



Jacques Courtois, Known As

4 800 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 64,5

Height : 19

Description

Jacques Courtois, known as "the Burgundian" (Saint-Hyppolite, February 12, 1621 - Rome, November 14, 1676), attr. Battles with the Turks Oil on canvas, 19 x 64.5 cm - with frame, 31 x 76 cm Gian Lorenzo Bernini said: "Among the painters of that time in Europe, none equaled Courtois in the graphic expression of the horror of battle." The two canvases under consideration here, both depicting the theme of the battle between Christians and Turks, display with remarkable stylistic and compositional coherence the distinctive characteristics of the work of Jacques Courtois, known as "the Burgundian." In the first painting, recognizable by the presence on the left of a small rocky formation topped with vegetation, the scene opens with an effective contrast between the foreground and the

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

background. On the right, a group of horsemen engage in violent combat: the figures, dynamically intertwined, are captured in the thick of the action, with rearing horses and raised weapons. The painter constructs the scene through a diagonal line that draws the eye toward the central melee, while a broader battlefield unfolds in the background, rendered with quick, concise brushstrokes. The rock in the foreground, almost like a theatrical backdrop, introduces an element of stability that contrasts with the turmoil of the scene. In the second painting, the composition becomes even more intense and dramatic. The combat is concentrated in a central cluster of figures who crowd together and clash violently, while the horses, rendered with great anatomical skill, help convey a sense of controlled chaos. The landscape in the background, with secondary episodes of flight and pursuit, expands the narrative but remains subordinate to the tension of the foreground. The light, diffused and atmospheric, shapes the figures without rigidity, accentuating the sense of movement and spatial continuity.

Jacques Courtois was born in February 1621 in Saint-Hippolyte, in Franche-Comté, then under the rule of the Spanish Habsburgs. Initially trained in his father's workshop alongside his brothers, he moved to Milan at a very young age, where he served in the Spanish army--an experience that proved fundamental to his firsthand knowledge of war. He later settled in Bologna, where he frequented the circles of Guido Reni and Francesco Albani, assimilating a more cultured and classicist figurative tradition. After stays in Florence and Rome, he came into contact with artists specializing in battle painting, including Michelangelo Cerquozzi and, above all, Aniello Falcone, who exerted a decisive influence on him. In 1657 he joined the Society of Jesus, yet continued his painting until his death in Rome in 1676. In the context of the 17th century, battle painting emerged as an independent genre, particularly appreciated for its ability to combine

spectacle, narrative, and technical virtuosity. Artists such as Falcone, Salvator Rosa, and Courtois himself developed a pictorial language based on dynamic compositions, loose brushstrokes, and an immediate rendering of the action. In this context, the Burgundian artist stands out for his expressive intensity and his ability to convey the chaos of battle without sacrificing a solid compositional structure. The two canvases under consideration bear striking similarities to authentic works by the artist held in major museums. The Battle Scene at the Detroit Institute of Arts features analogous solutions in its diagonal composition and the concise rendering of the figures in the background. The Battle Between Christians and Muslims at the Prado Museum displays a similar narrative density and a comparable typology of knights and weaponry. Similarly, the Battle Scene held by the National Trust in England and the National Gallery in Edinburgh confirms the use of rapid, vibrant brushwork, as well as a preference for compact groups of combatants in the foreground. These comparisons reinforce the attribution of the two works to Borgognone, highlighting full stylistic consistency with his known oeuvre.