Paolo di Giovanni Fei
Sienese, c. 1335/1345 - 1411

The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple

1398-1399

tempera on wood transferred to hardboard
painted surface: 146.1 × 140.3 cm (57 1/2 × 55 1/4 in.)
overall: 147.2 × 140.3 cm (57 15/16 × 55 1/4 in.)
Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961.9.4

ENTRY

The legend of the childhood of Mary, mother of Jesus, had been formed at a very early date, as shown by the apocryphal Gospel of James, or Protoevangelium of James (second–third century), which for the first time recounted events in the life of Mary before the Annunciation. The iconography of the presentation of the Virgin that spread in Byzantine art was based on this source. In the West, the episodes of the birth and childhood of the Virgin were known instead through another, later apocryphal source of the eighth–ninth century, attributed to the Evangelist Matthew. [1] According to this account of her childhood, Mary, on reaching the age of three, was taken by her parents, together with offerings, to the Temple of Jerusalem, so that she could be educated there. The child ascended the flight of fifteen steps of the temple to enter the sacred building, where she would continue to live, fed by an angel, until she reached the age of fourteen. [2] The legend linked the child's ascent to the temple and the flight of fifteen steps in front of it with the number of Gradual Psalms. [3] The image of so long a flight of steps does not in general appear in fourteenth-century Sienese painting, which instead follows other details of the narrative of the Pseudo-Matthew: it describes the surprise of those present on seeing the infant girl spontaneously ascend the steps on her own and shows the high priest Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (haloed), welcoming the child. [4] The other girls who are being brought up in the temple are represented in a separate zone. One endeavor to which Sienese painters, on the other hand, paid constant attention was that of expressing the splendor of Solomon's Temple, generally represented as a grand and complex building. The importance of the event was further underlined by the presence of ever more

numerous onlookers.

The painting now in the National Gallery of Art appeared in the London exhibition in 1928 as a work by Bartolo di Fredi, an attribution perhaps proposed by Bernard Berenson, who privately confirmed it in 1951. [5] William Suida and Fern Rusk Shapley accepted this opinion in their catalog of the Kress Collection (NGA 1956), commenting that "the attribution to Bartolo…is not likely to be doubted." [6] That attribution was reaffirmed in the 1959 catalog of the Gallery and by Jaqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne (1965). [7] As early as 1951, however, Millard Meiss broke ranks, identifying the hand of Paolo di Giovanni Fei in the painting. [8] All the more recent literature, apart from the above-cited exceptions, recognizes Meiss's proposal as correct, including Berenson's own posthumous edition of *Italian Pictures* (1968). [9] Confirmation of the attribution came with the discovery that the panel now in Washington comes from Siena Cathedral; documents of 1398–1399 record payments made to Paolo di Giovanni Fei that undoubtedly refer to this painting. [10] The various inventories of the cathedral later described it as "tauola dipenta colla Ripresentationi al Tempio di Nostra Donna et di sancto Pietro et di sancto Pauolo et di più altri sancti e sancte" (a painted panel with the Presentation of Our Lady and with Saint Peter and Saint Paul and many other saints). [11] It remained on the altar of the chapel of San Pietro at least until 1482 and probably until the early 1580s (see Provenance).

The composition of Paolo's altarpiece would have followed the scheme prescribed for the altarpieces of the various chapels in the cathedral, a church dedicated to the Virgin: namely, a scene representing a Marian feast at the center, flanked by full-length, standing saints in the lateral panels, including the titular of the altar. As we know from the example of other polyptychs with a provenance from the cathedral, the saints were portrayed one on each side. Moreover, the polyptychs, in contrast to the present appearance of *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, were always enriched with gables comprising half-figure images of other saints above the main register. Though none of these components of Paolo's altarpiece have yet been identified, there seems no reason to doubt their existence. [12]

