



Portrait of Bartolomeo Cepolla

Date

possibly 1470s

Primary Maker

Veneziano Jacometto

Medium

tempera on wood

Description

Beginning in the 15th century, the demand for commemorative portraits increased significantly among Italian and Flemish patrons. In general, the sitter was shown bust-length in profile or three-quarter view. The inclusion of a parapet in portraits originated in the work of the Northern Renaissance artist Jan van Eyck (active 1422-1441). This pictorial device was introduced into Italian

Renaissance portraiture by the Flemish-trained artist Antonello da Messina (ca. 1430-1479) during his trip to Venice about 1475. The parapet in these portraits frequently included an inscription with the artist's name, either carved on the ledge or in the form of a small piece of paper or parchment attached to it. In this case the inscription is indecipherable; it is on this basis of style that the portrait has been attributed to Jacometto Veneziano. Virtually nothing is known about this artist, despite the fact that he was the leading miniaturist and small-scale portrait painter of Venice in the last quarter of the 15th century. Marcantonio Michiel (1470-1547) recorded a great number of his portraits in collections in Venice and Padua in the early 16th century, but modern scholars have identified relatively few of Jacometto's works. His half-dozen surviving portraits are of conspicuously high quality, displaying a miniaturist's approach to refined detail. The man portrayed here, Bartolomeo Cepolla (ca. 1420-1475), was one of the leading jurists of his day. Born in Verona, he was a professor of law at the prestigious University of Padua and a noted author of several legal tracts; he served as Verona's representative to the Venetian republic and as an ambassador for Venice. In the mid-16th century this portrait was in the possession of one of Cepolla's successors at the University of Padua, the noted art collector Marco Mantova Benavides (1489-1582).

Dimensions

Sight: 12 7/8 x 9 3/4 in. (32.7 x 24.8 cm) Framed: 14 x 18 1/2 x 3 in. (35.6 x 47 x 7.6 cm)