

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Hans LIETZMANN (Berlin 1872 - Torbole 1955)**

**Rocks on the Shore of Lake Garda, near Torbole**

Watercolour and gouache on thick paper.

Signed and dated H. Lietzmann / 06 at the lower left.

Illegibly inscribed on the verso.

317 x 554 mm. (12 1/4 x 21 3/4 in.) [sheet]

Hans Lietzmann was best known for his landscape paintings and gouaches of the Alpine scenery and rocky shorelines of the Lake Garda region. He generally worked en plein air, and his paintings are characterized by confident brushwork and a refined handling of light and shade, allied to a particular feeling for colour. The present sheet was drawn in 1906, a few years after the artist had settled in Torbole, during a period when he was at his happiest and most productive.

Among comparable works by Lietzmann is a gouache view of The 'Marocche' Rocks near Torbole, signed and dated 1910, which was sold at auction in Germany in 2015, and is today in an Italian private collection.

## **Artist description:**

Born in Berlin, the painter and draughtsman Hans Lietzmann was orphaned by the age of eight, and was raised by a Lutheran pastor. Although he studied at the Akademie in Berlin between 1889 and 1894, he was largely an autodidact. One of his first paintings, *The Disciples at Emmaus*, was exhibited in Berlin in 1894, and two years later other paintings of Biblical subjects earned him an honourable mention in the annual Rome competition. An early visit in 1884 to the northern part of Lake Garda, then still a part of Austria, encouraged him several years later to settle in the area, and in 1899 he built a house in the village of Torbole sul Garda, on the north shore of the lake. (After the Treaty of Vienna of 1866, Torbole served as the border station between the Kingdom of Italy and the Habsburg territories.)

There Lietzmann established a studio and a private art school specializing in nude and landscape painting, which came to be frequented by numerous German artists. He became one of the best-known artists of the region, and was to live and work in Torbole for most of the rest of his life, painting many views of the town and the shores of the lake over the next fifty years.

After serving as a military draughtsman in France during the First World War, Lietzmann returned to Torbole to find that his home had been destroyed in the fighting and his property, like that of other German aliens, confiscated by the new Fascist regime in Italy. Nevertheless, he remained in the town,

working as a painter of religious works and as a portraitist, producing likenesses of many of the inhabitants of Torbole. He also restored an altarpiece by the 18th century Venetian painter Giambettino Cignaroli, in the local church of Sant'Andrea, that had been damaged during the war. Among his important commissions was one for sixty tempera paintings of New Testament subjects, painted between 1924 and 1928 for the Preussische Hauptbibelgesellschaft of Berlin and now in the collection of the Märkisches Museum there. In 1928 he published a guidebook to Torbole, which was followed by an autobiography issued in 1937. Lietzmann remained in Torbole during the Second World War, living almost in poverty and largely forgotten, and was buried there after his death. In recent years interest in his work has been revived, stimulated by an exhibition in Torbole in 1985 on the thirtieth anniversary of his death, and culminating in the publication of a monograph devoted to his work in 2006.