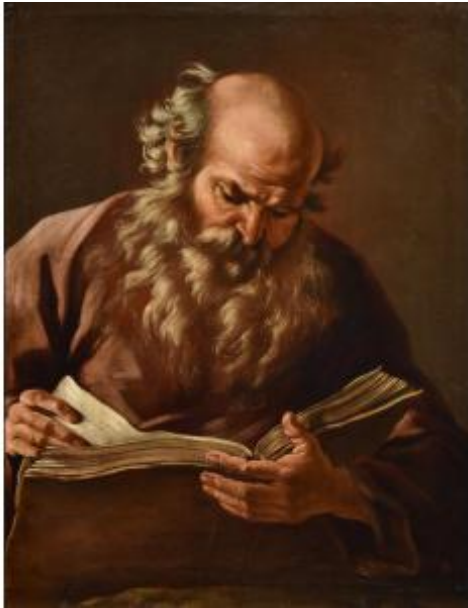




PROANTIC  
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

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## Portrait Of The Philosopher Heraclitus, Giovanni Battista Beinaschi (na1634 - Naples 1688



5 900 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : encadré 75 cm.

Height : encadré 95 cm.

### Description

Giovanni Battista Beinaschi (Fossano c. 1634 - Naples 1688) Portrait of the philosopher Heraclitus (absorbed in reading) Oil on canvas (82 x 64 cm - Framed 95 x 75 cm.) Full details of the painting ([click HERE](#)) The painting shows an intense image of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, portrayed as a mature man holding a book in his hands, an emblem of a life dedicated to study, and is presented here as a pendant to the portrait of the philosopher Democritus (see photo in the details). This type of subject, dedicated to the great philosophers or scholars of antiquity, was very dear to the figurative tradition and collecting tastes of the 17th century: in our case, we have one of the two key figures of pre-Socratic philosophical thought, often juxtaposed because of their opposing and

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complementary views of the human condition. If we look in detail at the iconography of the two philosophers, Heraclitus and Democritus, the portrait presented here follows the tradition that generally contrasts the sombre and contemplative character of the former with the more open and detached character of the latter. This opposite attitude towards reality and the human condition made them symbolic figures in thought and a favourite subject of various artists, especially in the Baroque period, due to their strong symbolic value and implications for the interpretation of the human condition (1). In the painting shown here, Democritus, "the atomist philosopher", gazes fixedly and detachedly at the observer, representing his view of life. According to his philosophy, in fact, all reality is just a meaningless dance of atoms and it is therefore useless to strive to find meaning in existence. There is no point in agonising over the absurdity of the world, but rather to distance oneself from passions and face them with lightness. The observer is captivated by the enigmatic nature of his expression, and the white-covered book that the philosopher holds in his hand becomes a symbol of this. In the proposed painting, Heraclitus "the obscure philosopher" gazes intently at the open book, aware of the tragic fragility that overwhelms all things, with his hand gesturing to turn the pages. As for the style of the work, the scholar is depicted with a profound scenographic approach in a vigorous Baroque style, with marked facial features. The backlighting effects and a magical chiaroscuro atmosphere make the character dynamic, oriented towards a light source that touches his face. By studying the characteristics and related details, we can attribute the work to the late Baroque painter Giovan Battista Beinaschi (1634 - 1688), whose prolific activity was concentrated between Rome, where he trained, and Naples. Nevertheless, he moved frequently throughout his career between Turin, Parma, perhaps Bologna and Genoa, assimilating varied artistic influences from each

place. Although he initially showed a propensity for Roman classicism, this influence was soon supplanted by an increasingly pronounced approach to the Baroque cultural front.<sup>(1)</sup> We can find many examples of this interesting iconography in art, for example in Hendrick ter Brugghen's "Heraclitus and Democritus" (1619, owned by Christie's, London, [https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6298681?ldp\\_breadcrumb=back](https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6298681?ldp_breadcrumb=back) ), or in the same subject by Gregorio Preti (<https://mattia-preti.it/279-eracrito-e-democrito/> ).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** The work is sold complete with a gilded wooden frame and comes with a certificate of authenticity and a descriptive iconographic card. We arrange and organise the transport of purchased works, both in Italy and abroad, through professional and insured carriers. It is also possible to view the painting in our gallery in Riva del Garda, where we will be delighted to welcome you and show you our collection of works. Please contact us, without obligation, for any further information. Follow us on: **INSTAGRAM** <https://www.instagram.com/galleriacastelbarco/?hl=it> **FACEBOOK** <https://www.facebook.com/galleriacastelbarco/>