The documents, therefore, not only confirm the attribution of the panel in the National Gallery of Art to Paolo di Giovanni Fei but also reveal that it is the fragment of a larger complex. It remains uncertain, however, whether Paolo was the sole author of the dispersed polyptych. According to another piece of documentary evidence dating to 1393, in fact, another painter, Bartolo di Fredi,

received a payment "per la tavola d'altare di San Pietro che fa." [13] According to some, this means that the execution of the polyptych had already begun in 1392–1393, but for some reason Bartolo's work was not completed. So the commission was then apparently transferred to Paolo. It was believed in the past that the lost laterals of our Presentation could be identified in two panels by Bartolo di Fredi representing Saint Peter and Saint Paul, but the hypothesis was then shown to be mistaken. [14] So, in this case, the problem of the collaboration between the two Sienese painters still remains open. [15]

Paolo's painting in Washington has always met with a flattering reception from art historians. Millard Meiss (1951) hailed it as an "important panel"; Enzo Carli (1979), as one of the masterpieces of late-fourteenth-century Sienese painting ("uno dei capolavori della pittura senese del tardo Trecento"); while the Dutch expert on Sienese painting, Henk van Os (1990), described it as "a magnificent painting." [16] Michael Mallory (1965) was the first to recognize its identity with the documented panel by Paolo di Giovanni Fei in Siena Cathedral. He also subjected it to a meticulous stylistic and iconographic analysis. He observed inter alia that "the series of spaces that the artist has opened up beyond the figures is more complex than anything that he attempted in the Nativity [that is, in the other polyptych by the artist similarly having a scene thronged with figures at the center, now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena] or in the Visitation [that is, in the scene frescoed by Paolo in the church of San Francesco, also in Siena], and at the same time the architecture is rendered accurately enough so that we can understand the plan of this church with its polygonal apse and vaulted chapels." The Washington Presentation, Mallory concluded, "is the most ambitious and successful Sienese painting of the late Trecento as regards interior setting." [17]

To illustrate the scene of the entry of the child Mary into the temple, Paolo must have followed an illustrious model, now lost: the one painted by Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti as part of a Marian sequence on the facade of the Ospedale della Scala, opposite the cathedral, in 1335. [18] We do not know whether Paolo had been contractually obliged—as Sano di Pietro would be a half-century later [19]—to reproduce the Lorenzettian composition in his panel. Many elements that it holds in common with Sano di Pietro's version of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana), [20] and with the many other variations on the theme produced by Sienese painters in the second half of the fourteenth century and early fifteenth century, [21] do suggest that he followed the same prototype, albeit with some liberties. The model in question showed Mary at

the top of the flight of stairs within an elaborate architectural structure, frontally placed, with one or two priests welcoming her. The child's arms were humbly crossed over her breast, but she was shown looking backward towards her mother. Behind the priests, at the center, an altar with a golden ciborium (presumably intended to represent the Ark of the Covenant) could be glimpsed in the background, while further to the right was placed the group of girls who would be Mary's companions during her years in the temple. Placed in the foreground to the left were Mary's mother and a group of women, and on the other side a group of men including two elderly bearded Jews disputing with each other. [22] Another model that the artist must have had in mind in his work was *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple* [fig. 1] painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti for the altar of San Crescenzio in Siena Cathedral (now in the Uffizi, Florence). [23] In conformity with this latter work, Paolo gives the Temple of Jerusalem a different appearance from that seen in the various versions of the theme painted by other Sienese painters. Following the lost fresco on the hospital facade, those painters describe the temple as a circular-plan building, whereas Paolo shows it as an imposing Gothic church with a nave and two aisles: an innovative feature that shows his intention— and capacity—to renovate the tradition.

