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Acquisitions

Medieval Sculpture from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection and from Other Donors

• FRITS SCHOLTEN •

A number of medieval sculptures have found their way to the Rijksmuseum over the last four years. The most recent is an impressive Flemish bust of the grieving Virgin, which was purchased with the aid of the BankGiro Loterij. Most of the other statues were acquired through donations or with the support of private individuals, and by far the most important group comes from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection in Eindhoven.

When the collector Professor H.O. Goldschmidt died on 9 November 2009, at the age of eighty-nine, it marked the end of an important piece of Dutch collecting history. Goldschmidt bought his first medieval figure at a sale in Amsterdam on 12 May 1962, almost by chance and without any real knowledge of the subject. It was to be the start of a lifetime of passionately collecting sculpture from the late Middle Ages – the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Over a period of more than forty years the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection grew into the most important and largest private collection of its kind in the Netherlands. With a keen eye, a selective and meticulous collecting policy and a degree of single-minded willfulness, Professor Goldschmidt and his wife amassed a hundred or so mostly high quality works. The collectors had a good eye for unusual, non-traditional figures, which meant that their collection took on an entirely individual character. Typical of their obstinacy was the purchase of the absolute highlight of the collection – the repentant St Peter by the Master of Hakendover.

This seemingly timeless work had been circulating in the art market for a considerable time before the Goldschmidts bought it. Evidently the

time was not yet ripe for a more general appreciation of this artist's radical and expressive style. However, Goldschmidt and his wife recognized the unusual quality of his work and did not hesitate to add this piece to their collection. Nowadays the significance of this work as a key element in the development of fifteenth-century sculpture in the Southern Netherlands is universally acknowledged.

For a long time the Goldschmidts kept their collection to themselves. It was not until an exhibition was staged in Aachen in 1998 and another in the professor's native town of Enschede in 2001 that a wider audience was able to see the collection. On these occasions the collection was also given a scholarly dimension in the catalogue *In gotischer Gesellschaft*, and Goldschmidt explained his passion in the booklet *Hemelse beelden*. Unlike his fellow collectors, Jacques Schoufour and Wim Neutelings, Goldschmidt never toyed with the idea of housing his collection in a museum *en bloc*. He was probably too much the economist, who also saw the importance in economic terms of returning his works of art to the art market so that they could come within the reach of other collectors. This outlook meant that the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection was

by no means static; until recently works were disposed of to make room for better ones. The Rijksmuseum was given the chance to acquire six key works from this unusual collection, in part because the heirs made use of the Dutch government ruling that allows for the donation of art in lieu of inheritance tax and also by

way of a generous gift. In consequence, a number of extremely important and valuable examples of medieval sculpture from the Low Countries have been added to the Netherlands Collection, providing a lasting memory of these exceptional art collectors.

I MASTER OF HAKENDOVER (active first quarter of the fifteenth century)

The Repentant St Peter

Brussels, c. 1425-30

Oak, limed, height 34.6 cm

Since its discovery in 1994 this relief of St Peter has been unanimously attributed to the Master of Hakendover, who was active in Brussels in the early fifteenth century and can be regarded as one of the artistic heirs of Claus Sluter. This anonymous artist derives his name from his most important surviving work, the altar of Hakendover (Belgium) of around 1405. The long, elegant folds of the clothes and the almost graphic style of his carving are characteristic of his work. The result, based on simple linear compositions, is always extremely expressive. These features give his work a great sense of timelessness, not to say modernity. Together with a group of figures of the apostles in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 16.32.212), this relief of St Peter is one of the core works in his oeuvre and is regarded as typical of his *ultima maniera*, his mature style (Steyaert, pp. 68-71). Until now there were only a few studio works by this artist in Dutch public collections, but the artistic quality of those pieces is not in the same league as this repentant St Peter – a subject that is extremely rarely depicted in sculpture before the Counter-Reformation.

