






Downstairs at Grays: A very fine hand woven silk and wool English miniature Tapestry "The Good Samaritan", attributed to Sheldon (see notes). English Circa 1580 - 1600
£16,800.00

A very fine hand woven silk and wool English miniature Tapestry "The Good Samaritan", with Pomegranate and trademark urns with flowers to the borders and two Swan quarter points, attributed to Sheldon. English Circa 1580 - 1600. A later raw silk mount with natural indigo dyes

William Sheldon of Beoley, Co. Worcester Married Mary, The Eldest Daughter Of William Willington,A Wealthy Wool Merchant Who Lived At Barcheston, Co. Warwick.
Sheldon Bought The Manor Of Weston On 21st November 1534.

Ralph Sheldon Was Born In 1537 And Travelled Extensively Abroad With Richard Hykes Pronounced Heeks) As His Companion.

Ralph Sheldon Married In 1557 Presumably Having Returned Permanently To England By This Point In Time.
In The Mid 16th Century, William Sheldon Is Recorded As Being Responsible For The introduction Of Tapestry Weaving Into England.

Sheldon, By His Will Wished That Workers If Possible Should Be Englishmen, And That Preference Should Be Given To The Users Of The Art Within The Counties Of Worcester And Warwick (Basically His Workers).
William Sheldon Made His Will On 3rd January 1569-70 (Two Months Before His Death). This Document Is Very Extensive And Very Complex. Consequently The Will Was Not Granted Probate Until 26th November 1603.
Besides Family Matters, Extensive Reference Is Made To Sheldon's Weaving School, Part Of TheWill Refers To Richard "Heeks" As " The Only Author And Beginner Of This Art Within This Realm".

Sheldon Utilised Long Apprenticed, Highly Skilled Weavers, See William Sheldon's Will As Lodged With The Lord Chamberlain Where Extensive Arrangements Were Made For The Continuance OfThe Encouragement Of Their Skills.
In The Mid 17th Century It Is Recorded That Ralph Sheldon The Younger Commissioned Works Taken From The Original Cartoons, As Designed By Richard Hyckes And His Son Francis. These Works Related To A Set Woven For Weston And Dated 1588.

Clearly By This Date Original Designs Of Hyckes Were In Production.

Hyckes Is Frequently Recorded In His Long Association With The Sheldon School Of Weaving.

This Information May Go Someway Towards Dispelling The Theory That English Tapestries Of This Period Were Taken From Flemish Cartoons (Designs).

Additionally, It Is Also Worth Noting This Designers Fondness For The Inclusion Of Fruit And Flowers Within The Borders.
(See similar examples In The Burrell Collection).

English Workers Rapidly Became Renowned For Reducing The Scale Of The Design WhilstRetaining The Depth And Perspective Of The Subject Matter, This Was Achieved By Utilising TheFinest Weave. In This Example The Quality Of The Central Panel Perspective Is Excellent.
On 30th October 2001, This Piece Was Presented To The Assistant Curator f Textiles At The Victoria & Albert Museum London. The Information In The Following Paragraph Was Noted And Accepted:

"At A Variance Of Approximately 18.5 - 22 Warps Per Inch And A Loom Width Of 22",
This Piece Falls Within Recognised Technical Benchmarks for the possibility of the Academic attribution to the piece being of English - Sheldon In Manufacture.
(20 Warps Per Inch & 20" - 22" Loom Width Approximately, As opposed to Continentale Equivalents of This Period At 14 Warps Per Inch)".

NB. Whilst Illustrations (Limited In Number) Of The V& A's Accredited Sheldon Works Reveal A More Elaborate Design To The Border Panels. The Most Extensive Sir William Burrell Collection Reveals Illustrations Of Nine Accredited Sheldon Miniature Tapestries With Elements Of Similarity To This Piece. Particularly, With Reference To The Floral Bouquets And The Surmounting Fruit And Foliage To The Bottom Of The Left And Right Hand Borders.

(See Bibliography Below).