



## Francesco Graziani, Known As Ciccio Napoletano, Two Cavalry Battles



4 400 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 17,4

Height : 23,7

### Description

Francesco Graziani, known as Ciccio Napoletano (Active in Naples and Rome in the second half of the 17th century) Cavalry Battle Against the Turks - Battle Between European Cavalries(2) Oil on copper, 23.7 x 17.4 cm With frame, 37 x 45 cm The two oil-on-canvas paintings presented here are particularly eloquent examples of the mature work of Francesco Graziani, a Neapolitan painter active in the second half of the 17th century and known to his contemporaries by the nickname Ciccio Napoletano. The first painting depicts a clash between European and Turkish cavalry in an open, barren landscape, set against a stormy sky of gray-ochre hues. At the center of the composition, the heart of the battle rages: knights in armor and soldiers in colorful attire charge at one another in a chaotic tangle of

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bodies, lances, and flags. A horseman in a striking red jacket and white turban occupies the right side of the scene, visually dominating the melee with an imperious gesture. In the foreground, the bodies of fallen horses and figures prostrate on the ground accentuate the sense of violence and carnage that has just taken place. In the background, shrouded in a misty light, stands a cylindrical tower--a recurring architectural element in Graziani's oeuvre, as seen in *\*Battle Near a Bridge\**, now at Palazzo Bardini in Florence--which helps situate the scene within a plausible and recognizable landscape. The second painting, set on a battlefield with a fortified city in the background, depicts a clash between European cavalry forces.

Francesco Graziani, known as Ciccio Napoletano, is a figure not yet fully elucidated by art history, but whose body of work is gradually taking shape thanks to new discoveries and stylistic comparisons. A painter trained in Naples, he specialized in battle scenes, developing a personal style of great expressive immediacy. The influences that shaped his artistic development can be traced primarily to two great masters: Salvator Rosa, the Neapolitan painter-poet famous for his wild landscapes and scenes of soldiers and brigands, and above all Jacques Courtois, known as "il Borgognone," a painter from Lorraine active in Rome, whose name often comes up in connection with Graziani as a possible teacher or direct model. From "the Burgundian," Graziani borrowed the dynamic composition of equestrian figures, the arrangement of figures on overlapping planes, and a certain theatrical treatment of space. From Salvator Rosa, on the other hand, he derived a more acute atmospheric sensibility, a freedom of brushwork that translates into fluid and fragmented brushstrokes, and a taste for dark and dramatic background landscapes. To corroborate Francesco Graziani's authorship of these paintings, it is helpful to compare them with some known works preserved in museums and public collections. Particularly

significant is the aforementioned \*Battle Near a Bridge\*, now housed at Palazzo Bardini in Florence: in this painting, a cylindrical tower appears that is practically identical to the one visible in the background of the first of the two oil paintings described here, with the same construction using masses of loose color and the same scenic placement in a misty light. A second key comparison is with the Battle Scenes housed at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. In these works, we find the same artistic choices in the depiction of the horses--powerful, agile, rendered with highly concise brushstrokes--and of the riders, figures who are almost anonymous in their agitation yet capable of conveying an immediate physical presence.