



The Crucifixion Or "the Spear Blow", Lorraine School Of The 17th Century



9 800 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 60

Height : 78

Description

Oil on prepared panel. Lorraine School, first third of the 17th century, attributable to Jean Le Clerc (Nancy 1586/88 - Id. 1633) after the large panel painted in 1620 by Anthony van Dyck, now in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Antwerp (KMSKA). Our composition, with its tight framing of the Crucifixion of Christ and the two thieves, presents a scheme inherited from the Antwerp tradition: the three crosses are inscribed in an ascending diagonal to amplify the drama of the scene. The soldier in chainmail on the ladder brandishes a metal club, an action that explicitly refers to the Johannine account of the breaking of the legs, this choice allowing the scene to refocus on the moment of the crucifixion rather than on the Lamentation. At the foot of the central cross, the holy figures--Mary, Magdalene, John, and

Dealer

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other disciples--express their anguish, while to the left, Roman soldiers on horseback introduce a narrative counterpoint, with Longinus thrusting his lance into Christ's side. The blue sky, pierced by a veil of clouds, opens up the composition and enhances its overall clarity. While the general structure and several secondary motifs clearly derive from van Dyck's prototype in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, the pictorial technique is distinct: the paint is applied thinly, the transitions are gentle, and the flesh tones are light and rosy; the simplified, undifferentiated faces reflect a desire for unification rather than dramatization. The palette, dominated by softened browns and luminous blues, along with the evenly distributed light, evokes the religious production of provincial workshops in northeastern France, and more specifically in Lorraine, a region in direct contact with the Spanish Netherlands. The choice of support, a prepared panel common in Lorraine workshops, reinforces this hypothesis. The treatment of Christ--elongated figure, softened musculature, attenuated anatomical tension--departs from both Rubensian vigor and Van Dyckian robustness. This expressive restraint, combined with a very marked narrative clarity, corresponds to the sensibility of Jean Le Clerc, who assimilated Flemish models while softening them. It is worth noting that Le Clerc met van Dyck in Rome shortly after the latter completed his "Blow of the Spear" (1620). It was there that the Antwerp genius portrayed his Lorraine colleague in 1622, shortly before Le Clerc's return to Nancy. Could our painting, intended for private devotion, be a tribute from Le Clerc to his painter friend? Our crucifixion is enhanced by its French Louis XIV-era carved and gilded wooden frame. Dimensions: 62 x 45 cm panel - 78 x 60 cm with frame. Biography: Jean Le Clerc (Nancy 1586/1588, Id. 1633) is one of the most important Lorraine painters of the early 17th century. Robert Parisot, in his *History of Lorraine* published in 1919, wrote of him that he was "the

greatest of the Lorraine painters of this period."

At a very young age, Le Clerc left for Italy where he trained first in Rome and then in Venice, becoming the disciple and collaborator of Carlo Saraceni. After Saraceni's death in 1620, he completed several unfinished works, notably the large composition of Doge Dandolo in the Doge's Palace in Venice. Returning to Nancy in 1622, he became the official painter of Duke Francis of Lorraine and helped introduce a new aesthetic to the region, blending Caravaggism with Venetian influences. His work, sometimes difficult to distinguish from that of Saraceni, plays a crucial role in the exchange of styles between Italy and Lorraine at the beginning of the 17th century.

Bibliography: - Vlieghe, Hans, *Corpus Rubenianum* Ludwig Burchard, Phaidon Press, 1972. - Balis Arnout, *Rubens: Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists*, Harvey Miller Publishers, 2006. - Thuillier Jacques, *French Painting in the 17th Century*, Flammarion, 1982. - Mérot Alain, *French Painting in the 17th Century*, Citadelles & Mazenod, 1994. - Foucart Jacques, *Provincial Painters in France in the 17th Century*, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1985. - Fagnart Laure, *Artists and Patrons between Lorraine and the Spanish Netherlands*, Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2012. - Choné Paulette, *Art in Lorraine in the 17th Century*, Éditions Serpenoise, 1991. - Jacquot Dominique (ed.), *Painting in Lorraine in the 17th Century*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy, 1998. - Fagnart Laure, Jacquot Dominique, *Religious painting in Lorraine*, Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2005.