SALOMON LILIAN

OLD MASTERS

2019



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Acknowledgements

We are very proud to be able to produce our 26th annual catalogue of Dutch and Flemish Old Master Paintings.

Amongst the recent acquisitions are the two Emperors, *Vitellius* and *Vespasian*, by Peter Paul Rubens. Ancient historians tell us that Vitellius was gluttonous and indulgent during his brief stint as Emperor, and he did not hold the title for long. Vespiasian, an army commander in Judea, and Vitellius were the real contendors to succeed the throne of Nero. Vespasian reached Rome and his armies captured Vitellius. According to the historians, soldiers abused and humiliated Vitellius before finally killing him in December of 69 AD. Once the violence died down, the Senate conferred power to Vespasian, cementing his position as Emperor. Vespasian was the first Emperor of the Flavian dynasty, and he headed what is generally considered to be an age of stability at Rome. It is with great pleasure that we are able to show these two Emperors together, painted by Rubens for his own personal collection.

Another important revelation is the *Still Life of an Illuminated Manuscript*, painted circa 1550, a *trompe l'oeil* of an open book which can be considered sixteenth century 'snap-shot.'

Then we are showing a very important work by Willem Drost. This powerful painting, *Roman Charity*, is a rediscovery. It is a rare addition to an already tiny corpus.

We also show a beautiful Pieter Claesz *Still Life*, a *Sabbath Scene* by Cornelis Saftleven, a fantastic *tronie* by Jacob Backer, and a powerful *Battle Scene* by Philips Wouwerman.

I would like to thank Martina Brunner-Bulst who wrote the entry on the painting by Pieter Claesz, I am thankful to Wendela Wagenaar-Burgemeister and Jasper Hillegers, who conducted the entire project as well as thorough art historical research on the paintings before writing entries, and to Natasha Broad, who edited them.

Salomon Lilian
March 2019

cat. no.	
1	Jacob Backer
2	Jacob Biltius
3	Cornelis Bisschop
4	Hendrick Bloemaert
5	Jan Boeckhorst
6	Pieter Claesz
7	Pieter Codde
8	Willem Drost
9	Lambert Jacobsz
10	Willem van Mieris
11	Jan Miense Molenaer
12	Marten Rijckaert
13	Peter Paul Rubens
14	Peter Paul Rubens
15	Cornelis Saftleven
16	Southern Netherlandish, c. 1550
17	Michael Sweerts
18	Philips Wouwerman