The kneeling apostle is completely surrounded by a cave of boulders that has an almost abstract impact. St Peter is composed of diagonal planes, which carry through into the interplay of lines in the jumbled rocks. This compact and elementary composition draws the observer's eye straight to the heart of the work – St Peter's contorted face and clasped hands. His inner struggle is dramatized so intensely that we almost forget that this fragment originally formed part of a large, polychrome ensemble: a huge Passion

scene or an altar dedicated to the apostle's life. In its radical simplicity it calls to mind the art of twentieth-century German Expressionists like Ernst Barlach and Käthe Kollwitz.

LITERATURE:

- J. Steyaert in exh. cat. Ghent (Museum voor Schone Kunsten), *Laat-gotische beeldhouwkunst in de Bourgondische Nederlanden*, Ghent 1994, pp. 68-71 and no. 23
 Cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum), *In gotischer Gesellschaft. Spätmittelalterliche Skulpturen aus einer niederländischen Privatsammlung*, Cologne 1998, no. 1
 Exh. cat. Enschede (Rijksmuseum Twenthe), *Hemelse beelden. Het verzamelen van kunst* (Rijksmuseum Twenthe cahier), Enschede 2001, p. 4

PROVENANCE:

- Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-3).



2 MASTER OF JOACHIM AND ANNE

Madonna and Child

Northern Duchy of Brabant (Breda?), c. 1470

Oak, limed

Height 105 cm

The sculptor who has been known as the Master of Joachim and Anne since the art historian Willem Vogelsang devoted an article to him and his contemporaries in 1906 is undeniably one of the most important carvers of the late Middle Ages in the Northern Netherlands. He owes his name to the small, intimate group of figures depicting the meeting of Joachim and Anne – the parents of the Virgin Mary – which the Rijksmuseum has held since 1875 (BK-NM-88). We know of only three other works by the same carver; this monumental Madonna and Child is the key work in his oeuvre.

The humility and intimacy – as if the observer is witness to a personal moment between mother and child, who seem unaware of being watched – is typical of his elegant style, which has been described as ‘spiritualized’ and ‘internalized’. This restraint has traditionally led the carver to be seen as a typical representative of the Northern Netherlands, active in Holland or Utrecht. The provenance of some of his figures, however, makes a North Brabant origin more likely. This Madonna also comes from a Brabant church, where the figure was acquired by the well-known Roman Catholic architect Jan Stuyt (1868-1934). The figure was loaned to the Rijksmuseum by his descendants as a ‘promised gift’ from the Stuyt-Barozzi Family.

LITERATURE:

- W. Vogelsang, ‘De Nederlandsche beeldhouwkunst’, *Elsevier’s geïllustreerd maandschrift* 16 (1906) 31, pp. 367-69, fig. 3
 W. Vogelsang, *Die Holzskulptur in den Niederlanden*, II, Utrecht 1912, no. 6
Katholieke illustratie 53 (14 June 1919) 37 (cover)
 D.P.R.A. Bouvy, *Middeleeuwse beeldhouwkunst in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 1947, pp. 79-80, fig. 84
 J.J.M. Timmers, *Houten beelden. De houtsculptuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden tijdens de Late Middeleeuwen*, Amsterdam/Antwerp 1949, pp. 59-60
 Exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), *Middeleeuwse kunst der Noordelijke Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 1958, nos. 268-71, spec. no. 270
 Jeroen Goudeau and Agnes van der Linden (eds.), *Jan Stuyt (1868-1934), een begenadigd en dienend architect*, Nijmegen 2011

PROVENANCE:

Unknown church, North Brabant (before 1906); J. Stuyt Collection (before 1906-34); Professor A.M. Stuyt Collection (1934-2007); loaned to the Rijksmuseum as a ‘promised gift’ (2007)
 (inv. no. BK-2007-C-2007-2).





