

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Antonio Joli

(Modena c. 1700 – 1777 Naples)

Paestum

oil on canvas, in an English carved giltwood frame, presumably the original 75.5 x 101 cm.;

29 ¾ x 39 ¾ in.

signed, inscribed and dated on the back of the original canvas: *Ve^{ta} delli tre Tempi che susitano nella destruta Città di Pesto. Anto. Jolli 1759 Napoli*

Provenance

Commissioned by Sir James Gray, 2nd Bt. (c. 1708 - 1773), Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Naples 1759-1764;

James Hugh Smith Barry (1746 - 1801), who was in Naples from 1772 - 73 and again in 1779, Marbury Hall, Cheshire, and by inheritance in the Smith Barry family until 1932, when the house was sold (19th or early 20th century inscription 'Mr Smith-Barry' on a label on the back of the frame);

Anonymous sale ['The Property of a Lady'], Sotheby's, London, 14 December 1977, lot 109; With Colnaghi, London (*Pictures from the Grand Tour*, 14 November – 16 December 1978, no. 33, illustrated);

Private collection, Europe.

Literature

A Catalogue of Paintings, Statues, Busts, &c. at Marbury Hall, The Seat of John Smith Barry, Esq. In the County of Chester, Warrington 1819, p. 2, no. 33 'Ruins – Ant^o. Jolli.';

N. Spinosa in *Civiltà del '700 a Napoli, 1734-1799*, exh. cat., Naples 1979 - 1980, p. 288;

N. Spinosa, *Pittura napoletana del Settecento: dal Rococò al Classicismo*, Naples 1987, p. 157, no. 280, fig. 379;

N. Spinosa and L. di Mauro, *Vedute napoletane del Settecento*, Naples 1989, pp. 182 and 192, fig. 70;

M. Utili in *All'ombra del Vesuvio: Napoli nella veduta europea dal Quattrocento all'Ottocento*, exh. cat., Castel Sant'Elmo, Naples 1990, p. 400;

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L. Salerno, *I pittori di vedute in Italia (1580-1830)*, Rome 1991, p. 256, no. 65;
R. Middione, *Antonio Joli*, Soncino 1995, pp. 31 and 92, fig. 19;
J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800, compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive*, New Haven and London 1997, p. 424;
M. Manzelli, *Antonio Joli: Opera pittorica*, Venice 1999, p. 118, no. W.5, fig. 97;
C. Beddington, 'Antonio Joli. Opera pittorica by Mario Manzelli', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLII, no. 1171, October 2000, p. 640;
R. Toledano, *Antonio Joli*, Turin 2006, p. 396, no. N.XL, and p. 84, colour pl. L;
G. Narciso in *Antonio Joli tra Napoli, Roma e Madrid: le vedute, le rovine, i capricci, le scenografie teatrali*, exh. cat., Palazzo Reale, Caserta, 15 June – 14 October 2012, pp. 86-7.

Exhibited

Padula, Certosa di S. Lorenzo, *La fortuna di Paestum e la memoria moderna del dorico, 1750-1830*, June 1986, I, pp. 47-8, 58 and 62-4, no. 1b.

Engraved

Filippo Morghen, 1766 (with minor variations);
Thomas Major, 1768.

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The subject of this work is the ruined Greek temple complex at Paestum, located one hundred miles south of Naples in Campania. The city was founded in 600 BC as a Greek colony called Poseidonia, and it was subsequently sacked first by the Lucanians and then by the Romans. Paestum was famed for its Doric temples, and became a site of renewed interest in the mid-18th century after its ruins were discovered in 1746 by the architect Mario Gioffredi, shortly after nearby discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The earliest visual records of the site were measured drawings made for Count Felice Gazola, Commander of the Neapolitan Artillery (engraved in Paris, 1752); and those by the French architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot (published in Gabriel-Pierre-Martin Dumont's *Suite de plans...de trois temples antique...de Poseto*, 1764). Antonio Joli painted the view on a number of occasions and Charles Beddington (*op. cit.*) regards the present work and a *View of Paestum, the interior of the Temple of Neptune* (Palazzo Reale, Caserta, inv. no. 386) as among the earliest known views of Paestum. The present work shows the Temple of Neptune in the foreground and in the distance the Temple of Ceres and Monti di Cilento.

Joli's peripatetic career brought him under the influence of a variety of local traditions and different masters before he settled in Naples around 1755, where he benefited from the flourishing market for *vedute* created by an international clientele of noblemen and Grand Tourists. He worked as a stage painter as well as a landscapist, and his manner, influenced by the work of Canaletto and Bellotto in Venice, typically combines topographical fidelity with a dramatic viewpoint. Joli also took up a position as court painter to Charles VII, King of Naples, later Charles III of Spain. Joli achieved significant commercial success with his scenes of the city and its surroundings, and he was the first to paint a 'bird's eye' view of Paestum in 1758, the year before he executed our painting (Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena).

The rediscovery of Paestum contributed to the flourishing of a Grand Tourist economy in Naples, which became an essential destination. Travellers such as Joseph Forsyth (1763 – 1815), who described his Grand Tour in *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and letters during an Excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803* (London, 1813) extended his tour to include Paestum. Forsyth recalled: "These wonderful objects, though surveyed in the midst of rain,

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amply compensated our little misadventures... I do not hesitate to call these the most impressive monuments that I ever beheld on earth" (*op. cit.*, p. 343). And Shelley described the effect of "the jagged outline of mountains [seen] through groupes [sic] of enormous columns on one side, and the other the level horizon the sea" as "inconceivably grand", a phrase echoed by Sir Walter Scott when he visited these "sybarite [sic]" temples in March of 1832 (quoted in *Letters of... Shelley*, II, p. 79; and *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W.E.K. Anderson, Oxford 1972, pp. 690-713).