cat. no. 1

Jacob Backer
Harlingen 1608/09 – 1651 Amsterdam

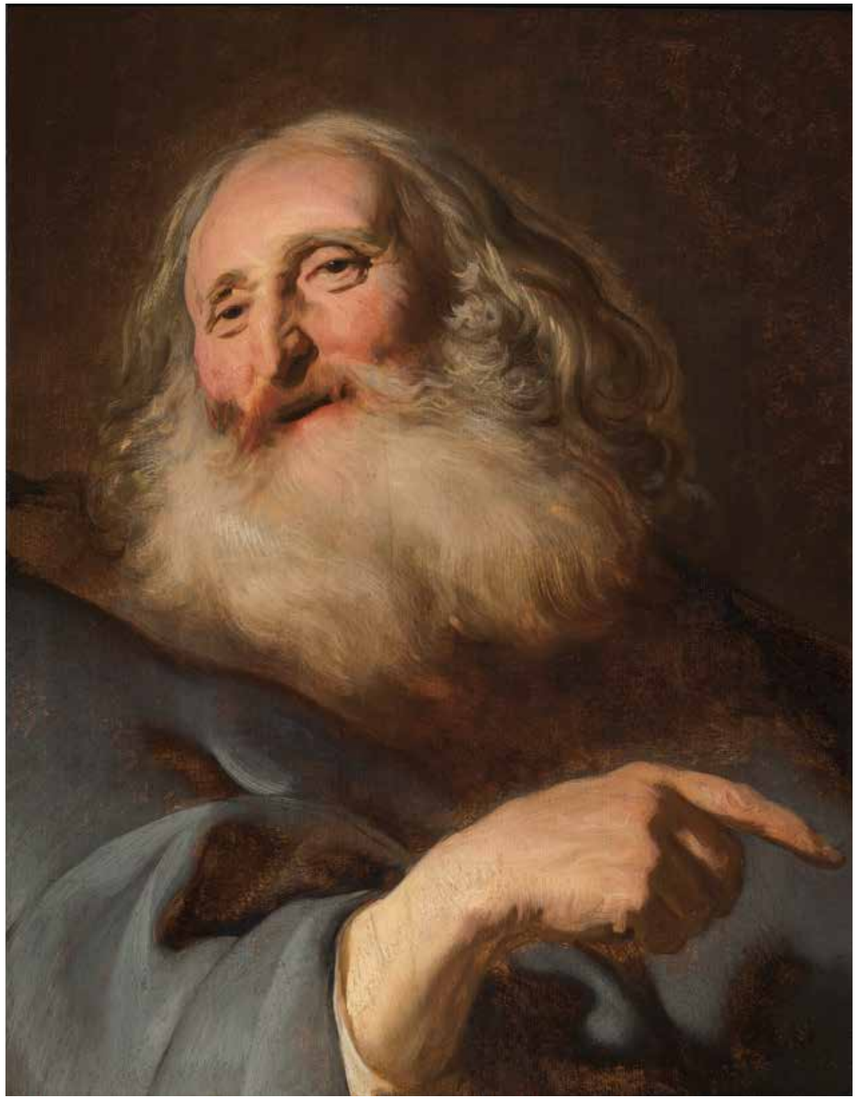
Democritus

Oil on panel
60 x 46.5 cm.

Provenance:
Stockholm, Art Gallery Stopalo
Sweden, private collection, since c. 1970

Literature:
P. van den Brink, 'Tussen Rubens en Rembrandt : Jacob Adriaensz. Backer als portret- en historieschilder in Amsterdam', in: *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* (2016), pp. 4-39, pp. 16-17, fig. 11

Jacob Backer
Jacob Backer was born in 1608 into a Mennonite family in Harlingen, a university town in Friesland.[1] Shortly after Jacob's birth his mother Hilcke Volckertsdr died, and when in 1611 his father Adriaen Tjercksz, a baker (hence the name Backer, which the siblings later adopted), re-married Elsge Roelofs from Amsterdam, the family moved there. Elsge, a well-to-do widow, owned a thriving bakery at the Nieuwendijk (currently house number 6) where many Mennonites lived, and when she died in 1614, Adriaen inherited both the house and a considerable sum of money. Backer thus grew up in a comfortable middle class environment. It is not known to whom he was first apprenticed, yet it has been suggested, with good reason, that it might have been the painter Jan Pynas (1581-1631), who co-owned a house down the street and taught Backer's documented friend and peer Steven van Goor (1608-c. 1660).[2] We are sure, however, that Backer moved back to Leeuwarden, Friesland in the latter half of the 1620s. It was there that he joined the workshop of the Mennonite teacher, painter, art dealer and entrepreneur Lambert Jacobsz (c. 1593/94-1636), whose family maintained close relations with the Backer/Roelofs family and who, like Backer, grew up at the Amsterdam Nieuwendijk before settling in the north in 1621. In around 1628, Jacobsz decided upon an ambitious business expansion, which probably explains why he was able to attract capable assistants: Backer and the young Govert Flinck (1615-1660). In addition to producing smaller paintings in the style of the so-called 'Pre-Rembrandtists', or the School of Amsterdam History Painters (Jacobsz might have studied with Jan Pynas as well), he then embarked on a second line of large-figure history works, inspired by the work of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Jan Lievens (1607-1674) and the Utrecht *Caravaggisti*.[3] Whereas young Flinck must have been a true apprentice, Backer's role was that of chief assistant, who was allowed a great deal of freedom in the studio, including making pictures of his own. Backer and Flinck remained with Jacobsz until 1632/33. At that point, as Arnold Houbraken states, both 'were so advanced that they could spread their wings [...] and move to Amsterdam'.[4] Whereas Flinck succeeded Rembrandt (1606-1669) in time as *chef d'atelier* of Hendrick Uylenburgh's studio, Backer achieved fame among the Amsterdam élite as a painter of fashionable large-scale histories, elegant portraits, bust-size '*tronies*' and genre works such as the present painting.[5] Accordingly, he received important commissions for large group portraits, such as *The Governesses of the Burgerweeshuis* (1634), *The Civic Guard company of Captain Cornelis de Graeff and Lieutenant Hendrick Lauwrensz* (1642) and *The Regents of the Nieuwezijds huiszitten- and aalmoezeniershuis* (1650/51).[6] Backer remained a bachelor all his life. In August 1651, just months after converting to the Remonstrant faith, he died in Amsterdam and was buried in the Noorderkerk.



