NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century

Jan Both
Dutch, 1615/1618 - 1652

An Italianate Evening Landscape

c. 1650

oil on canvas
overall: 138.5 x 172.7 cm (54 1/2 x 68 in.)
Inscription: lower left, JB in monogram: JBoth
Patrons' Permanent Fund 2000.91.1

ENTRY

Jan Both's imposing Italianate landscape invites the viewer to enter into a world that is at once familiar and exotic, where golden evening light floods over distant hills and waterways, and slender foreground trees gracefully reach beyond the very limits of the canvas. [1] No buildings are found in this extensive, mountainous setting, and there is little human activity beyond the leisurely travels of some peasants and a cowherd along a meandering path that stretches into the distance. Two goatherds have stopped by the wayside and, leaning on their staffs, appear to converse with the familiarity of longtime acquaintances.

This large-scale rendering of a sun-drenched and verdant landscape seemingly free from worldly concerns depicts Italy not as it was in reality but as it existed in the artist's imagination. Both's paintings are as much about mood as they are about the specifics of terrain—a quality generated, as Joachim von Sandrart already noted in 1675, from the artist's ability to evoke the differing light effects at various times of the day. [2] Like so many of Both's paintings, this landscape bathed in evening light invites the viewer to settle back and dream.

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Both developed this type of painting upon his arrival in Rome in 1637, shortly before he joined the Accademia di San Luca in 1638. In Rome he was reunited with his brother Andries Both (Dutch, 1611/1612 - 1641), who had already moved there in 1633. According to Sandrart, the two artists probably collaborated, with Andries painting the figures in Jan's landscapes. [3] While in Rome, Jan established friendships with a number of foreign artists who were interested in capturing the Roman Campagna in their works; of particular consequence for the development of Both's approach to landscape painting were Claude Lorrain (French, 1604/1605 - 1682), Herman van Swanevelt (Dutch, c. 1600 - 1655), and Gaspard Dughet (French, 1615 - 1675). Together they went on expeditions into the Italian countryside, where Both made drawings that would continue to be sources of inspiration for his paintings even after he returned to Utrecht in 1642. [4] Details about the circumstances of Both's initial encounter with these artists are not known, although he may have been introduced to the only other Dutch artist in this group, Van Swanevelt, by the Utrecht artist Cornelis van Poelenburch (Dutch, 1594/1595 - 1667). [5]

While in Rome, Both participated in an important commission with Claude, Dughet, and Van Swanevelt to paint a series of twenty-two large landscapes for Philip IV's summer palace in Madrid, the Buen Retiro. [6] He quickly assimilated the stylistic ideals of landscape painting that infused their work, ideals that drew their inspiration not only from the arcadian paintings of Poelenburch, but also from the classicist traditions of Annibale Carracci (Bolognese, 1560 - 1609) and Domenichino (Italian, 1581 - 1641). [7] The paintings made for this commission generally have a prominent repoussoir to one side—usually a tree or group of trees—beyond which one views the distant, light-filled landscape, a compositional schema that Both retained and later perfected in works such as *An Italianate Evening Landscape*. Nevertheless, Both's manner of painting differed from that of his colleagues in Rome in its emphasis on the specific details of naturalistic forms, particularly the rhythms and shapes of branches and leaves. [8] Moreover, presumably with his brother's assistance, he populated his landscapes with contemporary figures, not ones drawn from mythology or shepherds dressed as though they belonged to the Arcadia of classical antiquity. He retained this naturalistic approach to his landscape style and figure type throughout his career. [9]

The exact chronology of the large-scale landscapes that Both created during his latter years in Utrecht cannot be established because only one of these paintings is dated. [10] He probably executed the National Gallery of Art's imposing

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evocation of the Italian Campagna around 1650, when he had mastered his craft. [11] The painting's outstanding qualities have long been admired. The 1804 catalog of the renowned Van Leyden Collection, for example, celebrates the painting as being of "étonnante richesse" (surprising richness). The catalog entry, which stresses the brilliant rendering of the trees and the delicacy of their leaves, concludes with the following assertion: "This first-class and absolutely perfect painting represents without a doubt the masterpiece of its artist, and even of its genre." [12] This enthusiastic assessment of the artistic qualities and "perfection" of this "masterpiece" was later echoed by the German scholar Gustav Friedrich Waagen, who wrote in 1854: "The warm, but not, as sometimes with him, exaggerated, evening light, the more solid impasto, and the more careful execution, make this one of the most beautiful pictures of the master." [13] Indeed, as Waagen intimated, the trees in this painting are particularly lively thanks to their rhythmic shapes and the vigorous accents that articulate their foliage and the bark of their trunks and branches.

