Plaque - Christ as Divine Pilot

Object: Plaque

Place of origin: China (or Hispano-filipino, made)

Date: ca. 1600 - ca. 1650 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Carved ivory in relief

Credit Line: Bought in Spain by John Charles Robinson, and sold by him to the Museum.

Museum number: 267-1879

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This ivory relief depicts the 'Christ as Divine Pilot'. Other ivory versions of this object are known. The composition is related to an Indian miniature from the Jahangir Album, ca. 1600-1610, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Albeit the variants seem ultimately come from a common source (probably an engraving), they differ sufficiently from one another to suggest that they were produced not only in different workshops, but in different parts of the world. The form of the clouds and the moulded frame of the present piece are reminiscent of Chinese ivories made for the Spanish market. Although its date remains uncertain, it seems likely that this relief dates from the first half of the seventeenth century, and, as argued above, is either Chinese or Hispano-filipino.

Descriptive line

Relief plaque, carved ivory, Christ as Divine Pilot, Hispano-filipino or Chinese, ca. 1600-1650

Physical description

Carved ivory plaque depicting the Christ Child in a galley in full sail surrounded by emblems of the Passion. The naked Child stands on a cloud aboard a sailing ship, holding the main sail in his left hand and holding an orb in his right. Behind him is a ladder and a cross, which is also the mast of the ship. To his right is a medallion with another representation of the cross and symbols of the Passion. St Peter's crossed keys are incised into the sail. The upper right and the lower left corners are chipped. Two metal nails have been inserted at the top and bottom. The plaque is pierced with a pair of holes at the centre of the top for suspension. A portion of the border is missing on the top corner.

Dimensions

Height: 11 cm, Width: 6.5 cm

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Object history note

Other ivory versions of this object are known, one in the British Museum and two in two different Mexican private collections and another, now lost, was in a Madrid collection. The composition is related to an Indian miniature from the Jahangir Album, ca. 1600-1610, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC. The miniature includes the date '1580' and the word 'Rome', the date and original place of production of the putative Italian source, although it is interesting that the from of the word is 'Rome', not 'Roma', as it would be with Italian spelling. Albeit the variants seem ultimately come from a common source (probably an engraving), they differ sufficiently from one another to suggest that they were produced not only in different workshops, but in different parts of the world.

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URL

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