



## Allegory Of Fidelity - Italy - Late 16th Century



14 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Marble

Width : 46 cm

Height : 28 cm

Depth : 21 cm

### Description

This white marble sculpture depicts a toddler lying on a raised cushion. His plump body is finely sculpted, with particular attention to detail for the fingers of his hands and toes. He wears a playful expression, marked by a broad smile. His finely worked hair frames his youthful face. He is dressed in a simple tunic that covers only one of his shoulders, revealing part of his torso. At the child's feet is a young dog, whose ear he holds in a gesture of complicit play. This particular iconography highlights the relationship between the child and the animal, expressing a moment of tenderness and lightness. The dog, often present in artistic representations throughout the ages, can take on various meanings. In Antiquity, it accompanies man both in daily life and in death. It can appear on altars or in scenes of funeral

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banquets. Its presence alongside the child could thus echo its role as a psychopomp, guiding souls into the afterlife. In Egyptian culture, the dog is associated with Anubis, the funerary god and protector of necropolises. Over time, it became a faithful companion of man, particularly among the Greeks and Romans, where it joined the household and participated in the hunt. During the Middle Ages, the dog was represented in illuminations, sometimes as a hunting companion, sometimes alongside notables during equestrian rides. However, the representation of this joyful child, sharing a moment of complicity with the dog, is clearly distinguished from iconographies intended for funerary purposes. Indeed, although some sculptures placed above the coffins of dead children depict children lying down accompanied by young dogs as a sign of fidelity until death, this work seems to belong to a completely different register. Its expressive and lively character evokes more a scene of tenderness than a commemorative representation. In this sculpture, the dog could symbolize both childish affection and fidelity. This piece thus bears witness to a rich iconography, anchored in the history of animal representations. We can cite the white marble sculpture dating from the 1st century, made from a Greek model from the 3rd century located in the Museum of Romanity in Nîmes. Indeed, this sculpture presents a young child with a playful expression, who wraps his chubby little arms around his dog. Our toddler is in the vein of the putti, increasingly present in the art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under the influence of ancient models. This theme is widely exploited by a Renaissance that exalts humanism.