



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Bacchus As A Child And Two Putti In A Landscape



Description

Italian School, likely Rome or Bologna, mid-17th century Bacchus as a child and two putti in a landscape Oil on its original canvas 77 x 94.5 cm In very good condition (one patch on the back, a few very minor retouches). Restored by us 1620-1660 Interpreting this painting is more complex than it seems. At first glance, one might think it depicts one of those comic scenes in which the young Bacchus is portrayed as a ridiculous, potbellied child who indulges in excessive drinking. Guido Reni's strange "Child Bacchus" (c. 1630) depicts a young, obese god drinking without restraint while urinating at the same time. On the right side of our painting, Bacchus is recognizable by his wreath of vine leaves, similar to the one Guido Reni depicted (himself inspired by Renaissance paintings). The

8 000 EUR

Signature : école italienne Rome Bologne milieu 17 ème

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 77x94,5

Dealer

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197 rue des cigales

Sainte-Eulalie-en-Born 40200

putto (or is it a little girl?) whom he holds affectionately, with a hand resting on his shoulder, wears not a wreath but a bunch of grapes above his ear, held in place by a headband. The third child, standing against a tree with his head half-hidden by a veil, looks down on the scene with a cheerful expression. In the background, night unites the sky and landscape in a dark blue monochrome pierced by the faint light of dawn. The god to whom antiquity attributed the invention of wine is also identified, in the foreground, by a silver cup filled with wine in which a bunch of grapes is soaking. However, neither our Bacchus nor his two companions are indulging in the drink. For Bacchus is showing them a bird with outstretched wings that he holds aloft on his hand. The bird is tethered by a string. It is likely a goldfinch, recognizable by its red head and iridescent plumage. The goldfinch, however, was a symbol of Christianity. It appeared in numerous paintings, sometimes held by a string in the hand of the Infant Jesus. Legend had it that the bird owed its red spot to a drop of the Savior's blood that had splattered on it as it descended upon Christ's head on the way to Calvary, plucking a thorn from his forehead. Similarly, the grape and the cup of wine, rather than drunkenness, could symbolize the blood of Christ and the Eucharist: "Jesus is the grape of the Promised Land," said Saint Augustine, "the cluster that was put into the winepress." Following in the footsteps of Renaissance thinkers who sought to synthesize mythology and the Gospels, our painting could thus embody, in the midst of the Baroque era, a Christian interpretation of the myth of Bacchus.