymphs judge a musical competition between the shepherds Alcesto and Acaten, one of whom praises a life of leisure and the other a life of industry. In Boccaccio's story this is the prelude to Ameto's final transformation from a rustic into a rational man and his realization that the nymphs are, in fact, the virtues.

The right-hand coat of arms is that of the Di Lupo Parra family of Pisa; the other is unidentified. The birth tray was painted about 1410 by an associate of Lorenzo di Niccolò, who is known as the Master of 1416.

Tempera on wood, w. 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches.
Rogers Fund, 26.287. 1-2.





probability, that the painter is a miniaturist, Bartolomeo di Fruosino, who was born in Florence in 1366 and died there in 1441. A number of *deschi* with birth scenes are known. In the earliest of them, dating from the 1420s, the event takes place, as it does here, in a setting composed of rickety Late Gothic architecture. But the genre gave rise to one great work, the circular *desco* in Berlin, where the architecture is rationalized and the figures are depicted realistically. If the Berlin *desco* is, as has frequently been claimed, by Masaccio, it must date from 1427, but if, as is more likely, it is an early work by Domenico Veneziano, it must be five or six years later than the *desco* in the Metropolitan Museum.

On the back of the Berlin *Nativity* scene is a naked male child playing with an animal, which is sometimes identified as a dog. This animal is repeated on the reverse of another *desco*, this time of The Judgment of Paris, and seems to have had some specific significance. The back of another *desco*, painted in the 1430s, shows a rampageous male child, naked save for a cloak billowing out behind him, blowing a pipe and beating a drum. The reverse of the present *desco* is still more interesting (5). It is inscribed: "FACCIA IDDIO SANA OGNI DONNA CHFFIGLIA EPADRI LORO... RO... ERNATO SIA SANZA NOIA ORICHDIA • ISONO • VNBANBOLIN • CHESUL [ROCCIA?] DIMORO • FO • LAPISCIA • DARIENT [O] • EDORO" ("May God grant health to every woman who gives birth and to their father... may [the child] be born without fatigue or peril. I am an infant who lives on a [rock ?] and I make urine of silver and gold.") The reference to silver and gold urine is to future prosperity, and slight traces of the gold and silver urine produced by the child are still visible on the surface of the panel.

The third birth tray, which is also on loan from the New-York Historical Society, is by far the most distinguished surviving painting of its type (6). It is luxurious and opulent, as we might expect, because it was commissioned in 1449 by one of the principal citizens of Florence, Piero de' Medici, to commemorate the birth of his son, the future Lorenzo il Magnifico. Piero de' Medici was a patron of marked idiosyncrasy; he liked the works that he commissioned not only to be costly but also to look rich and to display as much gilding as possible; furthermore, he

liked them to be personalized with his own impresas (hence the feathers in the border of the *desco* and the elaborate design with the Medici and Tornabuoni arms behind, which is not illustrated here). He often intervened in the details of their design, and there is every reason to suppose that he did so here.

The subject of the obverse is the Triumph of Fame. The Renaissance interest in triumphs goes back to Petrarch's *I Trionfi*, and the Triumph of Fame seems first to have been used to illustrate manuscripts of Petrarch's *De Viris Illustribus*. But the main influence on the iconography of the scene was not Petrarch but Boccaccio, who in his *L'Amorosa Visione* describes the winged figure of Fame on her chariot, holding a sword and surrounded by knights who ride toward her with arms raised. In some early illuminations of the Triumph of Fame the central figure also holds in her left hand a little figure of Cupid with a bow. This is the pattern employed on the *desco*, where the figure of Fame appears at the top, with her wings touching the edge of the circle and her arms extended vertically, displaying on one side her sword and on the other a figure of Amor. She stands on a globe with circular apertures from which protrude the trumpets by which fame is bruited abroad, and the globe in turn rests on a circular support, a rationalized version of the circle by which Fame is surrounded in earlier illuminations. At the bottom of the structure, in the center and to the right, are the two captives, Spendius and Mathos, who traditionally appear in versions of the scene, and in front and at the sides are armed warriors with their right arms raised, touching the base of the structure on which Fame rests. The scene differs from earlier representations in that there is no chariot. What is depicted is an apotheosis rather than a triumph.

This work has a long critical history. Its historical identity was first established by A. Warburg (see Bibliography), and its authorship by R. Longhi (see Bibliography) who discarded earlier attributions to Piero della Francesca and Domenico Veneziano and recognized that it was painted by the minor artist who also executed the well-known Adimari marriage cassone in Florence and an altarpiece at Fucecchio (near Empoli) and who is now known as the Fucecchio Master. In the fifteenth century, however, works were not necessarily painted by the artist by whom they

were designed, and the pictorial structure of the *desco* seems to be such as to preclude the possibility that it originated in the mind of this not very distinguished painter. Its closest affinities are with a famous circular panel of the *Adoration of the Magi* by Domenico Veneziano in Berlin, which may also have been in Medici ownership. The design of both paintings, with a neutral area in the foreground, a horizontal strip of figures whose heads rest on a line drawn through the center of the circle, and a carefully constructed perspective landscape at the back, is very similar, and the probability is that we here are dealing with a work planned by Domenico Veneziano but carried out by a second hand.

3. *Ameto*, shown here with two nymphs in a detail from the reverse of the birth tray (2), wears one of the most typical articles of clothing of the early fifteenth century, an outer garment known in North Italy as an *oppelanda* or *pellanda* and in Tuscany as a *cioppa*. Opening at the front, it had large elaborately finished sleeves, the length of which was frequently restricted by sumptuary laws, and, sometimes, a high collar framing the face. Women wore these garments over simple gowns, belted just below the bosom, and men wore them short or long, depending upon the occasion. It is this upper-middle-class garment that distinguishes *Ameto* from the shepherds *Alcesto* and *Acaten*.

4, 5. Painted, according to the inscription at the base, in 1428, this is the earliest dated birth tray known. It was probably painted by the Florentine miniaturist Bartolomeo di Fruosino (1366–1441), and shows on the obverse a birth scene. The child has just been bathed and swaddled while maids bring a meal to the new mother. A well-wisher and her retinue have just arrived outside the Late Gothic edifice.

The reverse of the birth tray displays a naked child who holds a pinwheel in his right hand and has a hobbyhorse under his left leg. He wears a coral amulet and urinates gold and silver. The latter feature augurs good fortune. Around the perimeter is an inscription in Italian, which reads: "May God grant health to every woman who gives birth and to their father. . . may [the child] be born without fatigue or peril. I am an infant who lives on a [rock?] and I make urine of silver and gold."

Tempera on wood, w. 28 inches.

Lent by the New-York Historical Society, The Bryan Collection

6. Among the objects listed in an inventory of the contents of the Palazzo Medici in Florence, drawn up in 1492, is "a circular birth tray painted with a triumph of fame, in the room off the grand hall known as Lorenzo's." This description certainly refers to the present painting, which on the reverse displays Piero de' Medici's personal device of three feathers, a diamond ring, and the motto SEMPER (forever), along with the arms of the Medici and the Tornabuoni families, and on the obverse shows the Triumph of Fame with Piero's tricolored feathers ornamenting the gilt molding. Such allegorical triumphs were among Piero de' Medici's preferred subjects—in 1441 he commissioned a series of triumphs from Matteo de' Pasti, and three years later he seems to have commissioned from Pesellino a pair of cassoni showing six triumphs to celebrate his marriage to Lucrezia Tornabuoni. The birth tray commemorates the birth of his first son Lorenzo, later known as Lorenzo il Magnifico, in 1449. The depiction follows Boccaccio's description in *L'Amorosa Visione* of 1342. It was painted by the Master of the Adimari Cassone, also known as the Fucecchio Master, but its design seems to be due to Domenico Veneziano.

Tempera and gold on wood, w. 36 inches. Lent by the New-York Historical Society, The Bryan Collection





Cassone Panels

One of the most important pieces of furniture in the fifteenth century was a large chest, or cassone, in which the most valued possessions of a family could be kept (7). These chests were lined, according to Vasari, with linen or other material, according to the rank and status of those who ordered them, the better to preserve the clothes and other “*cose preziose*” that they contained. Initially, they had something of the character of strongboxes, which also doubled as benches, but a few examples from the fourteenth century testify to a natural desire to make cassoni more attractive if no less functional. In the fifteenth century whole workshops were given over to the manufacture and decoration of cassoni. One of the largest of these workshops was headed by Apollonio di Giovanni and Marco del Buono, whose account book between the years 1446 and 1462 reads like a social register of Florence. The shop must have been a highly efficient organization, for in the year 1452 alone twenty-three pairs of cassoni were turned out. The production of each of these involved the services of a carpenter and a gilder as well as of a painter, and the output of the shop would be incredible were it not for the fact that the constituent parts were, to a large extent, standardized. A high proportion of the cassone fronts that have survived seem to have been produced by or in association with this workshop.

More often than not, the subjects depicted on cassone fronts are classical; many of them derive from Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Livy, and Plutarch. For this reason they are often regarded as a humanist phenomenon, but their cultural significance is in fact less clear-cut than this description suggests. Ancient history and mythology had provided subjects for much late medieval literature, and by the middle of the fifteenth century quite a substantial component of classical reference ran through ordinary life. If a daughter were called Cassandra, this did not necessarily imply that her parents read Latin or Greek, and when a cassone panel from Apollonio di Giovanni's workshop represents a classical theme, it was not necessarily humanist-inspired. Maso Finiguerra, wishing to illustrate the Rape of Helen, engraved two contemporary figures standing in a little temple, a richly dressed youth leading by the hand a richly dressed girl. The single indication

of the subject is an inscription beneath: *ELENA RAPITA DA PARIS*. Most cassone panels (and almost all those from the shop of Apollonio di Giovanni) were conceived in this same fashion, as strip cartoons in which scenes from classical history and mythology are reenacted by figures in contemporary dress. Even an artist as sensitive as Pesellino felt no obligation to separate the present from the past, and only after about 1470 did the painters of cassone panels recognize an obligation to develop a method of depiction that was authentically humanist. The purpose of cassone panels was to give pleasure, and perhaps in a casual sense to educate. We must imagine the children of the marriages for which the chests had been commissioned spelling their way through the paintings, which were at ground level, in much the same way that children read comics today, and learning from them the encapsulated story of Dido and Aeneas or the Fall of Troy.

