

dered than in earlier years. Despite such tendencies toward a decorative style in Savery's artistic evolution, this work is an impressive landscape, and one that has been beautifully preserved.

Notes

1. For examples of such themes in Jacques Savery's work, see Cologne 1985, cats. 93, 94.

2. Müllenmeister 1988, 272, cat. 168, repro. This work, whose location is presently unknown, measures 52 x 85.5 cm.

3. This scene does not appear to depict a historicizing subject. See Müllenmeister 1988, 278, cat. 169.

References

- 1988 Müllenmeister: 272, no. 168a, 275, repro.
1991 Washington: 56, 57, repro.

Jan Steen

1625/1626–1679

JAN STEEN was born in Leiden, the son of a brewer and grain merchant. His date of birth is not known, but he was twenty years old when he enrolled at the University of Leiden in 1646. In 1648, he is recorded as one of the founding members of Leiden's newly formed Guild of Saint Luke. Houbraken stated that Steen's artistic education came from Jan van Goyen (q.v.), the Leiden-born landscape painter who had settled in The Hague. According to Weyerman, Steen had previously studied with Nicolaes Knüpfer (c. 1603–1655) in Utrecht and Adriaen van Ostade (q.v.) in Haarlem.

Steen married Van Goyen's daughter Margaretha in September 1649, and he appears to have remained in The Hague until 1654. In that year, he is recorded on several occasions back in Leiden. From 1654 until 1657, Steen's father leased a Delft brewery by the name of "The Snake" on his son's behalf, but no other documents link Jan Steen with this city, and it seems unlikely that he ever spent much time there. From 1656 to 1660, Steen lived at Warmond, a small town near Leiden. The increased interest in still-life details and careful finish of works produced during this period suggest his contact with the work of the Leiden *fijnschilders*.

By 1661 Steen had moved to Haarlem, where he entered the Saint Luke's Guild in that year. During the nine years spent in Haarlem Steen created many of his greatest paintings, including a number of large, complex scenes of families and merrymakers containing witty evocations of proverbs, emblems, or other moralizing messages. His pictures, which are marked by a sophisticated use of contemporary literature and popular theater, often depict characters from both the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and the

native Dutch *rederijkerskamers* (rhetoricians' chambers), although Steen was not a rhetorician himself. In addition to genre subjects, he depicted historical and religious subjects during the 1660s and 1670s. He remained a Catholic all his life.

In 1670, one year after the death of his wife, Steen moved to Leiden after inheriting his father's house. Two years later, he received a license to open an inn, a fact that has contributed to his traditional reputation as a dissolute drunkard. While he sometimes included his self-portrait in this guise in scenes of apparent immorality and chaos, there is no incriminating evidence—beyond his possession of an acute sense of humor—to suggest that his real life mirrored his art.

In 1673 Steen married Marije Herculens van Egmont, who survived him by eight years. In 1674 he was elected *deken* of the Leiden guild, having served as an officer at the rank of *hoofdman* for the previous three years. There is no record of his having had any pupils, although a number of artists, notably Richard Brakenburgh (1650–1706), imitated his style.

Bibliography

- Houbraken 1753, 1: 374; 2: 245; 3: 7, 12–30.
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Smith 1829–1842, 4 (1833): xv–xx, 1–69; 9 (1842): 473.
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