

Bezel B7

BLESSED DANIEL AND SIX COMPANIONS

INSCRIPTION:

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SERAPHIC ORDER, BURNING LIKE ELIJAH WITH ZEAL, THE BLESSED FATHER DANIEL, PRO[VINCIAL] MINISTER OF CALABRIA, WITH SIX OTHER COMPANIONS, SET OUT TO PREACH THE FAITH OF CHRIST AMONG THE SARACENS. WHILE THE STAMINA OF LIFE FELL SEVERED FROM HIS BLESSED COMPANIONS BY THE HAND OF BARBARIANS, HE, AMID THE STINGS OF THE SWORDS, PROFESSED WITH HIS GOD IN HIS HAND, WORDS OF LIFE TO THE UNFAITHFUL UNTIL HIS BLOODY BODY FELL ON THE GROUND, AND HIS BLESSED SOUL FLEW TO THE SKY IN THE YEAR 1288.

In 1227, the young Franciscan Order, under the direction of Friar Elias, was enthusiastic about its missionary endeavors. Seven Franciscans set sail from Tuscany for Spain, intending to later travel to Morocco to convert the infidels. Leading the group was Daniel, originally from Belvedere in Calabria and a former provincial minister. His companions were Samuele, Angelo, Domno (or Donulo) from Montalcino, Leone, Niccolò from Sassoferrato, and Ugolino.

After a brief stay in Spain, the group moved in two separate contingents to Ceuta in Morocco. This was a courageous act, as they knew that the local authorities had prohibited any form of Christian propaganda. Initially, they worked among the numerous merchants from Pisa, Genoa, and Marseille who lived in the city. Towards the end of the year, they began preaching to the Muslims in the streets of Ceuta, speaking in Latin and Italian, as they did not know the local language. The authorities ordered their capture, and after various interrogations, the missionaries were invited to convert to Islam. When they adamantly refused, they were beheaded.

Western Christian merchants recovered their mangled bodies and buried them on the outskirts of the city. As soon as possible, the remains were transported to Spain.

The scene depicted is dramatic. Daniel forcefully holds a crucifix in his hand to prevent a soldier from taking it away. Three friars await death with gestures of resignation, their hands pronated and wrists crossed, indicating inaction—a gesture that signifies their powerlessness or suffering from the negative consequences of unjust actions. Another friar is tied to a post, and two others lie on the ground, beheaded



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