'Geschwindigkeit'

In his *Teutche Academie*, the German painter and artist biographer Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) remembers Backer – whom he knew personally during his own Amsterdam period (1637-1645) – as 'excellent and artful', painting 'great modern paintings especially after life'. Sandrart then goes on to praise the speed ('Geschwindigkeit') with which Backer painted, and to support his words he recalls an incident in which Backer had introduced him to a woman 'who had arrived [in Amsterdam] from Haarlem to have herself portrayed, and who travelled back home the same day, whom he had painted in such a short time, complete with face, collar, fur, skirt and other clothes and both hands, in half-figure, life-size, distinguished and well done.'[7] In praising Backer's speed, Sandrart touched upon a well-known *topos*, an artistic commonplace. The anecdote might well have really taken place, and Backer no doubt painted fast, but in deliberately praising this speed Sandrart above all was paying tribute to the swiftness that Backer's painting style conveyed. Backer's 'Geschwindigkeit' was reflected in his artistic style, which expressed a swift and spontaneous quality, associated with '*sprezzatura*', and liveliness. If anything, the old man in the Lilian picture – Democritus, the laughing philosopher, who will be discussed below in further detail– is rendered with exactly this marvelous spontaneity, matching his cheerful character. Clearly, this is due to Backer's admirable economy of technique, the broad and bold brushstrokes, and the daring contrast between impasto paint and left-open areas. Backer's inspiration for this kind of painting seems to have come from the Antwerp painters – specifically Rubens and Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641). The latter's series of bust-length portraits of the twelve apostles, datable to around 1680-1620, must have impressed the young Backer. Did he travel to Antwerp, or did he see such paintings in the North? There is good reason to presume a journey to Antwerp in 1638[8], but Backer might well have visited the city before. His master Lambert Jacobsz was active in the art trade. In Leeuwarden he ran a franchise of the dealership that the Mennonite art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh (1587-1661) had set up in Amsterdam (in fact, Uylenburgh had, in 1620, possessed a complete series of Van Dyck's apostles, which he sold to the Polish king[9]). Given this situation, a surprisingly broad choice of modern art was available in Leeuwarden (to which Backer obviously had direct access), yet his dealership also involved Lambert travelling on a regular basis (which he also did in his capacity as Mennonite teacher, which is how he recruited Flinck in Kleves), and that on occasion he might have been joined by his chief assistant Backer. This is, of course, all hypothetical. Moreover, by the time Backer painted the present work – in around 1635 – he had



Fig. 1 Antony van Dyck, *St Matthew*, c. 1618/20, oil on panel, 2.5 x 50 cm., Brussels, King Baudouin Foundation, on loan to the Rubenshuis, Antwerp



Fig. 2 Peter Paul Rubens, *St Thomas*, c. 1610/12, oil on panel, 108 x 83 cm., Madrid, Museo del Prado

been back in Amsterdam for at least two years, where he could also have seen works by the Antwerp masters. Whether this is the case or not, the present *Democritus* could have hardly been painted without the example of works such as *St Matthew* (fig. 1), in which Van Dyck makes clever use of the priming to suggest creases, shadows and three-dimensionality in the apostle's heavy cloak. In Backer's *Democritus*, too, the blue-grey folds create a form of itself and, uniting with the dark ground layer, create the volume that supports the gesturing right hand, which is painted with astonishing ease. As for Democritus' face, Backer renders this with thick shapes of pink paint, boldly set against dark layers, alternating with areas where the blank panel is still visible, especially around the eyes. Notably, Backer barely indicated the head's connection to the bust, strongly recalling paintings such as Rubens' *St Thomas*, now in the Prado (fig. 2), where one observes the same daring looseness.

