



Christ The Redeemer - Emilia-romagna, Early 16th Century



9 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Terracotta

Width : 43

Height : 46

Depth : 21

Description

Christ as the Redeemer

Emilia-Romagna, early 16th century

Terracotta

46 × 43 × 21 cm

This deeply moving bust of Christ as the Redeemer exemplifies the refined terracotta sculpture that flourished in Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany between the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The figure is shown with a solemn downward gaze, heavy almond-shaped eyes, and a slightly parted mouth that seems to breathe a silent lament. Drops of blood trickling down the forehead subtly evoke the impending Passion, while the serene melancholy of the face conveys a deeply humanized spirituality.

The symmetrical facial structure, high domed forehead, long face, central parting of the hair,

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and the gently forked beard ultimately derive from Verrocchio's celebrated bronze figure of the Redeemer from the Christ and Saint Thomas group on Orsanmichele, Florence (begun 1467). Verrocchio's model became canonical, inspiring numerous variants in central and northern Italy. However, unlike Verrocchio's prototype, this Christ faces directly forward, his head upright in a gesture of calm authority rather than sorrowful inclination. Of particular note is the masterful treatment of the hair, whose thick, interwoven locks and restless curls cascade over the shoulders with remarkable naturalism. The sculptor achieves a balance between softness and tension, the strands seeming almost alive -- a feature that distinguishes this work as a masterpiece of tactile modeling.

The expressive handling of terracotta, especially visible in the hair and beard, invites comparison with Agostino de' Fondulis, the Lombard sculptor active in Lodi and Milan around 1490-1520.

Fondulis's figures, such as those in the Lamentation over the Dead Christ in Santa Maria presso San Satiro, Milan, reveal a similar sensitivity to surface texture and emotional intensity. The present bust, with its dense curls, fleshy modeling, and introspective pathos, shares this stylistic affinity, suggesting a common cultural milieu between Emilia and Lombardy during the early Cinquecento.

Related literature

C. Avery, *Fingerprints of the Artist: European Terra-Cotta Sculpture from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 28-30, no. 1.

G. Bonsanti and F. Piccinini, *Emozioni in terra cotta*, exhibition catalogue, Modena, 2009, pp. 208-209, no. 52.

A. Butterfield, *The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio*, New Haven and London, 1997, pp. 56-80.

J. Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Vol. I, London, 1964, pp. 205-207.

V. Sgarbi, *Tra classicismo, naturalismo ed*

espressionismo, in *La scultura al tempo di Andrea Mantegna*.

Superbi Gioffredi, *Verrocchio and Late*

Quattrocento Italian Sculpture, Florence, 1992, p. 129, fig. 90