

Adam Pijnacker

Schiedam c. 1620 – 1673 Amsterdam

Italian River Landscape with a Bridge

Signed lower right APynacker (AP interlaced) / APynacker (AP interlaced)

Oil on panel

73.3 x 90.2 cm.

Provenance:

Possibly Garscube, collection Sir A. Campbell 6th Baronet of Succoth (1825-1866)

Possibly collection Sir George Ilay Campbell, 6th Baronet of Succoth (1894-1967), by descent

Possibly his sale, London, Christie's, 19 July 1946, to W.G. Smith

Farmington Lodge (Gloucestershire), collection of the Hon. Bobby Wills

Bloemendaal, private collection

Literature:

Possibly G.F. Waagen, *Treasures of art in Great Britain : being an account of the chief collections of paintings, drawings, sculptures, illuminated mss., etc., etc.*, 3 vols., London 1854, 3, p. 292

Possibly C. Hofstede de Groot, *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke des hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 10 vols., Esslingen 1907-1928, 9 (1926), p. 554, no. 146

Possibly L.B. Harwood, *Adam Pynacker (c. 1620-1673)*, Doornspijk 1988, p. 164, cat. no. D53 (*Italian Landscape*)¹

Adam Pijnacker was probably born between 23 January 1620 and 22 January 1621.² Although Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) mentions the village of Pijnacker as being the artist's place of birth, he was undoubtedly born in nearby Schiedam, adjacent to Rotterdam. Pijnacker was the son of the prosperous wine merchant and member of Schiedam town council, Christiaan Pijnacker, and his wife Maria Jansdr Graswinckel. Not much is known about Pijnacker's upbringing, but according to Houbraken, he spent three years in Italy. Although there is a lack of archival evidence for this, Pijnacker's work does attest to first hand knowledge of the topography and customs of Italy. Assuming that he travelled to Italy at a young age, as was customary, such a sojourn could be dated to c. 1645-1648. This coincides with Pijnacker's documented presence in Delft from 1649 onwards, mostly in the company of wine merchant, art dealer and painter Adam Pick (1621/22-1665/66), who might have inspired him to launch his own career. During the 1650s, Pijnacker is recorded as being in Schiedam on several occasions, but he also worked in Germany for the Brandenburg court in c. 1654. Four years

later, in 1658, he married Eva de Geest, daughter of the portraitist Wybrand de Geest (1592-1661/65), in Friesland. A son and a daughter were baptised in Schiedam in 1660 and 1661, but soon afterwards the artist seems to have moved to Amsterdam.³ He is recorded as being in Schiedam once more in 1670, but his documented presence in Amsterdam during the years 1669, 1671 and 1672 indicates that he lived there. Pijnacker was buried in Amsterdam on 28 March 1673. At the time of his death he was living on Rozengracht, the artists' quarter at the time.

Of about hundred accepted works, Pijnacker only dated six, the earliest in 1650, the latest in 1670.⁴ It is generally assumed that the artist's earliest works date from c. 1648.⁵ Several of his paintings appear in Delft inventories of the early 1650s, and the Delft painter Leonaert Bramer (1596-1674) made three drawings after his works in or before 1653. It was in around 1655 that the artist arrived at his mature style. While Pijnacker mainly took his inspiration from his immediate Dutch Italianate predecessors, Jan Both (c. 1615-1652) and Jan Asselijn (1610/15-1652), he



developed a preference for more complex compositions, and above all excelled in his use of cool light and brilliant tonality. The atmosphere, effect and contemporary appreciation of Pijnacker's paintings is strikingly articulated by Pieter Verhoek (1633-1702), the brother of Pijnacker's pupil Gijsbert Verhoek (1644-1690), in an ode in praise of the artist's work in the Amsterdam canal house of Cornelis Backer, regent and director of the East India Company:

'And green woods, on which shines a morning sun, / Which brilliantly dawns from the horizon / And creates the day so anyone who understands Art stands enraptured / And fancies that he beholds Italy with his own eyes [...] Receding for miles as far as where the pale azure / Of the mountains is painted with the gleam of the sun's fire. [...] Here can Lord Backer, when the trees are devoid of leaves / And the barren field is overwhelmed with dunes / Of drifting snow, contemplate these leafy crowns, / The green of the foliage, a Summer for the eye. / Here, worn out by the cares of State, he can unstring / his bow, revelling in this contemplation.'⁶

In the present painting, Pijnacker clearly strives for precisely that effect. Bathed in the light of dawn, a majestic river landscape unfolds under a magnificent, pale blue sky. On the wooded river bank to the left, a road,



Fig. 1 Jan Both, *View on the Tiber*, c. 1650, etching, 198 x 276 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

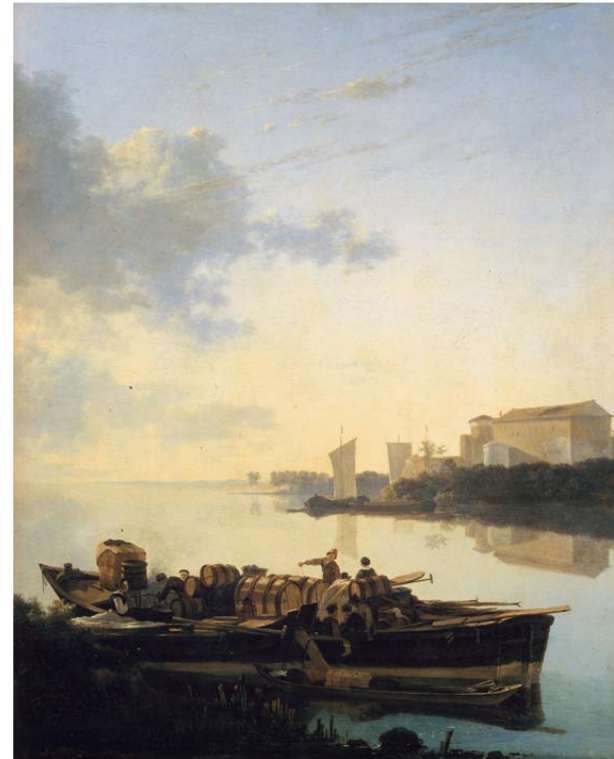


Fig. 2 Adam Pijnacker, *River Landscape with Laden Barge*, signed, oil on canvas, 43.5 x 35.5 cm., St. Petersburg, Hermitage

