

Finch & C^o



ITALIAN, FLORENTINE RENAISSANCE TERRACOTTA OF THE HEAD OF THE YOUNG ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

AN ITALIAN, FLORENTINE RENAISSANCE TERRACOTTA OF THE HEAD OF THE YOUNG ST JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE STYLE OF ANDREA VERROCCHIO. HIS HAIR FALLING OVER HIS SHOULDERS, DRAPED IN HIS SKINS CRACK TO THE TOP OF THE HEAD, DAMAGE TO THE NOSE. POSSIBLY A MACQUETTE FOR LARGER SCULPTURE

CIRCA 1500 - 1520

SIZE: 14.5CM HIGH, 14.5CM WIDE, 11CM DEEP – 5¾ INS HIGH, 5¾ INS WIDE, 4¼ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE CHARACTER OF THIS HEAD IS VERY DISTINCTIVE AND THE EXPRESSIVE MODELLING POINTS TO THE INFLUENCE OF VERROCCHIO'S PRESUMED MASTER DONATELLO WHO ALSO SCULPTED IMAGES OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST HAS ALWAYS BEEN HELD IN HIGH REGARD BY THE MONASTIC ORDER AS BY HIS SOLITARY AND AUSTERE LIFE IN THE DESERT HE WAS CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN A MONK HIMSELF. IN ART HE IS REPRESENTED AS A PROPHET AND A BAPTISER. HIS ASSOCIATION WITH BAPTISM MADE HIM ESPECIALLY FAMILIAR AND POPULAR TO THE MEDIEVAL POPULACE. HIS IMAGE WAS FREQUENTLY SEEN IN STATUES DRESSED IN SKINS AND POINTING TO THE LAMB, AGNUS DEI, LYING ON A BOOK, WITH A CROSS IN HIS OTHER HAND. SOMETIMES THE GOSPEL TEXT WAS INTERPRETED AS MEANING THAT HE WAS DRESSED IN THE ENTIRE SKIN OF A CAMEL, BUT THIS MAY HAVE HAD ITS ORIGINS IN MEDIEVAL DRAMA.