Perhaps the most original aspect of his composition, however, is its color: in contrast to the mainly dark colors enlivened by large splashes of deep red proposed by his predecessors, Paolo has adopted an altogether brighter, sunnier palette to represent the light-flooded interior of the temple, its polygonal apse pierced by a ring of double-lancet windows, its blue-gray stonework articulated with pink stringcourses. The colors of the architecture are matched by those of the various groups of onlookers that throng the interior, almost all of them wearing light-colored clothing: salmon pink, light blue, sage green. On the other hand, Paolo is parsimonious in his use of brilliant colors such as cinnabar red. It should also be pointed out that in his scene the middle distance is as densely inhabited as the foreground; it contains not only the principal group of Mary and Zacharias but also the crowd of girls assembled in a kind of raised singing gallery at the right [fig. 2]. Other innovative features of Paolo's scene are some apparently minor inventions, such as the two foreshortened heads closing off the back of the composition at either side—the heads of young women standing in the background and craning their necks in order to better view the sacred event—thus emphasizing the spaciousness of the scene. The detail—as spontaneous as a snapshot—of the kneeling woman seen from the back in the foreground to the left, half-hidden by the pillar against which the Solomonic column of the lost original frame would have
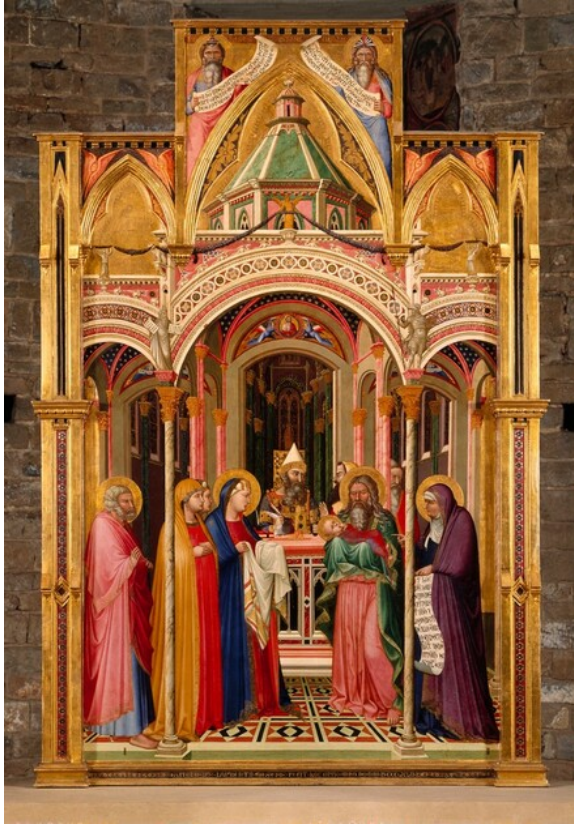
been superimposed, develops a motif with which the painter had already experimented, for example in *The Birth of the Virgin* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. [24] The *trouvaille* of placing two children in the foreground, silhouetted against the light-flooded flight of steps, with the evident function of providing a kind of repoussoir, also anticipated a motif of which the International Gothic painters of the following generation would be fond. Not even in this phase of his full maturity, however, was the painter apparently willing to forego the solemn, dreamy, and in general impenetrable facial masks that usually characterize his paintings. Yet he skillfully exploits the expressive potential of the large and nervous hands of his figures to express the resolution, wonder, or doubt of his protagonists. In conclusion, it can be said that the scene proposed by the painter epitomizes and at the same time renews the experiences of a whole century of Sienese figurative culture, projecting them towards what was about to be born in the new century.

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 2 Detail of girls in the singing gallery, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1398–1399, tempera on panel transferred to hardboard, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 1 Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, 1342, tempera on panel, Uffizi, Florence. Image: Scala/Art Resource, NY

NOTES

[1]   The apocryphal text has the title *De Ortu Beatae Mariae et Infantia Salvatoris*; on the origin of the legend and on its sources see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1964–1965), 2:112–128.

[2]   Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1964–1965), 2:128–134.

[3]   Gertrud Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 6 vols. (Gütersloh, 1966–1990), 4, pt. 2: 68. On the fifteen Gradual Psalms (Psalms 120–134),

see Frank L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London and New York, 1958), 578.

