

CHRISTOFFER WILHELM ECKERSBERG

1783 BLÅKRUG – COPENHAGEN 1853

Viewing the Solar Eclipse of 28th July 1851

Pen and black ink, brown wash over pencil on white paper.

Dated and inscribed by the artist 28 Juli 1851. *Solformørkelse*.

Bearing a number 535 in pencil lower right.

250 x 160 mm

PROVENANCE: Eckersberg's Third Estate Sale, Copenhagen, 3 January 1855, 'Drawings dated 1848-51', lot 533 (described as 'en Gadescene. Pen') – Acquired at the above sale by 'Eilertsen' (almost certainly the landscape painter Eiler Rasmussen Eilersen, 1827-1912) – Private collection, Germany

LITERATURE: Peter Michael Hornung and Kaspar Monrad, *C. W. Eckersberg – dansk malerkunsts fader*, Copenhagen 2005, p. 388, repr. – Dirk Luckow and Dörte Zbikowski, *Die Kopenhagener Schule. Meisterwerke Dänischer und Deutscher Malerei von 1770 bis 1850*, ehhib. cat., Kunsthalle Kiel 2005, p. 139 – Villads Villadsen (ed.), *C. W. Eckersbergs dagbøger*, vol. 2, Copenhagen 2008, p. 1215, note 9

EXHIBITION: *Die Kopenhagener Schule. Meisterwerke Dänischer und Deutscher Malerei von 1770 bis 1850*, Kunsthalle Kiel 2005, p. 139 – Markus Bertsch, Hubertus Gaßner and Neela Struck, *Eckersberg Faszination Wirklichkeit. Das Goldene Zeitalter der dänischen Malerei*, Kunsthalle Hamburg 2016, no. 86 – Ger Luijten, *C. W. Eckersberg 1783 – 1853 Artiste Danois à Paris, Rome & Copenhague*, Fondation Custodia / Collection Frits Lugt, Paris 2016, no. 119

A group of people are gathered to view the solar eclipse that could be seen in Copenhagen on the afternoon of 28 July 1851. On that day it was possible to see a total eclipse of the sun in several places in Denmark. The central track of the solar eclipse of 28 July 1851 ran across northern Canada, Greenland and Iceland, before traversing Continental Europe over southern Norway and Sweden and heading east-southeast across Poland and into the Ukraine.

To view the partial phases of the solar eclipse – before and after totality – viewing took place through a blackened glass. During the total phase, observers could view with the naked eye.

Eckersberg was very interested in astronomy and meteorology and carefully noted the different reactions and behaviour of adults and children on that particular day. In his diary entry for 28 July 1851 he describes the eclipse: *Around 3 pm the solar eclipse started, which was almost total at 4 pm, and terminated around 5 pm. There were a great many people on the square with their glasses to see this rare event.*¹

We are grateful to Jesper Svenningsen for his help in preparing this catalogue entry.

¹ See Villads Villadsen (ed.), *C. W. Eckersbergs dagbøger*, op. cit., p. 1215.



actual size