For this reason, particular importance attaches to one cassone panel in the Metropolitan Museum that faithfully reflects the aspirations of the early humanists. The coats of arms are those of the Ginazzi and Boni families of Florence, and it is decorated with three circular paintings of the Labors of Hercules (8–10). Hercules enjoyed especial esteem in Florence. By 1281 his image adorned the seal of the city, “to signify,” writes Gregorio Dati, “that Hercules, who was a giant, overcame all tyrants and evil lords as the Florentines have done.” When between 1391 and 1405, two of the exploits portrayed on this cassone—Hercules and Antaeus and Hercules and the Nemean Lion—were sculpted on the north portal of the Cathedral, known as the Porta della Mandorla, it was to extol the classical hero as an example of virtue. This must also be the intention on the cassone front, where allegorical figures of Fortitude and Temperance flank the three scenes. More important still, the three roundels reveal a study of Hercules representations in antiquity. The depiction of Hercules and the Nemean Lion seems to derive from ancient sarcophagi and coins showing Hercules and the Hind of Ceryneia, and a related depiction of Hercules and the Centaurs is known from a sarcophagus in the Villa Borghese in Rome. As we might expect, the three paintings are markedly progressive in style. The lighting and modeling of the figures remind one of the grisaille Genesis

7 (opposite). *This cassone was made in the shop of Apollonio di Giovanni in Florence during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. The shape of the chest is freely derived from classical sarcophagi, and the inside of the lid and the back are painted with brightly colored floral patterns in imitation of actual textiles. The panels depict the conquest of Trebizond by Sultan Muhammad II in 1461 (see figures 11, 12).*

Fruitwood, polychromed and gilded, length 6 feet 5 inches. John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 14.39.

frescoes by Paolo Uccello in the Chiostrò Verde of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, which must date from soon after 1430, and the barren landscape and carefully spaced trees recall Uccello's early work as well.

Like so many paintings of the 1430s, Uccello's frescoes are indebted to Lorenzo Ghiberti's relief style for many of their compositional ideas. It is therefore not surprising that perhaps the closest parallel for the relation of figure to setting and the depiction of violent action in the cassone roundels is to be found in the side reliefs of Ghiberti's Shrine of Saint Zenobius, which were modeled between 1432 and 1434. Some of the most attractive features of this cassone front are the winged putti in relief conceived in a variety of athletic poses. Vasari relates that as a youth even Donatello modeled figures in gesso for the fronts of cassoni, and it seems indisputable that the conception of these small putti derives from a major artist, though the most probable candidate would again seem to be Ghiberti.

One of the very few complete chests from the shop of Apollonio di Giovanni that survive was purchased by the Museum in 1913 from the Florentine collector and art dealer Stefano Bardini (7). It is said to have come from the Palazzo Strozzi, and the falcon with open wings that appears on either end was indeed a Strozzi heraldic device. The form of this cassone, which was

produced in the third quarter of the century, is a free interpretation of a classical sarcophagus, with a large rectangular central field framed at either end by two volutes with acanthus leaves and at top and bottom with elaborate classical moldings. By contrast the feigned piece of cut velvet modeled in gesso that drapes over the uppermost element of the lid is a piece of pure fifteenth-century *trompe l'oeil*.

This cassone is exceptional in that it seems to depict a contemporary event, the conquest of Trebizond by Sultan Muhammad II in 1461 (11). But, although the walled city on the right in front of which the battle takes place is labeled *TREBIZOND*, a very faint but legible inscription next to the conqueror on his triumphal cart at the extreme right reads *TANBVRLANA*. The opposing armies, one distinguished by conical hats, the other by turbans and curling bows, ought therefore to be those of Bajazet I and Tamerlane in the battle near Angora in 1402. Why either of these battles should have been portrayed on a piece of furniture intended to decorate a Florentine palace is puzzling, but a clue is provided by the depiction of Constantinople in the upper left (12). Unlike the schematic view of Trebizond, which derives from an illustration of Troy in Apollonio's *Virgil Codex* in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, Constantinople is shown much as it appears in early fifteenth-century maps. An effort has been made not only to depict the city's most famous

monuments but also to situate them with some degree of topographical accuracy. This exceptional depiction was certainly dictated by the patron, whose interest—probably mercantile—in the eastern capital was the occasion for the unusual subject.

Rare though it is to find a contemporary event on a cassone front, the Metropolitan Museum owns another example that dates perhaps half a century earlier and shows the capture of Naples by Charles of Durazzo in 1381 (13-17). A similar cassone, illustrating a novella, is in the Bargello in Florence, but the Museum's cassone seems to have been painted in the south of Italy—the same artist also executed some frescoes in the Church of Santa Caterina at Galatina in Apulia—and it may have been commissioned by Charles's son Ladislas, inasmuch as Angevin coats of arms are displayed in the triangular areas between each scene. Unlike the Trebizond cassone, where the battle unfolds in a landscape of great depth, here buildings and figures are stacked one above the other against a gold background, and the various episodes are divided by elaborate, gilt gesso decoration into three compartments.

This tripartite division is a feature of almost all surviving cassoni datable before the 1430s, and its disappearance marks a far-reaching change of taste. We know, for example, that the earliest altarpieces to abandon the elaborate Gothic polyptych form in favor of a simple rectangular panel framed by classical pilasters date from the 1430s, and that Leon Battista Alberti, in his treatise *De pictura* of 1435, presumes that the painter will compose his work on a rectangular panel. The form had two distinct advantages: it had the sanction of antique narrative reliefs, and it lent itself to a legitimate perspective construction. However, for a cassone painter whose knowledge of ancient reliefs was not great and whose method of composition was largely determined by precedent, the form had its drawbacks. The earliest cassoni by Apollonio di Giovanni are something of a muddle, architecture and figures being placed indiscriminately across the surface, and the various episodes of the story jostling one another uncomfortably. Not until the mid-1440s did he evolve a coherent solution in which the action is confined to the foreground and the division of the story is effected by architecture. This is the way in which the Museum's panel of the Story of Esther is composed (18-20).



8. *Petrarch's De Viris Illustribus marks a renewed interest in the Labors of Hercules as paradigms of virtuous and heroic action, and in the last years of the fourteenth century the chancellor of Florence and great humanist, Coluccio Salutati, completed a book on the subject. The cassone illustrated below is among the earliest visual manifestations of this interest, which was to culminate in Antonio Pollaiuolo's three famous canvases of the Labors of Hercules for the Palazzo Medici in 1460. Probably Pollaiuolo's works gave a Neoplatonic interpretation of the Labors, but the presence of the two virtues Fortitude and Temperance at either end of the cassone front indicates that in this case the subject is more probably Petrarchan in inspiration. Although the arms have been identified as those of the Ginazzi*

and Boni families, the occasion for the commission is unknown.

Tempera and gold on wood, 18¾ × 69½ inches. Bequest of Edward Fowles, 1971.115.4

9. *Hercules's battle with the centaurs is not normally considered one of his twelve labors. While hunting the Erymanthian boar, which he was to bring back alive to Eurystheus, Hercules passed through Pholoë and was entertained by the centaur Pholus. Pholus consented to serve up wine that was the common property of the centaurs, and this act brought on an attack that resulted in the death of the centaurs and of Pholus. Because the centaur was half beast, Hercules's combat was sometimes interpreted as a victory over all that is bestial in man. Especially remarkable in the cassone illustration is the vigorous pose of*

Hercules, who is viewed from the back, and the manner in which the composition has been placed off-center to give full rein to his club-wielding arm.

10. *Antaeus was the son of Poseidon and Earth, and so long as he was in contact with the earth his strength was invincible. He would challenge strangers to wrestling matches and, according to Pindar, used his victims' skulls to roof the Temple of Poseidon. Hercules discovered the source of Antaeus's strength and defeated him by lifting him in the air and crushing him. Ancient representations of the subject show Antaeus grasped from behind, but in this cassone the two opponents face each other, as they do in most subsequent fifteenth-century representations. At the feet of Hercules lies one of Antaeus's victims.*





On the right half of the panel is a loggia beneath one arch of which is shown the marriage of Esther to Ahasuerus while beneath the other is shown the feast made in her honor. On the left of the panel, before a rusticated palace and the façade of a domed church, Ahasuerus arrives with the princes of the land. As is fitting for a cassone intended to celebrate marriage, the three buildings shown—the palace, the family loggia, and the parish church—are those around which the life of a patrician Florentine family revolved. One of the few remaining examples is the Ruccellai family's complex, with its palace and loggia designed by Alberti and the nearby Church of San Pancrazio with the family chapel.

Inevitably, it took a more inventive artist than Apollonio to evolve a type of composition that gave clarity and unity to a narrative of expanded breadth and diversity. Sometime after 1429 Ghiberti abandoned the trefoil-shaped compartments, each with a single scene, of his first set of doors for the Florentine Baptistery in favor of square ones containing several episodes of a story. The most accomplished of the ten scenes from this second set of doors shows the Story of Isaac in six episodes. Employing a legitimate construction, Ghiberti projected a spatial stage articulated by an open loggia in which events take place at various distances from the viewer's eye. The influence of this scene is apparent in the pair of panels—probably from the backrest (*spalliera*) of a cassone rather than its front—that illustrates the Story of Jason and the Argonauts (21–30). In each panel slightly less than one half of the width is taken up by a complicated architectural setting that demonstrably derives from Ghiberti's Isaac scene. This architectural setting describes a foreground stage and defines the carefully graded penetration into depth so that, in the first panel, three episodes of the story are told with complete clarity (21). In the upper left Jason is charged by King Pelias to retrieve the Golden Fleece. A bit to the right of this he descends the palace stairs and mounts his horse, while companions arrive in the foreground. In another room of the palace a later episode—the murder of Pelias by his daughters—takes place. Even in the landscape portion, where the logic of a perspective construction was inapplicable, a fair degree of clarity is maintained by defining a foreground area and by diminishing the size of the figures as

they recede in depth. Additionally, an expedient familiar to readers of comic strips was employed in order to assure readability. In each episode the protagonists are represented in the same costume—Jason in gold armor, a pink cloak, and a winged helmet, Orpheus in a pink robe, a blue cloak, and always playing a viol, and King Aeëtes in a gold tunic, a blue cloak, and with an elaborate domed hat.

