A rare 16th century carved and polychrome-decorated oak panel, St. George and the Dragon, German, circa 1530-1550

Sold



REF: 4801

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Correspondence: Cotswold Business Centre, 2 A P Ellis Road, Upper Rissington, GL54 2QB • Showroom: Tudor House, Sheep Street, Stow-on-the-Wold, GL54 1AA
07894 345109 • 07776 327401 • enquiries@houlston.uk.com • www.houlston.uk.com

Height: 57 cm (22.4")

Width: 44.5 cm (17.5")

Depth: 10 cm (3.9")

Description

Of oval form, carved in high relief, St. George typically depicted on horseback slaying the dragon, maiden looking on in prayer and the village or town in the distance, integral frame

St. George is best known for his encounter with a dragon. The tale embodies the eternal struggle between good and evil, courage and cowardice, and faith and doubt. The legend is believed to have originated in the early Middle Ages, drawing from earlier folklore and hagiographies. According to the legend, a terrible dragon dominated the town of Silene, demanding a daily tribute of sheep to eat. When the supply of sheep ran out, the desperate townsfolk began offering their children to the dragon, selected by lottery. The king's own daughter, the beautiful princess Sabra, was eventually chosen as the next victim.
As fate would have it, St. George arrived in Silene just as the princess was about to be sacrificed. George charged at the dragon, slaying it, saving the princess. The townspeople, who had witnessed the battle from a distance, hailed George as a hero. They were so moved by his bravery and faith that they converted to Christianity, renouncing their pagan ways. The king offered George a reward, but he humbly refused, asking only that the people continue to live in peace and faith

For a compositionally comparable example see The Metropolitan Museum, New York, acc. no. 17.190.385. See also a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, circa 1504, in the same collection, acc. no. 19.73.169

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