

Lot 604



Auction	Fine Art
Date	17.11.2022, ca. 10:03
Preview	11.11.2022 - 10:00:00 bis 14.11.2022 - 18:00:00

BROSAMER, HANS
1495 Fulda - 1554 Erfurt
attributed

Title: Portrait of a Man with Fur Coat and Signet Ring.

Date: Ca. 1525-1530.

Technique: Oil on wood.

Mounting: Parquetted.

Measurement: 43 x 33cm.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Literature:

The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, London, vol. 73, no. 429, December 1938,
"Notable Works of Art now on the Market", panel 1.

Provenance:

Collection of Wilhelm Ernst Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1876-1923), Weimar;

until 1936 in the Berlin antique shop Kahlert & Sohn;

received from Kahlert & Sohn by the Munich art dealer Julius Böhler on 8 April 1936;

sold in 1940 by the art dealer Böhler to Paul Reusch (1868-1956), Oberhausen, who was chairman of the board of the Gutehoffnungshütte for many years;

Auction at the Kunst- und Auktionshaus Schloß Hagenburg, Hagenburg, 12.03.2022, lot 605;

Private ownership, Belgium.

Certificate by Michaela Schedl, 15.08.22, is available as a copy.

Against a dark green background a man in half figure is placed with his upper body slightly slanted. He wears a black beret on his thick, dark brown, neck-length hair. The portrayed man is dressed in a white shirt with a wide anchor chain disappearing into the neckline. He wears a black overcoat over it, trimmed with brown fur. The man's head is turned slightly to the right, as are his brown, eyelash-less eyes, which seek the viewer's gaze. The curved eyebrows have been partially painted with single brushstrokes. The long bridge of the nose ends in a strong curve. In contrast to the lower lip, the upper lip is very narrow. The sitter's left hand is bordered at the lower edge of the painting in such a way that the little finger is not visible. The man wears a ring on the index finger of this hand, in the oval recess of

which a coat of arms can be presumed.

The Munich art dealer Julius Böhler noted the following about the provenance of the panel: "The portrait originates from the estate of the late Grand Duke of Saxony and hung in the Grand Duke's private rooms at Wartburg before the outbreak of the war."

An enquiry with the Wartburg-Stiftung Eisenach revealed that - after checking the research literature and contemporary photographs - the portrait had not been at the Wartburg. However, it can be found on a black-and-white photograph taken before the First World War, showing one of the rooms of the Residenzschloss in Weimar, which was occupied by the last reigning Grand Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. There it can be seen on the right edge of the picture above a secretary. Until 1936, the portrait was in the Berlin antique shop Kahlert & Sohn, which was founded in 1913 and served as Imperial and Grand Ducal Court Antiquaries for, among others, Grand Duke Wilhelm Ernst, who resided in Weimar and abdicated on 9 November 1918.

From there, the panel was received by the renowned Munich art dealer Julius Böhler on 8 April 1936, as can be seen from their index card for the portrait. On 13 May 1936, the art dealer paid the Munich painting conservator Max Koeppel, who probably "transferred" the thinned oak panel to a veneer wood plate. A few months later in August, "Panzerbieter", probably referring to the painter Wilhelm Panzerbieter (1869-1954), was paid to restore the panel. Finally, in September 1936, Karl Pfefferle, "Kunsthändler, Rahmenmacher" (the workshop founded in 1859 still exists today) received 32 Marks for framing the portrait. After Böhler had contacted various interested parties and the portrait had been promoted in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, published in London in 1938, the portrait was sold in 1940 to Paul Reusch (1868- 1956), head of the major German company Gutehoffnungshütte in Oberhausen in the Ruhr area.