- 3 *Madonna and Child Standing on the Crescent Moon*
 Brussels (circle of Jan II Borman), c. 1490-1500
 Oak, with old polychrome
 Height 69.7 cm
-

The Virgin is shown here standing on a crescent moon. This marks her out as *Maria apocalyptica*, the woman in the Revelation of St John, who is identified with the church (Ecclesia) and stands on the old Jewish church, the Synagogue (the crescent moon). We see her with her child on her arm as an extraordinarily elegant, almost courtly lady, in a style associated with the Brussels wood carving of the late fifteenth century and in particular with that of Jan II Borman. Although the piece lacks the Brussels city mark – a brand in the shape of a hammer – the style is so pronounced that there is little doubt as to the provenance. This attribution is entirely borne out by comparing Mary's face with the facial types of a number of Madonnas that do bear the Brussels mark. The similarity to two seated Virgins in the Louvre and the Bodemuseum is the most convincing (Guillot de Suduiraut, no. 5). A somewhat larger figure, probably by the same carver as the Rijksmuseum Madonna, was in the Emile Gaillard Collection in Paris around 1900.

The characteristic face with the sharply-carved, crescent-shaped eyes and the high, full forehead that these Brussels figures have in common represents an ideal of female beauty that would have greatly influenced late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Brabant sculpture and painting. It was popularized by the many 'mass-produced' figures of the Madonna made in Mechelen in the early sixteenth century and known as 'poupées de Malines'.

LITERATURE:

Exh. cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum), *In gotischer Gesellschaft. Spätmittelalterliche Skulpturen aus einer niederländischen Privatsammlung*, Cologne 1998, no. 6
 Sophie Guillot de Suduiraut, *Sculptures brabançonnnes du Musée du Louvre (Bruxelles, Malines, Anvers xve-xvie siècles)*, Paris 2001, no. 5

PROVENANCE:

Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-2).



4 *Mater Dolorosa*

Flanders, c. 1500-10

Terracotta with old, partly original polychrome

Height 43.7 cm, width 37.5 cm

As a sculptural version of a grieving Mary after the examples by Flemish painters Rogier van der Weyden, Memling, Bouts and their followers, this terracotta bust is unique. The poignant, tranquil and introverted pose of grief and sorrow, the compact almost life-sized form and the sober use of colour give the figure a universal and timeless quality that also appeals to the modern observer.

The immediate example for this impressive and very serene sculpture can be found among the generation of artists after Van der Weyden. They isolated the subject of the *Mater Dolorosa* – Mary lamenting her dead son Jesus – and pared it down to its essence: a devotional image in the form of a bust. A grieving Mary from a diptych by or after Simon Marmion from the late fifteenth century (Groeningemuseum, Bruges) is the closest to the terracotta bust.

Polychrome terracotta sculpture from the Low Countries from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is almost unknown. The genre was developed and flourished in Italy. The very few works with their origins in the Low Countries were all made at the start of the sixteenth century, mainly in the circle of Margaret of Austria. It is quite conceivable that this bust of the Virgin was also created in this Habsburg environment. Not only was the archduchess an adherent of Marian devotion but in the artistic world surrounding her court the bust was introduced into the Netherlands as a sculptural form in its own right for portraits and related subjects, such as this Virgin. The fact that the Florentine Pietro Torrigiani (1472-1528) was in Margaret's service for at least two years (c. 1508-10) before he was appointed court sculptor in England has been almost entirely overlooked in the art-historical literature. An attribution of this bust to Torrigiani must therefore be given serious consideration, but requires further research. The importance of the figure would then be even greater as an early example of the artistic interaction between Italy and the Netherlands.

LITERATURE:

