Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Ludwig THIERSCH (Munich 1825 - Munich 1909)

A Grove of Olive Trees near Tivoli

Black chalk, with touches of white heightening, on blue paper.

Signed, dated and inscribed *Tivoli, L. Th. 1851.* at the lower left.

Further signed(?) and inscribed *Ludwig Thiersch* / *(a.e. Nachlass(?) konvolut [?] des Bauerin(?))* / *[?] [?]* on the verso.

326 x 480 mm. (12 7/8 x 18 7/8 in.) [sheet]

The present sheet, dated 1851, is an early work drawn during Ludwig Thiersch's stay in Rome, following his graduation from the Academy in Munich. Of the same date, and on the same blue paper, is a large drawing of *The Falls at Tivoli and the Villa of Maecenas*, in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Drawings by Thiersch are quite rare, although around a hundred drawings and oil sketches by the artist are in the collection of the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum in Aachen, which mounted an exhibition of them in 1979. A small number of Thiersch's travel sketchbooks are in the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, while several sketches for ecclesiastical projects are in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

Artist description:

The 19th century Bavarian artist Ludwig Thiersch studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he was initially trained as a sculptor but later turned to painting, and was taught by, among others, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld. After a brief stay in Rome, he travelled to Greece in 1852 with his father, the classicist and noted philhellene Friedrich Thiersch. He developed an interest in Byzantine art, and began teaching at the Athens School of Fine Arts, where his students included Nikolaos Gyzis. Greece and its artistic tradition were to be of great importance to Thiersch for the rest of his career, and he even came to be known in Greece as Ludovicos Thirsios. Highly regarded as a painter of mythological and religious subjects, he also produced genre scenes and portraits. In Athens in the early 1850s Thiersch painted frescoes in a number of Greek churches, notably in the Byzantine church of Saint Nikodimos, seeking to blend the concepts of ancient Christian Greek art with more naturalistic elements derived from modern Western art. As one scholar has noted, Thiersch 'established himself as the leader of the neo-Byzantine movement. His works, which spread throughout Europe in a few decades, helped to rehabilitate Byzantine art and Empire, and to thereby stress the importance of this secular culture

preserved by his Greek contemporaries…The Bavarian painter sought to inscribe his works within the tradition of Byzantine practices.'

Thiersch became well known, and highly respected, as an ecclesiastical painter. His work for churches throughout Europe was often the result of commissions from the wealthy Greek diaspora. In Vienna he painted frescoes in the neo-Byzantine Greek orthodox Holy Trinity church at the Fleischmarkt in the Innere Stadt between 1856 and 1858, while in 1860 in Saint Petersburg he worked in the Protestant church of Saint Catherine, and later painted several works for churches in Germany and painted icons for Greek Orthodox churches in London and Paris. He also produced easel pictures for private patrons, notably the Greek-Austrian philanthropist Simon von Sina and the Ottoman-born banker Demetrius Stefanovich Schilizzi.