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## The Suicide Of Queen Sofonisba, Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (milan 1609-1662)



6 900 EUR

Signature : Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (Milan 1609 - Milan 1662) attribué

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : encadré 85 cm.

Height : encadré 100 cm.

### Description

Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (Milan 1609 - Milan 1662), attributed  
The Suicide of Queen Sofonisba  
Oil on canvas 76 x 60 cm. - In frame 100 x 85 cm.  
**FULL DETAILS OF THE PAINTING (CLICK HERE)**  
This painting captures the tragic moment when Sophonisba, the last queen of Carthage, takes her own life rather than be taken to Rome and paraded as a prisoner of war, submitting to the Romans. This is a theme much favoured in Baroque painting for its high dramatic potential, emphasised here by the depiction of the woman immortalised in the moment when the poison begins to take effect, her head reclined in languid abandonment, still supported by her arm resting on a rich red velvet cushion with a tassel. In her left hand, resting low, she holds the golden cup from which she has

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just drunk the poison, a symbol of her ultimate sacrifice. The Carthaginian queen is portrayed in all her beauty, wearing sumptuous robes: a finely draped white tunic, partially slipped to reveal her shoulder, and an overgarment of damask fabric with floral motifs, her hair adorned with intertwined strands of pearls that emphasise her royal rank. Her story, a tale of political intrigue and love set against the backdrop of the Second Punic War, has made her one of the most celebrated and fascinating female figures of antiquity: having become, over time, a symbol of pride and dignity, her act is an emblem of courage, inspiring numerous literary and artistic works as a result. Sofonisba married Syphax, King of the Numidians, to seal the alliance between Carthage and Numidia against Rome. After Syphax was defeated by the Romans and Massinissa, the latter entered the city of Cirta and, upon seeing her, struck by her beauty, fell in love with her and married her immediately to save her from being taken as a prisoner to Rome. But unfortunately, the Roman general Scipio demanded that the woman be handed over to Rome nonetheless to be paraded as a trophy in his triumph, and since Massinissa could not oppose this decision, he sent Sofonisba poison so that she might kill herself and avoid the humiliation of captivity. Voluntary death was the only way to preserve her royal dignity and personal autonomy in the face of the slavery imposed by the Roman victors. The story of Sofonisba was a very popular subject, partly because it allowed artists to explore the contrast between feminine beauty and nobility of spirit, all emphasised by a narrative characterised by intense dramatic effect, focusing on the tragic ecstasy of the protagonist. The painting is attributed to the Milanese painter Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (Milan 1609 - Milan 1662), a leading figure of 17th-century Lombardy with a marked Baroque sensibility. The work displays his distinctive traits, with its classic soft and nuanced brushwork, influenced by Murillo to such an

extent that he was nicknamed the 'Murillo of Lombardy', using soft brushstrokes to create an almost ethereal atmosphere around the figures. Nuvolone's figures, especially the female ones, are characterised by a strong emotional component, with a melancholic grace: the intimacy and the subtle sensuality conveyed by the painting are a hallmark of the artist's artistic maturity and his complete embrace of the Baroque world. Specifically, if we compare his famous Cleopatra or Herodias, they often feature, as in the work on display here, reclining faces, half-closed eyes and slightly open mouths, blending the sacred and the profane in an aesthetic of voluptuous suffering. The expression of intense pathos appears here softened by the pursuit of an ideal beauty and an engaging narrative typical of Carlo Francesco's mature period. The use of a bright red cushion on which her arm rests and the metallic reflections of the goblet are, finally, typical elements of his compositions, balancing Lombard realism with a quest for aristocratic elegance. The exquisite details, such as the meticulous rendering of the hair adorned with pearls and the ethereal quality of the dress's fabric, demonstrate the artist's technical skill in rendering different materials.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** The painting is sold complete with an antique frame and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity and a descriptive iconographic sheet. We arrange and organise the transport of purchased works, both within Italy and abroad, using professional and insured carriers. Should you wish to view this or other works in person, we would be delighted to welcome you to our new gallery in Riva del Garda, at Viale Giuseppe Canella 18. We look forward to seeing you! Please contact us for any information or to arrange a visit; we will be happy to assist you. Follow us

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