These two panels were designed by Biagio di Antonio about 1465. Unlike Apollonio di Giovanni and Marco del Buono, Biagio di Antonio was not primarily a furniture painter. He is the author of a number of altarpieces and portraits, one of the most distinguished of which is in the Metropolitan Museum (31), and in 1482 he worked in the Sistine Chapel in Rome alongside Botticelli, Perugino, Cosimo Rosselli, Pintoricchio, and Signorelli. This fact certainly accounts for the superior quality of these panels. Another pair, illustrating the Story of Joseph—one in the Getty Museum in Malibu and the other in the Metropolitan Museum—is about contemporary with his work in Rome (33–36). They are usually considered to be cassone panels, but unlike the earlier pair there is no trace of the original molding by which they would have been attached to a cassone. Moreover, the background is continuous in both panels, and some of the events shown—the voyage of the merchants in the distance and the journey of the sons of Israel to Egypt in the foreground—begin in one panel and are concluded in the other. The pair was clearly intended to be separated by no more than several inches, and it therefore seems most probable that the panels formed the decoration of a room above a wainscoting with a thin molding between them. Be this as it may, the compositional principles are the same as in the Jason and the Argonauts panels. Architecture is used to close off the two panels as well as to define depth, but in the Story of Joseph the dependence on Ghiberti is much diminished, the compositions are looser, and the space less coherent. And though the story was certainly familiar, Biagio di Antonio has had recourse to a primitive device of labeling the protagonists. Despite the fact that Joseph's appearance and costume are throughout identical, the name *G(I)USEPPO* appears below him six times in the Museum's panel, and the Latin "*IOS/EF*" is inscribed in Roman capitals on his official cart. This device eliminates all risk of confusion in

deciphering such a detailed illustration to chapters 37 and 39–46 of the Book of Genesis.

Painted cassoni seem to have played a less important part in Siena in the first half of the fifteenth century than they did in Florence. The earliest of those in the Metropolitan's collection has been variously dated between 1450 and 1460 and at the extreme end of the century (37,38). If it was painted, as is likely, in the third quarter of the century, it must still when new have looked a somewhat archaic work. It shows in two separate scenes *The Departure of the Queen of Sheba* and *The Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, and it bears the arms of two Sieneſe families, the Spannocchi and the Insegni. There can be no doubt as to the artist whose style it reflects. At the outer sides of the two panels are cityscapes, in which the buildings, with their exaggerated height and erratic perspective, reflect the buildings in narrative panels painted by Giovanni di Paolo about 1455, and the extensive landscape shown at the inner sides likewise derives from the landscapes of Giovanni di Paolo, though it lacks their imaginative quality. A group of secular panels variously ascribed to this same follower of Giovanni di Paolo, and to his alter ego Pellegrino di Mariano is also known. Our painter was responsible as well for one more ambitious work, some grisaille frescoes in the portico of the Abbey of Lecreto, near Siena. They make up in narrative urgency what they lack in subtlety, and in one of them we see a rustic cart like that in which the queen of Sheba travels to meet Solomon, drawn by the same stolid white cart horses, with, just below it on the right, a townscape corresponding very closely with those on the cassone front (39). Since artists who are anonymous traditionally derive their names from their main works, this artist may be called the Lecreto Master.

By and large prior to 1460 major Sieneſe artists seem not to have undertaken commissions of this type. There can have been no inhibition to prevent their doing so, since Domenico di Bartolo painted at least one object of the kind, a decorated box, once in the Schlossmuseum in Berlin, on which a lover presents his heart to the lady of his choice. There are no strictly secular paintings by Sassetta or Giovanni di Paolo or Vecchietta or Matteo di Giovanni. Quite a number of cassone panels reflect Matteo di Giovanni's style,

but these seem all to have been produced in the workshop of his pupil and imitator Guidoccio Cozzarelli. Cozzarelli was born in Siena in 1450 and died there in 1517. From 1470 till about 1483 he was closely associated with Matteo di Giovanni, but thereafter his work takes a more individual turn. His natural gift was for narrative, and this seems to have been encouraged after 1480, when he was active as a miniaturist illuminating antiphonals for the Cathedral of Siena. The latest of his miniatures is dated 1487. From works such as these it was no sharp transition first to that typical Sieneſe activity, the painting of covers of tax returns, and then to secular paintings.

The panel in the Museum (40) represents Cloelia, and it was associated with the Butler Collection in London along with two similar panels illustrating the Story of Camilla. Another illustrates the Story of Lucretia, another is devoted to Penelope, and still another to Dido, and in addition we know similar panels by Cozzarelli devoted to Virginia, Tuccia, and, conjecturally, Hippo. This suggests that the panels probably formed part of a single decorative scheme devoted to the heroines of antiquity. We know, moreover, that Cozzarelli was responsible for a scheme precisely of this kind, since before World War II there existed in the Chigi-Zondadari Collection in Siena three panels by him of classical heroines with their original framing, which panels were probably designed to decorate a cupboard or as wall decoration. These panels represent Hippo, the Amazon Camilla (42), and Lucretia, and they must have formed part of a larger series of representations of classical heroines. Where the story permitted, Cozzarelli seems to have preferred to divide his narratives into three parts—he does this in the Dido panel in the Musée de Cluny as well as in the Lucretia panel—and he adopts this course in the Museum's panel, which shows on the left Cloelia before Lars Porsena in the Etruscan encampment, in the center Cloelia and her companions braving the turbulent waters of the Tiber, and on the right their reentry into Rome.

From the 1460s onward one major studio in Siena was also engaged in the production of high-class cassone panels. It was for a time run jointly by Francesco di Giorgio and Neroccio, but a clear distinction can be drawn between their two spheres of activity, and it was

Francesco who was the more inventive and more fertile artist. The painting in the Museum is a fragment; it formed the left side of a cassone panel, and it shows a triumphal car drawn by griffins containing a goddess (who has been explained as the Goddess of Chaste Love), accompanied by a covey of flaxen-haired girls at the back (43). The corresponding section on the right exists in a private collection, gravely damaged, but it shows a triumphal car drawn by four swans, again with a goddess supported by female figures holding bows and arrows. Attractive as the painting in the Metropolitan Museum is, it must have represented a conventional panel turned out in some numbers in Francesco di Giorgio's workshop. Two versions of the complete scene exist in the Museo Stibbert in Florence, and from them we know that the center of the panel would have been filled with a rocky mound behind which a throng of girls was shown felling a stag and a second animal (44).

More individual and of far higher quality is another fragmentary panel, seemingly painted in Siena by an immigrant artist, the miniaturist Girolamo da Cremona, who was engaged in illuminating antiphonals for the Cathedral of Siena between 1468 and 1474 (47, 48). It shows a game of chess played between a youth and a girl, and has been thought to represent the Story of Duke Huon of Bordeaux, one chapter in which tells how King Ivoryn insists that Huon play a game of chess with his daughter, "on ye condycion that yf she wyne though shalt lese they hede & yf thou canst mate her I promyse that thou shalt haue her one nyght in they bed to do with her at they pleasure..." However, when the king's daughter saw Huon, she was instantly infatuated with him and declared to herself, "By Mahounde, for the grete beaute that I se in this yonge man, I wolde this game were at an ende, so that I were a bed with hym all nyght." Forgetting herself, she lost the game—the pieces on the board are indeed all of one color—but Huon released her from the king's promise. A fragment from the left side, showing a number of male spectators watching the game, is in the Harvard Center for Renaissance Studies at I Tatti, near Florence (45). Girolamo da Cremona was a greater artist than Cozzarelli and a more gifted illustrator than Francesco di Giorgio, and the resulting scene is one of the most enchanting pieces of narration in the whole fifteenth century.





11. Battle scenes enjoyed a great popularity in the Renaissance, and famous battles of antiquity—the fall of Troy, the Battle of Arbelá between Alexander and Darius—were frequently illustrated on cassoni. The representation of contemporary or near-contemporary battles is far rarer. The most famous example, Paolo Uccello's three scenes of the Battle of San Romano, decorated a room in the Palazzo Medici, but there are several cassone panels that also depict almost contemporary battles. The Museum's cassone is exceptional in that the battle it portrays occurred not in Tuscany but in Greece and involved not Florentines but Turks.

On the basis of the faint inscription on the city in the right-hand background, the scene has been identified as the taking of Trebizond by Sultan Muhammad II in 1461—the closing battle in the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. However, the conqueror on his triumphal cart is identified as Tamerlane, who was in his lifetime compared to the great conquerors of the past—Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Charlemagne—and the battle depicted therefore would be the one that took place near Angora in

1402 between the opposing forces of Bajazet I and Tamerlane.

As in most battle scenes, great attention has been lavished on minor episodes: a horse who has fallen on top of his rider; a Turk who, in the process of dismounting one of the enemy soldiers, is himself shot in the back; and the presentation of two captives to the conquering leader. The battle is clearly meant to be read as reportage, and our difficulty in doing so is in large measure due to the elaborate costumes worn by the armies. These testify to a fascination with Oriental dress that stems from the visit of the Byzantine court to Italy in 1438–39.

Tempera and gold on wood, 15¼ × 49½ inches. John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913, 14.39

12. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Trebizond cassone is the detailed depiction of Constantinople in the upper left-hand corner. It is one of the most well-informed images of that city to come down to us, and it may derive from a map in Christoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*, completed prior to 1420 and known in several versions. Among the more prominent buildings depicted are Hagia Sophia, a smaller domed

