



THE *PORTRAIT OF FRANCESCO II COLONNA* BY GIROLAMO SICIOLANTE

The *Portrait of Francesco II Colonna* by Girolamo Siciolante of Sermoneta is signed **HIERONIMVS SERMONETANVS** and dated 1561 on the plinth of the column, in charge of alluding to the surname of the commissioner of the work who, as the inscription documents, was years old at the time.

He was the son of Stefano IV Colonna, a lieutenant of the Medici family who had distinguished himself during the Sack of Rome in 1527 in the defence of Clement VII and who was portrayed in 1546 by Agnolo Bronzino: the portrait, signed and dated on the base of the column, ahead of the solution of the Siciolante portrait, was exhibited in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence in 1548 on the occasion of the solemn funeral of the man at arms.



Belonging to the branch of the family that owned the fief of Palestrina, Francesco II Colonna played a significant role in the papal army during the war of 1556-1557 between Paul IV Carafa and the Spanish troops, commanded by his cousin Marcantonio Colonna and the Duke of Alba, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo. He was also among the defenders of the Hierosolymitan Order during Suleiman the Magnificent's Ottoman siege of the island of Malta in 1565.

In the portrait, in which he holds a staff of command in his right hand, Colonna stands next to a horseman's helmet very similar to the one in the Vatican collections exhibited here.