

References

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 1869 Gaedertz: 157.
 1885–1900 Widener, 2 (1900): 234, repro.
 1898 *Hope Collection*: LXXVI, repro.
 1907–1927 HdG, 3 (1910): 294, no. 503.
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 1923 Widener: n.p., repro.

- 1931 Widener: 218–219, repro.
 1938 Waldmann: 335–342.
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 1974 Buist: 492.
 1975 NGA: 256–257, repro.
 1981 Niemeijer: 127–232.
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 1982b Clark: 73–94.
 1985 NGA: 295, repro.
 1986 Sutton: 308–309.
 1990 The Hague: no. 47.

Isack van Ostade

1621–1649

ISACK VAN OSTADE, the youngest of the eight children of Jan Hendricx van Eyndhoven and Janneke Hendriksdr., was born in Haarlem, and baptized on 2 June 1621. He became a member of the Haarlem painters' guild in 1643 and died in 1649, at the age of twenty-eight.

Ostade's first surviving dated painting is from 1639, a mere ten years before his early death. Although his career was very short, his output was prodigious, and his creativity and originality striking. According to Houbraken, Isack was a pupil of his more famous brother Adriaen van Ostade (q.v.), and his early paintings of low-life interiors and peasant scenes are indeed extremely close in style to the work of his brother.

It was not long, however, before Isack began to develop his own distinctive artistic personality and started to paint larger outdoor peasant and village scenes in which elements of genre scenes are combined with an evocative treatment of their landscape settings. These compositions, which typically show travelers or peasants resting in front of inns or houses, are executed with quite subtle atmospheric and seasonal effects. Isack also excelled at depicting winter scenes.

Bibliography

- Houbraken 1753, 1: 347.
 Smith 1829–1842, 1 (1829): 179–198; 9 (1842): 121, 815.
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1942.9.49 (645)

The Halt at the Inn

1645
 Oil on canvas, 50 x 66 (19 x 26)
 Widener Collection

Inscriptions

At lower right corner: *Isack van Os.../164* []

Technical Notes: The original support was a horizontally grained wood panel composed of two boards joined horizontally just above the grouped figures. A horizontal check extended from the right edge through several of the figures and the head of the brown horse. Prior to 1837, when the painting was in the sale of the collection of the Duchess de Berry, it was transferred from wood to a fine-weave fabric and lined with the dimensions expanded. The transfer canvas has a small vertical tear in the foreground near the gray horse's tail. In 1982 the lining was removed and the transfer canvas marouflaged to a honeycombed aluminum solid support panel consistent with the original panel dimensions.

The artist incorporated a smooth, off-white ground layer into the light tones of the design. He applied paint in thin layers with minimal impasto. Transparent glazes were laid

over opaque layers in the upper sky in the dark foreground. The paint craquelure is characteristic of both paintings on wood and fabric supports, although the solid support mounting minimizes the impression of the weave texture.

A thin line of loss exists along the panel join and check and adjacent to a canvas tear that occurred in 1979. Scattered small losses found overall include losses in the signature and date, the beggar woman, and the structures at right. Dark gray stains in the sky were minimized through inpainting when the painting was varnished in 1982.

Provenance: Duchess de Berry, Paris; (sale, Paris, April 4, 1837, no. 19). Count de Morny, Paris; (sale, Phillips, London, 20–21 June 1848, no. 108). Mrs. Lynne Stephens, Norfolk, Rochampton, and Paris; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 9 May 1895, no. 340); (Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris, 1895).¹ (Fischhof, 1898); Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

Exhibited: New York 1909; no. 70.

WHILE Isack van Ostade lived in Haarlem, little of his work reflected his native cityscape. Rather, he took delight in depicting life outside the city, particularly as a traveler would have experienced it passing through one of the small villages in the vicinity of Haarlem. In this painting he portrayed the bustle of activity outside a village inn as two well-dressed travelers arrive and dismount from their horses.² A beggar woman with a child strapped to her back stands to watch while other figures converse with one of the travelers. The main street of the village is filled with other groups, among them, men smoking pipes on a bench before the inn, a child playing with its mother's apron, and a man talking to a woman who spins yarn. Ostade creates a sense of conviviality by the apparent informality of these human contacts and the inclusion of an array of animals within the scene. He added to the picturesque character by emphasizing the aged brick and mortar of the inn and the vines that grow over its weathered tile roof.

