



RARE TAPESTRY "Tobias mit dem Fisch" ("Tobias with the Fish"),

Brussels, ca. 1530/40. Based on the models of a successor of Bernard van Orley.

Depiction of Tobias with the Fish, with the Angel Raphael behind him. With a broad border featuring flowers and fruits, and birds. Slightly faded. Some repairs.

350x430 cm.

With an expert opinion by Prof. Guy Delmarcel. Boechout 2019. The scene depicted shows the moment when Tobias is attacked by a great sea monster (The Book of Tobit, Chapter 6,2). His companion, the Angel Raphael, encourages him to catch the fish. In the background (on the left), Tobias lays the fish on the ground and Raphael points

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in the direction of his further path. Summary of the expert opinion: The tapestry on offer here is part of a series of different motifs about the life of Tobias. A version with similar borders and figures, an eight-part series, is kept in the Museum of Art History in Vienna; another version is in the National Museum of Decorative Arts in Buenos Aires. While our tapestry is not signed, the Viennese series shows the coat of arms of the city of Brussels. Two of the tapestries have not been identified, but one can be assigned to Frans Gheteele, who was active around 1540. The designs refer to Bernard van Orley and his workshop. The episode with the fish is missing both in Buenos Aires and in the Viennese series. Depictions of this episode, but in a later version, can be found in the Royal Spanish Collection in Madrid and in the Cathedral of Palma de Mallorca. However, our tapestry is much more elegant and refers strongly to the series in Vienna. Numerous details refer to the same design. For example, the robe of the Angel Raphael is very similar to the Viennese series, as is the bird (a heron or a stork) in the lower right-hand corner of the border. Lit.: Guy Delmarcel, Flemish Tapestry, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 2000.

CHF 10 000 / 15 000

€ 8 770 / 13 160

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