Ruins of San Francesco, Lisbon

James Holland

Sold



REF: 1027

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Description

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James Holland (1800-1870)
The Ruins of the Church of St. Francisco, Lisbon

Signed lower right: Ruins of S.t Francisco/Lisboa 37 JH/destroyed by....
Watercolour over pencil heightened with bodycolour
27.3 x 20.4 cm., 10 ¾ by 8 in.

Provenance:
The Artist's studio sale, Christie's, 26th May 1870, lot 149, bt. E. White for 7 gns;
Sir Henry H. Houldsworth Bt., Coodham, Kilmarnock;
Anonymous sale, Christie's, 1st March 1977, lot 19;
Anonymous sale, Phillip's, 13th May 1987, lot 55

Holland visited Portugal in the summer of 1837 and was probably the first British landscape artist to do so. He was sent by William Harrison who commissioned him to produce watercolours to be engraved for one of his Landscape Annuals. They were published two years later under the title The Tourist in Portugal. Holland's Portuguese works are amongst his rarest and most celebrated works. He was in Lisbon in July. Another view of the ruins of San Francesco is in the Victoria and Albert Museum which has twenty of his Portuguese views.
This shows the Convent of St Francisco which was destroyed during the Portuguese civil war in 1834. The church and convent was situated below the castle of São Jorge, behind the Naval Arsenal in the centre of Lisbon. There is a vivid description of the state of the church by a Captain James Alexander of the Royal Highlanders in his book 'Sketches In Portugal During The Civil War Of 1834': 'the ruined walls of the Convent of St Francisco shattered as if the great earthquake had only yesterday visited this often devastated capital.'

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