

MID-17TH CENTURY FRENCH CARVED WALNUT BUST OF SAINT PAUL

$12,000

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Carved in France in the 17th century, this commanding walnut bust likely represents Saint Paul the Apostle, depicted with dramatic realism and spiritual gravity. The figure features sharply defined cheekbones, a long parted beard, and flowing hair swept back from the temples, all traits aligned with traditional iconography of Saint Paul in early modern ecclesiastical art. His intense, furrowed expression and downcast gaze convey a sense of deep contemplation, capturing Paul's role as the great theological thinker of the New Testament. The broad, V-shaped drapery of his garment enhances the sculpture's classical gravitas, while the raw, gouged carving on the back suggests it was once set against an architectural structure, perhaps part of a pulpit, choir stall, or retable ensemble. The surface retains a rich walnut patina, with visible age cracks and minor losses consistent with centuries of devotional or liturgical use. Executed from a single block of wood, the bust is both monumental in scale and emotionally nuanced. A rare and evocative work of sacred art, it exemplifies the devotional power and craftsmanship of 17th-century French ecclesiastical sculpture. 25"W x 10"D x 22.5"H

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