Democritus

From his humorous expression and specific hand gesture, the laughing greybeard in the present picture can be identified as the Greek philosopher Democritus of Abdera (460-370 BC), also known as the laughing philosopher. As such, he was paired with his counterpart Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC), the so-called weeping philosopher.[10] Although they never lived at the same time, they were nonetheless



Fig. 3 Jacob Locher (?), *Diogenes and Democritus*, woodcut, in: Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, Basel 1494 (ed. 1498)

staged as physical counterparts by classical authors such as Sotion (first century BC), Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) and Juvenal (c. 60-140 AD). Whereas Heraclitus – best known for his alleged phrase 'panta rhei' ('everything flows') – was a true pessimist (his epithet being 'ὁ Σκοτεινός', meaning 'the dark' or 'the obscure'), Democritus was of a different complexion altogether. His interest was universal, as he is said to have written on subjects as diverse as mathematics, physics, the cosmos, music and civilisation. Best remembered for his further formulation of his teacher Leucippus's (fifth century BC) atom theory, he is often considered the father of modern science. According to Diogenes of Laërtius (180-240) he was an industrious and humble man: 'The chief good he asserts to be cheerfulness' by which he [Democritus] understood 'a condition according to which the soul lives calmly and steadily, being disturbed by no fear, or superstition, or other passion. He calls this state *euthymia*.' Whereas, in contrast, Heraclitus regarded the world and the human condition with abhorrence, Democritus considered its folly with a pinch of salt.

This life outlook is also reflected in Democritus' hand gesture, the pointed finger. The gesture was already associated with Democritus by Juvenal, who interpreted it as 'a mockery of looming fate' and connected it with 'laughing about the sorrows and tears, as well as the joys of the people'.[11] In pictorial tradition, the pointed finger became Democritus' signature gesture, one of the earliest examples being an illustration in Sebastian Brant's famous *Narrenschiff* of 1494 (fig. 3), in which Democritus exchanges gestures with his laughing *alter ego* jester (standing behind Diogenes, who for once takes the place of Heraclitus). During the seventeenth century, too, the pointed finger featured in Democritus' standard iconography (see cat. no. 4, figs. 2, 5), pointed at either the sorrowful Heraclitus or the world itself, or as a gesture on its own. Heraclitus, on the other hand, was mostly depicted wringing his hands (see cat. no. 4, figs. 1, 6, 7). That Backer took an interest in the opposing duo is underlined by the mention of a now lost 'Heraclitus and Democritus at the world's globe, painted fiercely, by J. Backer', auctioned in 1803 in The Hague, which apparently showed the philosophers together in one painting.[12] Backer may have originally also paired the present *Democritus* with a *Heraclitus* as its counterpart, yet no pendant is known today. The only possible candidate that comes to mind, Backer's *Scholar at His Desk* in a private collection in the United States (fig. 4), of approximately similar size and depicting a greybeard wringing his hands, fails to convince as the present painting's pendant, despite the



Fig. 4 Jacob Backer, *Scholar at His Desk*, c. 1632/33, oil on panel, 66.6 x 50.8 cm., United States, private collection



Fig. 5 After Jacob Backer, *Bearded Old Man with a Cane*, oil on panel, 71 x 54.5 cm., present location unknown



Fig. 6 After Jacob Backer, *The Continence of Scipio*, oil on canvas, 70 x 94 cm., sale Paris, Tajan, 20 December 2002, lot 40 (as attributed to Gerbrand van den Eeckhout)

characteristic hand gesture and the pondering expression on the man's face.[13] Not only was the *Scholar* probably painted about two to three years earlier, its composition and iconography – including a table, books and writing gear – do not match the present work very well.

The model

As Sandrart remarked, Backer drew and painted after life, using life models.[14] The model he chose here, with his unique, hooked nose, his sparkling eyes and huge white beard, was exceptionally popular. Here he makes for a fantastic Greek philosopher, yet Backer painted him in other guises as well. He is, for instance, the bearded old man with a cane in a painting known nowadays through a copy (fig. 5). In the exact same pose we come across him as a bystander in a *Continence of Scipio*, probably one of Backer's most impressive large history works, mentioned in an Amsterdam inventory in 1682, but again known only through a (rather crude) copy (fig. 6).[15] We also recognize him as the *Man Holding a Coin* in the Landesmuseum, Mainz (fig. 7). In this painting, also known as *Allegory of Avarice*, he takes on the role of a smirking old miser. Again he stares out at the beholder as he points his finger, this time at a coin, thereby expressing his predilection for money.[16] Two mezzotints after the Mainz work – one presenting the whole painting, the other singling out the face – by the Amsterdam engraver Abraham Blooteling (1640-1690) further cemented the model's place in our shared memory (figs. 8, 9).