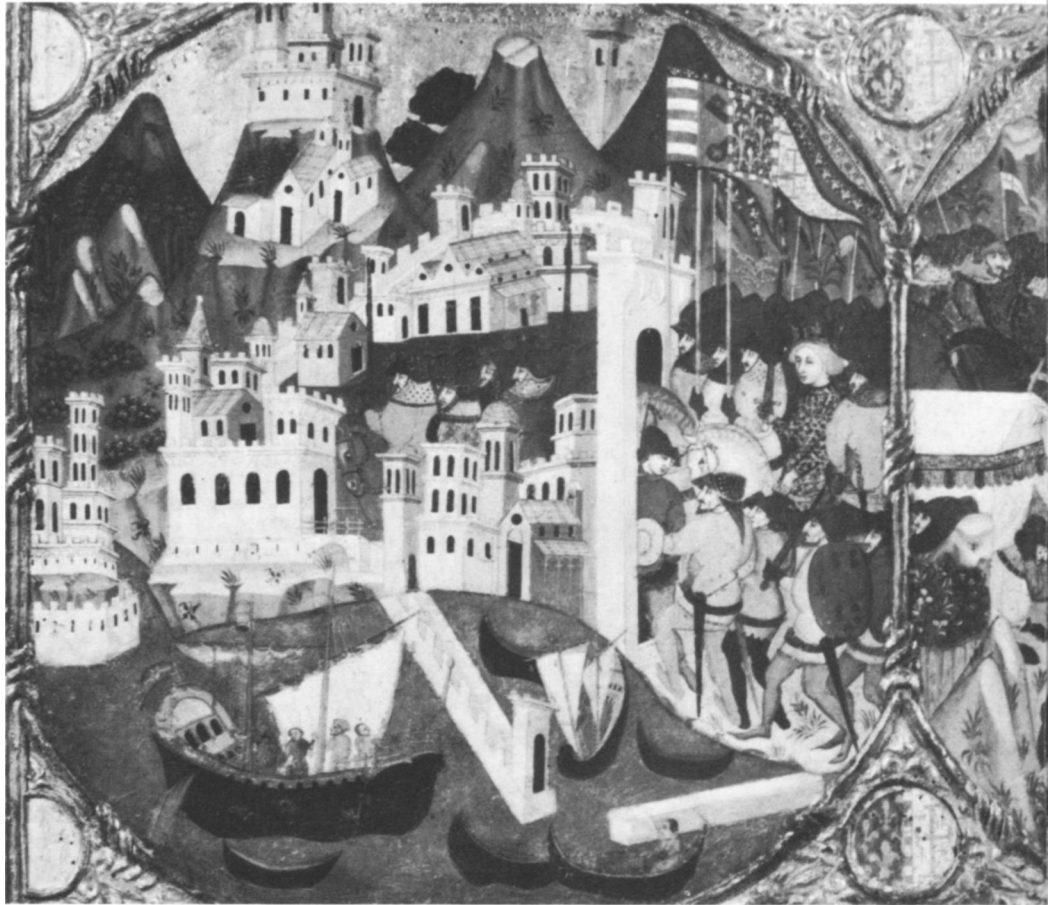
church—perhaps Saints Sergius and Bacchus—the Obelisk of Theodosius in the Hippodrome, the column of Constantine, and a Latin basilica dedicated to Saint Francis. Across the Golden Horn is the quarter of Pera, dominated by the Tower of Galata (see figure 11). It was here that the Genoese merchants maintained their headquarters. In the distance is the three-towered fortress built by Sultan Muhammad II in 1452.

13, 14. The subject of this cassone panel has been variously identified, but the standards portrayed leave no doubt that it shows Charles of Durazzo's campaign against Otto of Brunswick for the possession of Naples in 1381. The events were the direct result of the Great Schism that followed the death of Pope Gregory XI. The queen of Naples, Joanna I, supported the Avignon claimant to the papal throne, Clement VII, and was excommunicated by his Roman rival, Urban VI. Urban then turned for aid to Joanna's cousin, Charles of Durazzo, made him gonfalonier of the Church, and recognized him as king of Naples in June 1381. Charles defeated Joanna's husband, Otto of Brunswick, at Anagni shortly thereafter and entered Naples on July 26. The battle is shown in three episodes, viewed from right to left, on the cassone.

Because Angevin coats of arms are depicted in the triangular areas between each scene, it has been suggested that the person for whom the cassone was made was Charles's son Ladislas. Ladislas was a minor when his father was murdered in 1386, and his succession to the throne was by no means certain. He therefore had reason to commemorate his father's campaign.

The detail below, of the confrontation between horses and riders of the opposing forces, is from the right-hand panel.

Tempera and gold on wood, 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Rogers Fund, 1906, 07.120.1





15. In this detail Charles of Durazzo's forces rout those of Otto of Brunswick. Charles is shown on the right, mounted on a white horse with his three standards flying above him. Otto's forces are in retreat in the upper left, below the Brunswick arms. In the foreground individual skirmishes take place.

16. The setting is the same as in figure 15, but Otto's forces now surrender to Charles of Durazzo. In the left background is shown the capture of the Brunswick standard, while in the foreground captives are presented to Charles. An interesting detail is the group of two figures in front of the rectangular tent. They are shown in combat in figure 15, but here the pig-tailed soldier has gained the upper hand.

17. Charles of Durazzo enters the city of Naples, which is portrayed rather schematically, being identified only by the bay with its harbor.





18. Painted about 1460–70 in what may have been the most prestigious Florentine workshop for the production of cassoni, this panel illustrates the Old Testament Book of Esther. As is fitting for a marriage coffer, the two episodes shown are taken from chapter 2: 17–18. Having obtained the favor of Ahasuerus, the Jewess Esther was crowned queen and a great feast was made in her honor to which all the princes of the land were invited. Ahasuerus is portrayed three times, first on a gray charger and then twice beneath the arches of the loggia. Esther

wears a blue Florentine headdress known as a sella (see figure 19).

The buildings depicted relate closely to contemporary architecture, especially that of Michelozzo. The palace, with its rusticated ground floor, derives from the Palazzo Medici, and the church, with its Gothic three-aisled nave and immense circular tribune, resembles the Santissima Annunziata in Florence, as it appears in late fifteenth-century representations.

Tempera and gold on wood, 17½ × 55⅜ inches. Rogers Fund, 18.117.2







19. Rather than crowning Esther his queen, Ahasuerus here places a ring on her finger with the blessing of a priest. The figure at the far left wearing a red hat and listening intently to what

happens within the loggia may be Esther's kinsman Mordecai. 20. Seated in the place of honor, Esther is singled out to a companion by Ahasuerus.







21. This panel and its companion (27) from the backrests (spalliera) of a pair of cassoni are among the most complete fifteenth-century illustrations to the Story of Jason and the Argonauts. They are also among the most recondite, insofar as the familiar classical narration, Apollonius of Rhodes's *Argonautica*, does not seem to have been the only source utilized. Several of the episodes depicted have not, in fact, been adequately explained.

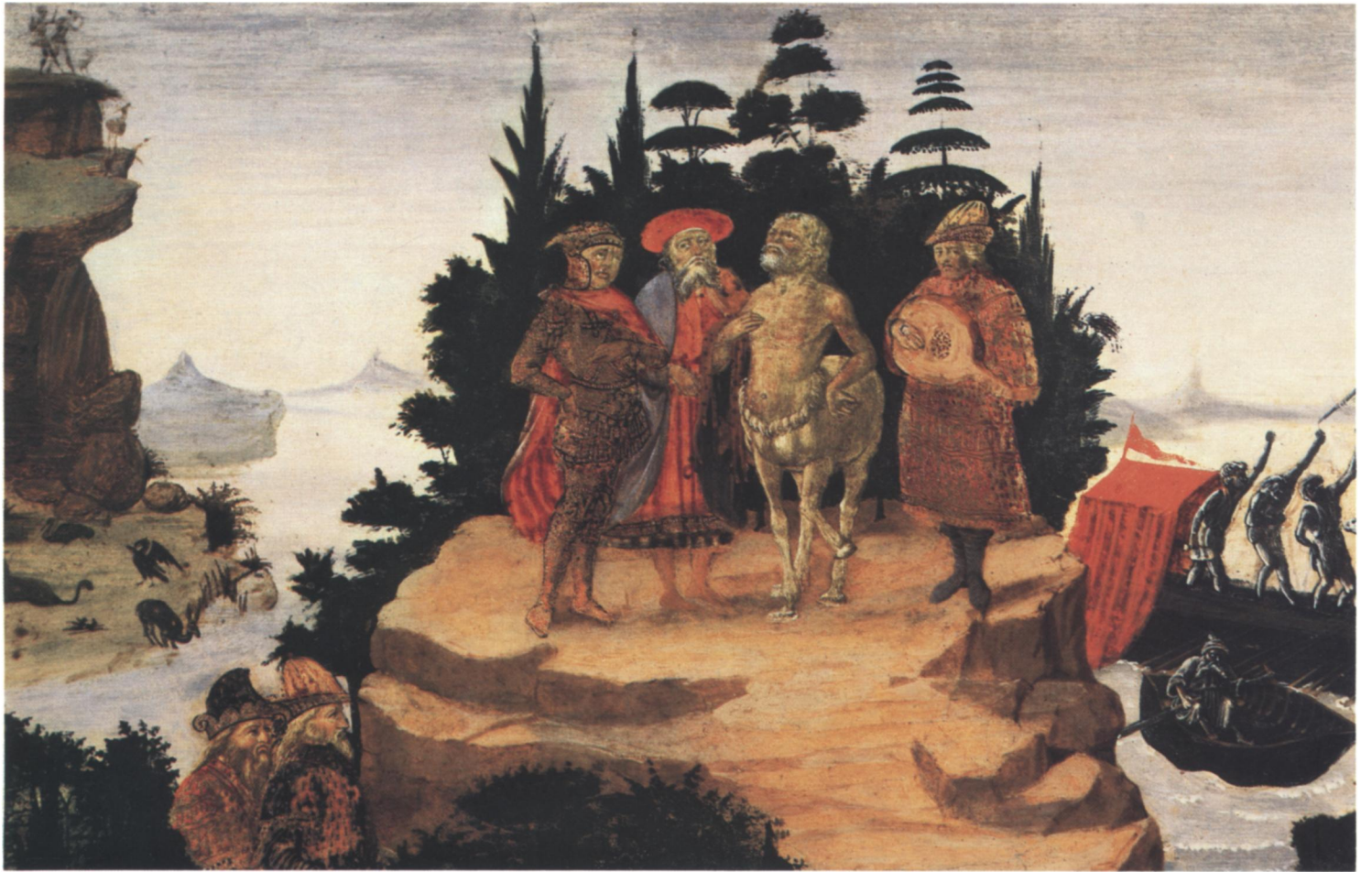
Both panels were designed by the Florentine artist Biagio di Antonio about 1465, but only the second was executed by him. Such a clear-cut division of labor is not uncommon, and Biagio di Antonio is known to have carried out similar commissions in the same fashion.

The narrative begins at the left-hand side of the panel reproduced above, where Jason, dressed in golden armor, is charged by King Pelias with retrieving the Golden Fleece as a precondition to recovering his inheritance. (Pelias was later murdered

by his daughters, and this is shown in another room of the palace.) Jason then descends the palace steps to seek companions for his task, some of whom have already gathered in the forecourt. In the center background he finds Orpheus, shown on an island playing a viol, and the two heroes are then seen consulting with the centaur Chiron on Mount Pelion. Further to the right is shown the Calydonian boar hunt.

