



Juan de Valmaseda (Basque Country 1487 - Palencia 1576)

St. John the Baptist

123 x 0cm

Circa 1520-1530

Wood, carved, painted.

123 x 0 cm (48 ³/₄ x 0 inches)

Private Collection Europe

Artist description:

JUAN DE VALMASEDA (1487-1548 approx)

Spanish sculptor born around 1487, possibly in the Basque Country, although he worked almost all the time in Castille, particularly in Palencia, where he spent most of his artistic life.

He married Catalina de Medina, with whom he had three children, Juan (probably also a sculptor), Francisco (Cistercian monk) and María. The exact date of his death is not known, although it was after 31st of August 1548, since on this date he made a declaration in favour of Francisco Giralte, with regards to a dispute with Juan de Juni regarding the execution of the principal altarpiece of Santa María la Antigua Church in Valladolid, which Juni finally completed, and is now located in the presbytery of Valladolid Cathedral. He is buried in the church of San Lázaro de Palencia.

In 1514 he was in Burgos working under the orders of Nicolás de Vergara el Viejo in the Sepulchre of Don Pedro López de Gumiel and his Family of San Esteban Church in Burgos, where he probably completed the relief of the Last Supper.

Between 1516 and 1517 he participated in the completion of the principal altarpiece of Oviedo Cathedral, with the execution of the scene of Doubting Saint Thomas, although his hand can also be seen in other scenes such as the Flagellation, the Road to Calvary, the Resurrection of Christ, the Coronation of the Virgin, etc.

The Calvary which crowns the principal altarpiece of Palencia Cathedral was completed by Valmaseda between 1519 and 1520, and displays notable progress towards Renaissance language, without losing the mediaeval concept of drama.

The artistic maturity of his Renaissance language can first be seen in the works completed at the start of the second quarter of the 16th century, such as the Altarpiece of the Chapel of Christ in León Cathedral, which he worked on between 1524 and 1527, in the figures of the Virgin and Saint John, which are found in Lázaro Galdeano Museum in Madrid (1525 approx), and in the Principal Altarpiece of Santa Columba Church in Villamediana (Palencia), since, although it is not documented, all specialists coincide that it was completed by Juan de Valmaseda around 1525-1530.

The result of the contacts held with Diego de Siloé and Alonso de Berruguete can be seen in the final twenty years of his life, when he resided definitively in Palencia, where his art was enriched and matured in such a way that a level similar to them was reached, as can be admired in the Altarpiece of the Chapel of Saint Ildephonsus in Palencia Cathedral (1530 approx) and in the group of the Annunciation of the principal altarpiece of the parish of Tordehumos (Valladolid), sculpted around 1540. It is also known that between 1544 and 1547 he made a tabernacle for the principal altar of the Church of Santa María in Aranda de Duero, which burnt down in 1601.

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