

Basic Detail Report



The Harttung Family Epitaph

Date

ca. 1540

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

oil on panel

Description

The Harttung Family Epitaph is a rare, early example of a Lutheran memorial, modeled after the earliest Protestant epitaphs created by Lucas Cranach the Elder. Donated to a Protestant church by the Harttung family in honor of two deceased relatives, Elisabeth (d. 1553) and her husband, Heronimus (d. 1539), the commemorative inscription at the bottom of the painting concludes with a petition on the part of the donors for mercy on the souls of the deceased and the expression of hope for resurrection. The painting depicts the couple kneeling in a landscape with members of their immediate family, and looking upward at a large figure of Christ resurrected, triumphant over Death, symbolized here by a skeleton, and Evil, represented by Satan. Illustrated to the left and right of Christ are the biblical scenes alluding to the Resurrection, of Jonah and the Whale and Ezekiel in the Valley. In the former scene, Protestant propaganda is conveyed by the image of Jonah being thrown overboard by a member of the Catholic Church.

Dimensions

Sight: 32 3/16 x 45 13/16 in. (81.8 x 116.3 cm) Framed: 53 1/2 x 40 1/2 x 3 in. (135.9 x 102.9 x 7.6 cm)