



### Study for *La fileuse chevrière auvergnate* (The Spinner, Goatherd of the Auvergne)

**Date**

c. 1868

**Primary Maker**

Jean-François Millet

**Medium**

Graphite on paper

**Description**

Jean-François Millet was one of the founders of the Realist movement, which took its subjects from everyday life, as opposed to grand historical or fictional narratives. Millet's mundane scenes of peasants and laborers at work, often in the French countryside, were initially received as a shocking affront to the academic painting tradition and often read as political statements. The artist left Paris in 1849 to escape political violence and unhealthy living conditions and moved to Fontainebleau, near the village of Barbizon; there, he joined other painters such as Théodore Rousseau and Charles-François Daubigny, forming what came to be known as the Barbizon School. This drawing is a study for a canvas Millet painted in 1868–69 of a female goatherd spinning wool while minding her sheep—the subject of a number of the artist's works of the 1850s and 1860s. He based the picture (now in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris) on a series of drawings he had made

in 1866 while visiting Auvergne and Allier, villages south of Barbizon. That this sketch consists of a mere contour line with little suggestion of the figure's volume indicates, along with the overlying grid, that it was likely made after Millet had determined the painting's composition as a tool to assist in enlarging the figure onto the final 36-by-29-inch canvas. Such gridding seems to have been common in Millet's practice, as other drawings exist in a similar state. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017) This sketch is a study for a painting and is squared for transfer to the final, larger canvas.

**Dimensions**

Sheet: 13 3/4 × 9 5/16 in. (35 × 23.7 cm)