This sympathetic view of village life is an outgrowth of attitudes evident in various series of landscape etchings published in Haarlem and Amsterdam in the second decade of the seventeenth century during the Twelve-Year Truce (1609–1621).³ Prints by Claes Jansz. Visscher (1587–1652), Willem Buytewech (1591/92–1624), Esaias van de Velde II (1590/91–1630), and Jan van de Velde II (1593–1641) depicted meandering roads on which travelers pass from one village to the next, occasionally resting before an inn, as in Jan van de Velde's etching of spring (*Ver*), 1617.⁴ Title pages to these series emphasized that these views were of "pleasant places"

in the vicinity of Haarlem and that they were made for the enjoyment of city viewers. Except for occasional depictions of specific inns or ruins, precise locations were of less consequence than the sense of delight one would receive traveling through the landscape and its villages.

Ostade began painting such "halt before an inn" scenes as early as 1643, the year he entered the Haarlem Saint Luke's Guild.⁵ While the delight he took in depicting peasant life, already evident in paintings from the early 1640s, may have derived from the inspiration of his older brother Adriaen, this particular subject matter was his own invention. Not only did the varied activities before an inn give him an opportunity to exploit his talents as a genre painter, such scenes also suited his abilities as a landscapist. As is evident from this example, he was particularly adept at depicting landscape elements and atmospheric effects. Part of what makes this scene so vivid are the nuances of light on the buildings and figures that have filtered through the overcast sky and the suggestions of smoke that rise from the inn's chimney.

To judge from a large number of surviving drawings, Ostade seems to have traveled along such roads and to have carefully observed the buildings and peasants he found on his journeys.⁶ None of the motifs in the drawings, however, specifically relate to the paintings, which suggests that he used his drawings as a point of departure and freely elaborated on his observations when he came to compose his paintings. Interestingly, the buildings in the painting seem somewhat more dilapidated than those he drew, which suggests that he purposely sought to create this picturesque effect.

While Isack's village may be understood as a fanciful creation based on his experiences traveling south of Haarlem, the church tower rising in the background seems to be based on the Oude Kerk at Warmond. A print by Abraham Rademaker, based on an image from 1600, shows the ruins of this parish church as it appeared after it had been set on fire by the Spanish in 1573 (fig. 1).⁷ Ostade may have included this church tower to orient the scene topographically, but he may have juxtaposed these ruins with the relaxed genre scene in the foreground for iconographic reasons. Just as the print series of the 1610s were intended to demonstrate the fruits of the Twelve-Year Truce by stressing that people could once again travel in the countryside without fear of attack, so this ruin served as a reminder that the freedom to travel in peace had only been gained through the efforts of those who had fought so valiantly against foreign oppression.



Isack van Ostade, *The Halt at the Inn*, 1642.9.49

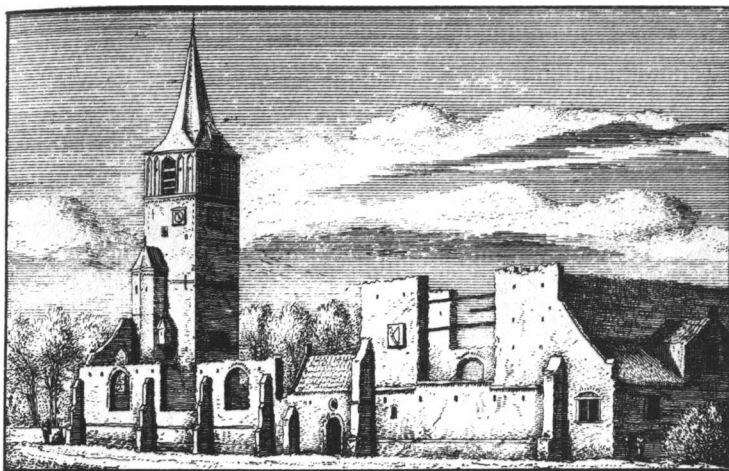


Fig. 1. Abraham Rademaker, *Oude Kerk at Warmont*, etching, pl. 81, from *Kabinet van Nederlandsche Outbeden en Gezichten*, Amsterdam, 1725

