A carved oak panel depicting St. John, English, circa 1500-70

Sold



REF: 5016

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Height: 76.8 cm (30.2")

Width: 33.3 cm (13.1")

Depth: 8.5 cm (3.3")

Description

The high-relief canopy of drapery and elaborate lambrequin parted to 'reveal' St. John standing, highlighting his sacred presence and representing the veil between the earthly and the divine, holding in his right hand a book, in his left a palm branch, an eagle stands at his feet, all on a plinth base inscribed 'S JOHN'

Provenance:

Stobhall Castle, Perthshire, Scotland, ancestral seat of the Drummond family, Earls of Perth

Former collection of Francis & Samuel Wolsey, leading 20th century dealers of oak furniture and works of art. Donated by them to a Christie's charity auction, 6 November 1956, Lot 80, to benefit the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth, hence the specific choice of donation

The book represents John's role as an author, particularly the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Revelation; the palm branch his association with martyrdom and potential death in Ephesus; the eagle his ability to take flight and spread the Word of God. It is unusual to have the name of the saint written, with identification typically connoted by their symbols/attributes

John is the patron saint of authors, love, loyalty and friendship

Apart from the possibility of this panel being a former stall end, the fabric draped canopy may suggest it was originally part of a pulpit or rood loft as examples with relief superstructures over carved saints endure on both. See for example the pulpit at Kenton, Devon, illustrated H. Cescinsky, 'English Furniture from Gothic to Sheraton' (1937), p. 9 and the rood loft at Llananno, Radnor, illustrated F. E. Howard & F. H. Crossley, 'English Church Woodwork' (1933), p. 42

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