The different assessments of the painter who executed the work and thus of its place of origin can be traced in the records of the art dealer Böhler. In October 1936, Böhler inquired with various Old Master experts. Dr. Friedrich Winkler (1888-1965), at that time director of the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen, wondered whether it could be "an early work" by the Augsburg painter Christoph Amberger (ca. 1505-1561/1562). His colleague, the Basel-born Dr. Hans Schneider (1888-1953), at that time director of the Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague, on the other hand, assumed that the portrait had been painted in the Lower Rhine region - a view previously held by the Berlin-born Dr. Max J. Friedländer (1867-1958), since 1924 first director of the Berlin Gemäldegalerie. In promoting the portrait, however, Böhler finally followed the attribution of the Munich-based Dr. Ernst Buchner (1892-1962), who had been appointed Director General of the Bavarian State Painting Collections in 1932; his fundamental work on German portrait art, *Das deutsche Bildnis der Spätgotik und der frühen Dürerzeit*, was published in 1953. Buchner attributed the portrait to Hans Brosamer, painter, engraver and mould carver, who was probably born in Fulda around 1495 and died in Erfurt around 1554. Kurt Löcher assumed that Brosamer had been trained in the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder in Wittenberg around 1515/20, after which his work is documented in Nuremberg. The portrait of the Nuremberg tailor Hans Pirkel the Younger (monogrammed HB and dated 1520) may have led Buchner to attribute the portrait discussed here to Brosamer. Löcher described the Pirkel portrait (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) very aptly in 2009: "The portrait of Hans Pirkel offers a prime example of Brosamer's portrait art. It is succinct in its rendering of the darkly dressed male figure against the monochrome green ground on which its rounded cast shadow falls. The head is sharply observed, especially in the age-related undulation of the skin over the firmly built skull. The nose, thickened at the tip, and the strong lower lip characterise a face dominated by the bright eyes turned to the side. Dense brown curly hair covers the head. The comparatively leisurely rising contour on the left, steeper on the right, and the course of the fur lapel give the impression of a slight shift to the right, which counters the energetic turn of the head. The brown fur, which only just hints at the seams of the assembled pelts, is probably taken from the marten's back. The dark gown distinguishes the overcoat from the patterned sleeves of the doublet. The white shirt, over which the strings of the doublet run, adds a light accent. The sitter as well as the painter paid great attention to the depiction of the hands with the paternoster, which divides five black beads each with an ivory-coloured one. (...) The signet ring identifies him as a member of the Pirkel family."

The man depicted in the present portrait also wears a ring, in the oval recess of which a coat of arms seems to be embedded (Fig. 7): An inner escutcheon shows two (or three) white diagonal bars in blue. Three blue dots are visible at the top of the golden-yellow frame surrounding it. Above them is a red field. Further research into heraldry would be necessary for the possible identification of the coat of arms and the ring bearer. Whether the attribution made by Ernst

Buchner in 1929 is still valid today would have to be checked on the basis of the portraits signed by Hans Brosamer or attributed to him and with the technological research methods available today in the field of paintings (e.g. determination of the signature with infrared reflectography). A monograph on Hans Brosamer's paintings is not yet available. Before the portrait arrived at Böhler in 1936, a copy of the portrait was already in circulation. As can be seen, among other things, in the above-mentioned publication by Ernst Buchner on the German portrait from 1953, portraits were often copied, e.g. if there was interest in the family to also be in possession of the portrait. In the estate of Dr. Kurt Löcher, until 1998 director of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, which is kept at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, a black-and-white copy of a photograph showing the copied portrait has been preserved. Measuring 46,5 x 35,5 cm, it is somewhat larger than the original (41,1 x 32 cm) (Fig. 8). Below the copy, the attribution to the painter "H. Brosamer" is noted in typewritten form, which comes from Dr. Ernst Buchner ("Certified by Buchner"). In addition, there is a reference to the fact that this portrait was in the possession of "Schäffer, Berlin" in 1930, which very probably refers to the Galerie Dr. Schäffer at Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 7 in Berlin. Schäffer may have purchased the portrait at an auction in the English-speaking region, the organiser of which (in the short time available) could not be ascertained (Fig. 9). The "Portrait of a Man" in front of a 'neutral background' is listed there as no. 41. The dimensions are 18 ½ x 14 inches, i.e. approx. 47 x 35,5 cm. The attribution was based on an expert opinion by Dr. Ernst Buchner from 2 May 1929, who placed the portrait around 1525-1530. A comparison with the black-and-white photo from the photo portfolio of the art dealer Böhler shows (Fig. 10), that the background of the copied picture is lighter and that the copyist did not quite match the original portrait exactly: the face of the copied portrait appears less picturesque, the gaze of the portrayed person more tired.

Why the certificate was present for the copy of the portrait but not for the original portrait at Böhler is not known. In 1934, the portrait, which at that time was in a Viennese collection, was again offered at the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne with the "Expertise of Dr. Buchner" as a "Characteristic work in good condition, painted in 1525-1530 [by Hans Brosamer]". It seems to be the same panel that the Dorotheum Salzburg presented in 2014 - Here, too, the attribution to Hans Brosamer was retained, but with the apt remark that the painter was an "imitator of the 19th century". Even if the copies of the present portrait differ minimally from one another in places, it still seems to be the same panel.

We are grateful to Michaela Schedl, Tübingen, for her kind assistance in cataloguing the present painting.

Estimate: 30.000 € - 40.000 €; Hammer: 19.000 €
