

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Charles Désiré Le Thierry d'Ennequin (Lille 1860 - Paris 1929)

A casket decorated with reliefs from the Old Testament

Bronze

Height : 44.4 cm , width: 31.8 cm

Signed on the lower edge of the chest below the left relief : C. le Thierry d' Ennequin and stamped : lost wax Valsuani. The lid also stamped.

Le Thierry d'Ennequin bequeathed several of his sculptures and pieces of his collection to the Musée des Beaux Arts in Lille, his native city. Among them was the present casket, described as follows in a letter from his lawyer dated 18 July 1929 that quotes the artist's will and lists the works:

"MON COFFRET HEBRAIQUE fondu en bronze à cire perdue doublé de cuir, ciselé d'après mes dessins, par St-André de Lignereux, le coffret reposant sur une gaine en noyer sculpté de style Louis XIV, exemplaires uniques tous les deux.

L'inscription Sémitique en bordure du couvercle signifie "Le jour où vous en mangerez s'ouvriront vos yeux, vous serez comme des Dieux, sachant le bien et le mal.

L'inscription hiératique qui se trouve également sur le couvercle est tirée du papyrus Prite de la Xve Dynastie (Musée de Turins. elle se prononce "Bou Nowr Khopr M bou ban et donne la moralité de l'aventure "le bien en devint le mal".

L'inscription hiéroglyphique du panneau antérieur, peut, de gauche à droite se lire (Sarai) femme Tsahi devant Pharaon.

L'inscription Samaritaine sur un des panneaux latéraux précise le haut lieu où Judas rencontra Thamar."

In 1934 Emile Théodore, curator of the Lille Museum, had access to the collection that had remained in Paris since Le Thierry d'Ennenquin's death and decided to only keep four of the pieces given by the

artist. The casket therefore remained in private hands until its recent rediscovery.

The top of the casket is animated by the figures of Adam and Eve in high relief, accompanied from a text in Hebrew characters taken from Genesis 3:5 and the four corners of the lid feature a pair of cobras. The four reliefs on the sides of the casket are framed by Egyptian columns. The scene at the front of the box shows an Egyptian palace where a naked woman is brought before the Pharaoh and is taken from Genesis 12: 11-20. The relief at the back illustrates Abraham and Sarah visited by the three men of God, Genesis 18:1-16. On one of the shorter sides of the box to the right are Tamar and Judah, Genesis 38:13-20. The four and last relief features Lot and his daughters. Genesis 19:32-36. The inside of the lid features David and Bathsheba and the box is lined with stamped brown leather.

Little is known about Le Thierry d'Ennequin's life. He was a lawyer as well as a sculptor and a great traveller. The Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille owns three sculptures by him: Woman with a garland of roses (patinated plaster, signed and dated 1902), Philippe Le Bon (stone) and Cupid (marble, signed).

We are grateful to Mrs Fleur Morfoisse, curator at the Lille Museum, for her assistance in tracing the history of the work and for providing documents related to the bequest.

Provenance

Provenance:

- with the artist until his death
- by whom bequeathed to the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille
- the bequest was only partially accepted and the casket remained in private hands

Literature:

Biographical references:

- Le Thierry d'Ennequin, Charles, Une famille bourgeoise de Lille. Ses alliances. Ses seigneuries. 1610-1930. Lille : impr.-éditions du « Mercure de Flandre », Valentin Bresle, éditeur, 1929 [23 mai 1931]