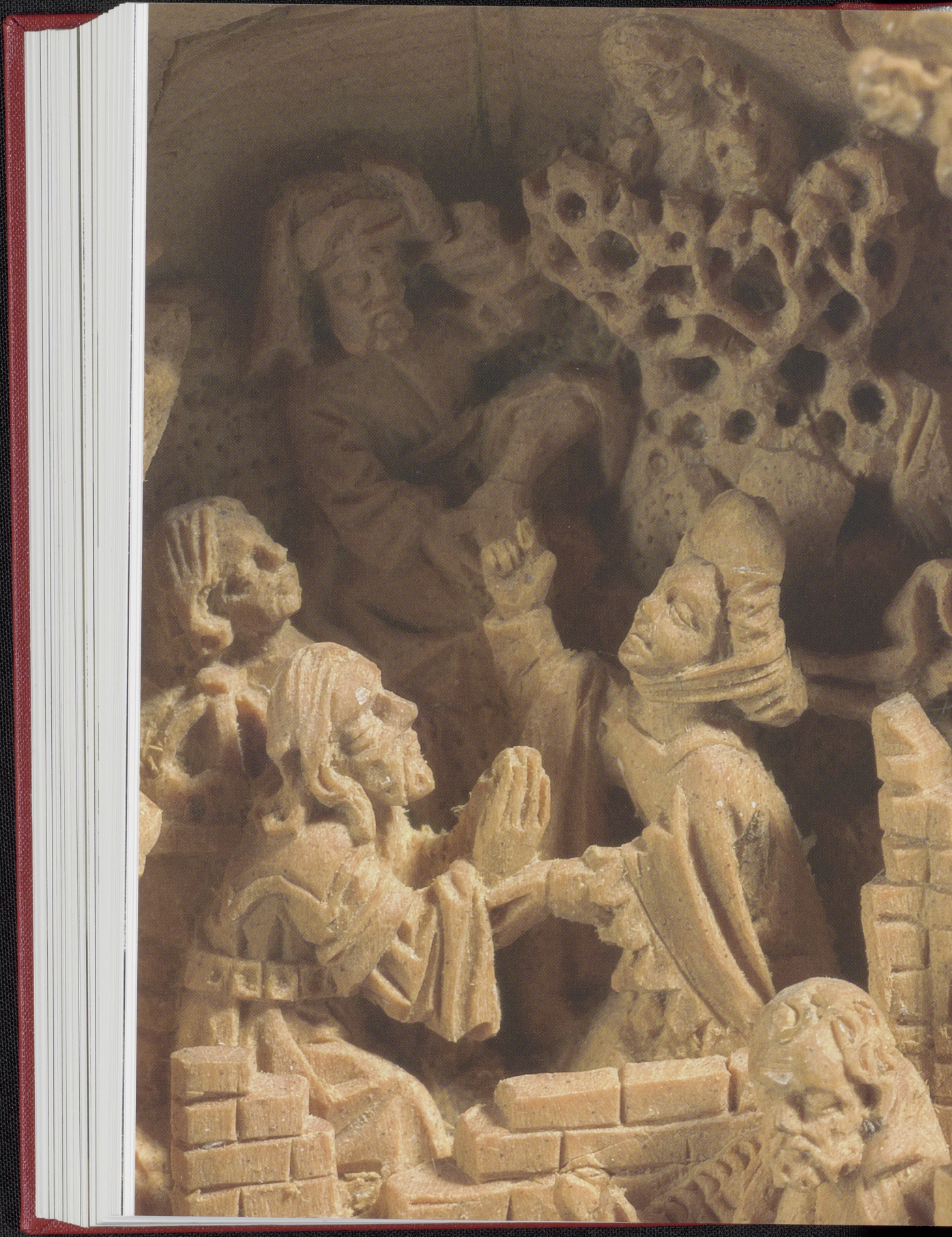
- A. Feulner, *Sammlung Schloss Rohoncz*, III, *Plastik und Kunsthandwerk*, Lugano-Castagnola 1941, p. 35 and no. 66
 R. Heinemann, *Sammlung Schloss Rohoncz*, Castagnola-Lugano 1958, p. 136
 Anthony Radcliffe, Malcolm Baker and Michael Maek-Gérard, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection: Renaissance and Later Sculpture*, London 1992, no. 83

PROVENANCE:

- D. Schevitch Collection, Paris (before 1910); sale Schevitch Collection, Paris, April 1910, no. 310; purchase by Baron Thyssen (before 1937); Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Schloss Rohoncz, Villa Favorita, Lugano and Madrid (-2011); purchased with the support of the BankGiro Loterij (inv. no. BK-2011-31).







5 'ADAM DIRCKZ.'(?)

