



Stefano Della Bella, Arch Of Constantine And Colosseum, 17th-century Etching, Colbert Watermark



550 EUR

Signature : Stefano della Bella (Florence, 1610-1664)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 27,5cm

Height : 32,5cm

Description

Stefano della Bella, Arch of Constantine and Colosseum, 17th-Century Etching, Colbert Watermark

Arcus Const.ini et Amphit.ri Flavii

Stefano della Bella (Florence, 1610-1664), known in France as Étienne de la Belle.

Original etching on French laid paper with a watermark associated with the Colbert arms.

Plate engraved in 1656; French impression datable to the closing decades of the 17th century.

The series was published in Paris by Israël Henriet, succeeded by Israël Silvestre.

Second state of two in the traditional classification: with the Latin inscription identifying the monuments depicted, absent in the first state.

Sheet dimensions: 27.5 × 32.5 cm (10.83 × 12.80

Dealer

Antichità di Alina

Peintures anciennes - Art nouveau - Art déco, micromosaïques, porcelaine

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Via Maggio 63 / rosso

Firenze 50100

inches).

From the series Six Large Views, Four of Rome and Two of the Roman Countryside.

Reference: De Vesme-Massar 834, II/II.

Viewed against the light, the upper part of the sheet reveals an unexpected clue: a serpent within a crowned shield, with the cross of the Order of the Holy Spirit beneath it. The watermark recalls the arms of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's finance minister and a central figure in French economic and manufacturing policy. How did his emblem find its way onto a Roman view etched by a Florentine artist?

The answer begins with Stefano della Bella's career. Trained in Florentine workshops, advised by Remigio Cantagallina and profoundly influenced by Jacques Callot, he met the French publishers Israël Henriët and François Langlois in Rome. In 1639 he travelled to Paris, where he remained until 1650, working for local publishers and receiving commissions from Richelieu and Mazarin.

His return to Florence did not end these relationships. The six large Roman views, etched around 1656, were entrusted to Henriët for printing in Paris. The French publishers therefore held the original copperplates and could continue printing them after the artist's death in 1664. The reconstructed history of the plates subsequently places them with Israël Silvestre, Henriët's nephew.

The paper adds another significant element.

According to Gaudriault's research, paper bearing the Colbert arms was produced from 1668, initially for ministerial use and subsequently also for publishing. Watermarks from the same family are documented on impressions of Silvestre's prints, providing a comparison that supports a late 17th-century date for this sheet.

Rome supplies the subject, Florence the invention, and Paris the publishers and presses.

The Arch of Constantine dominates the left of the composition, while the Colosseum rises on the right; sheep in the foreground introduce a quiet

pastoral scene. Monuments and small incidents
intertwine in della Bella's vision, turning a
topographical view into a story.