Limestone Figure Of Virgin And Child, Lorraine, 14th Century



28 000 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Quelques manques

Material : Stone

Height : 61 cm

Description

Virgin and Child with GoldfinchWorkshops of Metz, Lorraine, circa 1330Limestone carved in the round with remains of polychromyHeight: 61 cmHead of the Virgin, formerly broken and reglued, missing the Virgin's left hand, missing part of the cloak strap. Head of the child, broken and reglued, missing part of the child's left foot.The sculpture of the Virgin and Child that we present belongs, by its stylistic characteristics, to the very specific corpus of Lorraine statuary, where the Marian cult gained momentum at the end of the 13th century, reaching its artistic peak in the years 1320-1340. By its modest dimensions, it is part of the statuary of private devotion, intimate religious practice being increasingly popular.Standing, slightly swaying, the Virgin carries the infant Jesus on her right

Dealer

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arm. The face with its youthful features in the shape of a shield (specific to Lorraine) is framed by delicate wavy locks, enlivened by elongated almond-shaped eyes, a wide and short nose and a mouth with pursed lips. On the head of the Virgin rests a crown with trilobed fleurons on a short veil.Mary is dressed in a dress and a loose-fitting mantle that, starting from her left shoulder, transforms into an apron above her knees, revealing her waist, which is emphasized by a tight belt that creates pocket-like folds of the dress on the chest. The presence of the delicately sculpted belt with its buckle and its drooping end carries an important meaning in the attributes of Marian worship, the belt being the symbol of chastity.The movement of the mantle creates uneven falls of the side draperies. On the right, under the child Jesus, its fluted folds cascade richly. On the left, it is the bending of the arm that creates a fall with wider folds.The drapes of the apron, hollowed out in a rounded shape, are followed in an offset fashion by a few beak-shaped folds created by the movement of the left knee.The apron-like draping of the coat introduces an important transversal element into the silhouette and is part of the graphic and plastic research of this first third of the 14th century.The folds of the dress in the lower part are more deeply carved, the sides of the coat skillfully released by the sculptor reveal the Virgin's pointed shoes.The enveloping movement of the coat encourages one to turn around the work and provides a multitude of points of view, especially since the work is executed in the round.The child Jesus is dressed in a tunic whose open collar allows one to glimpse a buttoned blouse. The round face with slightly slanted eyes is framed by small, very tight curls from which his large ears emerge. These coiled locks imitate a lamb's fleece, thus constituting a reference to the Passion.In an affectionate gesture, he pulls with his left hand the strap that attaches the virgin's coat, the sculptor thus creating an emotional interaction between two protagonists.In

his right hand Jesus holds a goldfinch that nibbles his thumb. Symbolically, the presence of this bird announces the coming sacrifice of Christ during the Passion and the blood that will be shed. In addition, this bird eats thistle seeds whose thorns recall Christ's crown.The gentleness of the Virgin's face, the lively and affectionate attitude of the Child, the suppleness and arrangement of the draperies, the clothing details highlighted by the sculptor contribute to making our sculpture both aesthetic and moving and make it a fine example of Gothic statuary from Lorraine.The child carried on the right is rather rare in Lorraine iconography (he is usually carried on the left) which requires the sculptor to do additional work in order to reverse the positions and order the draperies from left to right. There are, however, other Lorraine sculptures with the child on the right listed in the reference work on Lorraine statuary in the 14th century by Professor JA Schmoll (among which the Virgin and Child in the Cluny Museum (inv. 18763, cat N° 114)). However, the art historian does not give any specific explanations on the child's disposition; we can only assume that it would probably be a specific request from the commissioner in relation to a chosen location and desired viewing angle.The work we are presenting can be perfectly compared to a Virgin and Child made in Lorraine around 1340 and kept at the Bavarian National Museum in Munich, which has the same particularity of having the child on the right.Related works:o Virgin and Child, Bavarian National Museum in Munich (inv 65/278), limestone, h. 64.5 cm, around 1340, Metz workshop, (reproduced cat. No. 167)o Virgin and Child, Schnutgen Museum, Cologne, limestone, h. 104 cm, around 1330, Metz workshop, (reproduced cat. No. 145)o Virgin and Child, Kaisheim Abbey (Bavaria), Germany, h. 80 cm, Metz workshop around 1330 (cat. No. 361)Bibliography: JA SCHMOLL, gene. Eisenwerth, Die Lothringische Skultur des 14. Jahrunderts, Michael Imhof Verlag, D-36100

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