[4] Gertrud Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 6 vols. (Gütersloh, 1966–1990), 4, pt. 2:67–68.

[5] Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:176.

[6] National Gallery of Art, *Paintings and Sculpture from the Kress Collection* (Washington, DC, 1956), 28.

[7] National Gallery of Art, *Paintings and Sculpture from the Samuel H. Kress Collection* (Washington, DC, 1959), 35; Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1964–1965), 2:30 n. 1.

[8] Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton, 1951), 28.

[9] Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Central Italian and North Italian Schools*, 3 vols. (London, 1968), 2:130.

[10] Vittorio Lusini, *Il Duomo di Siena* (Siena, 1911), 321 n. 2, and Provenance, note 1.

[11] Quoted by Michael Mallory, *Paolo di Giovanni Fei* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965), 124.

[12] On the compositional scheme prescribed for altarpieces in Siena Cathedral, beginning with that of Sant'Ansano painted by Simone Martini (Sienese, active from 1315; died 1344) and Lippo Memmi (Sienese, active 1317/1347) in 1333 (now in the Uffizi, Florence) and continuing through the fourteenth century, see Kavin Frederick, "A Program of Altarpieces for the Siena Cathedral," *The Rutgers Art Review* 4 (1983): 18–38; Hendrik W. van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215–1460: Form, Content, Function*, vol. 2, *1344–1460* (Groningen, 1990), 99–139. The only one of these altarpieces to retain the paintings of its upper register (except for the one originally at its center) is that for the altar of Sant'Ansano, with busts of prophets in its gable panels, but it does not seem justified to suppose that in this respect the polyptychs of the cathedral were any different from the altarpieces of the main Sienese churches. In fact, in recent times the existence of gable panels has been conjectured both for the polyptych of San Vittore painted by Bartolomeo Bulgarini (Italian, c. 1300 - 1378) around 1351 and now divided among the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen; and other collections. See Elisabeth H. Beatson, Norman E. Muller, and Judith B. Steinhoff, "The St. Victor Altarpiece in Siena Cathedral: A Reconstruction," *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 610–631; Judith Steinhoff-Morrison, *Bartolomeo Bulgarini and Sienese Painting of the Mid-Fourteenth Century*, 2 vols. (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1990), 2: fig. 20h. For that of

San Crescenzio, painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in 1342, of which the main panel is now in the Uffizi, Florence, see Sonia Chiodo, "Attorno a un dipinto inedito di Ambrogio Lorenzetti," *Arte cristiana* 91 (2003): 1–6; Erling S. Skaug, "Two New Paintings by Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Technical Criteria and the Complexity of Chronology," *Arte cristiana* 91 (2003): 7–17. Andrea De Marchi made the point that the carpenter Paolo Bindi, having realized the wooden structure for the polyptych that Ambrogio Lorenzetti had been commissioned to paint, was paid for constructing not only the predella but also the "cholonne" and the "civori" (possibly to be interpreted as gables); Andrea De Marchi, "La tavola d'altare," in *Storia delle arti in Toscana: Il Trecento*, ed. Max Seidel (Florence, 2004), 29.

[13]   Gaetano Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, 3 vols. (Siena, 1854–1856), 2:37; Gaudenz Freuler, *Bartolo di Fredi Cini: Ein Beitrag zur sienesischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Disentis, 1994), 428; Monica Butzek, "Chronologie," in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3, *Der Dom S. Maria Assunta*, bk. 1, *Architektur*, pt. 1, ed. Walter Haas and Dethard von Winterfeld (Munich, 2006), 98. Commenting on this information, Michael Mallory observed, "probably the document...is designating a panel depicting St. Peter rather than one made for the chapel of S. Pietro, or possibly it refers to an altarpiece for the chapel that [Bartolo di] Fredi did actually execute, but which was moved or destroyed," and he added, "it is even possible that [Bartolo di] Fredi did begin the triptych from which the *Presentation of the Virgin* remains, but that his work was executed on one of the missing panels." See Michael Mallory, *Paolo di Giovanni Fei* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965), 128. In the view of the present writer, this latter hypothesis seems the more plausible; in any case, it should be recalled that only one of the chapels in the cathedral was dedicated to Saint Peter.

