Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane from the cemetery at St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków

Author: Veit Stoss
Date of creation: around fourteen eighty-five

Dimensions: one hundred and fifty-seven centimetres high, one hundred and thirty-seven centimetres wide, thirty-nine centimetres deep

Technique: bas-relief made of limestone

The bas-relief depicts a group scene described in the New Testament. It takes place in an olive garden surrounded by a fence. The main figure is Christ kneeling in the middle. His three disciples – John, Peter, and James – sleep huddled next to him. In front of Christ hovers an angel. Judas leads a group of soldiers through a gate in the fence. There is also a man breaking through a hole in the fence. In the distance, there are walls and buildings of Jerusalem. The bas-relief is damaged in several places. The entire composition is located in a niche carved in a light-grey limestone slab surrounded by a simple stone frame. In the museum hall, the sculpture is placed on a wall.

The figure of Christ and the sleeping disciples fills the middle and lower parts of the composition. They all wear very loose garments flowing down in numerous folds. They all occupy the foreground of the scene. The main character kneels in the centre, presenting his right profile. He has long curly hair and a beard. His raised face is downcast, with prominent cheekbones. The hands are folded in prayer. His right foot pokes out from under his garment. Under his feet lies a discarded cloak, also heavily folded. John and Peter sleep sitting upright to the left of Christ, right next to him. John has long hair and a smooth face. Peter is balding and bearded. He holds a sword in front of him. James is half lying on his left side, under Christ. He has long hair and a beard.
On the right, opposite Christ's face, rises a rock, with an angel floating above its peak. This is the upper right corner of the bas-relief. The angel has flowing hair and a long robe. Its arms are broken off. In the upper left corner of the composition is a gate leading to the garden. Just beyond the gate, Judas walks down the stairs towards Christ. Behind him, a group of several soldiers wearing medieval armour mill around at the gate. To the right of the gate rises another rock. To the right of the rock, there is a hole in the fence, with a man entering through it. His head is broken off.

In the distance, the buildings of Jerusalem are visible, surrounded by a fence. They are located at the upper edge of the bas-relief, to the left of the angel. The highest building has a temple dome.