



Brussels Tapestry - History Of Cyrus The Great - 17th Century - 375lx325h Cm - No. 1534



62 000 EUR

Signature : La Manufacture de Bruxelles

Period : 17th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Wool

Width : 375 cm

Height : 325 cm

Depth : 0.5 cm

Description

This magnificent carpet, which has undergone a deep cleaning, a hand-sewn lining in 100% linen fabric, and a meticulous inspection by the experts of the Lissier Gallery's artisanal workshop, is now ready to adorn your interior!

The Tapestry of Cyrus the Great - Brussels, 17th century: Between Art, Faith, and Power

Introduction

In the heart of Baroque Europe, in the 17th century, the city of Brussels established itself as one of the most prestigious centers of tapestry manufacture. It is in this context that this monumental tapestry was created, depicting King Cyrus of Persia--a surprisingly positive figure in the biblical tradition, despite being a pagan ruler. Probably woven between 1600 and 1650, this

Dealer

Galerie lissier

French Tapestry | Rugs & Kilims| Antique - Modern

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work skillfully blends sacred history, political propaganda, and artistic virtuosity in a rich and abundant composition.

The Subject: Cyrus the Great in the Bible

The scene shows a bearded man--most likely a prophet (Ezra or Isaiah)--presenting a scroll to King Cyrus, who is identified by his crown. The Latin inscription refers to Isaiah 45, where God addresses Cyrus, King of the Persians, declaring that He has chosen him as an instrument of His divine will, even though Cyrus does not know Him. Indeed, the Bible presents Cyrus as the one who allowed the Jews exiled in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple destroyed in 586 BC.

This historic act--also attested by extra-biblical sources such as the Cyrus Cylinder--marks a rare recognition of a foreign ruler as the "anointed of the Lord" (*"anointed" meaning messiah in Hebrew). This scene therefore symbolizes a key moment in salvation history: the deliverance of the Hebrew people made possible by a pagan inspired by God.

A Religious and Political Message

The presence of the Latin text--the language of the Catholic Church--and the theme of the restoration of divine order by a legitimate ruler are significant of the Counter-Reformation context in which this tapestry was likely woven. In the 17th century, Europe was deeply divided by religious conflicts: Catholics and Protestants clashed both theologically and politically.

In this climate, the alliance between royal power and divine will became a central theme in Catholic iconography. Cyrus, though foreign to the Hebrew faith, was a model of a ruler chosen by God to fulfill a divine mission. Thus, this tapestry can be seen as an allegory of good governance, an indirect praise of European monarchy, or even a political compliment directed at a princely patron.

The Brussels Tapestry: Prestige and Excellence

In the 17th century, Brussels was a major center of tapestry production in Europe, rivaling the

workshops of Paris, Florence, or Antwerp.

Supported by the Spanish Habsburgs, who controlled the Southern Netherlands, Brussels' production attracted prestigious commissions from royal courts, bishops, monasteries, and wealthy aristocrats.

The Brussels workshops were renowned for their mastery of vibrant colors, rich details, the quality of the threads (wool, silk, gold, silver), and above all for their ability to translate great Renaissance and Baroque pictorial models into tapestry. The cartoons were sometimes designed by famous artists, often Italian or Flemish.

The tapestry before us is a testament to this mastery: we can see the depth of the landscape, the diversity of costumes, the finesse of facial expressions, and above all the skill in narrating a complex story in a readable and spectacular way.

Interpretation and Symbolism

The tapestry is far more than a mere decorative object. In palaces or churches, it served as a visual manifesto, meant to teach, impress, and glorify. Here, several layers of meaning intertwine:

Historical: the biblical event of the return to Jerusalem.

Theological: God acts in human history, even through pagan kings.

Political: a message about the rightful use of royal power, based on justice and obedience to God.

Aesthetic: a demonstration of the patron's wealth, culture, and piety.

Conclusion

This 17th-century Brussels tapestry, depicting Cyrus the Great and the decree of liberation of the Hebrew people, is a masterpiece of visual storytelling, where textile art becomes a vehicle of religious teaching and political legitimization. Through the example of Cyrus, it reminds us that a king, even one outside the faith, can become the servant of the divine plan--a highly useful theme in the monarchical and Catholic Europe of the Grand Siècle.

It is also a precious witness to the craftsmanship of the Brussels workshops, who combined biblical inspiration, ornamental richness, and symbolic power to produce works that continue to speak with eloquence across the centuries.