Prayer Nut

Northern Netherlands, c. 1510-25

Boxwood, silver, gold

Diameter 4.8 cm (prayer nut)

In the late Middle Ages prayer nuts were luxury devotional objects, often worn on a rosary. They consist of two round reliefs in boxwood, which are mounted in two hinged hemispheres. In this outstanding example the casing is made of silver and gold, intricately engraved with images of animals among foliage and personifications of the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire and Water with a nude woman. The text in the banderoles refers to this iconography: *SOKET * VAER * /GHI * VILT * HIER * VINDET/ * IN * D ARDE/ * IN * VUER*/ * IN * VATER/INDEN * LUCHT/* (seek where ye will, ye find it here, in the earth, in fire, in water, in the air).

The minuscule reliefs inside depict the Nativity and the Adoration of the Kings. Typological prefigurations of Mary's virginity are arranged around the Nativity: Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-5), Gideon and the angel (Judges 6:36-40), and the vision of Caesar Augustus and the Tiburtine Sybil. The ingenious grouping of the numerous little figures and the use of several *repousoirs*, such as the walls, gives the scenes a remarkable effect of depth.

A small eighteenth-century box covered in red Morocco leather and a handwritten description of the object accompany the prayer nut. The box once contained a magnifying glass so that the whole thing formed a tiny showcase in which the trinket could be admired and the associated explanation could be studied. This makes the whole thing a unique art-historical document and an early example of the reassessment of medieval art in the Netherlands.

LITERATURE:

F. Scholten, *Handzaam verzamelen*, Amsterdam 2011 (self-published in association with the Rijksmuseum Fonds)
F. Scholten, 'A Prayer Nut in a Silver Housing by "Adam Dirckz"', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 59 (2011), pp. 322-47

PROVENANCE:

Nicolaas Cornelis de Gijselaar (1792-1873), Leiden (?);
Johannes Kneppelhout ('Klikspaan', 1814-1885), Oosterbeek (?);
Johanna Maria Kneppelhout (1851-1923); Jonkheer Gerard Jacob Theodoor Beelaerts van Blokland (1843-1897);
Jonkheer Johannes Beelaerts van Blokland (1877-1960);
purchased from a Dutch private individual, with support from the Ebus Fonds, part of the Rijksmuseum Fonds (2010)
(inv. no. BK-2010-16).



6 *St James*

Lower Rhineland, c. 1480-1500

Boxwood

Height 8.9 cm

Over the last few decades it has become clear that there must have been a not inconsiderable output of small-scale edifying sculpture – finely carved figures and reliefs in boxwood or ivory – in the Netherlands and adjoining regions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although the magnitude and distribution of this genre have gone largely unstudied, it is clear that the work is of a generally high standard and can hold its own with what was being made in this field elsewhere in Europe.

This tiny, minutely carved figure of the apostle James is one of the earliest examples of small sculptures of this kind. Initially it looks quite static and expressionless, but further examination reveals the presence of a sophisticated *contrapposto*. The carver gave the pilgrim saint – identifiable from his hat and cloak with scallop shells sewn to them – a twist to the body, created by his diagonal movement on the little base. He steps towards the left corner of the base with his right foot, while his left is placed in the right rear corner and also denotes movement. James's upper body and head, however, are turned to the right.

The figure follows fairly literally the compositional framework and style of large statues of saints in oak from the Lower Rhineland – around Cleves, Kalkar and Xanten. Two holes on the underside suggest that the figure once had a stand or was mounted on something, possibly a processional staff.

LITERATURE:

Exh. cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum), *In gotischer Gesellschaft. Spätmittelalterliche Skulpturen aus einer niederländischen Privatsammlung*, Cologne 1998, no. 80

PROVENANCE:

Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011
(inv. no. BK-2011-23).



