

**Johann Franz ERMELS (Reilkirch 1621/41 - Nuremberg 1693)**

**The Interior of the Colosseum, Rome**

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, with framing lines in brown ink.

Inscribed f. Ermels del:, Boerner 1820. / lcmz x and No.26 [crossed out] on the verso.

245 x 186 mm. (9 5/8 x 7 3/8 in.)

This drawing is a study, in the same direction, for an etching by the artist which is part of a series of nine prints of Italianate landscapes with ruins of classical buildings, published sometime between 1660 and 16931. (While Ermels is not definitively known to have travelled to Italy, the views of the Colosseum in this series of prints would suggest that he may well have done so.) The dimensions of the print, at 115 x 98 mm., are, however, somewhat smaller than those of this drawing.

The present sheet was one of three drawings of the Colosseum by Ermels which were at one time in the collection of Johann Andreas Boerner (1785-1862). The drawing later belonged to the editor and publisher Curt Otto (c.1880-1929), who began collecting Old Master drawings in 1908, with a particular focus on Dutch and Flemish drawings of the 17th century.

**Exhibitions**

Amsterdam, Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap, Hoe Hollandse teekenaars Rome zagen 1500-1840, 1940 [no catalogue published].

**Artist description:**

A landscape painter and etcher, Johann Franz (sometimes Johann Franciscus) Ermels grew up in Cologne and trained with the history painter Johann Hülsmann. He travelled to Holland, where he came under the influence of the painter Jan Both and other Italianate Dutch artists. From 1660 onwards he lived in Nuremberg, where he was among the circle of artists around Joachim von Sandrart after the latter settled there in 1674. Although he may not have travelled to Italy himself, Ermels introduced the manner of the Dutch Italianate artists to Germany. In later years he collaborated with Wilhlem van Bemmel, painting figures in the latter's landscapes.

Several large and highly finished drawings of classical and mythological landscapes by Ermels are in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. Other landscape drawings by the artist are today in the collections of the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Braunschweig, the Hessisches Landesmuseum in Darmstadt, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Orléans, the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, the Louvre in Paris, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, the Albertina in Vienna, and elsewhere.