[14]   Hendrik W. van Os, "Tradition and Innovation in Some Altarpieces by Bartolo di Fredi," *The Art Bulletin* 67 (1985): 50–66; Gaudenz Freuler, "Bartolo di Fredis Altar für die Annunziata-Kapelle in S. Francesco in Montalcino," *Pantheon* 43 (1985): 21. For a correction of the proposal, see Gaudenz Freuler, *Bartolo di Fredi Cini: Ein Beitrag zur sienesischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Disentis, 1994), 341.

[15]   Recently it was conjectured that the payment to Bartolo referred not to the altarpiece but to the tabernacle commissioned in 1380 to hold the statue of the saint, and destined for the same altar; Monica Butzek, "Chronologie," in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3, *Der Dom S. Maria Assunta*, bk. 1, *Architektur*, pt. 1, ed. Walter Haas and Dethard von Winterfeld (Munich, 2006), 99 n. 1285 and 1286. However, as Monica Butzek verbally advised me, she excluded this eventuality.

[16]   Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton, 1951), 28 n. 58; Enzo Carli, *Il Duomo di Siena* (Genoa, 1979), 85;

Hendrik W. van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215–1460: Form, Content, Function*, vol. 2, *1344–1460* (Groningen, 1990), 136.

[17]   Michael Mallory, *Paolo di Giovanni Fei* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965), 119.

[18]   Daniela Gallavotti Cavallero, *Lo Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena: Vicenda di una committenza artistica* (Pisa, 1985), 70–73. The frescoes represented the Birth of the Virgin, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, the Betrothal, the Return of Mary to the House of Her Parents, and, probably, the Assumption.

[19]   In 1448 it was decided to add a predella to the altarpiece of the "cappella de' Signori" in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, and it was specified that "vi si debba fare cinque storie di nostra donna alla similitudine di quelle che sonno a capo le porti dello spedale della scala" (five stories of Our Lady should be made copying those that are above the doors of the Hospital of the Scala). See Gaetano Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, 3 vols. (Siena, 1854–1856), 2:256–257. The panels of the predella, now dispersed among various collections, were painted by Sano di Pietro and are to be considered simplified reproductions but substantially faithful to the frescoes of Lorenzetti on the facade of the Ospedale della Scala. See Keith Christiansen, "The Cappella de' Signori Predella," in *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500*, ed. Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, and Carl Brandon Strehlke (New York, 1988), 146–148.

[20]   Wolgang Fritz Volbach, *Catalogo della Pinacoteca Vaticana*, vol. 2, *Il Trecento. Firenze e Siena* (Vatican City, 1987), 48, fig. 99.

[21]   Mallory listed the variants of the compositions. Michael Mallory, *Paolo di Giovanni Fei* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965), 135–141.

[22]   This motif is less clearly evident in the panel of Sano di Pietro and in the other derivations from the Lorenzettian prototype, where the two old men, busily conversing with each other and in some cases with other figures, are also flanked by Saint Joachim, who dominates the group. Presumably this also was so in the lost fresco of Santa Maria della Scala. The motif of the disputation is particularly conspicuous in Lippo Vanni's fresco of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple in the church of San Leonardo al Lago, and in this respect recalls the National Gallery of Art panel.

[23]   Uffizi, Florence, no. 8346; see Hayden B.J. Maginnis, "Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Presentation in the Temple," *Studi di storia dell'arte* 2 (1991): 33–50, and on the position of this important painting in the history of the representation of space in fourteenth-century painting see Miriam Schild Bunim, *Space in Medieval Painting and the Forerunners of Perspective* (New York, 1940), 145 –151.