Tempera on wood, gilt ornaments; 24 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 60 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 09.136.2

22 (opposite). Famed for its speed, the greyhound was the most prized hunting dog in the Renaissance. In his *Master of the Game* written about 1425 the duke of York notes that "the middle-sized greyhound... is the best kind, for if he were too big he is nought for small beasts, and if he were too little he were nought for great beasts." In the depiction of the Calydonian boar hunt above, greyhounds run down the boar. The ferocious-looking brown dog looks like the modern griffon.



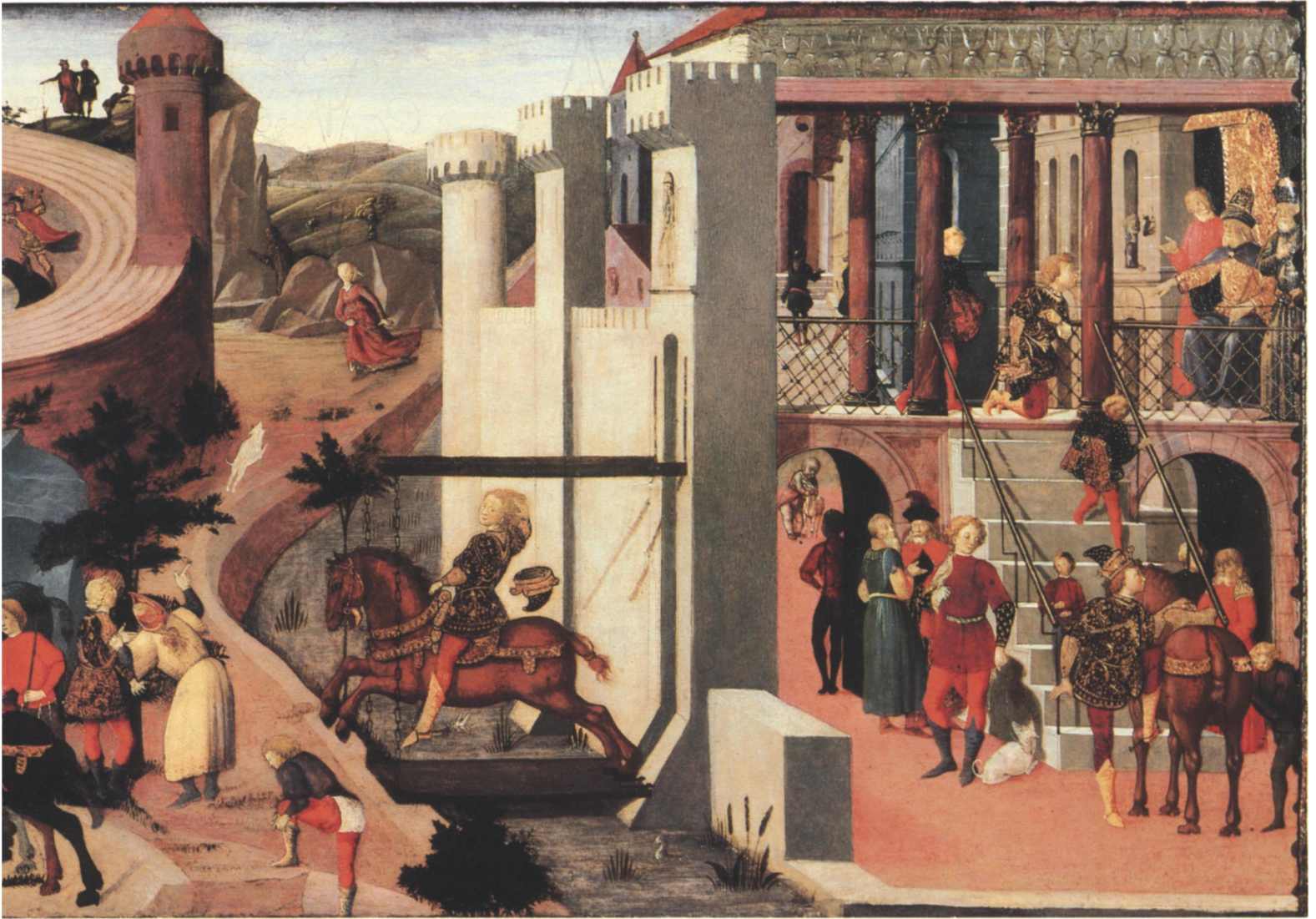
23. Jason's education was entrusted by his father Aeson to the centaur Chiron on Mount Pelion, and—according to Apollonius of Rhodes—it was Chiron who urged Jason to enlist the services of Orpheus, whose music was to save the Argonauts on more than one occasion. The two heroes are shown to the left of Chiron, Orpheus identified by the viol he plays. The identification of the figure playing a lute is not certain.

24. After a long day of rowing, the Argonauts arrived at Mysia in Asia Minor, where Hercules sets out to find wood for a new oar. He was followed by the young Hylas who, while fetching water from a spring, was set upon by nymphs and never seen again. Only Polyphemus heard his cries. He informed Hercules, who immediately set out in search of the youth. The other Argonauts remained ignorant of these events and unwittingly embarked in the middle of the night without the three men; this episode is shown in the background.

25, 26. The wild boar sent by Diana to ravage Calydon is described by Ovid as "great as the bulls which feed on grassy Epirus, and greater than those of Sicily. His eyes glowed with blood and fire; his neck was stiff and high; his bristles stood up like lines of stiff spear-shafts; amidst deep, hoarse grunts the hot foam flecked his broad shoulders. . . ." Meleager gathered a group of heroes, among them Jason, and after a long chase in which several of the heroes were killed, Meleager felled the boar and awarded its pelt to Atalanta, an action that was the source of contention between the Calydonians and Curetes.







27. In the left foreground of the companion piece to figure 21, Jason and his companions arrive in Colchis and are greeted by King Aeëtes and his two daughters, Medea and Chalciopé. The king agrees to grant Jason the Golden Fleece on condition that he plow the grove of Ares with fire-breathing bulls, sow the furrows with dragons' teeth, and overcome the warriors that spring from them. Jason accomplishes these tasks in the center background, but he is still forced to

steal the Golden Fleece. The right-hand scene may show King Aeëtes sending his son in pursuit of Jason and Medea, the latter of whom may be seen fleeing the palace. In the left background Jason and Medea return to Iolcus, and Medea rejuvenates Jason's father with the aid of Diana, who is shown with her dogs as an apparition in white.

Tempera on wood, gilt ornaments;
24 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 60 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Gift of J. Pierpont
Morgan, 09.136.1



28 (right). The task laid upon Jason by King Aeëtes would have proved impossible had not Medea, stricken with love for the hero, provided a charm against the fiery breath of the bulls he had to yoke and a ploy to overcome the warriors who sprang from the dragons' teeth. In illustrating the accomplishment of Jason's task, Biagio di Antonio has portrayed the grove of Ares as though it were surrounded by a labyrinth, with the Golden Fleece hanging from an oak tree in its center. Jason is also shown battling the serpent that guarded the tree. According to Apollonius of Rhodes, Medea put the dragon to sleep, but an older tradition ascribes this feat to Orpheus, who is seen here playing his viol.

29, 30. The views of King Aeëtes's palace and of the Colchian city form some of the most beautiful details conceived by Biagio di Antonio. They combine an exterior view of the city walls with a drawbridge crossing a moat, and a street lined with sober Florentine palaces seen through a raised loggia of the royal residence. The intention was to balance the palace of King Pelias, shown on the left-hand side of the first panel. The scene portrayed on the opposite page seems to be the episode of King Aeëtes sending his son Absyrtus in pursuit of Medea and Jason, who have fled with the Golden Fleece. Absyrtus is seen mounting his horse and then, in the illustration at the right, galloping across the drawbridge.







31, 32. *The portrait on the opposite page is Biagio di Antonio's most distinguished work in that genre. The pose of the figure derives from a famous portrait by Andrea del Castagno in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., but the background has been enriched by a view of Florence (above), showing the domed Cathedral, the towered walls that once surrounded the city, the Arno, and the hills beyond.*

Like so many other artists, Biagio di Antonio was deeply influenced by Andrea del Verrocchio around 1470, and this influence is especially apparent in the sculptural modeling of the figure.

Tempera on wood, 21½ × 15¾ inches. Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931. The Friedsam Collection, 32.100.68

33, 34. These two panels were intended to be framed contiguously and were probably originally placed above the wainscoting of a room. They illustrate the Story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis. Beneath the left-hand loggia of the first panel (above), Jacob sends the young Joseph to Shechem, where his brothers, jealous of Jacob's love for him, throw him in a pit and sell him to merchants traveling from Gilead to Egypt. These scenes are shown in the left background. Beneath the right-hand loggia the brothers present Jacob with Joseph's blood-stained cloak as proof of their story that he has been killed by a wild beast. The departure of the merchants is seen in the right background, and their landing in Egypt appears in the left background of the companion panel (below), where Joseph is sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.

Potiphar's wife later made unsuccessful advances to Joseph and then falsely accused him, for which Joseph was thrown in prison. These events are shown in the center background. In the foreground building Joseph is freed when he

interprets a dream of Pharaoh that foretells a famine. Immediately to the left of this he is seen as overseer of Egypt riding on a cart inscribed with his name, while in the right-hand background are the large barns he constructed to store grain. The ensuing famine forced Joseph's brothers to seek food in Egypt. In figure 33 they leave Jacob, while in the foreground of figure 34 is shown the final reunion of Joseph and his father.

One of the most appealing aspects of these panels is the depiction of architecture, which reflects the taste for classical detailing prevalent in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Especially notable is the use of red-veined marble columns and tondi, and the foreground palace has acanthus molding instead of the typical gray stone (pietra serena) of Florentine architecture.

Above: Tempera and gold on wood. John Paul Getty Museum, 70.PA. 41. Below: Tempera and gold on wood, 27 x 59 inches. Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931. The Friedsam Collection, 32.100.69







35, 36. The building above serves a triple function: it is Potiphar's house, Joseph's prison, and Joseph's house in which he reveals his identity to his brothers. The edifice is conceived as a small contemporary Florentine palace but with two modifications: the loggia would normally be a feature of the private courtyard rather than the exterior, and the crenellation, although a feature of medieval palaces, is an anomaly here. The battlements certainly were intended to mark the building as a public prison.