Backer and Blooteling were not the only artists who recognized the appeal of the model with the hooked nose. During the later 1630s we come across him as an old man in various poses – arms crossed, supporting his head, with clasped hands – or dressed up as an oriental scholar reading a book in works by the Amsterdam painter Simon Kick (1603-1652) (figs. 10a-d). Salomon Koninck (1609-1656), also from Amsterdam, depicted him as a hermit with a book in his painting dated 1643 now in Dresden (fig. 10e). As a collector of old coins we see him again in a painting now in Indianapolis, by the Amsterdam born painter Hendrick Pot (1580-1657) who, however, lived in Haarlem for most of his life (fig. 10f). Might we therefore assume that our old man with the crooked nose also modeled in Haarlem? This seems to be the case, as he was also portrayed – again type-cast as a hermit reading a book – by Adriaen van Ostade (1610-1685) (fig. 10g). Finally, we encounter him in two works of the late 1630s by Thomas de Keyser (1596-1667) from Amsterdam, one depicting him as old Simeon holding the Christ child while singing his song of praise (fig. 10h), the other in the guise of St Paul with his sword (fig. 10i).[17] Who this striking greybeard was, or why he posed for all these painters – was it an extra income, or was there more to it? – we will probably never know. At least we still have the pictures.

JH

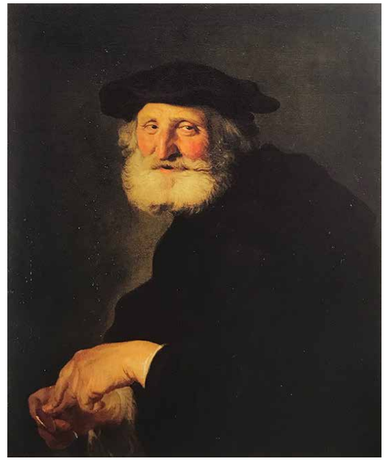


Fig. 7 Jacob Backer, *Old man with a Coin*, oil on canvas, 75.5 x 63.5 cm., Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum



Fig. 8 Abraham Blooteling after Jacob Backer, *Old Man with a Coin (a.k.a. Staverinus, an Old Jew, Holding a Medal)*, mezzotint, 27.2 x 22.7 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

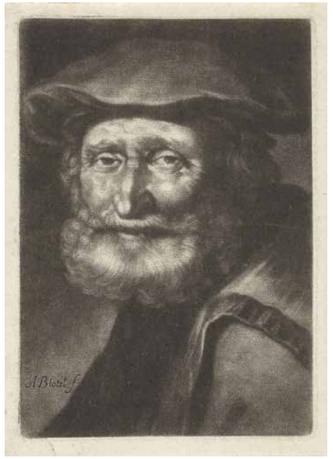


Fig. 9 Abraham Blooteling after Jacob Backer, *Old Laughing Man*, mezzotint, 14.3 x 10 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 10a-i
The present model in paintings (left to right, top to bottom) by Simon Kick (10a-d), Salomon Koninck (10e), Hendrick Pot (10f), Adriaen van Ostade (detail) (10g) and Thomas de Keyser (10h-i)

Notes

1 For an extensive biography on Backer, see J. van der Veen, 'Jacob Backer, een schets van zijn leven', in: P. van den Brink, J. van der Veen, *Jacob Backer (1608/9-1651)*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis, Aachen, Suermond-Ludwig-Museum 2008-2009, pp. 10-25. For an analysis of Backer's artistic production, see P. van den Brink, 'Uitmuntend schilder in het groot : De schilder en tekenaar Jacob Adriaensz Backer', in: Amsterdam/Aachen 2008-2009, pp. 26-84. See also E.J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals : History Painting in Amsterdam 1630-1650*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2015, pp. 110-127; Van den Brink 2016.

