

CHRIST BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE

Artist: Nordic Master, active around the middle of the 16th Century

Date: 16th Century

Dimensions: 107 x 79 x 3 cm

Material: Oil on canvas

Inventory Number: 40624

Total Cost: € 11.930,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

This work is currently in poor condition. It had several tears and holes which will have to be repaired. The pictorial surface is regarded as unstable.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Heal and strengthen the canvas
- Cleaning and touching up of the lacunae
- Reintegration of the pictorial surface
- Reapplication and balancing of the varnish
- Photographic documentation

This beautiful painting by an unknown Nordic Master represents Christ before Pilate, and possibly belonged to a series of Stories of the Passion.

After Judas' betrayal, Christ was taken to the Sanhedrin where the priests, scribes and elders were gathered in the presence of the high priest Caiaphas. Jesus was accused of having proclaimed himself the Son of God and therefore of blasphemy. Thus he was bound and delivered to the governor Pontius Pilate to be sentenced to death.

The painting is accompanied by a framed inscription at the bottom which reads: IAMQ[VE] E CONSILIO CHRISTV[S] POST TERGA REVICTVM PRAESIDIS AD GREMIVM MAGNO CLAMORE TRAHEBA[N]T.

This inscription may be translated, "And now (the Jews) of the Sanhedrin dragged Christ, after having tied his hands behind his back, in front of the governor (Pontius Pilate) with great clamor." This is not taken from the New Testament, although the encounter between Christ and Pilate is narrated in the four Gospels (Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28). These words are written with the clear intention of explaining to the faithful that Christ was taken with his hands tied (though not behind his back as written in the inscription), to Pilate who was seated on a throne surrounded by a number of soldiers. In the center there is the dark figure of a priest leaning on a stick. Pilate shows his anxiety, moving his hands, expressing the uncertainty and the desire not to participate in the condemnation of the innocent Christ. Jesus, in contrast, stands still in front of him, accepting the ultimate sacrifice and obeying his Father's will. The scene is set in Jerusalem in the Praetorian Palace in front of an open arcade preceded by a few stairs, the seat of the Roman Tribunal. The view in the background does not show a typical landscape of the Holy Land, but instead reveals traditional houses of a northern European city with characteristic roofs and mullioned windows.

The painting is attributed to a Northern painter, possibly active in the mid-16th century, who was influenced by both the Italian Renaissance and formal elements of his original Franco-Flemish culture.