[24]   No. 116; cf. Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena*, vol. 1, *I dipinti dal*

XII al XV secolo (Genoa, 1977), 179–180, and Veronica Randon, in *Il Crocifisso con i dolenti in umiltà di Paolo di Giovanni Fei: Un capolavoro riscoperto*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli, Silvia Colucci, and Veronica Randon (Siena, 2005), 55–57.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The original wooden support, of an undetermined number of planks with vertical grain, was removed by William Suhr when the painting was transferred to hardboard and cradled in 1954. [1] Photographs taken before this treatment [fig. 1] show the painting in a nineteenth-century frame that follows the shape of the upper edge; since this format would have been most uncommon in a fourteenth-century altarpiece, it seems likely that the panel was cut out of a larger one of different shape, presumably provided with gables above. The wooden support may have been slightly cropped along all the edges. The panel was prepared with gesso followed by red bole in areas to be gilded. The brocade fabrics were created using sgraffito. The gilded areas were elaborately tooled with twelve different punch marks. Incised lines were used to indicate the contours of the architecture and the placement of the figures. Infrared reflectography at 1.5 to 2.0 microns shows underdrawing, which reveals that both the figures and the architecture were sketched in freely. [2] Paint was applied in the small, discrete brushstrokes typical of tempera, with green underpaint in the flesh areas.

When the panel was stripped of its original frame, the two wooden columns that would have divided the composition into three parts were dismantled and lost; during their removal, the painted columns of the architectural setting, which the framing columns had partially covered, suffered damage in the areas of the bases and capitals [fig. 2]. The paint layer in the areas beneath the two lateral arches is generally well preserved; that beneath the central arch is abraded, and scattered small losses there have been inpainted. There are additional paint losses along the lower edge and to the right side of the left inner column. Lacunae are also present along a crack extending from the center of the lower edge to the left hand of the high priest. Suhr removed a discolored varnish and inpainted the panel when he transferred it in 1954. By 1996, the varnish and inpainting applied by Suhr had discolored. The painting was treated again between 1996 and 1998 to remove this discolored varnish and inpainting.

TECHNICAL COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Archival photograph, c. 1950, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1398–1399, tempera on panel transferred to hardboard, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 2 Photograph during treatment, before inpainting, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1398–1399, tempera on panel transferred to hardboard, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1]   Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:177.

[2]   Infrared reflectography was performed with a Kodak 310-21X focal plane array PtSi camera.

PROVENANCE

Commissioned in 1398[1] for the chapel of San Pietro in Siena Cathedral,[2] where it remained at least until 1482.[3] It is probable, however, that the altarpiece was removed only between 1580 (when a new, richly decorated marble altar was commissioned for the chapel) and 1582 (when the decoration of the new altar was completed). At this time it was then either consigned to the cathedral's storerooms or sold.[4] H.M. Clark, London, by 1928.[5] Edward Hutton [1874-1969], London.[6] (Wildenstein & Co., New York), by 1950;[7] sold February 1954 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;[8] gift 1961 to NGA.

[1] Gaetano Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, 3 vols., Siena, 1854: 2:37; Scipione Borghesi and Luciano Banchi, *Nuovi documenti per la storia dell'arte senese* 1, Siena, 1898: 62; Monica Butzek, "Chronologie," In *Die Kirchen von Siena*, multi-vol., ed. Waltee Haas and Dethard von Winterfeld, vol. 3, part 1.1.2, Munich, 2006: 102. Payments to Paolo di Giovanni Fei "per la tavola di sancto Piero et sancto Pavolo, per sua fatiga e colori" were made, specifies Monica Butzek (2006), between 1398 and April 1399.