2 Van der Veen, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

3 On Lambert Jacobsz' studio and the different kinds of production practiced there, see J. Hillegers, 'Lambert Jacobsz (c. 1598-1636) en zijn werkplaats. Atelierpraktijk in Leeuwarden omstreeks 1630', in: *Jaarboek De Vrije Fries* 89 (2009), pp. 67-92 (available online: http://www.friesgenootschap.nl/index.php/nl/online-artikelen); J. Hillegers, 'The Lambert years: Govert Flinck in Leeuwarden, ca. 1629 – ca. 1633', in: S. Dickey (ed.), *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck : New Research*, Amsterdam 2017, pp. 45-65.

4 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718–1721, 2 (1719), p. 20: 'Te Lewaarden gekomen vond hy Jakob Backer een geschikt en yverig Jongman tot zyn byslaap en gezelschap in de Konst, die met hem (na dat zy nu zoo veer gevordert waren dat zy op eigen wieken konden vliegen) naar Amsterdam vertrok [...]'.

5 See E. Kok, *Culturele ondernemers in de Gouden Eeuw : De artistieke en sociaal– economische strategieën van Jacob Backer, Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol en Joachim von Sandrart*, PhD diss. University of Amsterdam 2013.

6 P. van den Brink, *Oeuvrecatalogus van de schilderijen van Jacob Backer*, in: Amsterdam/Aachen 2008-2009, pp. 204-249 (also consultable on DVD including B-E categories: *Jacob Adriaensz Backer – Complete overview of his paintings*), cat. nos. A21, 92, 132.

7 J. von Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura Scultura e Pittura oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, 3 vols., Nuremberg/Frankfurt 1675-1680, 2 (1679), p. 307.

8 A drawn *Self Portrait* in the Albertina, Vienna, inscribed 'Jacob ABacker / fecit 1638 / In Vlissingen' was possibly done during a journey to or from Antwerp. See Van der Veen, op. cit., p. 21; Th. Döring, in: Amsterdam/Aachen 2008-2009, cat. no. 41.

9 See J. van der Veen, 'Hendrick Uylenburgh, Factor van de Poolse koning en kunsthandelaar te Amsterdam', in: J. van der Veen, F. Lammertse, *Uylenburgh en zoon : kunst en commercie van Rembrandt tot De Lairesse 1625-1675*, exh. cat. Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis 2006, pp. 12-59, pp. 32-33.

10 For an overview of the history and pictorial tradition surrounding Democritus and Heraclitus, see the still indispensible A. Blankert, 'Heraclitus en Democritus : in het bijzonder in de Nederlandse kunst van de 17de eeuw', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 18 (1967), pp. 31-124.

11 Blankert 1967, pp. 55-58, 80.

12 Sale The Hague, Bosboom (collection C.G. Blanken), 4 June 1803 (Lugt no. 6097), lot 4 (fl. 3,16 to Hardenberg): 'Heracliet en Democriet by de waerelds Globe, kloek geschilderd, door J. J. Backer, op paneel, hoog 34.25 breet 38.5 duim'. See K. Bauch, *Jacob Adriaensz Backer : Ein Rembrandtschüler aus Friesland*, Berlin 1926, p. 81, no. 58 (Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, E62). A similar painting, but on canvas, was auctioned with the same auction house in 1805 (sale The Hague, Bosboom, 9 October 1805 (Lugt no. 7000), lot 1(Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, E63).