No commissions related to Both's large Utrecht-period landscapes are known, but these works probably decorated the houses of upper-class clients, largely in Amsterdam and Utrecht, who had a strong interest in and love for Italy and arcadian ideals. [14] A poem commenting on the visual and psychological appeal of a room filled with works by another Dutch Italianate landscape painter, Adam Pynacker (Dutch, c. 1620 - 1673), captures the impact of such decorative schemes: "The walls of the room are painted with artful parks and green woods, lit by a morning sun which shines down brilliantly from the horizon upon lush vegetation, creating the day, so that he who understands art, stands enraptured, and believes Italy appears before his eyes. . . . Here, worn out by affairs of state, he can unwind again, and enjoy himself in these observations." [15] One can well imagine a comparable tribute being written about a room containing this masterpiece by Jan Both.

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

April 24, 2014

NOTES

[1] I would like to thank Jeptha Dullaart for his assistance in writing this entry.

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[2] Joachim von Sandrart, *Joachim von Sandrarts Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste von 1675*, ed. A. R. Peltzer (Munich, 1925), 185. “Sie [Jan and Andries Both, ed.] mahlten meistens grosse Landschaften, die sie reichlich ordinirten in Ausbildung der Morgenstunden, als wie der Thau noch auf den Feldern ligt und die Sonne über das hohe Gebürge herfür blicket. Also haben sie auch den Mittag, Abend und Sonnenuntergang, den Mondschein bey Nacht und dergleichen in Colorit und anderm dermassen verwunderlich nachgebildet, dass man in ihren Gemälden gleichsam die Stunden des Tages erkennen konte, mit sonst andern eigentlichen Natürlichkeiten der Felder, Berg und Bäumen.”

[3] Joachim von Sandrart, *Joachim von Sandrarts Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste von 1675*, ed. A. R. Peltzer (Munich, 1925), 185.

[4] Peter Schatborn, *Drawn to Warmth: 17th-Century Dutch Artists in Italy* (Zwolle, 2001), 93.

[5] Malcolm R. Waddingham, "Andries and Jan Both in France and Italy," *Paragone* 171 (1964): 28. Poelenburch had known Van Swanevelt in Rome before he returned to Utrecht in the mid–1620s.

[6] Malcolm R. Waddingham, "Andries and Jan Both in France and Italy," *Paragone* 171 (1964): 28–32. The series was commissioned in 1636, thus before Jan Both arrived in Rome. Waddingham argues that Both participated in four of the paintings in this series before he returned to Utrecht in 1641. James David Burke, “Jan Both: Paintings, Drawings and Prints,” PhD diss. (Harvard University, 1976), 81–95, asserts that he was responsible for five paintings in this series.

[7] Malcolm R. Waddingham, "Andries and Jan Both in France and Italy," *Paragone* 171 (1964): 30.

[8] James David Burke, “Jan Both: Paintings, Drawings and Prints,” PhD diss. (Harvard University, 1976), 87–91.

[9] Joaneath A. Spicer, *Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age*. (Baltimore, 1997), 42, aptly described Both’s paintings as depicting “Arcadia *from life*.” These same qualities are evident in a few of Both’s late drawings, as, for example, *Landscape with Trees and Travelers*, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna. See: Peter Schatborn, *Drawn to Warmth: 17th-Century Dutch Artists in Italy* (Zwolle, 2001), 98–99, fig. O.

[10] *Landscape with Mercury and Argus*, 1650, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie, Bayreuth.

[11] This painting can be most closely compared to three other large arcadian landscapes: *Italian Landscape with a Draftsman*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; *Landscape with Hunters*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and *Landscape with Bandits Leading Prisoners*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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[12] “Ce Tableau capital et de la plus perfection, offre sans contredit le chef-d’oeuvre de son Auteur, et même de son genre.” (Translated by Jennifer Henel.) *Catalogue de la célèbre collection de tableau de M. van Leyden* (Amsterdam, 1804), 4–5, no. 6.

