



COLNAGHI

BATTISTA FRANCO called SEMOLEI

1510-1560

Battista Franco, though born in Venice, spent most of his life painting in central Italy, mainly in Rome and Urbino. He went to Rome in 1530, where he saw the works of Michelangelo, and this was to have a lasting impression on his art. After participating in the decorations for the arrival of Charles V in Florence in 1536, he worked extensively for the Medici and then travelled to Rome where in 1542 he painted in S. Giovanni Decollato. He then worked in Urbino, finally returning to Venice in 1551, where with the prestige of his Roman sojourn he found work with the Grimani family, the Venetian Government (in the Doge's Palace and Sansovino's Library) and other important patrons, dying before he completed work in Palladio's Villa La Malcontenta.

17 *Christ before Pilate*

Canvas, 120 by 149 cms.

This picture, probably painted about 1552/3, is one of Franco's most successful combinations of the Roman and Venetian traditions. The vivid greens, blues and reds, and the theatrical spotlighting are attractively added to central Italian design, in a manner contrasting with his stiff Roman productions. Though Vasari makes no mention of this subject in his *Life* of Franco, he does cite other collectors' pictures from the *Life* of Christ. He also tells of Franco's work for the German community, and it is tempting to suggest that the Northern elements in this painting may be due to the tastes of his patrons.





25 FRANCESCO MAZZOLA called PARMIGIANINO