and an old fortress with a tower are seen. Beyond, while the yellow light of sunrise floods the somnolent mountains seen through hazy atmospheric perspective, the viewer's attention is led to the old bridge in the centre of the composition, whose arches are quietly reflected in the water's smooth surface. Collapsed on the left, the bridge leads the eye to the right, to a rustic village on the riverbank. A *campanile*, recalling that of the church of Santa Francesca Romana at the Forum Romanum, Rome, crowns its skyline. In the foreground, a dark rocky outcrop with overgrowth serves as a *repoussoir*. Dominating the right side of the picture, it overlooks the activity in the foreground; boats are being loaded, a horse packed. Fishermen prepare their net, a ferry is about to

set out, and beside it two men bathe in the refreshing water. Following Verhoek's eloquent verses, the work truly transports the beholder, in dreamy contemplation, to the Italian peninsula.

Italian River Landscape with a Bridge, painted in the Schiedam and Delft era, is Pijnacker's largest work on panel, which by itself is a clear indication of the painter's lofty ambitions. The painting shares several motifs with Pijnacker's *Harbour Scene*, one of the three works drawn by Bramer and therefore datable to before 1653.⁷ Both feature the stone bridge with several arches, a rocky *repoussoir* to the right and similar, somewhat scattered activity in the foreground. The present work shares the X formation diagonal scheme with two other river views by Pijnacker, one of them in the collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein, and both datable to the early 1650s.⁸ In addition, Pijnacker was surely familiar with a print by Jan Both that had been published around 1650. Part of a series depicting Rome and its surroundings, the print, too, features a meandering river, a ruined arched bridge in the distance, and a ferry with cows and a helmsman in the foreground (fig. 1).⁹ Yet what really sets the present work apart from these earlier examples is the overwhelming grandeur and the sophisticated harmony of composition and lighting. Executed with such satisfying finesse, it bears strong affinities to the marvellous *River Landscape with Laden Barge* of around 1655, now in the Hermitage (fig. 2). In that work the painter reaches a first zenith in terms of luminosity, leading Pijnacker specialist Laurie Harwood to praise its 'sublime classical calm and balance [and] the fantastic quality of light.'¹⁰ The present work, unknown to Harwood at the time of writing her catalogue raisonné on Pijnacker, has since been inspected by her at first hand; endorsing the attribution to the painter, she proposes a date similar to that of the Hermitage work, of c. 1655.

- 1 Harwood gives no support, but the measurements (73.6 x 89 cm.) and subject matter are similar to those of the present painting. She refers to the work mentioned by Waagen in 1854 and Hofstede de Groot in 1926 (see Literature), whose descriptions both lack measurements (Waagen: 'A landscape; carefully executed, and unusually warm in colour.'). In addition she mentions the sale of George Ilay Campbell, London, Christie's, 19 July 1946 (no lot), at which occasion the painting was apparently sold to Smith (see Provenance). Harwood presumably took the measurements from the Christie's catalogue, which the present author was unfortunately unable to retrieve.
- 2 This appears from the painter's own statement of 22 January 1652, that he was 31 years of age. For a biographical account on Pijnacker, see: L.B. Harwood, *Adam Pijnacker (c. 1620-1673)*, Harwood 1988, pp. 13-23.
- 3 Archival evidence for this assumption seems to be lacking. A poem by Pieter Verhoek (1633-1702) published by Houbraken in 1718, on several paintings by Pijnacker executed for a house in Amsterdam that was completed in 1665, is hardly proof for his presence there. His large and abundant works from the period, however, seem a good indication he was working for a wealthy (Amsterdam) upper class clientele.
- 4 Harwood 1988 lists 98 autograph works.
- 5 A no longer known work is apparently dated 1646. See: Harwood 1988, p. 169, cat. no. D77.
- 6 First published in: A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., The Hague 1718-1721, 2, pp. 97-99. Translation based on the that offered by Harwood 1988, p. 32.
- 7 Harwood 1988, p. 47, cat. no. 10, illus. Harwood dates the work to c. 1649.
- 8 Harwood 1988, pp. 51-52, cat. nos. 16 (Liechtenstein), 17 (present whereabouts unknown), illus.
- 9 E. Runia, *The Glory of the Golden Age : Dutch Art in the 17th century: drawings and prints*, exhib. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 2000, pp. 86-87, cat. no. 62, dates the print to c. 1650. Interestingly, under-drawing visible in the present work reveals Pijnacker initially intended the bridge to be undamaged.
- 10 Harwood 1988, p. 70, cat. no. 45, interprets the light as evening light. Albert Blankert, correctly to my mind, is of the opinion that the Hermitage work depicts morning light. See: A. Blankert, *Nederlandse 17^{de} eeuwse Italianiserende landschapschilders*, exhib. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum 1965, pp. 185-17, cat. no. 106.