

The West Front of Lichfield Cathedral, Derbyshire

Thomas Girtin

Sold



Description

Thomas Girtin (1775-1802)
The West Front of Lichfield Cathedral, Derbyshire

Inscribed in another hand on reverse of original backing: Litchfield Cathedral./T. Girtin delin.t
Pencil on laid paper
34.3 by 27.1cm., 13 ½ by 10 ½ inches

This recently rediscovered drawing dates from Girtin's 1794 tour of the Midlands with the antiquarian James Moore. From 1793 Moore had employed Girtin to produce copies in watercolour of his own pencil sketches and this tour was their first journey together. They visited Warwick, Stratford, Lichfield, Peterborough and Lincoln and it resulted in a number of further commissions for Girtin from Moore. The viewpoint was presumably chosen by Moore and its advantage is that the three spires of the cathedral are visible.

The watercolour which Moore commissioned from this drawing is now in the Yale Center for British Art and another version is now in the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester (see Greg Smith, Thomas Girtin: The Art of Watercolour, exhibition catalogue, 2002, p.60, no.38, ill.). A similar pencil drawing of the West front of Peterborough Cathedral also dating from the 1794 tour is in the Yale Center for British Art (Greg Smith, op.cit., p.97, no.70, ill.) and one of Lincoln Cathedral was sold at Sotheby's on 24th November 2005, lot 124.

This is likely to be the 'sketch of Lichfield Cathedral' which belonged to the artist and Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, William Alexander (1767-1816) (see Thomas Girtin and David Loshak, The Art of Thomas Girtin, 1954, p.146, under no.88)

Provenance:

Probably William Alexander, his sale, Christie's, 12th March 1817, lot 1199 - 'Sketch of Lichfield Cathedral by T. Girtin'