



India - Medieval Indian Stele Representing Vishnu In Solar Form - Beige Sandstone - 12/13th Century.



42 000 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Quelques manques

Material : Sandstone

Length : 39 cm

Width : 16 cm

Height : 77 cm

Description

Large white granite stele with very fine grain size representing the god Vishnu. It should be noted that the grain size of this piece is so fine that one might think it is marble, but a careful analysis of the back in particular immediately disabuses us. It is indeed granite. The style of this piece reminds us of the Chandella style, and we find steles with similar iconography of the god Vishnu in Gille Beguin's book: Khajuraho. Khajuraho is the ancient capital of the Chandella dynasty. It is located between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. This capital had nearly 85 temples, of which only 25 remain today. A very fine example of a stele with iconography similar to our piece is the large stele located in Laksmana (western group) and dedicated to Vishnu p161. It is in any case difficult to determine the exact origin of the

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piece in question, but comparisons allow us at least to place it in time around the 12th century at the end of the Chandella period. Indeed, at this time, the Chandella dynasty was in decline and the wars of succession made the genealogy difficult to follow. The presence of the syncretic deity Surya and Vishnu and the avatar Kalkin tip the scales in favor of a late creation. In the Middle Ages, many kings of the Chandella dynasty claimed to be Vishnu. (Khajuraho p37), The god was indeed very popular at all times among Indian sovereigns. In the book "Leaves from the Bodhi tree" p107-108: it is explained that if Vishnu is so popular with Indian kings, it is because he represents in the Hindu triad the one who preserves the good order of the universe. Some avatars are easily recognizable on our coin including the most popular at the time of the Chandella dynasty: The avatars of the boar (Varaha) and the lion man (Narasimha) (Khajuraho p19). On our coin they are easily recognizable on the top of the stele on either side of a representation of Vishnu seated which is in fact a representation of Surya Narayana. Syncretic divinity of both Vishnu and Surya. At elbow height on both sides, there are other avatars of the god. We easily recognize among them on the left of the God Kalkin who is the last avatar to come of the God. It is indeed said that at the end of the cosmic period it is in the form of a horseman that Vishnu will lead the glorious army to victory by crushing the Muslims and thus consecrating the triumph of Hinduism (Khajuraho p 166). On the sides, we find on the right a representation of Brahma and on the left a representation of Shiva heavily eroded. This representation of the Hindu trinity is shoulder-high and smaller than the main deity, underlines the primacy of the god Vishnu. The halo which adorns his head reminds us that he is represented here in his solar form. Under the feet of the god Vishnu the earth goddess (Prthivi) is traditionally seated on a Kurma turtle (second avatar of the god Vishnu who is not represented

directly here but who by the evocation of the scene and who is traditionally represented at the feet of the god at this time. Assisted by a pair of snakes, she holds a vase of immortality liquor obtained during the churning of the ocean of milk. Origin: India. Dimensions: Height: 77 cm; Length: 39 cm; Width: 16 cm. Dating: Medieval period, 12/13th century. Piece appraised during the Auction Art sale in 2018 by the Portier firm by Alice Jaussonne. Provenance: Piece from an old collection M. Andral acquired around 1990 - Auction Art sale June 12, 2018 Lot n°16 - Belgian collection Dr. VDW. Vishnu establishes his domination over the universe in a peaceful way and uses these powers to protect and maintain human life and society. Moreover, Vishnu has 10 main incarnations or avatars: Matsya (fish), Kurma (turtle), Varaha (boar), Nrsimha (lion man), Vamana (boar), Parasurama (Rama with Axe), Rama (king), Krsna (the dark one), Balarama ((King of force a brother of Krsna) and Kalkin (a future incarnation not yet appeared).