

JAN VAN GOYEN

(Leiden 1596 - The Hague 1656)

A Village on the Banks of a Canal with Cattle and Fishermen

signed with initials and dated 'VG 1652' (lower right)
black chalk, grey wash, pen and brown ink framing lines, watermark foolscap
11.3 x 19.2 cm (4½ x 7½ in)

Provenance: E. Cichorius; C.G. Boerner, Leipzig, 5 May, 1908, lot 535, (sold before the sale);
O. Huldshinsky; Berlin, 3 November, 1931, lot 46a (130 Marks);
with Galerie Rosen, Berlin, 1962.

Literature: H.-U. Beck, *Jan van Goyen 1596-1656, Ein Oeuvreverzeichnis, I*, Amsterdam, 1972, p. 108, no. 304b.

JAN VAN GOYEN WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED DRAUGHTSMAN and painter, and his drawings are testament to his capabilities. He travelled widely throughout the Netherlands recording details of landscape, topography and everyday life in chalk, wash and ink sketches, filling many sketchbooks with his daily observations. Though primarily a landscape artist, van Goyen frequently animated his composition with genre scenes of everyday life, and painted many of the canals in and around The Hague as well as the villages surrounding the countryside of Delft, Rotterdam, Leiden and Gouda. After compiling these preparatory sketches *in situ*, of which the present drawing, *A Village on the Banks of a Canal with Cattle and Fisherman*, is a charming example, he used them to form and shape the final painting carried out in the studio (fig. 1). Drawings survive for every year of van Goyen's creative life, see figs. 2 and 3, and he was particularly prolific



Jan van Goyen, *Village at the River*, 1636, Alte Pinakothek Munich (Figure 1)

from 1631 to 1653. Indeed, of his surviving body of work approximately 1,200 paintings have been documented.

Van Goyen was born in Leiden, the son of a shoemaker who, reportedly, from the tender age of ten, was apprenticed to several artists before training in Haarlem for a year, in 1617, with Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630) (see catalogue no. 137). In 1632, at age thirty five, he established a permanent studio in The Hague. Two years later he acquired rights of citizenship and served as head of the Guild of St. Luke (1638-40). An artist with business acumen, van Goyen recognised that income gained solely from his artistic output was insufficient, and he worked intermittently as an art dealer and collector, auctioneer, estate agent and picture valuer to further his prosperity. He lost a great deal of money



Jan van Goyen, *Snowball Fight*, 1625, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Figure 2)

when he speculated in tulips in 1637, at the height of 'tulip mania' when contract prices for bulbs of the newly introduced tulip reached extraordinarily high levels and then suddenly collapsed. At the peak of this tulip mania, in February 1637, tulip contracts sold for more than twenty times the annual income of a skilled craftsman. It is generally considered the first recorded speculative bubble. Despite being a prolific artist, van Goyen was unable to cover his debts and in 1652 and 1654 he was forced to sell his possessions at public auction, and subsequently moved to a smaller house. He died in 1656, sadly still heavily in debt, forcing his widow to sell all their remaining assets, including their home.



Jan van Goyen, *Cottages Amid Leafless Trees*, c.1625-1630, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Figure 3)



(Actual Size)