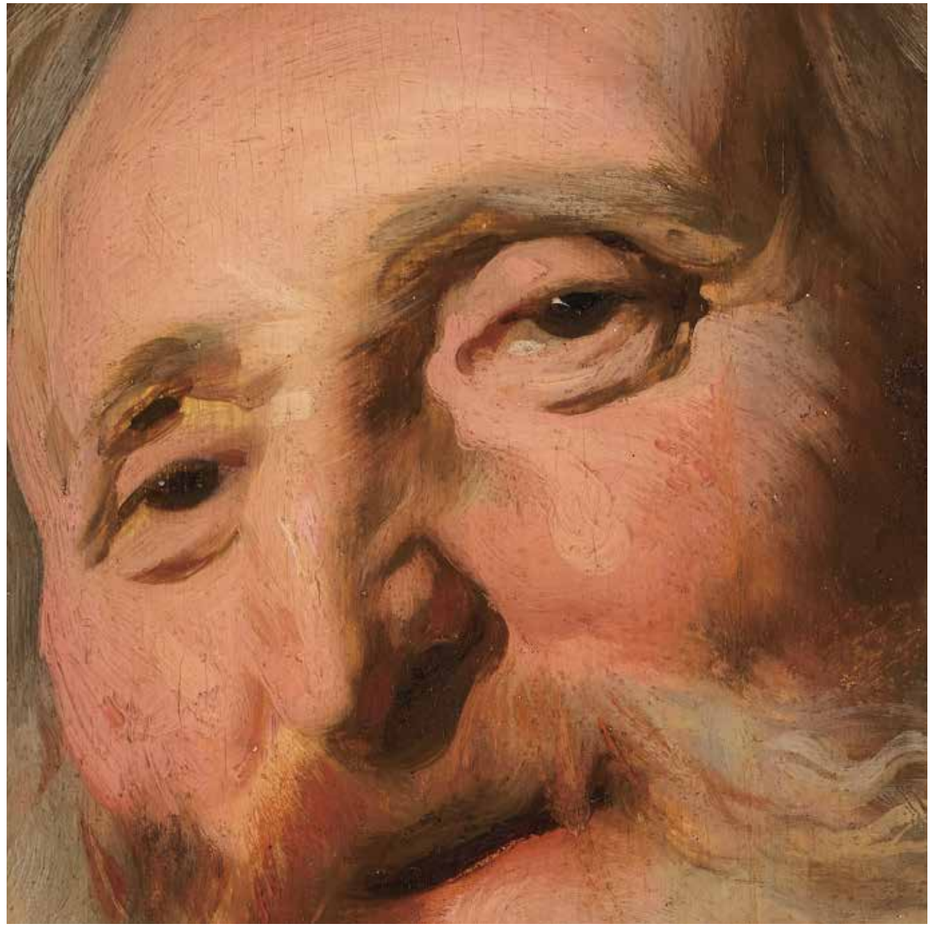
13 Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, A7. Remarkably, the model was used as Democritus in Backer's *Hippocrates visiting Democritus in Abdera* in the Bader Collection (Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, A8).

14 Not much has been published on working with (individual) models or their identities. In relation to Rembrandt depicting his supposed family, see C. Vogelaar, G. Korevaar, *Rembrandt's mother : myth and reality*, exh. cat. Leiden, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal 2005-2006. See also J. Noortman, D. De Witt (eds.), *Rembrandt's naked truth : drawing nude models in the Golden Age*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis 2015, which deals with nude modelling in Amsterdam. See for the Antwerp model Abraham Grapheus: J. de Smet, B. Fornari, *Abraham Grapheus, model van Jacob Jordaens*, exh. cat. Caen, Musée de Beaux Arts, Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten 2012.

15 Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, B3 (*Bearded Old Man with a Cane*), C17 (*Continence of Scipio*). The latter is probably a copy after 'a large piece of Scipio by the old Backer' (' Een groot stuck van Scipio door d'oude Backer') in the 1682 Amsterdam inventory of Jan de Wijs (Van den Brink, *Complete overview*, E52).

16 The same finger pointing gesture is made by an old woman counting money in an *Avaritia* print by Hendrick Bloemaert. See, also on the topic of old people and avarice, A. Janssen, *Grijsaards in zwart-wit*, Zutphen 2006, ch. 5, 'Gierigheid en hebzucht', pp. 221-245, p. 235, fig. 144.

17 10a) Simon Kick, *Portrait of an Old Man*, 1639, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; 10b) Simon Kick, *Tronie of an Old Man*, England, private collection; 10c) Simon Kick, *Bearded Old Man*, St Gallen, Museum 10d) Simon Kick, *Reading Oriental Scholar*, 1637, sale New York. Christie's, 24 january 2003, lot 53; 10e) Salomon Koninck, *The Hermit*, Dresden, 1643, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister; 10f) Hendrick Pot, *The Coin Collector*, Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art; 10g) Adriaen van Ostade, *The Hermit*, Vienna/Vaduz, Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections (detail); 10h) Thomas de Keyser, *Simeon and the Christ Child*, 1639, Chicago, Loyola University Museum of Art; 10i) Thomas de Keyser, *St Paul*, formerly Amsterdam, Salomon Lilian. Many thanks to Stephanie Dickey, who focused my attention to the works by Pot and De Keyser (*Simeon*).



