



The Temple of Hercules in Cori near Velletri

Jakob Philip Hackert
German, 1783
Gouache, 11/16 x 18 1/2 in.
2010.68



Background Information

Using the opaque medium of gouache (a type of watercolor for which the ratio of pigment to water is much higher), Jakob Philip Hackert made the irregular walls and weathered surfaces of this Roman temple, southeast of Rome, almost tangible. The diagonal composition leads the gaze to the right, thereby inviting us on a journey. Hackert probably captured this view on his way to or from Naples, where he was employed at the local court.

Hackert achieved international recognition with his highly finished Italian landscapes, which ally the classical ideal with topographical and archaeological accuracy. The famous German writer of *Faust* (considered one of the masterpieces of modern German literature), Johann Wolfgang Goethe, his friend and biographer, praised the "sureness and clarity" of his drawings.

About the Artist

Jakob Philip Hackert (German, 1737–1807)

Jakob Philip Hackert came from a family of German painters and printmakers, and he first studied with his father Philipp Hackert. From 1755, he received formal training at the Academy in Berlin where he encountered and copied the landscapes of Dutch artists and of the French artist Claude Lorrain. Hackert went on to study in Paris, where there was a growing interest in the kind of landscapes developed by Dutch painters, characterized by classical motifs and harmonious compositions. He excelled in creating paintings in the Dutch style, resulting in some money and fame. This success enabled him to depart for Italy in 1768. After travelling throughout the country, Hackert arrived in Rome, where he joined a group of other German artists.

In 1782, Hackert met King Ferdinand IV of Naples, and in 1786, became his court painter. During his 13 years in Naples, his fame increased, largely through the advocacy of his good friend and famous writer Goethe, whom he met in 1787. In Naples, Hackert started his own school, promoting his ideas about landscape painting to other painters, including his brother Georg Hackert. When the Revolution of 1799 forced him to leave Naples, Hackert settled permanently at San Pietro di Careggi, near Florence. There he returned to his old interest in studying and depicting nature with renewed perception, preceding the Romantic artistic movement. After his death his memoirs were edited and published by Goethe.

The Temple of Hercules in Cori near Velletri, Jakob Philip Hackert

Questions for Teaching

Take the time to look closely at the reproduction of the painting.

What attracts your attention first in this drawing? Why?

What three words come to mind when you examine the architecture in this drawing?

Describe the color, surface and condition on the temple to a partner. Share your partner's observations with the group. What are some things that they noticed?

The entrance hall to the temple is called a **pronaos** (pronounced pro-NAY-us; Greek for “before a temple”; also called “portico” in Italian). Refer to the “Elements of Art” handout and read the definitions. Describe the **lines** and **shapes** you can see in the entrance hall.

Examine the **pronaos** and identify architectural elements in closer detail. Have students fill out the “Identifying Architectural Elements” handout that depicts Hackert's *The Temple of Hercules in Cori near Velletri*. Students may refer to the “Architecture Vocabulary” handout on the Getty website

(http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_architecture/arch_vocabulary.pdf).

Besides the architecture in this drawing, where does your eye travel next? Why?

What else do you notice?