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Antoine Melling (1763-1831) View Of The Surroundings Of Saint-cloud From Meudon

38 000 EUR



Signature : Antoine-Ignace Melling

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Water color

Length : 62,5 cm hors cadre

Width : 93,5 cm hors cadre

Description

Antoine-Ignace MELLING

(1763 Karlsruhe - 1831 Paris)

View of the surroundings of Saint-Cloud from the terrace of Bellevue in Meudon

Gouache watercolor

H. 62.5 cm; L. 93.5 cm

Signed and dated lower left - 1819

Exhibition: Salon of 1819, under number 814, titled View of the surroundings of Saint-Cloud, taken on the heights of Bellevue Provenance: certainly Drouot, sale on February 1 1895, Room 10, Old and modern paintings, watercolors, drawings and pastels, CP Paul Chevallier, Expert Féral, number 132 of the catalog, titled View of the surroundings of Saint Cloud, watercolor

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This superb gouache has reached us in an astonishing and rare fresh condition, with its original frame and glass. We find the green/blue palette often used by Melling, as well as quite remarkable precision in the details of the vegetation and buildings, and excellent topographical accuracy. The artist is stationed on the Bellevue plateau, on the heights of Meudon. On the left we recognize the park of Saint-Cloud, with the lantern of Démosthène (built in 1801 and which was destroyed by the Prussians in 1870) and the Allée de la Balustrade, the Pavillon de Breteuil, and below, a building of the Sèvres Porcelain Manufacture. A little further in the background, the town of Saint-Cloud and its bridge over the Seine, then Mont Valérien (with at its summit the building built by Napoleon from 1811 and intended for the orphans of the Legion of Honor). In the distance towards the center we can even distinguish the Butte de Sannois with the silhouettes of its three mills, and on the banks of the Seine what appears to be the Château d'Asnières. To the right of the Saint-Cloud bridge, the buildings of the village of Boulogne are quite detailed. After spending his youth in Strasbourg, then studying architecture and mathematics in Klagenfurt, Melling left in 1782 to discover Italy and Egypt, before settling in 1784 in Constantinople, as a member of the retinue of the ambassador of Russia, city where he was to remain until 1802. During these eighteen years, he learned Turkish, blended into local life, and became the designer and architect of Sultana Hadidgé, sister of the Great Lord Selim III; it produced numerous views, often panoramic, of the city and the Bosphorus, and festive events. His arrival in Paris in 1802 corresponded to his project of creating an album of these Ottoman views, which would not be published until 1819, under the title *Picturesque Voyage of Constantinople and the Banks of the Bosphorus*, comprising 48 engraved plates. In Paris, Melling became a landscaper in the service of the Empress Joséphine, who also acquired the first

"French" work that the artist exhibited at the Salon of 1808, a view of Paris taken from the hill of Chaillot and today kept in Arenenberg. At the Salon of 1819, Melling, who had become "landscape painter of the king's bedroom and cabinet", exhibited other watercolors of similar dimensions to ours, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1817, and representing the castles of Gosfield and Hartwell, places occupied by Louis XVIII during his exile in England. Both works were hung in the Tuileries Palace. At the Salon of 1812, the artist had already exhibited views of the surroundings of Paris (Château de Ris, Château de Pierrefonds, etc.) and in particular of Saint-Cloud from the country house of the Duke of Bassano located in Meudon. Here again, the dimensions were similar to those of our work. Reviving his quality as a traveling artist (Constantinople, Holland in 1812, French departments in 1815, England in 1817), Melling went to the Pyrenees in 1821, at the request of the French government, and published an album on this stay. Melling was notably collected by Murat and Queen Hortense (who commissioned two views of Holland from him in 1812, exhibited at the Salon of 1814, and subsequently acquired by Paul Marmottan and given to the Valenciennes museum in 1896). Marmottan mentions in an article (Bulletin of the Historical and Archaeological Society of the 8th arrondissement of Paris, 1917-1919) devoted to the gallery of paintings by Murat (who had at least five gouaches by Melling) at the Elysée his "views of Paris with an extreme, unsurpassable finesse of perspective... an excellent translator of nature although a little meticulous. Knight of the Legion of Honor in 1825, he had a daughter, Adèle (1799-1876), born in Constantinople, who had a successful career as a designer, collaborating from an early age on her father's works. She exhibited at the Salon from 1824 under the name Clerget-Melling, following her marriage in 1819 to a Customs collector.