



17th Century, Four French Paintings Depicting Biblical Subjects

12 500 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Parchment

Width : 52

Height : 38

Depth : 4

Description

Four paintings depicting biblical subjects, French school, 17th century, tempera on parchment mounted on wooden panel. These four paintings were executed in tempera on parchment, mounted on wooden panels, in the 17th century, most likely in France. They depict biblical scenes: Bathsheba at the Bath, David Slays Goliath, Esther Before Ahasuerus, and Moses Striking Water from the Rock. The first painting on the left shows a scene set in an elegant garden, with a carved Baroque fountain, leafy trees, and an architectural structure in the background. At the center, a group of women dressed in classical tunics gathers around a seated female figure near a large basin: this is Bathsheba, surrounded by her attendants. The delicate colours--especially blues, pinks, and ochres--create a luminous, serene

Dealer

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atmosphere. The scene refers to the well-known episode in the Second Book of Samuel: King David, looking from the terrace of his palace, sees Bathsheba bathing and becomes captivated by her beauty. Their encounter will lead to a forbidden relationship and dramatic events that will shape the history of Israel. This painting, however, chooses to depict the moment of the bath as a harmonious and tranquil scene, focusing on beauty and stillness before the turmoil to come. The second painting from the left portrays the decisive moment of the confrontation between the young David and the giant Goliath. In the foreground, Goliath is shown staggering and falling backward, struck on the forehead by the stone launched from David's sling. His massive body and the red garment add dynamism to the scene. Opposite him, the young David still has his arm raised in the gesture of throwing. Around them, soldiers and camp tents create a vivid military setting. The scene draws on the First Book of Samuel, in which David, a simple shepherd, faces the Philistine champion Goliath armed only with a sling and his faith. With a swift gesture, guided by trust in God, David brings down the giant, securing Israel's victory and foreshadowing his future as king. The third painting depicts Queen Esther at the dramatic climax of her encounter with King Ahasuerus. The scene unfolds in a sumptuous court environment, featuring a colonnade, a monumental staircase, and rich draperies. Ahasuerus, seated on the throne beneath a red and blue canopy with lambrequins, extends his arm toward Esther, who faints from tension while two attendants support her. Court figures and architectural elements fill the background, while vivid colours and meticulous details enhance the theatricality of the moment. The episode refers to the Book of Esther: the young queen, risking her life, presents herself before the king without having been summoned, to plead for her threatened people. Overcome by emotion, she faints; the king,

moved to compassion, receives her and extends his sceptre toward her, a gesture symbolizing clemency. The painting captures precisely this dramatic instant, embodying courage, intercession, and justice. Finally, the last painting depicts the famous biblical episode in which Moses brings forth water from the rock to quench the thirst of the Israelites during the Exodus in the desert. In the center, Moses--draped in a light mantle--strikes the rock with his staff, while men, women, and children rush toward the miraculous water, kneeling or reaching forward with containers. The setting is natural and luminous, with trees and mountains in the background and animals in the foreground such as a dog and a bird near the stream. The scene refers to the Book of Numbers (20:1-11) and the Book of Exodus (17:1-7), where Moses, following divine command, strikes the rock at Meribah to provide water for the people in distress. The miracle symbolizes faith in God and His providence, revealing Moses' role as leader and mediator between God and the Israelites. The four parchments, with their bright and lively colours, are highly decorative and visually pleasing. In good condition, they are presented in Venetian-style carved and gilded wooden frames.