



Museum - Censer - Scenes From The Life Of Christ - Gilded Bronze - Byzantine - Late Period

595 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze



Description

Late 18th - early 19th century In the style of 17th-century Armenian and Syrian censers, preserved at the Victoria & Albert Museum Near East - Syria / Lebanon / Armenia Cast and chiseled bronze censer, suspended by three wrought iron chains, decorated with a relief depicting several scenes from the Life of Christ. Made in an Eastern Christian workshop, it is in keeping with Byzantine and Syro-Coptic liturgical productions of the early Middle Ages, where the use of incense symbolizes prayer ascending to God. Its decoration, of great narrative density, combines fervor, archaism and a sense of the sacred: a rare testimony to the survival of Byzantine iconography within the Christian communities of the Levant under the Ottoman Empire. The scenes in relief The domed

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body is divided into narrative registers arranged in successive medallions, each framed by a plant frieze with palmettes and stylized flowers. The Crucifixion The central scene of the cycle, it shows Christ on the cross, flanked by the Virgin on the left and Saint John on the right. The frontal and hieratic treatment, with its strong contours, reflects the Eastern conception of the sacred image: not a simple representation, but a spiritual manifestation. The sun and the moon, sometimes visible in the upper medallions, recall the sacred cosmology surrounding the divine sacrifice. The Holy Women at the Tomb In another medallion, three female figures stand before a vaulted structure evoking a sarcophagus. They symbolize the Myrrh-Bearers who came to embalm the body of Christ on Easter morning. Their presence underlines the victory over death and the Paschal dimension of the work. The Annunciation, the Nativity and the Presentation On another level, the scenes of the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Presentation in the Temple appear successively, as they appear in the traditional iconographic program of the Life of Christ (Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation and Crucifixion according to the V&A Museum). The Archangel Gabriel, the Virgin Mary and the figures of the Temple are displayed in a continuous composition where the order of events takes precedence over perspective, in accordance with Byzantine visual grammar. The lower rose window Beneath the domed base, a radiant rose window represents the divine light, the symbolic heart of the object. It evokes the "sacred fire" which animates the material and prolongs the spiritual function of the flame and the incense smoke. Comparison with the censer in the Victoria & Albert Museum The example in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (Censer, Armenian or Syrian, circa 1600-1650, inv. O108693*) constitutes the most direct parallel: same hemispherical structure, same arrangement of medallions, same cycle of the Life of Christ. The censer reproduces this model almost exactly,

with the exception of the trees of life and the pedestal. The domed base and the palmette friezes bring it closer to the Syrian variants rather than the Armenian models. The warm patina and the density of the relief suggest a slightly later production, late 18th - early 19th century, in the style of the Haute Époque, testifying to the Byzantine survival in the Christian workshops of the Levant. Liturgical significance The censer symbolizes the rise of prayer and the passage from the earthly to the divine. Each scene recalls a moment of the Redemption, and the swaying of the suspended body symbolically reactivates the sacred narrative: the rising smoke becomes a living memory of the Passion and Resurrection. Condition Fine old patina, internal oxidation, traces of combustion visible inside. Original chains and attachments. Dimensions Height with chains: 50 cm Height of cup: 11 cm Diameter at mouth: 11.5 cm Comparative references Walters Art Museum, inv. 54.2575 - Syria, 7th-8th c. British Museum, inv. 1872,1202.1 - Syria?, 7th-9th c. Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. O108693 - Armenia or Syria, 1600-1650 Deir Mar Musa Censer, University of Exeter - 6th-9th c. Fligny Cabinet, Byzantine or Anatolian censer, 11th century. Delivery All deliveries are made by DHL Express only.