The painting, when sold in 1837 from the collection of the Duchesse de Berry, was identified as being on canvas. In fact, it had originally been on a wood support and had been transferred to canvas prior to that date (see Technical Notes). When the old lining fabric was removed and the painting backed by an aluminum panel during restoration in 1982–1983, the old panel-induced craquelure returned, much improving the appearance of the painting. During the restoration it was found that the signature and date, which had read 1645, were partly reconstructed. Since 1645 seems appropriate for stylistic reasons, this date probably reflected the one originally inscribed on the painting.

Notes

1. Reproduced in Sedelmeyer 1895, 34, no. 28.
2. A replica of *The Halt at the Inn*, entitled *A Village Scene*, is in the Wallace Collection, London (inv. no. P21). It is described in the 1992 catalogue of the Wallace Collection as a "weak copy."
3. For a discussion of these prints, see Freedberg 1980, 28–38.
4. See Hollstein 1949–, 33: 18, no. 26; and 34: 20, repro.
5. *Country Inn with a Horse at the Trough* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. A303).
6. See Schnackenburg 1981, 1: 52–54.
7. Abraham Rademaker, *Kabinet van Nederlandsche Outbeden en Gezichten* (Amsterdam, 1725), plate 81. This tower is the only one depicted by Rademaker that has a central arched window flanked by two blind arches. Distinctive also is the turret attached to its side.

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 1885–1900 Widener, 2 (1900): 235, repro.
 1895 Sedelmeyer: 34, no. 28, repro.

- 1907–1927 HdG, 3 (1910): 450–451, no. 37.
 1909 New York: no. 70.
 1913–1916 Widener, 1 (1913): unpaginated, no. 29, repro.
 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
 1931 Widener: 92, repro.
 1938 Waldmann: 335–342.
 1942 Widener: 6.
 1948 Widener: iv, 52, repro.
 1965 NGA: 98, no. 645.
 1968 NGA: 86, no. 645, repro.
 1975 NGA: 256–257, repro.
 1981 Schnackenburg, 1: 35, 274, no. 59 repro.
 1984 Wheelock: 16–17, color repro.
 1985 NGA: 295, repro.
 1991 Washington: 72.
 1992 NGA: 126, color repro.

1991.64.1

Workmen before an Inn

1645

Oil on oak, 66 x 58.4 (26 x 23)

Gift of Richard A. and Lee G. Kirstein, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

Inscriptions

At lower right corner: *Isack van Ostade 1645*

Technical Notes: The painting is on an oak panel with a vertical grain. The support is a single panel. The original chisel marks are visible on the back.

The ground is a smooth, light brown layer of medium thickness. It is allowed to show through the thinly applied paint layers. In the sky the paint is applied more thickly, with low impasto and strong brushwork. The painting is in very good condition, although small, scattered losses are visible in ultraviolet light. Minor pentimenti in the large tree in the center of the painting and the dogs in the foreground are visible to the naked eye. The painting has not been treated since acquisition.

Provenance: Van Tol, Souterwoude [near Leiden]; (sale, Amsterdam, 15 June 1779, no. 13); Wubbels, J. E. Fiseau, Amsterdam; (sale, Amsterdam, 30 August 1797, no. 165); (J. de Bos, Amsterdam). Baron Guillaume-Joseph de Brien van de Grootelindt, Amsterdam, by 1842; by inheritance to Baron Guillaume-Thierry-Armand-Maria de Brien van de Grootelindt, Amsterdam; (sale, Paris, 8 May 1865, no. 23); Marquis H. de V[illefosse?], Paris; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 5–6 June 1871, no. 218); Comte Henri Gref-fulhe [1848–1932], Paris. (Sale, Sotheby & Co., London, 22 July 1937, no. 74); (Roland & Delbanco, London, 1937–1939); Adolf Mayer, The Hague; (Edward Speelman, London); private collection, England; (A. Duits, London); (Christian Humann, Paris and New York, 1968–1973); Claus Virch, Paris, 1973–1977; (Brod, London, 1977). Richard A. and Lee G. Kirstein, Washington.