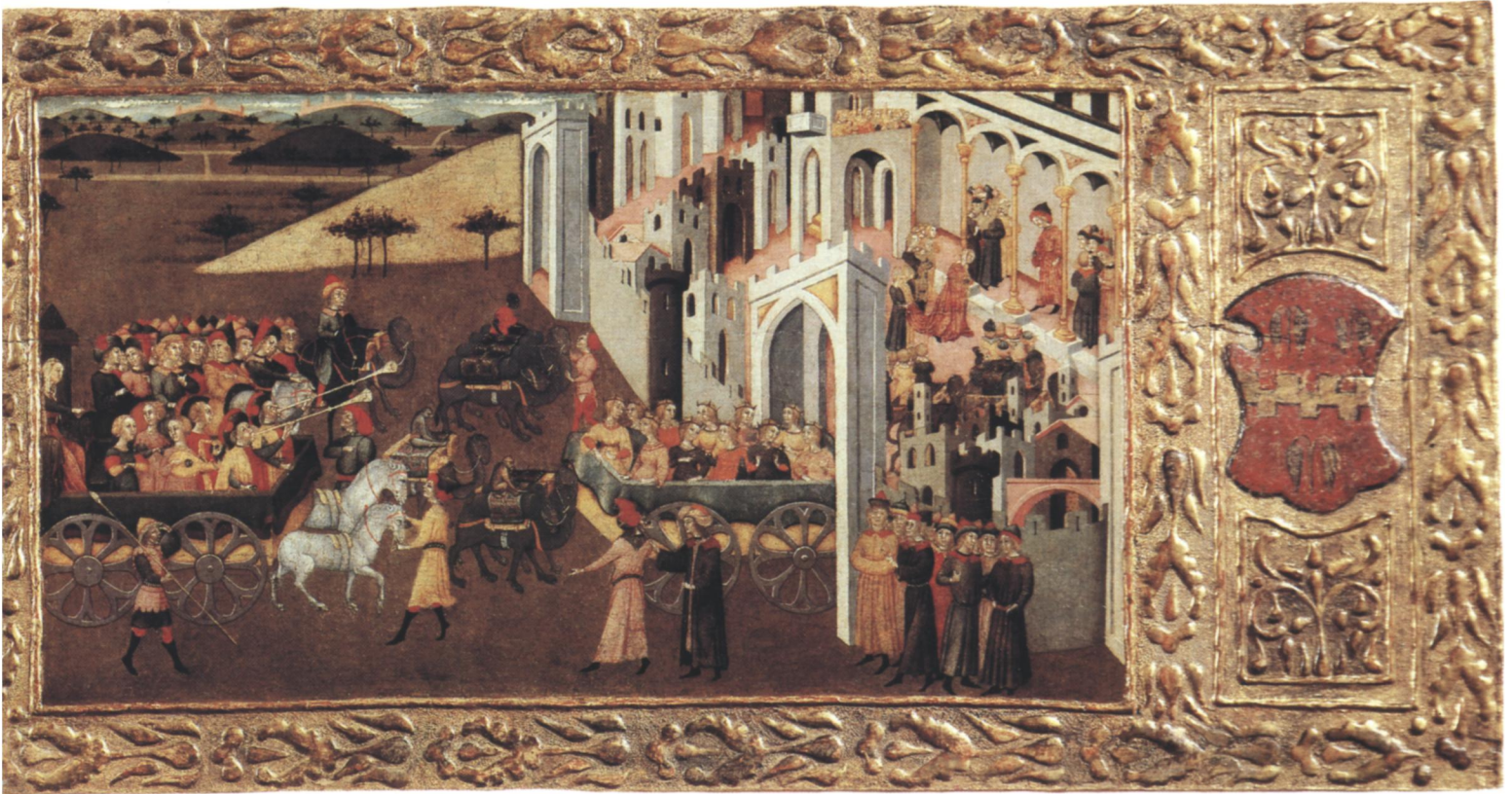
The building thus symbolizes

Joseph's disgrace and lends a poignant touch to his subsequent justification and elevation by Pharaoh. The edifice in the background to the right is identified as a pagan temple by the two figures in niches above the door, one of whom appears to be Jupiter with his lightning bolts and the other of whom is Apollo playing a viol.

Opposite, in a detail of the foreground building from the same panel, Pharaoh is shown dreaming and then listening to Joseph's interpretation of his dream.







37, 38. This cassone front, showing the Story of Solomon and the queen of Sheba, dates from the third quarter of the fifteenth century and is, by Florentine standards, conceived in an archaic style. The diminution of the buildings obeys no perspectival logic, and the architecture is Gothic throughout. The contrast with Biagio di Antonio's illustration of the Story of Joseph (33, 34) could not be greater. But what this panel lacks in terms of intellectual conception, it makes up for in charm.

The Bible describes the queen's arrival in Jerusalem "with a very great train, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold, and precious stones." The anonymous master of the Museum's cassone front has given full rein to his imagination in portraying the queen of Sheba supervising the

selection and packing of her gifts to Solomon and the elaborate retinue with which she traveled. She is seen within the city at the left and then seated beneath a canopy on a cart among men and women singing and playing trumpets, a lute, and a harp. Beside the royal cart are two pages who salute her by raising their hands to their hats. At the far right she is shown entering the city and then kneeling, inside, in homage before Solomon.

The subject of the journey of the queen of Sheba to do homage to King Solomon, as told in 1 Kings 10, enjoyed great favor as a paradigm of the proper relationship between a great woman and a wise man.

Tempera on wood, embossed and gilt ornament, $20\frac{3}{4} \times 70\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Rogers Fund, 14.44





39. *The frescoes on the portico of the Abbey of Lecceto, near Siena, are executed in grisaille and depict worldly life and its consequence, Hell. They have been variously dated, but they were probably painted in the third quarter of the fifteenth century—at the same time and by the same follower of Giovanni di Paolo as the Metropolitan Museum’s cassone front (37). A cart filled with people and a fragmentary view of a city in the portrayal of worldly life compare very closely with those on the Museum’s panel.*





40, 41. Plutarch's life of Publicola is the source for this Siennese cassone, which shows on the left Cloelia and the other Roman maidens presented as hostages to the Etruscan king Lars Porsena and on the right, and in the detail below, the maidens escaping the king by swimming the Tiber. The city of Rome is identified by a triumphal arch outside the walls and by a circular building—perhaps intended to represent the Colosseum.

Guidoccio Cozzarelli's beautiful depiction of Cloelia entering Rome through a city gate owes much to the

complicated postures favored by Liberale da Verona, whose work in Siena between 1466 and 1476 was the most decisive force in Siennese illustration in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The lavish use of gold and of bright colors clearly derives from Cozzarelli's contemporary activity as an illuminator of choir books for the Cathedral of Siena in the 1480s.

Tempera and gold on wood, 17¾ × 45½ inches. Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 11.126.2



42. One of the most remarkable heroines of antiquity was Camilla, who was instructed in martial exercises by her father. She was reputed to be so swift and so deft that she could fly over wheat without bending its stalks or over water without getting her feet wet. In this panel, painted by Guidoccio Cozzarelli, which possibly formed part of the same cycle dedicated to Roman

heroines as that of Cloelia (40, 41), she leads the Volscians into battle against Aeneas, the founder of Rome. Camilla was killed in the battle, but not before she felled numerous warriors. In the background her death is avenged by a nymph of Diana.

Tempera and gold on wood. John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art







43 (opposite). Several interpretations of this fragment of the left side of a cassone panel have been made, but none of them can be supported by a literary text. The most convincing argument suggests that the cassone may have shown the opposing forces of carnal and spiritual love. This fragment represents the Goddess of Chaste Love accompanied by a group of maidens, her triumphal cart drawn by griffins. It was painted in the workshop of the Sienese artist Francesco di Giorgio. Typical of his work are the elaborate patterns of the costumes, created by scratching through the

pigment with a stylus to reveal the underlying silver.

Tempera and gold and silver on wood, $16\frac{7}{8} \times 17\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Marquand Fund, 20.182

44. The subject of this cassone front by Francesco di Giorgio is a variant of that treated in the Metropolitan Museum's panel (43). In this panel, however, the maidens do not hold blindfolds, and the focus of attention is on the action in the center rather than on the allegorical figure on the cart, here to the far left.

Tempera and gold and silver on wood. Museo Stibbert, Florence

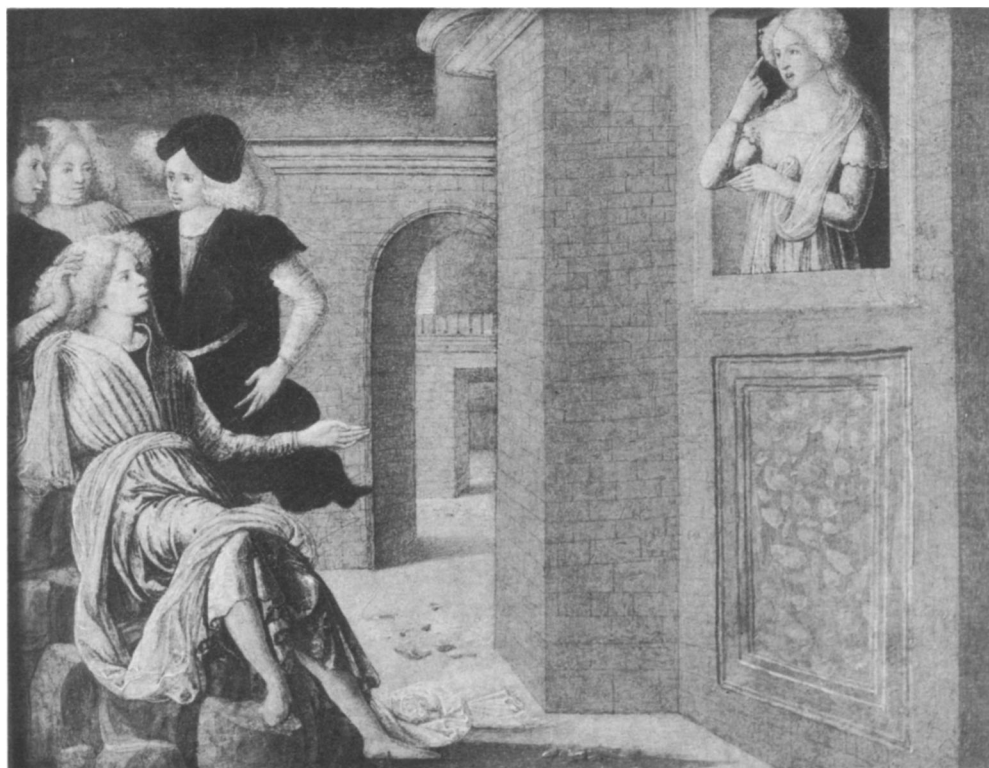


45, 46. *The miniaturist Girolamo da Cremona is first mentioned in 1461, when Andrea Mantegna acted as the agent for the marchioness of Mantua in engaging him to illuminate a missal. As might be expected, his work on this missal was deeply influenced by Mantegna. Between 1468 and 1474 Girolamo was employed in Siena to illuminate choir books for the Cathedral, and during this period he seems to have collaborated occasionally with Liberale da Verona. Among the paintings he produced at this time are the Metropolitan Museum's panel of a*

chess game (48) and a fragment from the same scene showing spectators, illustrated on the opposite page.