7 *Madonna and Child*

Flanders or the Northern Netherlands, c. 1480-1500

Ivory

Height 11.5 cm

This small figure of the Virgin from the Goldschmidt-Pol gift is one of a group of ivory statues that was only identified as being of Dutch origin in 1994 by Richard Randall, who based his argument on similarities to Dutch miniature paintings and the engraving on silver in the fifteenth century (Randall, pp. 127-39). The freely carved figure follows a compositional scheme characteristic of Dutch figures of the Madonna from the late fifteenth century (cf. Van Vlierden, pp. 242-43 and exh. cat. Maastricht, no. 14). The little ivory figure is almost identical to a *Madonna and Child* in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, published by Randall.

Even though the ivory bears no traces of polychrome, as the American example does, it is particularly special for a different reason: there is an old label on the back with an eighteenth-century handwritten text in Latin with a possible reference to Cologne and the year 1786. Old inscriptions like this are an important source for the provenance of ivories and for determining their age, mainly because copies of medieval ivory carvings were often made in neo-Gothic style in the nineteenth century, and these are hard to distinguish from originals.

LITERATURE:

R.F. Randall, 'Dutch ivories of the fifteenth century', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 45 (1994), pp. 127-39

Exh. cat. Maastricht (Bonnefantenmuseum), *Op de drempel van een nieuwe tijd: De Maastrichtse beeldsnijder Jan van Steffesweert, voor 1470 - na 1525*, Ghent 2000, no. 14

M. van Vlierden, *Hout- en steensculptuur van Museum Catharijneconvent, ca. 1200-ca. 1600*, Zwolle 2004, pp. 242-43 (inv. no. ABM bh322)

PROVENANCE:

Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011

(inv. no. BK-2011-24).



8 CIRCLE OF LODEWIJK VAN BOGHEM

Madonna and Child

Southern Netherlands, Duchy of Brabant, Mechelen or Brussels, c. 1500-10

Alabaster from St Lothain with traces of original polychrome

Height 55.8 cm

The iconography of this alabaster statue of the Madonna is exceptional: as far as we know the subject of Christ holding a basket of apples and offering one to his mother is unique in late medieval sculpture. The subject can be regarded as a reference to Eve's apple from the Fall, which gains a positive meaning because of Mary's purity.

This iconographic singularity is combined with outstanding artistic quality and refinement of execution. Stylistically the Madonna can be associated with the work of a group of alabaster sculptors who worked in Brou (France) on the tombs of Margaret of Austria, her deceased husband Philibert of Savoy and her mother-in-law Margaret of Bourbon. To begin with, the work on these monuments, which began around 1517, was mainly a Flemish affair, with Jean Perreal and Jan van Roomen as designers and Lodewijk van Boghem as the contractor and project manager (Duverger; Berens). In the folds of her robes the Madonna is closely akin to some of the alabaster statues of virtue on Philibert's tomb (Dhanens, figs. 4, 5, 6) and sculptures on the altarpiece of the Seven Joys of the Virgin in the same church (Fransolet, pp. 13-41). There are also stylistic parallels with the alabaster figures on the tomb for Henri van Witthem (†1515) and his wife Isabelle de Spout (†1503) in Beersel (St Lambertuskerk), a project which has also been attributed to Lodewijk van Boghem's circle.

The artistic quality and these similarities of style make it likely that the maker of the Madonna statue should be sought among the alabaster sculptors who worked in Van Boghem's team for the work in Brou. They were probably recruited from various Flemish towns and at some stage may have already worked for Margaret of Austria's court in Mechelen. The height (55.8 cm), which closely corresponds to two Mechelen feet (2 x 27.8 cm) is confirmation of the Mechelen provenance. In this sense this statue marks the start of the tradition of small-scale sculpture in Mechelen, which degenerated into a veritable

industry of Renaissance sculpture in alabaster, particularly in the middle and second half of the sixteenth century.

