

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM

TABLEAUX - DESSINS - SCULPTURES

JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME

Vesoul 1824 - Paris 1904

French school

LOUIS XI VISITING THE CARDINAL LA BALUE

Oil on Mahogany bord

H. 0,50 m; W. 0,42 m

Signed and dated in the middle on the left: *à Cain / J. L. GEROME / 1883*

Printed label on the verso: *Bernheim Jeune & Cie avec l'inscription à la main No. 18161 / Louis XI et le Cardinal La Ballue (sic)*

DATE: 1883

PROVENANCE:

Bernheim-Jeune, Paris

Collection Charles Bessonneau, Angers

Gérôme studied Latin, Greek and history at the Jesuit College of his hometown Vesoul. These classical studies had certainly an impact on his future choice of subject matters, often taken from history and Antiquity. At the age of sixteen he moved to Paris to study with the renowned history painter Paul Delaroche. Gérôme completed his training with a stay in Italy and on his return to Paris he studied for a brief time under Charles Gleyre, one of the leading "art pompier" artists.

He was exceedingly hostile to the Impressionists and his paintings were always highly finished and realistic. A part from history and Antiquity subjects, his oeuvre includes many orientalist paintings depicting Arab religion, genre scenes and North African landscapes. He developed a strong interest for anecdote and costume, which he painted with a concern for historical truth.

Our picture shows Louis XI visiting the cardinal Jean La Balue, his Secretary of State, whom he had arrested. La Balue had been accused of having intrigued against his king by entering into an alliance with Charles the Bold. La Balue had been imprisoned in 1469 in the castle of Loaches (according to other sources, in the castle of Onzain near Blois) where he stayed during eleven years until 1480. A legend tells that he was locked into a kind of cage where he could neither stand up nor lie down. The picture's dedication "to Cain" might refer to the Parisian sculptor Auguste Cain (1821-1894), of the same generation as Gérôme, who was a sculptor himself.

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