

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Cecilia Gonzaga (1426–1451)

Pisanello (Antonio di Puccio Pisano) (Italian, ca. 1395–1455)

Date dated 1447

Medium Copper alloy, cast

Dimensions Diam.: 3 3/8 in. (8.58 cm)

Credit Line Dr. Stephen K. and Janie Woo Scher Collection

Accession Number SCHER.2014.15.29

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 32, Medals Room

Commentary The youngest daughter of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, first Marquess of Mantua, was a gifted pupil of the humanist Vittorino da Feltre. Although the medal was produced two years after Cecilia entered the Clarissan convent of Santa Paola in Mantua, Pisanello portrays her in secular court dress, perhaps based on an earlier portrait. Her virginal status is indicated on the obverse (VIRGO) and figuratively represented on the reverse. Following medieval tradition, only a virgin could subdue the fierce unicorn, a symbol of Christ, which Pisanello represents as a goat, a symbol of knowledge that evokes Cecilia's intellectual accomplishments. Pisanello includes the crescent moon as a subtle all'antica reference to the virgin goddess Diana. Source: Scher, Stephen K., et al. *The Scher Collection of Commemorative Medals*. New York and London, 2019.