Finch & Co



A FINE ITALIAN IVORY CORPUS OF CHRISTO MORTO

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CIRCA 1650
SIZE : 34.5 CM HIGH, 29 CM WIDE – 13½ HIGH, 11½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST IS A CENTRAL IMAGE IN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY THAT DATES BACK TO AT LEAST THE 5TH CENTURY. CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS HAS BEEN PRESENTED OVER THE CENTURIES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS EACH CONVEYING CERTAIN MESSAGES OR STRESSING PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF. EARLY REPRESENTATIONS SHOW CHRIST ON THE CROSS ALIVE, CHRISTO VIVO, WITH EYES OPEN EXPRESSING HIS TRIUMPH OVER DEATH AND SIN. IN THE 14TH CENTURY AN EMPHASIS ON CHRIST'S SUFFERING CALLING THE BELIEVERS ATTENTION TO THE WOUNDS OF HIS TORTURE, TO HIS HUMANITY, AND THE FRAILTY OF HIS HUMAN FLESH, BECAME MORE PREVALENT.

THIS IVORY CORPUS PRESENTS CHRIST DEAD, CHRISTO MORTO, BUT NOT SUFFERING. HIS HEAD IS GENTLY DROPPED TO ONE SIDE AND HIS STRAIGHT MUSCULAR TORSO IS NOT TWISTED OR ANIMATED AS IN LATER IMAGES. THE QUIET CONTEMPLATIVE QUALITY OF THIS CARVING HAS SIMILARITIES WITH ITALIAN LATE 16TH CENTURY DEVOTIONAL PAINTINGS WHERE SACRED IMAGERY IS PRESENTED STRAIGHTFORWARDLY IN KEEPING WITH THE DOCTRINES OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT AND THE IDEOLOGIES OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTER REFORMATION.