



GIOVANNI FRANCESCO DA RIMINI

(Rimini circa 1420–1470 Bologna)

Christ as Man of Sorrows.

Tempera on panel.

14.3 x 11 cm.

Provenance: European private collection. For the first time, a brief art-historical analysis has been made of this small-format and historically interesting work. The small dimensions of the panel and its theme –the sacrificed body of Christ standing in the sarcophagus –suggest that this painting formerly served as a so-called "pace", which was kissed by the priest during mass. The distinctive rendering of the figures, inspired by Italian early Renaissance sculpture, can be linked to artistic processes in Padua in the

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1440s around Francesco Squarcione (c. 1395–c. 1468). The artist must also have been familiar with developments in Rimini. The style of the present painting, with its borrowings from Italian sculpture, is associated with the painter Giovanni Francesco da Rimini (1400–1462), who was born in Rimini and has been documented in Padua since 1441, where his paths crossed with Squarcione. Da Rimini must also have developed artistically at this crossroads of the early Florentine Renaissance around Paolo Uccello (1397–1475), Donatello (1386–1466) and Filippo Lippi (1406–1469), with Venetian painting around Jacopo Bellini (1396–1470) and Michele Giambono (1400–1462). In any case, this *Christus patiens* testifies to the knowledge of the artistic processes in Padua, namely Donatello's *Man of Sorrows* in the Basilica di S. Antonio in Padua (1446/47), as well as the archaeologically oriented painting around Squarcione, Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) and Bono da Ferrara's (active c. 1441–1461), work in the Ovetari Chapel in the Eremitani Church in Padua. This is true of our Christ, whose hairstyle with its highly stylised curls refers back to antique sculpture, which also permeated the works of Mantegna and his companions. Our panel is comparable to Giovanni Francesco da Rimini's *Birth of Christ* in the collection of the Musée du Petit Palais in Avignon (inv. no. MI526), where we find a Joseph whose facial formation and expressiveness reveal a close relationship to our Christ. This picture is associated with Giovanni Francesco's early Bolognese activity (1459–1469). The creation of this panel can, however, be dated slightly earlier, around 1450, and can therefore be situated in Padua, which also applies to Giovanni Francesco da Rimini's panel of the *Crucifixion* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Ferrara (inv. no. 412). This painting, correctly dated to the Paduan years between 1445 and 1450, shows a Christ whose face is cut from the same pattern as that of our *Man of Sorrows*. Consequently, our *Pietà* was probably made around 1450, and represents a valuable new addition to the catalogue of works by Giovanni Francesco da Rimini. Our thanks to Prof. Dr Gaudenz Freuler for this catalogue entry.

CHF 8 000 / 12 000

€ 8 250 / 12 370

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