



## Bust Of Saint Dominic - Alabaster - Italy - XVIIth Century



3 500 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Alabaster

Width : 17,5 cm

Height : 27,5 cm

### Description

This charming alabaster bust represents a man wearing the tonsure and dress of the Dominican friars: a scapular (sleeveless piece of fabric, which rests on the shoulders), a hood and a tunic that we guess. An eight-pointed star adorns the front of his habit. All these iconographic elements tell us that this bust represents Saint Dominic.

Dominique Nunez de Guzman was born around 1170 in an austere village in the current Spanish province of Burgos: a Catholic monk, he was the founder of the order of preaching brothers, more commonly known as "Dominicans". Dominique studied theology and philosophy and took the habit at the age of 25. While accompanying a Spanish embassy to the King of Denmark, he crossed Occitania and encountered the heresy of the Cathars there. Dominique very quickly

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resolves to fight the "good men" at the request of the pope and therefore settles in Languedoc with the mission of evangelizing the territory. When the Albigensian crusade was launched in 1209, Dominic followed the crusaders to obtain conversions. Wanting no other weapons than persuasion, prayer and good examples, Dominique did not take part in war and massacres, making him a pacifist figure to be put in opposition to Simon de Montfort, leader of the army of Crusaders, who exterminated the Albigensians with iron and fire between 1205 and 1215. Inspired by the very recent order of Francis of Assisi, Dominic founded the Order of Preachers in 1216. The Dominicans are invited to educate themselves tirelessly and to follow the rule of Saint Augustine. The order gives an important place to prayer, meditation, must practice begging, must have no income or property (except for the convent and books which are property of the community). Very quickly the first Brothers were dispersed in the big university towns where they were recognized for the quality of their teaching. A year after the death of their founder, the Dominicans are involved by the pope in a new method against heresy: the Inquisition. Due to their solid dogmatic training, the Dominicans provided a good number of inquisitors until the 14th century, thus participating in the persecutions against the Cathars, the Templars, the beguines and the Jews; despite the precepts of Dominic who fought only through preaching. According to legend, while she was pregnant with him, his mother had a dream that she would give birth to a son who would light up the world, which is why Dominic is often depicted with a star. This piece offers us two types of alabaster called calcite: finer and more delicate, with visible veins and with a greater variety of colors. Used since Antiquity in many types of productions but slightly neglected in the 16th century in favor of marble, alabaster remains appreciated for the manufacture of vases and small statues. The choice of two different

types of alabaster, the finesse of the carving and its dimensions make this bust an object of private devotion, a beautiful intimate tribute to an important saint.