The scene below was presumably part of the same cassone or a companion piece—the protagonists are clearly the same as those who play chess. However, the episode it represents has not been explained, and its interpretation remains an enigma.

Opposite: Tempera on wood, Villa I Tatti, Florence. Below: Tempera on wood. Formerly in the Wauters Collection, Brussels



47, 48. This chess game has been thought to represent an episode in the story of Duke Huon of Bordeaux. King Ivoryn insisted that Huon play chess with his daughter on the condition that if she won he would lose his head, but if he could mate her, he would have her for one night in his bed. However, the king's daughter, taken by Huon's beauty, loses the game—the pieces on

the board are all of one color—but Huon releases her from the king's promise. A fragment from the left side, showing male spectators watching the game, is illustrated in figure 45.

Tempera on wood, $13\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Bequest of Maitland F. Griggs, 1943. Maitland F. Griggs Collection, 43.98.9





Portraits

The concept of the family, which was so central to birth trays and cassoni, likewise dominated portraiture. Whether or not surviving portraits were life images, records, that is, of the features of a living sitter, their function was commemorative and documentary. It was not that artists could not paint lifelike portraits; from the time of Masaccio onward Florentine frescoes are filled with portraits of astonishing veracity. It seems rather that in Tuscany till the last quarter of the century there was a division between the portraits introduced in frescoes and the independent panel portrait. Probably the earliest of the Florentine portraits on panel in the Metropolitan Museum's collection is the *Portrait of a Lady in Profile*, currently ascribed by others to an eclectic painter active in the 1450s who was first known as the Master of the Carrand Triptych (on the basis of a small altarpiece in the Museo Nazionale in Florence) and was later identified with a documented artist, Giovanni di Francesco (49). The sitter is set against a wall constructed of recessed stone panels (presumably in *pietra serena*, though this is not absolutely clear) and surmounted by a stone frieze. She looks outward to the left, through what must be a window—judging from the light suffused over her face and from the diagonal shadow cast by the upper molding on the wall behind. Though the sitter is shown in silhouette, the artist clearly is concerned with establishing the three-dimensional existence of the figure he portrays. He does this in two ways, first by the architectural perspective and second by the careful distribution of light on the forehead, face, and neck and on the pleated overdress covering the chest. The lighting is, however, treated in rather a peculiar fashion: the cheek is in half shadow; the chin casts a diagonal shadow on the neck; the back of the neck, from the ear down to the collar of the dress, is once again shadow; and there is a triangular area of shadow round the eye. The stylistic expedient that we are most conscious of is geometry, and we might guess that the artist (who was not Giovanni di Francesco) is applying to the portrait constructional expedients developed in response to the requirements of other types of painting.

The style of this portrait recalls that of Uccello, who had, however, a much more sophisticated understanding of perspective than the painter of this

panel, and if we look among the paintings of Uccello's associates and imitators, we find one work in which the characteristics of this portrait unmistakably recur. This is a fresco cycle in the Chapel of the Assumption in the Cathedral of Prato, which includes a lunette with *The Birth of the Virgin* and *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*. On the right of the *Presentation* is a standing male figure, evidently a portrait, whose features are treated in the same schematic fashion as those in the panel painting, and in the foreground of *The Birth of the Virgin* we encounter to left of center a nurse holding a child whose hair is braided in a pattern like that of the sitter in the portrait. Immediately to the right of center is a woman visitor, whose pleated overdress is painted in exactly the same way as the one in the panel painting. The resemblances are in fact so close that the authorship of the painting cannot be in any doubt.

What we know about the author of the Prato frescoes rests on stylistic inference. He seems to have been trained in the studio of Paolo Uccello before 1443 and to have worked in Prato in the middle of the 1440s, and it is to the period of the Prato frescoes, about 1443–45, that this beautiful portrait must be assigned.

There is no means of establishing the sitter's identity. Though she is no longer young—she is in her forties, one might guess—she is fashionably but plainly dressed. Her hair is braided on a wicker structure that runs from the crown of the head down to the neck, leaving the ear fully exposed and allowing a few strands of hair to soften the line of the temple and forehead. Like most well-to-do ladies, she wears a velvet or brocaded underdress beneath an overdress cut away so that the forearm is revealed. The overdress is nondescript save in one particular, that it is edged with lappets in two colors, some of which are turned back so that the lining is revealed. Possibly the contrasting colors of this fringe have some heraldic significance and may eventually enable the sitter's family to be identified.

It is anybody's guess whether the portrait by the Prato Master is a few years earlier or a few years later than the most important of the Quattrocento portraits in the Metropolitan Museum's collection, Fra Filippo Lippi's *Portrait of a Man and a Woman at a Casement* (illustrated on the covers and in figure 50). To describe this painting as *Portrait*

of a Man and Woman is not strictly correct. It is a portrait of a lady into which a secondary male portrait has been inserted at one side. The secondary portrait shows the front of the face and the hands only and is not individualized: we would recognize the lady if we saw her in the street, but we would not recognize the man. If the male portrait were not there, the structure of the painting would be more apprehensible. We know that Lippi, at least from 1437, when he painted a *Madonna* now in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, was familiar with Flemish paintings, probably from the shop of the Master of Flémalle, with figures depicted in deep space leading the eye to a view through a window at the back. Almost certainly the present work was inspired by some such Flemish painting. But the way in which the landscape at the back is integrated in the painting is characteristically Florentine. The space in which the figure of the woman is portrayed is not wholly unlike that in the panel by the Prato Master, but it is more convincing because it is projected more carefully. The perspective scheme is established by the left edge of the ceiling and by a receding shelf on the level of the sitter's hands, and the line of the shelf is in turn continued in a path seen through the window at the back. If the two orthogonals were protracted, as they doubtless were in the preliminary drawing for the painting, they would meet at a central vanishing point in the sitter's cheek, level with her mouth. The jewel on the sitter's head marks the exact center of the panel, and the vanishing point falls on the same vertical at two-thirds of its height. Though the male portrait reads as an interpolation (it is in fact nothing of the kind), the left wall must have contained a window from the very first, since there is no other source from which the delicate contours of the female sitter could be lit.

From a purely historical standpoint the presence of the secondary male figure is fortunate, since he holds with his left hand an embroidered coat of arms that falls over the windowsill. The arms have been identified, almost certainly correctly, as those of the Scolari family, and the function of the embroidery is essentially the same as that of the two heraldic bosses that occur in the London portrait of Edward Grymeston by Petrus Christus of 1446. They tell us to what family he belongs. According to Litta's *Famiglie celebri*

italiane, the condottiere Pippo Spano (himself a member of the Scolari family) on his death in 1427 named as his heirs three Scolari brothers, who had like himself been in service in the North with the emperor Sigismund. The brother most likely to be depicted here, Lorenzo, returned to Florence, where he was patronized in the 1430s by Cosimo de' Medici and in 1436 married a member of another noble family, Angiola di Bernardo Sapiti. It has been suggested that Lippi's painting is a marriage or engagement portrait. There are two objections to this theory, first that the painting of a portrait to commemorate a marriage would have been unusual in Florence in the first half of the fifteenth century, and second that the portrait, by the criterion of Lippi's other paintings, must have been made in the 1440s and not in 1436. For some years (and again our information is based on Litta) Scolari's marriage was childless, but in January 1444 an heir, Ranieri, was born, the first of eight Scolari children. Possibly the painting was commissioned to commemorate this event.

If this explanation is correct, it would go far to account also for the sitter's exceptionally elaborate costume. We know from other sources, such as the birth tray at Houston with *The Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* and the Adimari marriage cassone in the Accademia in Florence, that on ceremonial occasions ladies in Florence wore on their heads what is known as a *sella* or saddle, a wicker structure rising to two points over which the hair was dressed. On it was placed an embroidered *cappuccio*, which hung on the left side just short of the shoulder and on the right extended to below the thigh. A *sella alla fiamminga* or *sella alla francese* is worn by the sitter in Lippi's portrait; for practical reasons the tips of the headdress have been truncated, since it would otherwise have been impossible to fit the portrait into an orthodox format. The hair, as always at this time, is pulled back from the forehead, and is held in place by an embroidered cap covering the ears. Over the cap is the *cappuccio*, fashioned of heavy crimson damask richly embroidered with gold thread, at the front of which is a border of silk lappets stitched onto the fabric. On the far side the surface of the *cappuccio* is concealed, but the border is visible once more above the sitter's throat and at the waist. This is by far the richest headdress portrayed in any Tuscan mid-



Quattrocento painting, and one must assume that for Scolari and his wife it had some particular significance. Probably it was made in Bohemia or Hungary and not in Tuscany.

The neck of the supposed Angiola Scolari is encircled by a single string of pearls. On her shoulder she wears a jewel, a diamond or rock crystal surrounded by large pearls, and a second jewel is set over her forehead. Her opulent underdress, of velvet, has a pleated sleeve drawn in at the elbow. A similar underdress is worn by a woman leading a child in the painting of *The Birth of the Virgin* by a pupil of Lippi, Fra Carnevale, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum. Her overdress, on the other hand, is again exceptional; it is held in with a belt and is cut away over the sleeve, and its edges are trimmed with fur. On the cuff between two strips of fur is an inscription in gold thread and seed pearls with the word *LEALTA*. But even this account does not exhaust the jewelry depicted in the painting. The man looking through the casement has a jeweled ring on the little finger of his left hand, and the lady wears on the first finger of her right hand two jeweled rings and on the second finger a third ring with a sharply pointed colored stone. It is as though the painter had been invited to prepare a visual catalogue of the jewels owned by the Scolari. For that matter the chapel in the road behind may represent a Scolari foundation.

