



Inv. no. B 401

THEODOR PHILIPSEN (1840–1920)  
THE MILVIAN BRIDGE, 1902  
OIL ON CANVAS

40 X 61 CM

Theodor Philipsen was an unusually prolific traveller throughout his life, visiting many cities and places in Europe. In 1877 he set out for Italy for the first time. The country would subsequently become a favourite destination for him. Under its sunny skies he found inspiration as well as an entirely new range of motifs, that was to become absolutely central in his overall artistic oeuvre.

Philipsen visited Italy again in 1902. From Rome, he painted a series of paintings, among these several showing scenes from the Milvian Bridge, which crosses the Tiber in the northern part of the capital. In the past, the Milvian Bridge was an important point of passage. All travellers from the north crossed the bridge on their way to Rome, and this was also where artists said goodbye to colleagues who were leaving Rome behind.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike other artists who have painted the Milvian Bridge, such as Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) and Joseph M.W. Turner (1775–1851), Philipsen did not dwell on either nature or architecture here. Nor did he create a classically composed depiction of the bridge, which is easily identified by its four central and two smaller arches as well as the gate tower at the northern end. More than anything, Philipsen's painting is about light and colour. He has kept to a light colour scheme without any hint of shadows, applying the paint with rapid brushstrokes so that large parts of the canvas have thin layers of colour.

The David Collection owns another painting by Philipsen showing a scene from the Milvian Bridge (B 398).

<sup>1</sup> Kasper Monrad et al.: *Eckersberg, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 2015*, p. 206.

Published in:

Erik Zahle: "Malerisamlingens vækst" in *C.L. Davids Samling*, Tredie del, København 1958, pp. 125-126; .

Finn Terman Frederiksen: *Theodor Philipsen. En traditionsbevidst nyskaber*, Randers kunstmuseum, Randers 2016, BFL 691, p. 471;