[13] Gustav Friedrich Waagen and Algernon Graves, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Mss.*, trans. Lady Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake, 3 vols. (London, 1854), 2:111.

[14] One of Both’s foremost patrons in Utrecht was the Baron Vincent van Wyttenhorst, a major patron of landscape painting who also owned twenty-three landscapes by Cornelis van Poelenburch, who bought works from Both in 1649 and 1651. Both’s paintings were collected in Amsterdam by, among others, Jan Six and Joseph Deutz, and thus by patrons living beyond Utrecht. See Albert Blankert, *Nederlandse 17e Eeuwse Italianiserende Landschapschilders* (Utrecht 1965; reprint, Soest, 1978), 42, 223, no. 142; Alan Chong, “The Market for Landscape Painting in Seventeenth-Century Holland,” in Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 110–112; Jonathan Bikker, "The Deutz Brothers, Italian Paintings, and Michiel Sweerts: New Information from Elisabeth Coyman's 'Journael,'" *Simiolus* 26, no. 4 (1998): 283, 309; and Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 276.

[15] This late seventeenth-century poem was written by Pieter Verhoek (1633–1702) about paintings in the home of a wealthy Amsterdam merchant. I have used Alan Chong’s translation here, with some minor changes; see Alan Chong in Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 399. Original text is from Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1718–1721; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2:97–99: “nu all wanden / Der zaale, stan bemaald met konstige waranden, / En groene bosschen, van een morgenzon bestraalt, / Die glansryk uit de kim op wilde kruiden daalt, / Den Dag schept, dat wie Konst verstaat, staat opgetogen, / En want Italien t’aanschouwen met zyn oogen. . . . Hier kan hy afgeslooft door Staatszorg, weer den boog / ontspannen; zig in dees bespiegeling verlusten.”

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The support is two pieces of a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, joined with a horizontal seam, which runs through the lower portion of the landscape. It has

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been mounted on a seven-member stretcher, but stretcher-bar cracks indicate that an earlier stretcher, possibly the original, had a single, thin, vertical crossbar. The painting has been lined at least twice and the tacking margins have been removed, but visible cusping on all four sides indicates that the painting probably retains its original dimensions.

The support was prepared with a gray ground. Both used thin layers of paint to create the image. The paint appears to be oil, but an aqueous emulsion may have been used to enhance the texture and depth in the foliage, tree trunks, vines, and other highly textured areas. This emulsion has a beaded-up quality and appears to have been applied with a sponge, rather than a brush. There are some pentimenti in the hills of the middle ground on the left side of the painting.

The support fabric has a large tear in the upper right corner and a vertical split that intersects the seam in the lower left quadrant. There is some weave enhancement, which was probably caused by excessive pressure during one of the linings. The paint is in good condition, though some of the pigments appear to have faded. As a result, the moss on the trees in the foreground appears overly bright. The painting was treated in 2000, at which time several layers of discolored varnish were removed. The treatment involved toning the overly bright moss and the pentimenti.

PROVENANCE

Pieter Cornelis, baron van Leyden [1717-1788, known during his lifetime as the Heer van Leyden van Vlaardingen], Leiden;[1] by inheritance with the paintings in his collection to his son, Diederik van Leyden [1844-1810/1811], Leiden and Amsterdam;[2] sold, with the rest of his father's painting collection, to a consortium formed by L.B. Coclers, Alexander Joseph Paillet, and A. de Lespinasse de Langeac;[3] (sale, Paillet and Delaroche, Paris, 5-8 November 1804, no. 6);[4] purchased by Paillet for Herard. Alexander Baring [later 1st baron Ashburton, 1774-1848], Bath House, London, by 1821;[5] by inheritance to his son, William Bingham Baring, 2nd baron Ashburton [1799-1864], Bath House, London; by bequest 1864 to his wife, Louisa Caroline, Lady Ashburton [née Mackenzie, 1827-1903], Bath House, London; sold by her executor and son-in-law, William George Spencer Scott Compton, 5th marquess of Northampton [1851-1913], to a consortium of (Thos. Agnew & Sons, Charles Davis, Arthur J. Sully, and Asher Wertheimer, all in London);

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presumably retained by Wertheimer until (his sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 18 June 1920, no. 6, as *A Woody Landscape*); (Permain, London).[6] Charles Hubert Archibald Butler [1901-1978], Shortgrove, Newport, Essex; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 26 June 1964, no. 51);[7] (Alfred Brod Gallery, London), until at least December 1965.[8] (Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, London), 1966-1967; sold to private collection; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, 7 July 2000, no. 17); purchased by NGA.

