Pendant

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	80.272.1
Date of production:	second half of the 19th cent.
Place of production:	unknown
Materials:	ivory
Techniques:	etched; rubbed graphite powder
Dimensions:	height: 4,7 cm width: 4 cm

The slightly more than half-length figures of Virgin Mary and the child Jesus appear in an almost square-shaped picture field, in front of a Gothic interior, whose upper portion is composed of three pointed arches and turrets, reminiscent of winged altars or niches. For a pendant of such a small size, it refers to the most important elements of the Christian doctrine in surprising detail. One group of the motifs refers to the circumstances of the incarnation of the divine child: Mary's eyes are humbly lowered, she does not wear a veil, having become a mother while her virginal purity remained intact. The Son, tenderly held in her left arm, gently touches her mother's chin with a childlike playfulness, a sign of filial love and an indication that Mary became betrothed to God. At the same time, it indicates that the child Jesus is both aware of and fearful of his later destiny, which will be fulfilled in the crucifixion and resurrection. He too still longs for her mother's caring love. The pear (?) Mary holds in her right hand, which evokes the forbidden fruit of the tree in Paradise, refers to the suffering of the Saviour: if the first pair of humans, who tasted it, left the burden of the original sin to mankind, Mary as the second Eve and Jesus as the second Adam cancelled it. For her participation in the plan of salvation, the Blessed Virgin was granted glory in heaven—as evidenced by her queenly crown and the two angels holding the brocade—where she can continue to turn to her Child with maternal trust, so that the prayers of those who adore her will be certain to be heard.

by Szilveszter Terdik, PhD



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