

# DAVID TENIERS II

(Antwerp 1610 - Brussels 1690)

## *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path*

signed on the rock 'D.TENIERS' (lower centre)

oil on canvas

67.9 x 92.7 cm (26¾ x 36½ in)

**Provenance:** Alfred de Rothschild (1842-1918), Seamore Place, London;  
thence by inheritance to Almina, Countess of Carnarvon (1877-1969);  
by whom sold, London, Christie's, May 31, 1918, lot 156;  
Anonymous sale, London, Christie's, November 16, 1973, lot 32;  
with Cohen, London;

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, October 31, 1977, lot 129A;  
Kunstalon Francke, Baden-Baden, 1979;  
West German Private Collection;

Anonymous sale ("Property of a Private Collector"), New York, Sotheby's, January 17, 1985, lot 97 (unsold);  
Anonymous sale, Munich, Neumeister Kunstauktionen, September 23, 1992, lot 556.

**Exhibitions:** Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon (No. L80.15.1).

**L**ANDSCAPE WITH A SHEPHERD AND A SHEPHERDESS and their Flock along a Path is the epitome of the charming pastoral genre for which David Teniers the Younger was renowned and which made him famous in the seventeenth-century. Set within an extensive Arcadian landscape, this delightful genre scene shows a shepherd and shepherdess gathering together and moving their flock of cows, sheep and goats along the banks of a stream. The shepherdess, in the far-right foreground looks out of the picture plane directly at the viewer. Dressed in a red chemise with white under-shirt she clutches a metal jug, her hands kept warm beneath the folds of her blue skirt.

The shepherd is depicted waving his long staff to encourage the movement of his flock; wearing breeches, a blue jacket and soft hat, his profile, like that of the shepherdess, is full of individual character. Crossing over a bridge, another shepherd can be seen playing a pipe - a popular instrument in rustic genre scenes in seventeenth century Dutch art - as a loyal dog scampers along behind him. The path over the bridge leads up towards a small farmhouse. The cylindrical tower is particularly distinctive, and several figures mill around outside talking amongst themselves.

Rising behind the farm buildings is a craggy rock formation with scattered trees sprouting from its rocky crevices. The stream effectively leads the viewer's eye into the distant, verdant landscape. In the soft, powdery sky a flock of birds soar through the clouds, whilst in the far distance the snow-capped peaks of a mountain range can be faintly glimpsed. Teniers has skilfully framed his landscape by placing a tree close to the edge of the picture plane in the near left-foreground. This area of vegetation is cast in dark shadow thus allowing the viewer to immediately study the shepherd and shepherdess in the central



David Teniers II, *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path* (Detail)

foreground who, by contrast, are bathed in light.

The main features of the landscape - the bridge, the farm building on the hill and rocky outcrop - dominate the right-hand side of the composition, while the left-hand side is reserved for the sprawling landscape. However, it is the central shepherding activity which balances the composition and harmonises the aesthetics of the figures and the landscape as a whole.





David Teniers II, *Shepherd*, c.1650s,  
The Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Yusupov Palace Museum, Leningrad, 1925  
(Figure 1)

Dr. Margaret Klinge has dated *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path* to c.1650 and the 1640s and 1650s are often considered to be the period during which Teniers produced his finest works. Throughout the 1650s, Teniers developed his pastoral genre and the present work is an exceptional example of his skill and talent for illustrating such subject matter.

The Hermitage holds one of the finest collections of David Teniers the Younger's works with over thirty paintings demonstrating the breadth and variety of his *oeuvre*. His pastoral genre scenes are particularly well



David Teniers II, *The Village Fête*, 1646,  
The Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Collection of the Duke de Choiseul, Paris,  
1772 (Figure 3)



David Teniers II, *Shepherdess*, c.1650s,  
The Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Yusupov Palace Museum, Leningrad, 1925  
(Figure 2)

represented, for example the companion pieces, *Shepherd* and *Shepherdess* (figs. 1 & 2).

Both *Shepherd* and *Shepherdess*, like their counterparts in the present work, are depicted with individual, portrait features. Furthermore Teniers has taken great delight in detailing the costumes and props held by the two figures. *Shepherd* has an identical conical flask tied and hanging from his waist as the shepherd in the present work.

In the Hermitage work, the shepherd gaily holds a pipe in his hands, which is seen being played by the second shepherd in *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path* as he moves his sheep. Traditionally, the pipe - together with the tambourine - provided a musical accompaniment to the pastoral dance and the inclusion of the instrument enhances the elemental rusticity of the scene.

