

S P H I N X F I N E A R T



Johannes Lingelbach (Frankfurt am Main 1622 - Amsterdam 1674)

Peasants Resting Before an Inn

oil on canvas

49.6 x 38.7 cm (19½ x 15¼ in)

In this work Johannes Lingelbach has depicted three peasants recuperating and refreshing themselves by an inn. These figures sit, eating and drinking, around a low table covered with a white cloth, on which a bowl and a chunk of bread have been placed. The eldest of the figures drinks deeply while clutching a flagon, ready to immediately refill his glass; this thirst suggests that they had a tiring journey. There is a lack of conversation between the figures, as they concentrate instead on rejuvenating themselves.

Behind them, two horses water at a trough. The central group is meticulously depicted, particularly in terms of Lingelbach's use of light. The stark, white sunshine highlights the figures, models their faces, and picks out the folds in their clothing. This light also plays off various objects, such as the saddle, the large ceramic jug and the table top, giving an almost still-life aspect to the painting in this central, foreground section.

The inn dominates the canvas, so that there is a relative lack of depth to the *Peasants Resting Before an Inn*, although on the left-hand side a figure can be discerned, walking along a path and beyond him the outline of another building. In terms of composition the present work is reminiscent of other paintings by Lingelbach, such as [Roman Street Scene with Card Players](#). Again a lack of recession focuses the work on a few leisurely foreground figures, the background details are indistinct. The scene is also illuminated by a similar stark light to the present work and these dramatic contrasts are reflective of the

time Lingelbach spent in Rome, where he was influenced by the fashion for precise but intense chiaroscuro.

Peasants Resting Before an Inn demonstrates Lingelbach's skill in depicting the human figure, something which is demonstrated on a greater scale in [*Peasants Dancing*](#). In this painting we see a variety of figures, including musicians, dancers, drunks, lovers, workers and children. All these figures are treated in the same detailed and individualised manner which is employed in the present work. Lingelbach was part of the second generation of the bamboccianti, a group of, mainly Dutch, genre painters active in Rome during the seventeenth century, who chronicled the everyday life of the lower-classes. Having found commercial success through such works, on his return to Amsterdam Lingelbach helped develop the 'Italianate' genre that was imitated by Dutch artists who had never been to Italy. Such was his skill in painting genre figures, that Lingelbach was often invited to paint the staffage for prominent Dutch artists, such as Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/9-1682), Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) and Jan Wijnants (c.1635-1684).

Provenance:

sale, Sotheby's London, 24 October 1973, lot 43, as Jan Miel;
Private Collection New York;
with Richard L. Feigen & co., New York.

Literature:

Catja Burger-Wegener, *Johannes Lingelbach, 1622-1674*, Ph.D. diss., Freie Universität, Berlin, 1976, no. 106.

Artist description:

Lingelbach, seen here in a self-portrait with a violin, was German by birth but by 1634 had settled in Amsterdam with his family, where presumably he trained as a painter. According to Houbraken, he visited France in 1642 and arrived in Italy two years later. However, he is not mentioned in any document of 1644, although he is recorded in Rome from 1647 to 1649. The artist left Rome in 1650 and by 1653 was back in Amsterdam, where he remained until his death. Lingelbach is perhaps the only one of the Dutch Italianates with a catalogue of numerous signed and dated works to document his artistic development. The first two signed works are *The Blacksmith* (1650; Rome, Melmeluzzi private collection) and *Self-portrait with Violin* (1650; Zurich, Kunsthau). Unfortunately no certain works survive from the previous years. Kren (1982) attributed a series of works depicting Roman trades, some formerly ascribed to Pieter van Laer, to Lingelbach's early career. The original group consisted of three small paintings: the *Acquavita-seller*, the *Cake-seller* and *The Tobacconist* (all Rome, Palazzo Corsini). While these paintings have some striking points in common with the Melmeluzzi *Blacksmith* of 1650 and the signed *Dentist on Horseback*, 1651 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). It is still uncertain whether they belong to Lingelbach's pre-1650 work or are by another hand (sometimes called the Master of the Trades). In the Melmeluzzi *Blacksmith* the forms are drawn with a dry, incisive line that gives the figures an almost caricature-like air, whereas in the Roman *Trades* the volumes are given body by a dense, intense and mellow style of painting.

In the next few years Lingelbach painted large compositions that are his best-known works: the great *Market in the Piazza Navona* (Frankfurt Main, Städel. Kunstinstitute.) and the *Carnival* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). These fancifully painted Roman piazzas are crowded and busy; the settings evoke a feeling of space and distance, fading more and more into memory. By comparison with the Amsterdam *Dentist on Horseback*, the *Market in the Piazza del Popolo*, (1664; Vienna), is Dutch in its language and in the figure types depicted. Northern collectors wanted an 'impression' of Rome, not a historically correct reconstruction of the city. Thus Lingelbach developed the 'Italianate' genre that was imitated by Dutch artists who had never been to Italy. Lingelbach also produced paintings of port scenes, using a similar vocabulary as this Lepanto painting, populated by a great variety of types: Turks, merchants, gamblers and pedlars.

Collections

Lingelbach is represented in the following collections: Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota; National Gallery, London; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; The Royal Collection, London; Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia; Courtauld Institute of Art, London; Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig; Palazzo Braschi, Rome; Ringling Museum of Art, Florida, amongst others.