

Addendum to “Hubert Robert’s Decorations for the Château de Bagatelle”

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IN A RECENT ISSUE of this journal¹ I published an article on a group of six landscapes that Hubert Robert painted as a decoration for one of two ground-floor boudoirs of the comte d’Artois’s château de Bagatelle. These works are today exhibited in the Wrightsman Rooms of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. My study perforce left unresolved a nagging question relating to the history of the paintings, i.e., the precise point at which they and the companion series of six Neoclassical compositions that Antoine-François Callet had executed for the twin boudoirs were removed from Bagatelle. I am greatly indebted to Christian Baulez, conservateur en chef of the Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, for solving this mystery. He graciously pointed out to me that the paintings were indeed sold at auction two years after the château was acquired by Napoleon’s Administration des Domaines.

An item in the April 2, 1808, issue of a periodical entitled *Annonces, Affiches et Avis divers*² previewed the forthcoming sale of “six tableaux de place, peints par Hubert Robert représentant des Monuments d’Italie et six autres peints par Callais [*sic*] représentant des sujets de la fable, provenant de bagatelle et faits pour le ci-devant comte d’Artois.” The auction took place two days later in one of the sale rooms of the old Hôtel de Bullion, a town house on the rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The name of the *expert* was Clisorius, and the auctioneer’s gavel was wielded by the sieur Masson jeune.

The paintings by Hubert Robert were included in the catalogue as entry no. 151: “Six Tableaux sous ce numéro; ils représentent des monuments d’Italie et amusements champêtres. Ils ont été peints pour le ci-devant comte d’Artois, à Bagatelle. Toile.” This lot was in fact divided into two parts; bidding on two of the panels, undoubtedly *The Wandering Minstrels* and *The Bathing Pool*, went up to 381 francs, whereas

the other four fetched only 240 francs. The lot that followed (no. 152), which comprised Callet’s six panels, was described in the catalogue as “Six Tableaux sous ce numéro, provenant aussi de Bagatelle. Ils représentent des sujets de la fable et ont été aussi peints pour le comte d’Artois. Toile.” These works sold as a group for the sum of 351 francs.

The only copies of the auction catalogue listed in Frits Lugt’s *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques*³ are preserved in the Département des Imprimés of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris. According to the marginal annotations in the Bibliothèque Nationale’s catalogue, all twelve of the Bagatelle panels were purchased by a certain Brunot.

NOTES

1. Joseph Baillio, “Hubert Robert’s Decorations for the Château de Bagatelle,” *MMJ* 27 (1992) pp. 149–182.

2. *Annonces, Affiches et Avis divers* 93 (1808) p. 1478.

3. Frits Lugt, *Répertoire des catalogues de vente publiques* I (The Hague, 1938) no. 7373.