

The Village of Kastri, Delphi, Greece

Edward Lear



Description

Edward Lear (1812-1888)
The Village of Kastri, Delphi, Greece

Signed with monogram lower left
Watercolour over traces of pencil heightened with bodycolour with original line mount
12 by 18.5 cm., 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Provenance:

The Marquess of Crewe, West Horsley Place, Surrey, by 1913;
Mary, Duchess of Roxburghe, her Estate sale, Sotheby's, 27th May 2015, lot 128, where bought by the present owner

Literature:

Crewe House, London, Inventory, 1913, vol. 2, p.56, as in Lord Crewe's Study;
An Inventory... of Pictures at West Horsley Place, Surrey, the property of the Marquess of Crewe, 1938, p.39

This studio work is based on a sketch drawn on Lear's visit to Delphi in April 1849. He was disappointed not to have reached Delphi when he was taken ill the previous year (see nos. 62-63). Travelling with Franklin Lushington, they travelled from Athens up through Attica to Thebes before continuing to Parnassus and Delphi.

The ancient Greeks considered Delphi, on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, the centre of the world as the seat of Pythia the most important oracle of the period. When Lear was there, the ancient ruins were occupied by the town of Kastri and the site could not be excavated until the residents of the village were relocated which they were reluctant to do. Eventually an earthquake damaged Kastri in the 1880s and excavation could begin.