LITERATURE:

J. Duverger, 'Vlaamse beeldhouwers te Brou', *Oud Holland* 47 (1930), pp. 1-27

Mariette Fransolet, 'Le retable des Sept Joies de l'église St. Nicolas de Tolentin à Brou', *Oud Holland* 48 (1931), pp. 13-41

E. Dhanens, 'Jan van Roome alias Van Brussel, schilder', *Gentse Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis*, 11 (1945-1948), pp. 41-137, esp. p. 64

Exh. cat. Brussels (Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis), *Beeldhouwkunst van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en het prinsbisdom Luik, 15de en 16de eeuw*, Brussels 2000, no. 122

Aloysia Romaine Berens, *Jean Perreals Beitrag zur fürstlichen Memoria in Brou, Stiftung und Grablege der Margarethe von Österreich*, Norderstedt 2009

PROVENANCE:

G.-L. Beeckmans de West-Meerbeeck, c. 1925-55; G. Beeckmans de West-Meerbeeck, 1955-2007; art trade, Brussels; purchased with the support of the Frits & Phine Verhaaff Fonds, part of the Rijksmuseum Fonds (2009)

(inv. no. BK-2009-270).





9 *Pietà*

Utrecht, 1450-70

Pipe clay with old polychrome

Height 42.3 cm

Discoveries of countless fragments, shards and moulds in Utrecht (near the Tolsteegpoort and elsewhere) and in other Dutch towns provide sufficient proof that in the late Middle Ages statues and figures were mass-produced in pipe clay (terra alba) alongside wooden and stone sculptures. Large, intact examples of medieval sculpture in pipe clay, like this *Pietà*, are very rare and are almost entirely absent from Dutch museum collections. Stylistically this statue is closely linked to the fragment of a pipe clay mould for another *Pietà*, which was unearthed in Utrecht (Centraal Museum, inv. no. 1998) and to a pipe clay *Entombment* relief from Utrecht in a church in Segovia in Spain (see Leeuwenberg, pp. 79-100).

This *Pietà* can be regarded as a work conceived in its own right, which may have served as the central point of a small altarpiece for private devotion. The statue has old, well-preserved polychrome and gilding, which was applied over the original decoration. From the technical point of view it is interesting that the statue was originally made heavier with two pieces of stone that were pressed into the still wet clay at the back and then fired with the piece.

LITERATURE:

- D.P.R.A. Bouvy, *Middeleeuwse beeldhouwkunst in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 1947, p. 155 and fig. 169
 J. Leeuwenberg, 'Een nieuw facet aan de Utrechtse beeldhouwkunst v', *Oud Holland* 77 (1962), pp. 79-100
 Exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boymans Van Beuningen), *Hout- en steensculptuur*, Rotterdam 1994, no. 56
 Exh. cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum), *In gotischer Gesellschaft. Spätmittelalterliche Skulpturen aus einer niederländischen Privatsammlung*, Cologne 1998, no. 52

PROVENANCE:

Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-22).



10 *Angel with Coat of Arms (corbel)*

Duchy of Brabant (Breda), c. 1500-20

Oak with traces of the original polychrome and gilding

Height 31.2 cm

Decorative wooden sculpture from the Middle Ages, like this angel corbel, is much rarer than individual pieces. This is because it was subject to much harder wear, a great deal of it was destroyed in the Iconoclasm and tastes changed. Stone corbels in the shape of an angel bearing a coat of arms have survived in a few Gothic churches, but a wooden angel corbel of this high quality and in this condition is rare. What makes this example so exceptional is the presence of the coat of arms of Breda. In all probability this means that the carving was made in that town and is one of the few surviving examples of late Gothic sculpture from Breda.

With the building of a large Gothic church, the Church of Our Lady, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, sculpture flourished in Breda for some time. However only a tiny proportion has survived, for example on the choir stalls (c. 1460), but this suffered badly during the Iconoclasm.

This corbel may have come from a municipal building in Breda, possibly a hospital, where it functioned as a support for a figure of a saint. The Rijksmuseum has a statue of St Sebastian made in Mechelen on its original corbel (BK-1971-50), which also came from a local hospital. However its coat of arms is that of the probable donor of the statue and not the arms of the town.

LITERATURE:

Exh. cat. Aachen (Suermond-Ludwig Museum), *In gotischer Gesellschaft. Spätmittelalterliche Skulpturen aus einer niederländischen Privatsammlung*, Cologne 1998, no. 35

PROVENANCE:

Gift from the Goldschmidt-Pol Collection, 2011
(inv. no. BK-2011-22).



