



Carl Haag

1820-1915

Ruins of Baalbeck, Lebanon

Aquarelle on paper / signed, located and dated lower right "The ruins of Baalbek, painted on the spot by Carl Haag RWS 1859"

Dimensions : 29,5 x 60 cm

Dimensions : 11.42 x 23.62 inch

Biography

Carl Haag was an orientalist painter with a worldwide reputation. He was the apprentice of Reindel at the Fine Arts school of Nuremberg, then Cornelius supervised his work at Munich, and finally Rottman and history painter Wilhem von Kaulbach took him under their wing. He stayed several times in France and exhibited from 1848 at the French Art Salon.

Starting from 1845, he travelled frequently to Belgium, France, Italy, Egypt, Syria and England. The remarkable watercolour work of English painters seduced him so much he decided to settle in London at the age of 27 and to take on this method of painting. His watercolour paintings featured nimbleness in the brush moves, smoothness of bright shades and an ethereal style. After numerous researches, he opted for mineral colours owing to their stability and then created his own technique: natural colours in a wash drawing style, stippling for brush strokes and then scratching colour for brighter shades. His hand was mutilated in a firearm accident, and during his convalescence he developed a new original method involving a removal of colour excess intentionally added, until the perfect tones are achieved.

In 1853, Carl Haag became a member of the Royal Society of British Artists, also called Royal Watercolour Society, where he exhibited his paintings on a regular basis. His landscapes with characters inspired by Tyrol area and Italy were a success. He produced plenty of oil paintings, especially architectural patterns and women faces. He was also a painter at the Saxe-Cobourg court, and was soon noticed by the prince consort Albert. From then on he was invited at Balmoral, the Scottish residence of Queen Victoria who will order to him numerous paintings.

Attracted by the Orient light, he travelled to Cairo with Frederick Goodall in 1858. There, he shared the everyday life of nomads; together they cross Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. For his work Holy Rock summit of Moryia Mount (1891), Carl Haag visited Jerusalem in 1859 with a firman permit to paint the Holy Rock. This royal edict issued by sultan Abdul Madjid upon Queen Victoria's request allowed him to enter the Dome of the Rock. Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem, one of the three holy sites for Muslims together with Mecca and Medina, has not been frequently depicted before.

In 1873 Haag obtained his first award for his work Danger in the desert, also exhibited at the Exposition Universelle of Paris in 1878. He was honoured Chevalier of the Honour Legion the same year.

His reputation spread throughout Europe, from the Saxe-Cobourg court to the London gentry. The artist's studio with sumptuous an Oriental style became an unavoidable place for high society. His visitors came to discuss as well as admire his works. In 1876, the German Athenaeum consecrated an exhibition to his works with more than eighty pieces.

This sublime aquarelle depicts the famous pearl of Anti-Lebanon Mountains, the fabulous Baalbek. As it is specified by the artist, the work has been painted in situ during a visit in 1859 and represents the ruins in the beginning of the wet season. This Phocaea city - shelter for a divine triad- is the ancient Heliopolis of the Greek era. The city keeps its religious function through the Roman era, during which the Jupiter temple was a pilgrimage site. Baalbek - with its gigantic buildings -, becomes one of the rarest and impressive remains of the imperial Rome. Further on, the artist would paint several watercolour works of the ruins, and among them one is dedicated to Prince of Wales.

Museums

Blackburn,

Bristol,
Manchester,
Londres (Victoria and Albert Museum),
Château de Windsor

Bibliography

Du Maroc aux Indes, Voyages en Orient, ACR Editions
Les Orientalistes peintres voyageurs, ACR Editions
Les Orientalistes de l'école Allemande et autrichiennes, ACR Editions