

The Great Villa at Quintili, Rome

William Pars



Description

William Pars, A.R.A. (1742-1782)
The Great Villa at Quintili, Rome

Pen and grey ink and watercolour over traces of pencil
20.5 by 28.3 cm., 15 ½ by 18 ½ in.

Provenance:

Miss Descret, Broadwater, Sussex;
Anonymous sale, Christie's, 19th March 1985;
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's 5th June 2008, lot 192;
Private Collection, UK

Born in London, Pars began his working career as a portrait painter until in 1764 he was appointed draughtsman on an expedition to Greece and Asia Minor organised by Chandler and Revett on behalf of the Society of Dilettanti. Many of the resulting watercolours were engraved for the Society's publication *Ionian Antiquities* and are now in the British Museum.

Pars had first visited Rome with Lord Palmerston in 1766. In 1775 Pars was able to return, when he became the first beneficiary of a new award established by the Society of Dilettanti, enabling an artist to spend time studying in Rome. Pars became a central figure in the group of British artists in Rome, which included Francis Towne, Thomas Jones, John Robert Cozens and John 'Warwick' Smith (see nos.15, 16, 59 and 60). Pars remained there for the last seven years of his life, dying aged only 40, from a chill caught whilst sketching at Tivoli.

The Villa dei Quintili lies just over five miles outside the ancient boundary of the city of Rome on the Via Appia Antica. Built by two brothers, Quintilius Valerius Maximus and Sextus Quintilius Condianus, in the 2nd Century A.D., the villa complex was so large that for centuries it was believed locally to have been the site of Old Rome.