

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM

FINE ARTS

JEAN-BAPTISTE DESHAYES

Colleville 1729 - Paris 1765

French School

HERD NEAR A WATERFALL

Oil on paper laid down on panel

H. 0,34 m; W. 0,25 m

Inscription lower right: *F Boucher*

DATE: 1763-1765

PROVENANCE:

Sale of the paintings in the collection of M. F. de Villars, Paris, hôtel Drouot, 13 March 1868, C.P. Charles Pillet, *expert* Haro, n° 8 (as Boucher, *Passage du ruisseau*) and 9 (as Boucher, *La rencontre des troupeaux*)

Sale Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 15 June 1979, C.P. Audap-Godeau-Solanet, *expert* Louis Ryaux, no number (attributed to Jean-Baptiste Deshayes, *Bergers et leur troupeau*)

Private collection

LITERATURE:

Marc Sandoz, *Les Lagrenée*, Paris, 1977, t. II, p. 19 (doubtful attributions), ill.

André Bancel, *Jean Baptiste Deshayes (1729 - 1765)*, Paris, 2008, p. 169, P.146 (*Jeune bergère parmi son troupeau, appuyée sur une vache*), reproduced (as location unknown).

RELATED WORKS:

Its pendant: *Bergers traversant un fleuve*, cf André Bancel, *Jean Baptiste Deshayes (1729 - 1765)*, Paris, 2008, p. 169, P.145 (*Paysanne en route sur un âne, avec ses jeunes enfants*), reproduced (as location unknown).

Jean-Baptiste Deshays, the son of a painter was born in Rouen and left for Paris in his adolescence, where he trained initially in Jean Restout's studio, who continued the style of Jean Jouvenet. Around 1750, he became a pupil of François Boucher, whose eldest daughter he married a few years later. Deshays quickly rose through the ranks of a career at the Academy: First Prize at the age of twenty-two, *agrégé* at the Académie Royale at twenty-eight, *reçu* and assistant professor at twenty-nine. Each of the works he sent to the salon was immediately praised by the critics and by connoisseurs.

Deshays was primarily a painter of grand religious subjects and it is in this area that he nourished the dreams of reformation held by those who had become weary of a form of painting that was now considered libertine. However, he did not limit himself to religious painting. Succeeding Boucher, he provided tapestry designs, large mythological compositions and pastoral subjects for the Beauvais factory. Like Boucher, Deshays created numerous

Andlauer Hof, Münsterplatz 17, 4051 Basel, Switzerland

Phone +41 61 681 35 35 - Mobile +41 78 955 77 77

Fax +41 61 681 75 70 - jean.f.heim@galerieheim.ch - www.galerieheim.ch

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“caravans”, a genre that was very popular at the time, inspired by the Genoese painter Benedetto Castiglione. His sketches, animated with a beautiful “energy” were also very popular. An accident ended his brilliant career: Deshays fell from a scaffolding and died shortly afterwards, at the age of thirty-three.

Our oil sketch and its pendant, *Shepherds Crossing a River*, were dated by André Bancel around 1763-1765, at the peak of Deshays’ artistic career. Their subject can be compared to his “caravans”. The *Herd near a Waterfall*, shows a young cowherd with a child who is letting her herd drink, while in the background, at the base of a waterfall, a woman on a donkey is listening to a boy who is showing her the way to continue her journey.

Painted in warm grisaille shades, our painting stands out for its rich and voluptuous technique, elegance in the vibration of the materials and the suppleness of the paintbrush. Unlike Boucher, with Deshays, vigour and “energy” outweigh elegance. The volumes are well mastered, the mass of the cow’s body behind the young cowherd in the second painting is easily noticeable. The play of diagonals, the work of the postures that are hard to untangle, contribute to the dynamic effect of both works.