

The town of Tiberias looking towards Lebanon, from the Ruins of the Roman Baths at the Hot Springs to the South of the City

David Roberts R.A.



Description

David Roberts, R.A. (1796-1864)

The town of Tiberias looking towards Lebanon, from the Ruins of the Roman Baths at the Hot Springs to the South of the City

Inscribed lower left, Town of Tabarius looking towards Lebanon April 22nd 1839 and signed lower right, David Roberts R.A.

Watercolour over pencil

24.2 by 34.2 cm., 9 ½ by 13 ½ in.

Engraved:

By Louis Haghe, as a lithograph, for David Robert's, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia*, 1842, volume 1, pl, 35.

David Roberts undertook an extended visit to the Near East in 1838-9, leaving London in the autumn. He spent the winter travelling throughout Egypt, before setting off for the Holy Land in February 1839. He arrived in Jerusalem at Easter 1839, before travelling onto Lebanon, leaving Beirut in May and arriving back in London in July. Roberts stated that this journey had provided him with sufficient material to inspire him for the rest of his career and he returned with '272 sketches, a panorama of Cairo and 3 full sketchbooks' (Helen Guiterman and Briony Llewellyn, *David Roberts*, 1986, p. 69). This vast cache of work formed the basis for Roberts' designs for his six volume, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia*. Louis Haghe (1806-1885) produced all 248 lithographs for Robert's Holy Land series.

Roberts had first left England in 1824, to visit France and six years later he went to Germany before undertaking a further trip to Spain and Morocco in 1832 (see no.44). On his return he found a ready market for his drawings. He clearly relished travelling and wanted to journey further and see things that few Europeans had seen at this time. Whilst readying himself for his journey across the desert from Cairo to Syria, Roberts wrote in his journal: I have no doubt all with end well - then for home with one of the richest folios that ever left the East.

Apart from the numerous studies capturing the people, buildings and landscapes, he also kept a detailed journal, providing vivid descriptions of what he had seen. Roberts visited the town of Tiberius, over two days on 21st and 22nd April. The town lies on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and was founded in about 20CE by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and named after the Roman emperor. The town was largely destroyed by earthquake only a few years before Roberts's visit and the entry in the artist's journal for 22 April states; I made several sketches of the town, or rather its remains - for every part has more or less been destroyed by earthquakes. The part nearest the lake seems to have suffered most; the city wall, which is built of hewn stones, is in most parts thrown down and those remaining are rent from top to bottom. The town and 600 of its inhabitants were killed in the earthquake of 1837. (Gabriel Naughton, *David Roberts, Travels in the Holy Land, Watercolours from a Private Collection*, 2013, p. 74).