



## 17th Century Flemish School - The Judgment Of Solomon



1 550 EUR

Signature : Ecole Flamande 17è

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

<https://www.proantic.com/en/1513593-17th-century-flemish-school-the-judgment-of-solomon.html>

### Description

This masterful work, entitled *The Judgment of Solomon*, is an oil on wood panel by a 17th-century Flemish School artist. The work presents an emblematic biblical scene in which King Solomon, dressed in rich clothes and wearing a turban, delivers his famous judgment. The composition is subtly orchestrated: the king sits enthroned on the left, dominating the scene, while the two women disputing the child's maternity are depicted on the right, in expressive and theatrical postures. The painting is distinguished by its chromatic richness and mastery of lighting effects. The purple and red drapes surrounding Solomon's throne contrast with the bright blue sky visible through the arcades in the background. The checkerboard floor reinforces the perspective and guides the

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eye towards the center of the action. The scene takes place in a monumental interior with massive columns, creating a solemn and dramatic setting. The Judgement of Solomon is a biblical episode from the Old Testament (1 Kings 3:16-28). It depicts the wisdom of King Solomon, who proposes to cut a child in two to resolve a dispute between two women claiming to be the child's mother. The real mother reveals her compassion by preferring to give up her child rather than see it die, thus demonstrating the king's justice. The artist captures the crucial moment when Solomon pronounces his decree. The facial expressions are finely detailed: the distress of the real mother, the impassiveness of the king, and the attitude of the impostor woman. The secondary characters add to the dramatic tension, creating a true visual theatre. The rich and deep colour palette is typical of the Flemish School: deep reds, intense blues, and subtle shadows that add volume to the figures. The contrast between the dark interiors and the bright sky accentuates the dramatic tension. This oil on wood panel is in excellent condition, with no visible repainting or traces of restoration. The wooden and gilded stucco frame, later than the work, is in very good condition, adding an additional touch of elegance.

Dimensions with frame: 52 x 44 cm  
Dimensions of the panel: 39.5 x 30.4 cm

Shipping: Very careful shipping, guaranteeing the safety of the work during transport.

This work illustrates the biblical episode of the Judgment of Solomon, an emblematic story of the wisdom of King Solomon, taken from the Old Testament (1 Kings 3:16-28). In this scene, two women claim the maternity of the same child, and Solomon proposes to cut it in two to reveal the real mother, who prefers to give up the child rather than see it die.

1. Composition and Staging  
The scene is balanced and theatrical, following a diagonal structure that guides the viewer's gaze from the king to the woman in blue. On the left: Solomon, seated on an imposing throne, dominates the

scene and points at the woman in blue. His attitude is decisive and sovereign. On the right: A woman in blue, in distress, supported by two servants. Her expression and posture convey great emotion, contrasting with the king's authority. In the background: An open architectural space with columns and arches, giving depth to the scene.

## 2. Character Analysis

**Solomon (in the center, on the throne)**  
**Gestures:** He extends one arm toward the woman in blue, as if pronouncing his verdict. His other hand is raised, a gesture of authority and speech.  
**Clothing:** A rich red and blue tunic, signifying his royal power. A white turban with a golden crown, evoking wisdom and divine justice.  
**Expression:** Her gaze is focused, reflecting her wisdom and ability to resolve conflicts.

**The Woman in Blue (the real mother)**  
**Gestures:** She is slumped, supported by two women, as if emotion had overcome her. Her arms are abandoned, a gesture of despair and supplication.  
**Clothing:** Blue dress with bright drapes -> symbol of purity, truth and sincere motherhood. Light pink shawl, softening her appearance, showing her maternal and sacrificial side.  
**Expression:** Painful face turned towards the king -> she agrees to give up her child to save his life.

**The Second Woman (the impostor, in black and pink)**  
**Gestures:** She supports the woman in blue, but her attitude is less expressive, as if she was trying to maintain a dignified appearance.  
**Clothing:** Dark and heavy dress -> symbol of falsehood and deception. Pink softens her severity, but her appearance contrasts with the mother in blue.  
**Expression:** More neutral, even closed -> she does not feel the same sincere sorrow as the real mother.

**The Advisors and Soldiers (left and in the background)**  
They are in the background, observing the scene with an attentive posture. Their presence reinforces the importance of the royal judgment.

## 3. The Symbolic Elements

**The Throne and the Purple Curtain**  
The imposing throne and the heavy curtain show the majesty and authority of the king. The color purple is associated with wisdom and royal justice. The Architecture in the

Background Columns and open arches -> symbol of order and stability. The bright background evokes divine clarity and wisdom. The Play of Light The king and the woman in blue are the most enlightened -> They embody truth and wisdom. The shadow on the woman in black translates doubt and falsehood.

#### 4. Conclusion

This painting highlights a climatic and emotional moment of the biblical myth, where the wisdom of Solomon is revealed. Thanks to the expressive gestures, the clothing contrasts and the play of light, the artist succeeds in translating the fight between truth and lies.

#### In-depth analysis of Solomon and the fainting woman

The relationship between these two figures is at the heart of the scene, contrasting the king's authority and wisdom with maternal suffering and emotion.

#### 1. King Solomon: Authority and Wisdom

##### Posture and Gestures

Seated on an imposing throne, he occupies a high and stable position, symbolizing power and justice. His right arm is outstretched, and his index finger points toward the fainting woman: This gesture marks his decision, as if he had just settled the debate. He does not look at her directly but addresses the assembly, reinforcing his role as an impartial judge. His other hand is raised in a gesture of appeasement or explanation, as if to justify his verdict.