The significance of Scolari commissions in the second quarter of the fifteenth century has never been properly investigated, though they included Brunelleschi's Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence and the *Last Judgment* by Fra Angelico for the same church, now in the Museo di San Marco in Florence, and though Pippo Spano himself was included, along with Niccolò Acciaiuoli and Farinata degli Uberti, about 1450, in Andrea del Castagno's decorations at the Villa Carducci (now Villa Pandolfini). Probably Lippi's delicate double portrait should be regarded as a family manifesto rather than as a portrait in the modern sense.

Very few profile portraits in the middle of the fifteenth century can have been as complex as Fra Filippo Lippi's. The norm of female portraiture was a flat silhouette shown on a dark ground. In the hands of a substantial artist, such as Alesso Baldovinetti, in his *Portrait of a Lady* in the National Gallery in London,

this type of portraiture could develop as an art form in its own right, but most of the surviving portraits are of much more modest quality. One of them, a rather undistinguished painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Johnson Collection) has been ascribed to Neri di Bicci, an attractive decorator who enjoyed some success in the middle of the fifteenth century with half-length Madonnas for private patrons and altarpieces commissioned in the main for country churches in the neighborhood of Florence. Two more are in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and in the Metropolitan Museum (Bache Collection) (51). They seem to have been painted in a single workshop, probably that of a minor follower of Fra Filippo Lippi, known for his small devotional paintings as the Master of the Castello Nativity, but when they appeared on the market, earlier in this century, they were habitually credited to such major artists as Domenico Veneziano and Uccello.

In photographs the portraits in Boston and New York look very similar. Each shows a girl in profile to the left, wearing a contrasted underdress and overdress with an elaborate floral pattern. In each case the neck is encircled by a string of pearls (in the New York portrait composed of units of ten pearls separated by gilded bosses, in the Boston portrait groups of nine pearls with a jeweled or enameled bar between them), and in each the fair hair is drawn back beneath a linen *capuccio* covered with seed pearls and embroidery, and so constructed as to support a long braid of hair pulled over the crown of the head and a short ponytail of hair pulled through a ring behind. In both portraits there is a jewel in the center of the crown. Possibly the two paintings are not only by a single artist, but also originally formed part of a single series of portraits. It is difficult to establish whether or not this is so, since the Gardner painting is on its original panel and is relatively well preserved, whereas the painting in New York was transferred to canvas and grossly overcleaned. It has almost certainly been cut at the base, details (for example, the gold bosses in the pearl necklace) have been scraped away, and above the nose a pentimento, which was once painted out, has been left visible, hence the rather ungainly outline of the forehead. The painting in its present state is of interest as a social document, not as a work of art.

49. *Almost all surviving Florentine portraits from the first half of the fifteenth century are conceived as profiles against a dark background. One of the most notable exceptions is this profile portrait of a lady, painted by a follower of Paolo Uccello, in which the lady's sharp-edged features are set into a shallow niche illuminated from the opening at the top. Not the least beautiful aspect of this picture is the patterns of the lappets on the sleeve and the underblouse around the neck.*
Tempera on wood, 16¼ × 12¼ inches. Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931. The Friedsam Collection, 32.100.98



When portraits started life as serious works of art, something of their artistic quality is generally preserved even if their surface is much abraded or in part destroyed. This is the case with a *Portrait of a Lady* by Antonio or Piero del Pollaiuolo (52). It is one of a group of female portraits which is given to one or other of the Pollaiuoli by almost every student save their latest biographer. That the portraits are by one or other brother is not open to serious doubt, nor can it be questioned that they date at earliest from a couple of decades later than the profile portrait by the Master of the Castello Nativity and were painted between about 1470 and 1485. One of the earliest of them, in Berlin, shows a richly dressed girl against a balustrade with a background of sky. The balustrade is inlaid with porphyry like the floor of the altarpiece completed by the Pollaiuoli for San Miniato al Monte in Florence in 1467. Later, because it is painted with fuller forms and with a richer descriptive technique, is a masterly *Portrait of a Lady* in the Museo Poldi-Pezzoli in Milan, where the balustrade is omitted and the figure is shown to the shoulder only, not to the waist. A number of paintings have been grouped with these, but only two of them concern us here. The first is an unattractive portrait of a richly dressed lady in the Uffizi in Florence, unattractive first in its depiction of character and second in the crudeness of its damaged and repainted state. The second, which must from the first have been more pleasing, is in the Metropolitan Museum. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Italian families seem to have had little or no compunction at mutilating and repainting the portraits in their palaces. Originally, the sitter in the New York portrait seems to have been represented at a pink casement against a background of sky, but at a later time the background and the casement were both painted out; they were recovered only in course of cleaning, but in so damaged a condition that both the light blue background (the underpainting of the missing sky) and the pink casement had to be reconstructed from the few traces that survived; and the patterned dress had also to be heavily made up. Better preserved are the features and the elaborately dressed hair with a veil covering the ear. This part of the painting conveys something of the magic the Pollaiuoli as portraitists possessed. The style is richer and more

assertive than in earlier profile portraits, but in this it reflects a change in the character of Florentine society, which led Benedetto Dei, when he returned to Florence in 1468 after an absence of some years, to comment on the new self-indulgence that had become apparent in Florentine dress. Ladies, he said, wore dresses with sleeves of silver and gold thread and their necks were encircled by strings of pearls. It is also more expressive, in that the Pollaiuoli endeavored to depict, indeed succeeded in depicting, aspects of the human personality with which earlier painters had felt no concern.

50. *Only two independent portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi are known, and of these the most distinguished is the Metropolitan Museum's Portrait of a Man and a Woman at a Casement. It was painted in the early 1440s and perhaps depicts Lorenzo Scolari and his wife Angiola di Bernardo Sapiti, who were married in 1436. Most fifteenth-century portraits of a man and his wife were conceived as diptychs or pendants and are painted on separate panels. Lippi's painting is the earliest surviving Italian double portrait in the true sense, and it is also among the earliest European portraits with a domestic setting.*

Tempera and gold on wood, 25¼ × 16½ inches. Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1885. Marquand Collection, 89.15.19

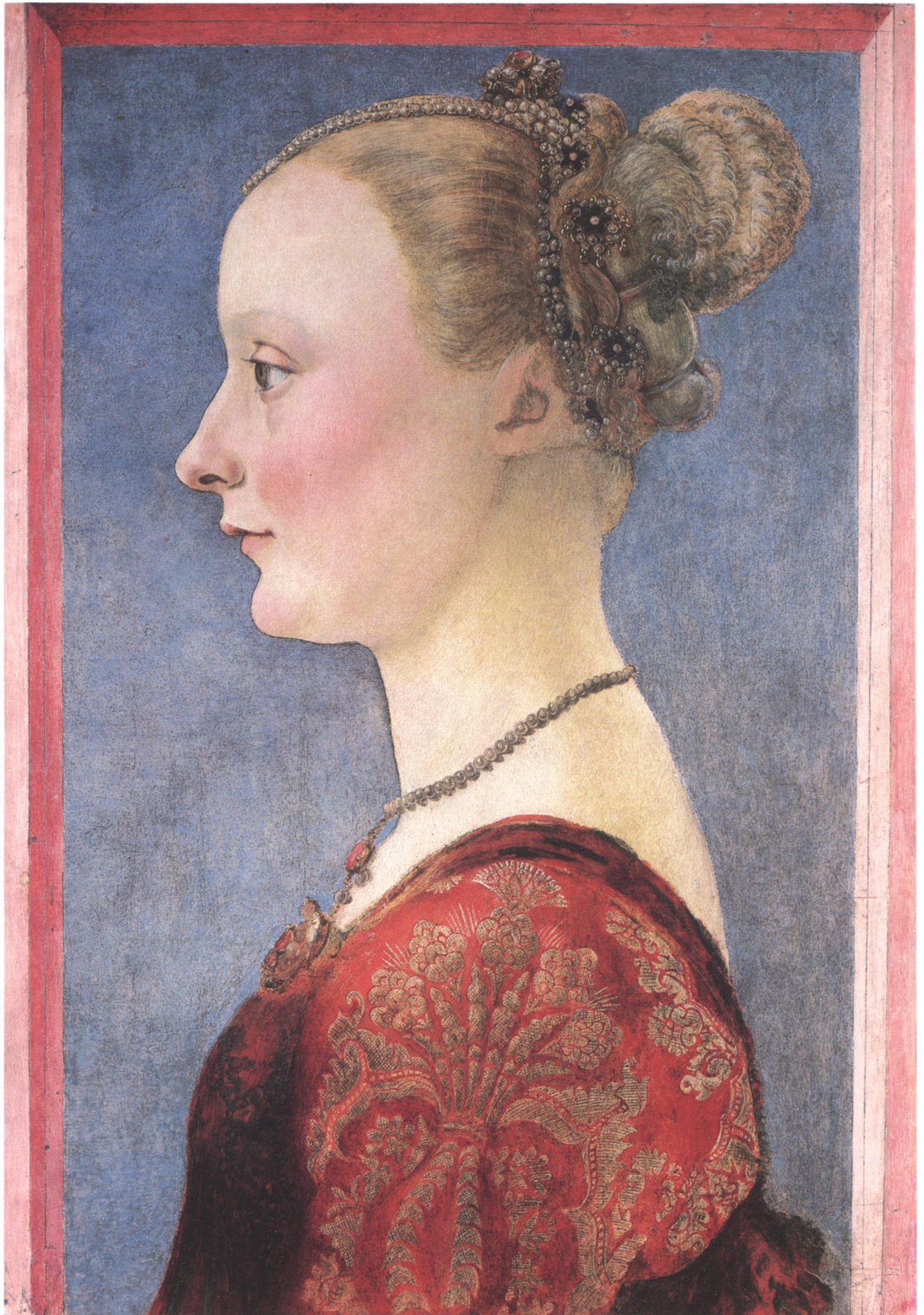


51. Though badly overcleaned during the past centuries, this charming portrait of a young lady by the Master of the Castello Nativity is characteristic of Florentine portraiture in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Tempera on canvas, transferred from wood, $15\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The Jules S. Bache Collection, 49.7.6

52. Antonio del Pollaiuolo was one of the great realists of fifteenth-century Italian art, in his painted portraits as well as in his sculpted ones. To a degree his power of description is maintained in the work of his younger brother, Piero, who is the more probable author of the Metropolitan Museum's damaged Portrait of a Lady.

Tempera on wood, $19\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Bequest of Edward S. Harkness, 1940, 50.135.3



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Opposite: *Detail from the Story of Esther (18). The palace, with its rusticated ground floor, is probably derived from the Palazzo Medici, which was most likely begun by Michelozzo in 1446.*



