

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Pietà with Donor

French, Probably South of France

Date mid-15th century

Medium Tempera or mixed technique on panel

Dimensions 15 5/8 x 22 in. (39.7 x 55.9 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1907.1.56

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 33, Sitting Room

Commentary The Pietà, a representation of the Virgin supporting the dead Christ in a pose that poignantly recalls the image of her holding the Child, is a motif that first appears in Germanic art of the fourteenth century. Here the figures are set in a landscape which includes Christ's sepulcher at right, a Gothic city representing Jerusalem, and distant snowcapped mountains. The Pietà by a follower of Konrad Witz (in The Frick Collection) evidently was the model for this French variant by a later artist who added a kneeling donor to the composition. Both paintings — individually and in their relation to each other — present many unsolved mysteries. The national origins of the two artists, the patrons who commissioned the panels, and the locations in which the works were executed are all unknown. Northern European characteristics seem stronger in the earlier version, which was long attributed to Witz himself. This Pietà is more dramatically intense, more emotional in the handling of the sharp-featured faces, the angular drapery folds, and the colder tonality of colors and light. Source: Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Jules Renouvier, Montpellier, said to have been acquired from a convent in Catalonia.¹¹ Inherited by Baron A. d'Albenas, Montpellier. Sold, May 30, 1907, to P.A. Gross, Paris. Shirleys, Ltd., Paris. Frick, 1907. Source: Paintings in The Frick Collection: French, Italian and Spanish. Volume II. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.