



PROANTIC
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Jean Restout, Attr. The Meeting Of Alexander The Great And Roxana



1 300 EUR

Signature : JEAN RESTOUT LE JEUNE attr.

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 32.5 cm

Height : 23.5 cm

Description

JEAN RESTOUT THE YOUNGER attr. to
THE MEETING OF ALEXANDER THE
GREAT AND ROXANA

JEAN RESTOUT THE YOUNGER

Rouen 1692 - 1768 Paris

Pen, ink and wash on paper

23.5 x 32.5 cm / 9.3 x 12.8 inches; mat 31 x 42

cm / 12.2 x 16.5 inches, unframed

in the lower left corner is the owner's inscription

from the beginning of the 19th century : Jean

Restoux Col. de Spengler n 976

The owner's initials (B.W.) and coat of arms are

stamped at the bottom center of the sheet of paper

Dealer

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PROVENANCE

Collection of Johan Conrad Spengler
(1767-1839), Director of the Museum and the
Picture Gallery, Copenhagen
Collection of B. Wolff, Copenhagen
France, private collection

Like all great artists of the academic tradition,
Jean II Restout viewed drawing not merely as a
preparatory stage for a painting but as an
independent process in which ideas crystallize,
composition is refined, and artistic forms take
shape. In his addenda to the lecture *Les Principes
de la Peinture*, he elaborates on the method he
followed in constructing compositions, revealing
a complex system of working with drawing.

Restout, following the tradition of his teacher
Jean Jouvenet, insisted on deep concentration
before making the first stroke on paper:
"One must contemplate one's subject with the
utmost attention," he writes, "and then allow the
thoughts to settle freely on paper."

This is not a chaotic process of improvisation but
a structured system, where the first stage consists
of defining the major masses. He advocated
beginning with the main forms in perspective and
separately outlining the background of the
composition to better perceive spatial
distribution. Only afterward should the figures be
developed, each within its respective plane,
corresponding to perspective foreshortening.

This approach is fully evident in the drawing
depicting the meeting of Alexander the Great and
Roxana. Originating from the collection of Johan
Conrad Spengler (1767-1839), director of the
Museum and Picture Gallery in Copenhagen and
a renowned collector of 18th-century French
graphic art, the drawing left Denmark in the early
20th century and has since remained in French
and Belgian collections.

The artist chose for his drawing an important

episode from the life of the great conqueror. In 327 BC, Alexander the Great, advancing deeper into Central Asia, approached the borders of Sogdiana--a region that remained the last stronghold of resistance to his conquests. The pivotal episode of this campaign was the siege of the Sogdian Rock, a fortress whose defenders, convinced of the impregnability of their position, rejected the offer of surrender. However, Alexander, demonstrating his genius for military ingenuity, ordered his finest warriors to scale the summit under the cover of night. When morning broke and the Sogdians saw the Macedonians atop the cliff, further resistance became futile--the fortress surrendered.

Among the captives was Roxana, the daughter of the local nobleman Oxyartes. According to ancient historians, Alexander was struck by her beauty. Quintus Curtius Rufus recounts the moment with solemnity:

"Alexander, seeing among the captives a girl of extraordinary beauty named Roxana, daughter of Oxyartes, was inflamed with love for her, and, believing that marriage with her would strengthen his power in the conquered lands, decided to wed her."

This decision combined both personal passion and strategic calculation: an alliance with the Sogdian nobility facilitated the integration of the newly conquered territories into the Macedonian empire. Arrian, in *Anabasis Alexandri*, also notes that Roxana was considered one of the most beautiful women of the East, which likely influenced the great commander's choice.

Restout's drawing can be dated to the 1730s-1740s, when he was working on a pair of *desus-de-portes* illustrating the life of Abdalonymus, commissioned by the Duke de Chevreuse (now housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans). These works are characterized by a frontal, slightly low

viewpoint--a feature we also observe in this drawing. Moreover, one of his paintings, particularly *Abdolonyme paraissant devant Alexandre en costume royal*, bears significant compositional resemblance to the drawing.

So far, no known painting by the artist on this subject has been identified, making this a promising subject for future research.