

# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

## KUNST



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THOMAS ENDER

1793 - Vienna – 1875

## *View of the Port of Trieste from the Scala Santa*

Oil on paper, laid down on canvas; 1819/23 or 1853.

Signed lower left *Th. Ender*

31.5 x 23.5 cm

Thomas Ender entered the Vienna Academy in 1806 and studied under Josef Mößmer (1780-1845) and Franz Steinfeld (1787-1868). He took up his studies in landscape painting under Laurenz Janscha (1749-1812) in 1810. On study tours to Salzburg, Styria, the Tyrol, northern Italy and Lake Garda he diligently recorded landscapes in a series of studies and sketches. He enjoyed the patronage of Metternich, then Protector of the Academy, who invited him to take part in an Austrian scientific expedition to Brazil<sup>1</sup> in 1817-8. With Metternich's support he obtained a four-year bursary to study in Rome in 1819. He was in Paris in 1826. In 1829 he was appointed *Kammermaler* – one of a privileged group of court painters – to Archduke Johann who commissioned him to undertake an artistic record of his properties and estates. The project resulted in an impressive body of watercolours depicting Alpine views. He was named a professor and appointed to lead the landscape class at the Academy in 1837. In the same year he travelled to Russia and Greece, and also visited Constantinople. He was appointed *kaiserlicher Rat* in 1845. He resigned his post at the Academy in 1850. He travelled to Italy for nine months in 1853, twice staying in Trieste. He describes his visit in a letter to the Archduke dated 8 November 1853: *Your Highness, Noble Lord! While I most respectfully bow at your feet, I hereby take the liberty of announcing my safe return from Italy. My journey took me from Trieste to Venice, Padua and Bologna where I sojourned two full days devoting my attentions to the enjoyment of works of art [...]. Although I saw all this some thirty years since, the richness and beauty of this country in all its parts has nevertheless astonished me. I have left it with some melancholy. Italy is, and shall remain, the most beautiful and richest of countries for art and artists. No other country has such a wealth of art treasures and art history [...]. From Rome I travelled to Voligno and Loretto, Ancona, Trieste and Vienna [...].*<sup>2</sup>

Ender is precise in his handling of topographical detail. He depicts the Gulf of Trieste and the Old Port from an elevated viewpoint – the Scala Santa high above the city. On the horizon is the narrow outline of the Kras ridges stretching towards Slovenia. Ships are depicted at anchor. The curving expanse of the bay is framed by low banks of cloud above the horizon and by the rich greens of the trees and shrubs in the foreground.

The city's flowering in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be ascribed to its role as the only major port under Habsburg rule. It is unclear whether the present oil sketch was executed on Ender's first visit to Italy in 1819-23 or on one of his two documented visits to Trieste in 1853.

<sup>1</sup> The expedition was in Brazil between March 1817 and August 1818. On the expedition Ender executed a large number of landscape commissions for the Kaiser and Metternich. He first visited Trieste on his embarkation for Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> *Kaiserliche Hoheit, gnädigster Herr! Indem ich mich ergebenst zu Füßen lege, bin ich frei, meine glückliche Zurückkunft von Italien gehorsamt zu melden. Meine Reise ging über Triest nach Venedig, Padua bis Bologna, wo ich zwei Tage der Beschauung von Kunstgegenständen widmete [...]. Ich habe all dies schon vor 30 Jahren gesehen und war doch überrascht, wie reich und schön dieses Land in allen seinen Theilen. Mit Wehmut habe ich es wieder verlassen. Italien ist und bleibt das schönste und reichste Land für Kunst und Künstler, kein Land hat solche Kunstschatze und Kunstgeschichte aufzuweisen [...]. Von Rom reiste ich über Voligno, Loretto nach Ancona, Triest und Wien [...].* Walter Koschatzky, *Thomas Ender (1793-1875): Kammermaler Erzherzog Johans*, Graz 1982, pp. 152-54.