[2] Pietro Lorenzetti's altarpiece of the *Birth of the Virgin*, also painted for the Cathedral of Siena in 1342 (see Carlo Volpe, *Pietro Lorenzetti*, ed. Marco Lucco, Milan, 1989: 152-154), is surmounted, like *The Presentation of the Virgin* discussed here, by three arches included in a heavy frame. The present appearance of these paintings is misleading, however. Fourteenth-century altarpieces were generally realized on rectangular panels, not silhouetted like these, and integrated above by triangular or trapezoidal gables partially overlapped by the integral frame. See Monika Cämmerer George, *Die Rahmung der toskanischen Altarbilder in Trecento*, Strasbourg,1966: 144-165; Christoph Merzenich, *Vom Schreinerwerk zum Gemälde. Florentiner Altarwerke der ersten Hälfe des Quattrocento*, Berlin, 2001: 43-56.

[3] Enzo Carli, *Il Duomo di Siena*, Genoa, 1979: 85-86.

[4] On 9 September 1579, the Congrega di San Pietro, patron since 1513 of the chapel dedicated to this saint (the second altar from the entrance in the north aisle), commissioned the stonecutters Girolamo del Turco and Pietro di Benedetto da Prato to realize a new marble structure around the altar. This sculptural

decoration was completed in April 1582. It is presumed that between the two dates Paolo's panel, considered antiquated, was removed. See Butzek 2006, 197.

[5] *Daily Telegraph Exhibition* 1928, 162. Concerning the unknown whereabouts of the painting between 1582 and 1928, a handwritten note on a photograph of the painting, formerly owned by Bernard Berenson (now in the Biblioteca Berenson at Villa I Tatti, Florence), suggests a provenance from the collection at Corsham Court, Wiltshire, which the British diplomat Sir Paul Methuen (1672–1757) had formed in the eighteenth century, and which, by the mid-nineteenth century, had been enriched with paintings from the collection of the Rev. John Sanford (1777-1855) through the 1844 marriage of Sanford's daughter and sole heir, Anna Horatia Caroline Sanford (1824–1899), to Frederick H.P. Methuen, 2nd baron Methuen (1818-1891). See Benedict Nicolson, "The Sanford Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* 98 (1955): 207–214. However, this suggestion appears to be in error. James Methuen-Campbell, who inherited Corsham Court in 1994 and has extensively researched the family collections, kindly reviewed the manuscript material for both the Sanford and Methuen collections, and found no reference to the painting (see his e-mail to Anne Halpern, of 15 February 2012, in NGA curatorial files). The painting also does not appear among those disposed of by Sanford on the occasion of two London sales: a sale by private contract under the auspices of George Yates (24 April 1838, and days following), and a sale at Christie & Manson (9 March 1839).

[6] Information given in *Paintings and Sculpture from the Kress Collection*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1956.

[7] According to the handwritten note on the photograph referenced above (see note 5), the painting was with Wildenstein by October 1950.

[8] The bill of sale (copy in NGA curatorial files) is dated 10 February 1954, and was for fourteen paintings, including *Presentation of the Virgin* by Bartolo di Fredi; payments by the foundation continued to March 1957. See also The Kress Collection Digital Archive, https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/2275.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1928 Daily Telegraph Exhibition of Antiques and Works of Art, Olympia, London, 1928, no. X1, as by Bartolo di Fredi.

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1951   Meiss, Millard. *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*. Princeton, 1951: 28, fig. 165.

1956   *Paintings and Sculpture from the Kress Collection Acquired by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation 1951-56*. Introduction by John Walker, text by William E. Suida and Fern Rusk Shapley. National Gallery of Art. Washington, 1956: 28, repro., as by Bartolo di Fredi.

1959   *Paintings and Sculpture from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1959: 35, repro., as by Bartolo di Fredi.

1960   Campolongo, Elizabetta. "Fei, Paolo di Giovanni." In *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*. Edited by Alberto Maria Ghisalberti. 82+ vols. Rome, 1960+: 46(1996):15, 16.

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