The figures in *Shepherd* and *Shepherdess*, like the pair in *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path*, are idealised figures in idealised surroundings. The inclusion of an ugly shepherd in the background, however - here the pipe-playing shepherd in the present work - shows the artistic influence of Adriaen Brouwer (1605-1638) who excelled at depicting subjects, often coarse and grotesque, from everyday life. The use of the shaded tree and vegetation to frame the composition could also allude to the work of Brouwer who used smoky, half darkened interiors to add atmosphere to his works. The survival of numerous preparatory drawings shows Teniers' concern for the accurate depiction of the figures in his works. *Rural Feast* is an excellent example of the artist's talent for handling figures within an open landscape and, like *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path*, he treats the figures with a warm, human, and often humorous touch. Moreover, the compositional structure of *Rural Feast* was closely imitated in the present work.

Teniers evidently recycled compositional features from earlier pastoral scenes: *Landscape with a Tower*, see figure 3, painted a decade or so before



David Teniers II, *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path* (Detail)

the present work, shows an exact replica of the cylindrical tower in *Landscape with a Shepherd and a Shepherdess and their Flock along a Path* complete with bridge, circular window, roofed chimney pot and extension buildings, though the background and composition are markedly different (fig. 4).

The painting has a particularly distinguished provenance having once been part of the noted collection of Alfred de Rothschild (1842-1918). Although he reluctantly worked as part of his family's famous banking business, his interests and influence lay more in the administration of Britain's public art collections, serving as a trustee of the National Gallery, and the Wallace Collection. He inherited thirty-eight, predominantly Dutch paintings, from his father, but by his death had built up a collection of over 200 works, which reflected 'his taste for seventeenth-century Dutch masters, for Reynolds and Gainsborough' and eighteenth-century French work.<sup>1</sup> A significant portion of the collection was acquired from those of the Earl of Lonsdale and Lord Ashburton and it was hung in either Seamore Place in London or Halton in Buckinghamshire. The painting was inherited by de Rothschild's daughter Almina Wombwell, Countess of Carnarvon (1877-1969) where it probably was hung in Highclere Castle, seat of the Earls of Carnarvon (fig. 5). Almina's husband was George Herbert, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon, a man best known as the financier of the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb.



David Teniers II, *Landscape with a Tower*, c.1640s, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Collection of Baron L. A. Crozat de Tierra, Paris, 1772 (Figure 4)



Highclere Castle, Berkshire (Figure 5)

David Teniers the Younger was one of the most successful and celebrated artists of the seventeenth century. The son of the artist David Teniers the Elder (1582-1649), the younger Teniers trained and collaborated with his father, before becoming a master of the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp in 1632. In 1637, he married the daughter of Jan Brueghel I (1568-1625) thus uniting two influential Flemish artistic families. Though there is no evidence to suggest any formal training took place, the young Teniers was deeply influenced by Adriaen Brouwer who had moved to Antwerp in 1631 and injected a new freshness and temper to the Brueghelian tradition of peasant scenes. Teniers particularly employed the monochrome palette, smoky darkened interiors and inclusion of sinister, satirical figures of Brouwer's works.<sup>2</sup>

The 1640s and 1650s saw Teniers develop the potential of the peasant genre scene to its full and these paintings were particularly prized by the Antwerp dealers with whom Teniers had forged an excellent relationship, in particular the firm, Matthijs Musson (c.1600-1678). These works are characterised by a rich and varied pastel-tinted palette that present country life in a positive, idealised setting.

It was his appointment as court painter in Brussels to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662), Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, in 1651 which confirmed Teniers' artistic prowess. Not only was he employed as the Archduke's painter, he was also charged as keeper of his vast collection of paintings. In particular, he was involved in the purchase of a large number of Italian, and especially Venetian, masterpieces from the confiscated collections of Charles I (1600-1649) and his supporters (now in the Vienna Museum). Teniers visually documented this considerable collection in a series of views of the gallery and also produced an illustrated catalogue of the collection, the *Theatrum Pictorium* (1660), as well as making small-scale copies of the Italian paintings for engravers.<sup>3</sup>

We are grateful to Dr. Margret Klinge who (in a letter dated 9 January, 2006) confirms this painting to be a work by David Teniers the Younger, dateable to c.1650. She will publish it in her forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* on the artist.

<sup>1</sup> Conlin, J., 'Butlers and Boardrooms: Alfred de Rothschild as Collector and Connoisseur', in *Rothschild Archive Annual Review* (2006), pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, David Teniers the Younger, *Twelfth-Night (The King Drinks)*, 1634-1640, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

<sup>3</sup> Today there are eight known scenes of the Archduke's collection.