11 *Mould and accompanying cast with the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan (patacon?)*

Leiden, c. 1540

Greyish brown fired clay

Height 11.7, width 7.5 cm (mould)

Height 10.6, width 6.2 cm (cast)

This concave, negative mould and matching original, positive cast show John the Baptist baptizing Christ in the River Jordan. Although the design of this mould and cast are entirely Gothic, they have to be dated to the mid-sixteenth century, after the Renaissance had already arrived in the Netherlands. They actually come from a single excavation in Leiden of refuse from one pottery in which pieces with obviously later decorations were also found (see also no. 12, BK-2010-10-1 and 2). The appearance of these styles side by side suggests a date of around 1540.

The rise of easy and relatively cheap to produce devotional items for the common people in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is peculiar to Northwestern Europe (Hermann; Kammel). In the urbanized Netherlands there was a particularly great demand for them among laymen, pilgrims and members of religious orders. Only a very few complete pieces have survived because of their fragility and the intensive use to which they were subjected. This means that the combination of an intact mould and accompanying cast is extremely rare and of great art-historical importance for our

knowledge of reproduction sculpture in the Netherlands in the late Middle Ages.

We are not certain what the relief was used for. Like the next acquisition it may have been a *patacon*, an earthenware decoration for special loaves of bread at Christmas and New Year. *Patacons* were visibly incorporated in the bread dough and then baked with the loaf (Delcart, pp. 133-35).

LITERATURE:

- M. Hermann, *Augsburger Bilderbacker: Tonfigurchen des späten Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Augsburg 1995
 F.M. Kammel, *Spiegel der Seligkeit: privates Bild und Frömmigkeit im Spätmittelalter*, Neurenberg 2000
 André Delcart, *Winterfeesten en Gebak. Mythen, folklore en tradities*, Antwerp/Apeldoorn 2007, pp. 133-35
 Gerald Volker Grimm et al., *Kleine Meisterwerke des Bilderdrucks. Ungeliebte Kinder der Kunstgeschichte*, Büchenbach 2011

PROVENANCE:

- Found during excavations in the Galgenveld in Leiden (c. 1980); Van Someren Collection, Leiden (c. 1980-2005); Plomp Collection, Delft (2005); Jan Pieter van Halderen Collection, Delft (2005-10); Sanctus Religious Art & Antiques, Amsterdam (2010); purchase (2010)

(inv. no. BK-2010-9-1 (mould); BK-2010-9-2 (cast)).



12 Mould and accompanying cast with *The Flight into Egypt* (patacon?)

Leiden, c. 1550-1600

Greyish brown fired clay

Diameter 14.5 cm (mould)

Diameter 13.0 cm (cast)

This negative mould and original positive cast come from the same excavation in Leiden as the previous two. The central medallion, bordered by garlands of laurel leaves, depicts the Flight into Egypt and is set in a Gothic clover leaf combined with a four-pointed star and surrounded by alternating decorations of flowers, a squirrel, a bird and putti.

The subject of the Flight into Egypt is one of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and it is therefore conceivable that this relief was part of a set and that these images were arranged (perhaps in a house altar) around the likeness of the Mater Dolorosa. However, the uncommon shape of this relief and other items from the same excavation suggest that it is a *patacon*, a terracotta relief used to decorate festive loaves of bread at Christmas and New Year. *Patacons* were mainly used in the Southern Netherlands from the sixteenth century onwards. *Patacons* were visibly incorporated in the bread dough and then baked with the loaf (Delcart, pp. 133-35).

PROVENANCE:

Found during excavations in the Galgenveld in Leiden (c. 1980); Van Someren Collection, Leiden (c. 1980-2005); Plomp Collection, Delft (2005); Jan Pieter van Halderen Collection, Delft (2005-10); Sanctus Religious Art & Antiques, Amsterdam (2010); purchase (2010)

(inv. no. BK-2010-10-1 (mould); BK-2010-10- 2 (cast)).

