

SA1131859

Early 16th Century Gothic Stone Carving - 'The Death of a Prelate'

Price

Reserved**Item Reference: SA1131859****Date of manufacture: 16th Century**

Dimensions

Height = 67 cm (26.4")

Width = 40 cm (15.7")

Depth = 15 cm (5.9")

Description

A rare and evocative early 16th-century carved stone relief retaining traces of its original polychrome decoration, depicting 'The Death of a Prelate'. The dying bishop is shown enthroned in full episcopal vestments, attended by clergy and mourners, while celestial angels hover above to receive his soul — a composition rooted in the late medieval *ars moriendi* ('art of dying') tradition, in which the good death of a churchman was held up as a model for the faithful. Reliefs of this type were typically carved for a funerary or devotional context — a tomb monument, chantry chapel, or retable — and few survive with their painted surface intact. The Reformation and subsequent centuries of iconoclasm and restoration destroyed the vast majority of polychromed church sculpture in Northern Europe, making surviving examples with period paint genuinely scarce on the market. The carving displays the deep undercutting, expressive faces, and crowded, animated composition characteristic of late Gothic workshops working around 1500–1530.

Internal Ref: 6007

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