Finch & Co



SOUTH NETHERLANDS MALINE (MECHELEN) RECTANGULAR ALABASTER BAS RELIEF OF AN OLD TESTAMENT SCENE

A SOUTH NETHERLANDS MALINE (MECHELEN) RECTANGULAR ALABASTER BAS RELIEF OF AN OLD TESTAMENT SCENE
TRACES OF GILT, CONTAINED IN A COLLECTORS VELVET COVERED FRAME
CRACKS, OLD REPAIRS AND RESTORATION
CIRCA 1600
SIZE: 14.5CM HIGH, 14CM WIDE – 5¾ INS HIGH, 5½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MECHELEN ALABASTER INDUSTRY WERE LAID BY A SMALL GROUP OF ARTISTS, SOME OF THEM FOREIGN, WHO WORKED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 16TH CENTURY FOR THE COURT OF MARGARET OF AUSTRIA IN THE THEN NEW RENAISSANCE STYLE THAT HAD BEEN IMPORTED FROM ITALY. THEIR PRESENCE IN MECHELEN STIMULATED LOCAL CARVERS TO WORK IN ALABASTER USING THIS NEW VOCABULARY OF FORMS.
THE MAIN PRODUCTS OF THESE SO CALLED 'CARVERS OF MINOR WORKS' WERE THESE SMALL TABLEAUX DECORATED WITH MYTHOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL SUBJECTS THAT WERE MADE UNTIL WELL INTO THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17TH CENTURY. RANGING IN SIZE FROM 10 TO 12 CENTIMETRES THEY WERE SET INTO FRAMES AND THEN GILDERS WOULD ENLIVEN THE SCENES WITH GOLD HIGHLIGHTS.