##### Expression and Gaze

His gaze is piercing and focused, testifying to great intelligence and mastery of the situation. He appears calm and implacable, contrasting with the fainted woman who is overcome with emotion.

##### Clothing and Symbolism

He wears a richly colored tunic, red and blue: Red -> symbol of power and royalty. Blue -> associated with wisdom and divinity. A white turban adorned with a golden crown: White symbolizes the purity of judgment. The crown reminds us that her authority comes from God.

#### 2. The Fainted Woman:

##### Injustice and Maternal Pain

##### Posture and Gestures

She collapses, supported by two women, in a movement of defeat and extreme sorrow. Her right arm is relaxed, her hand open, a sign of total abandonment. Her body tilts backwards, reflecting

the intensity of despair. Expression and Gaze Her face is pale and tilted back, her eyes half-closed, as if she were losing consciousness from shock. Her parted lips reflect a final sigh of pain. Clothing and Symbolism She is wearing a light blue dress, draped with flexibility: Light blue -> symbol of purity, truth and sincere motherhood. The flowing folds accentuate the softness and fragility of the character. A pink shawl partially covers her shoulders: Pink evokes maternal love and tenderness, reinforcing her role as a true mother. This contrast with the woman in black and pink highlights her honesty.

### 3. The Opposition between Solomon and the Fainting Woman

Emotional contrast: Solomon is firm and impassive, representing reason and law. The mother is upset and defenseless, embodying emotion and maternal love. Visual contrast: The king dominates the composition, he is luminous and majestic. The woman is inclined, almost erased, under the weight of her sorrow. Contrast of gestures: Solomon points, he judges. The mother gives up her strength, she suffers.

### Conclusion

The opposition between Solomon and the fainted woman is the central point of the scene. The intelligence of the king opposes the distress of the mother, but it is precisely this emotion that will allow her to triumph. The artist has thus magnified the humanity of the maternal character in the face of the cold royal logic, making this scene deeply dramatic and expressive. The artist of this work demonstrates several remarkable qualities, which contribute to the dramatic and narrative impact of the scene. Here are the key points to emphasize:

#### 1. Mastery of Theatrical Composition

The organization of the figures follows a dynamic diagonal going from Solomon to the fainted woman, guiding the viewer's gaze through the scene. The artist creates a strong visual balance between: The group on the left (authority and power) dominated by Solomon. The group on the right (emotion and drama) centered on the fainted woman. The architectural spaces in the

background (columns and arches) structure the image and give it spatial depth, contrasting with the density of the foreground.

2. Expressiveness and Emotional Intensity  
The artist brilliantly captures extreme emotions: The implacable authority of Solomon, which cuts with wisdom. The poignant despair of the fainted woman, whose dramatic gestures amplify the tragic effect. The looks and facial expressions are meticulously worked, making each character lively and credible. The artist brilliantly captures extreme emotions: The implacable authority of Solomon, who cuts wisely. The poignant despair of the fainted woman, whose dramatic gestures amplify the tragic effect. The looks and facial expressions are meticulously worked, making each character lively and credible. The contrast between the majestic rigidity of the king and the abandoned flexibility of the mother underlines the psychological shock of the scene.

3. Mastery of Chiaroscuro and Light  
The artist plays with light contrasts to accentuate the dramaturgy: Solomon and the mother are the most illuminated, highlighting wisdom and truth. The secondary characters and the dark curtain on the left reinforce the theatrical effect by creating a background that dramatizes the main action. The drapes are magnificently modeled by the light, creating a sculptural effect close to the baroque.

4. Detailed Work on Textures and Clothing  
The artist accurately renders the richness of the fabrics: The king's heavy red velvet reflects his royal status. The fainting woman's flowing, silky dress accentuates her vulnerability and maternal gentleness. The folds and reflections of the fabrics are treated with great attention to realism. The purple curtain in the background, pleated and voluminous, reinforces the majestic side of the scene and gives an effect of depth.

5. Baroque Influence and Sense of Dramatization  
The work is part of an aesthetic close to the Baroque with: A strong light/shadow contrast. Expressive and exaggerated gestures, accentuating the dramatic tension. A feeling of movement frozen in a

decisive moment. The artist clearly seeks to move the viewer, by amplifying the tragic and theatrical aspect of the biblical episode. Conclusion: What to highlight? The artist excels in dramatic staging, emotional management and the expressive use of light and colours. What is particularly worth highlighting: ? The tension between Solomon and the fainted mother -> Key to emotional and narrative reading. ? The incredible expressiveness of the characters -> Real driving force of the scene. ? The mastery of chiaroscuro -> Accentuates the contrast between justice and despair. ? The realism and texture of the fabrics -> Contribute to the visual richness and credibility of the work. In summary: A work where the artist combines theatrical force, emotional intensity and pictorial mastery, transforming a biblical story into a poignant and immersive scene. #JudgmentOfSolomon #FlemishSchool #17thCentury #FlemishArt #BiblicalPainting #AncientArt #OilOnWood #AncientPainting #EuropeanArt #HistoryOfArt #BiblicalScene #ReligiousPainting #ArtCollection #SacredArt #FineArts #GoldenFrame #Antiques #ClassicalArt