

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Georg Schweigger (Nuremberg 1613 - 1690)

Mary Magdalene reading

Solnhofen stone

5.3 x 8.4 cm

Indistinctly signed and dated on the book

1634

Schweigger is thought to have been apprenticed first to his father and then to Christoph Ritter III (1610–76), a Nuremberg goldsmith and sculptor, but his work appears to reflect the influence of Netherlandish sculpture of the second half of the 16th century. During the Thirty Years War, when there were almost no commissions for large-scale sculpture, he made small-scale objets d'art, reliefs and plaquettes for sale to the public. From about 1635 until the 1640s he produced portrait plaquettes in hardwood or stone of such historical figures as Martin Luther, Erasmus of Rotterdam (both Brunswick, Städtisches Museum); these were often based on models from Albrecht Dürer. From 1660 until his death Schweigger worked with some interruptions on his most extensive and important commission, the Neptune Fountain for the Hauptmarkt in Nuremberg, for which he created monumental bronze figures. Although the fountain was never installed, it made Schweigger renowned in his lifetime.

A rectangular relief of similar dimensions to ours and with a comparable landscape background depicting Cephalus and Procris, signed and dated by Schweigger, is in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg (inv. n. 1928.114). The British Museum also owns a small panel by the artist, representing the Naming of St John the Baptist. It is signed, inscribed and dated 1642 by the artist (museum n. 1824,0429.85).

Because of its attractive creamy colour and its relative softness, Solnhofen stone became a favoured material of sculptors active in Augsburg and Nuremberg during the 16th and 17th centuries. The stone was mined in Franconia. Georg Schweigger, along with Hans Daucher and Loy Hering among others frequently used the material in their small scale sculpture and reliefs.

Literature:

Comparative literature:

- J. Rasmussen, Deutsche Plastik der Renaissance und des Barock, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, 1975, n. 31