[1] The provenance is taken from the 7 July 2000 sale catalogue. About the Van Leyden collection, see the description of Sale F-80, by Benjamin Peronnet, in The Getty Provenance Index© Databases, accessed 17 February 2012, and J.W. Niemeijer,"Baron van Leyden, Founder of the Amsterdam Print Collection," trans. Patricia Wardle, Apollo (June 1983): 461-468. As Niemeijer explains, in Van Leyden's own day the title of baron was not actually used; when alive he was known as the Heer Van Leyden van Vlaardingen. He is given the title of baron in later publications, a title that was indeed his, as an ancestor was created a baron of the Holy Roman Empire in 1548.

[2] Niemeijer 1983, 468. While his son inherited the paintings, Van Leyden's large and important print collection was bequeathed to his grandson, after whose death in 1789 it became the property of the young man's mother. Sold in 1806 to Louis Napoleon, it was housed first in The Hague, then Paris, and was eventually returned in 1816 to Amsterdam, where it formed the nucleus of the print collection at the Rijksmuseum.

[3] The sale catalogue does not cite a source for this information.

[4] The sale was originally scheduled for 5 July 1804, and rescheduled for 10 September 1804 (the date printed on the sale catalogue), before finally taking place in November.

[5] Baring lent the painting to an 1821 exhibition at the British Institution.

[6] The 2000 sale catalogue indicates that the painting was "possibly purchased by

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Seligman" at the 1920 sale. However, the annotated copy of the 1920 sale catalogue available on microfiche in the Christie's catalogues from the Knoedler Library gives the buyer as "Permain," who might be the London dealer William Permain.

[7] The painting was erroneously described in the sale catalogue as having come from the collection of his grandfather, Charles Butler of Warren Wood, presumably having been confused with a landscape by Both lent by his grandfather to the British Institution in 1864 (no. 88).

[8] The painting was offered by the Alfred Brod Gallery to the National Gallery of Art in December 1965 (original letter of 13 December 1965 in NGA Photographic Archives, copy in NGA curatorial files).

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1821 British Institution, London, 1821, no. 55, as *Landscape; a View in Italy, with Figures travelling*.

1964 25th Exhibition of Old Master Paintings, Alfred Brod Gallery, London, 1964, no. 41.

1965 Nederlandse 17e eeuwse Italianiserende landschapschilders [Dutch 17th Century Italianate Landscape Painters], Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 1965, no. 57, repro., as *Landschap met muilezelrijder*.

2001 Aelbert Cuyp, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Gallery, London; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2001-2002, not in catalogue (shown only in Washington for first month of exhibition).

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1821 British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom. *A catalogue of pictures of the Italian, Spanish, Flemish, and Dutch schools: with which the proprietors have favoured the Institution*. Exh. cat. British Institution, London, 1821: 16, no. 55.

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1829 Smith, John. *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*. 9 vols. London, 1829-1842: 6(1835):179, no. 23,199-200, no. 78.

1854 Waagen, Gustav Friedrich. *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Mss.*. 3 vols. Translated by Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake. London, 1854: 2:111.

1907 Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. 10 vols. Esslingen and Paris, 1907-1928: 9(1926):505, no. 306.

1964 Alfred Brod Gallery. *25th Exhibition of Old Master Paintings*. London, 1964: no. 41.

1965 Houtzager, Maria Elisabeth, H.J. de Smedt, and Albert Blankert. *Nederlandse 17e eeuwse Italianiserende landschapschilders*. Exh. cat. Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 1965: 126, no. 57.

1972 Burke, James Donald. "Jan Both: Paintings, drawings, and prints." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1972: 200-201, no. 31.

1978 Blankert, Albert. *Nederlandse zeventiende eeuwse Italianiserende landschapschilders*. Revised and enlarged ed. Exh. cat. Centraal Museum, Utrecht. Soest, 1978: 126, no. 57.

2003 Waagen, Gustav Friedrich. *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. Translated by Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake. Facsimile edition of London 1854. London, 2003: 2:111.

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