Finch & Co



ENGLISH CARVED OVAL MARBLE PLAQUE IN RELIEF

AN UNUSUAL ENGLISH CARVED OVAL MARBLE PLAQUE IN RELIEF
DEPICTING MARY MAGDALENE AS A HERMIT IN THE WILDERNESS CONTEMPLATING A SKULL, HER LONG FLOWING HAIR, BESIDE A SCOURGE, A JAR AND A CROSS. A CHURCH WITH A SPIRE IN THE DISTANCE AND MARY PRAYING BEFORE A CROSS BENEATH TREES
PROBABLY FROM A CHURCH MEMORIAL OR CHEST TOMB
LATE 18TH CENTURY
SIZE: 31CM HIGH, 41.5CM WIDE, 7CM DEEP – 12¼ INS HIGH, 16¼ INS WIDE, 2¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE CHURCH MASON OF THE 17TH CENTURY AND 18TH CENTURY BROUGHT HIS OWN SKILLS AND IMAGINATION TO EACH PIECE OF WORK TOGETHER WITH HIS OWN LIMITED KNOWLEDGE AND SYMBOLISM. THE MAJORITY OF EARLY MEMORIALS INCORPORATE THE SKULL, THE ULTIMATE REPRESENTATION OF DEATH, BUT MARY MAGDALENE IS AN UNUSUAL SUBJECT.
MARY MAGDALENE STOOD BY THE CROSS, ANOINTED CHRIST'S BODY AT THE TOMB AND WAS THE FIRST TO MEET THE RISEN CHRIST. SHE THEN PROCLAIMED THE RESURRECTION TO THE ELEVEN APOSTLES AND FOR THIS REASON SHE WAS CALLED THE 'APOSTLE TO THE APOSTLES'. HOWEVER GREGORY I MERGED MARY MAGDALENE WITH TWO OTHER MARY'S; THE SINNER WHO ANOINTED JESUS AND MARY OF BETHANY WHO ANOINTED CHRIST'S FEET, THUS PRODUCING THE COMPOSITE FIGURE OF THE SEXUALLY ABERRANT PENITENT. FROM THIS 'MAGDALENE' BECAME A TERM FOR PROSTITUTES WHO HAD TURNED TO CHRIST, AND FOR HOUSES, WHICH TOOK THEM IN, SOMETIMES AS SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS ORDERS.
THERE IS NO GROUND FOR GREGORY THE GREATS' IDENTIFICATIONS AND THEY HAVE BEEN ABANDONED EVEN BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH WHERE THEY HAD GREAT EMOTIONAL IMPORTANCE.