Detail of cat. no. 1

cat. no. 2

Jacob Biltius
The Hague 1633 – 1681 Bergen op Zoom

A Trompe l'Oeil of Dead Fowl, a Hunting Net and a Whistle Suspended from four Nails

Oil on canvas
71.5 x 44 cm.

Provenance:
Switzerland, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

The present, very well preserved painting by Biltius is a typical example by the artist and has emerged beautifully after cleaning.[1] The motif of hanging fowl and game appeared within the context of the aristocratic pastime of hunting. Specialists such as Biltius sought not only to render faithfully the colour and texture of the birds' plumage, but also to create the illusion of three-dimensionality and the suggestion of a real wall. Against a whitewashed wall, a huntsman's net, a whistle and two dead birds are suspended from nails. The shadows cast by the birds, leather straps and nails, enhance the strong relief against the pale background. The image also reminds the spectator of the fleeting nature of life and, because the birds still possess the remnants of their appearance in life, its vulnerability. Biltius created a great many *trompe l'oeil* still-lifes with dead game and hunting gear in the 1660s, especially after 1663. His composition can be associated with that of similar works by Jan Baptist Weenix (1621-c. 1660). In the 1670s the artist's attention returned to the traditional game piece, a table top display in an interior space.[2]

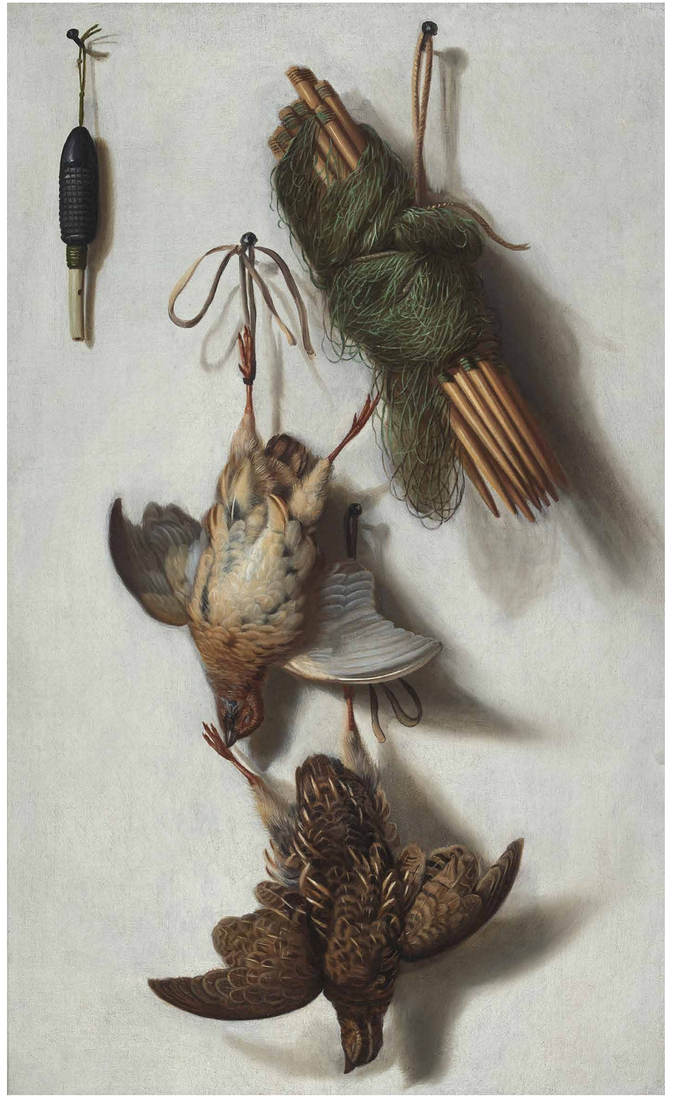




Fig.1 Jacob Biltius, *Dead Wildfowl and a Huntsman's Net*, oil on canvas, 67.5 x 50 cm., Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst

While a comparable painting by Biltius, *Dead Wildfowl and a Huntsman's Net*, in the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, with suspended birds and attributes, extends the *trompe l'oeil* effect with a feigned wooden frame, throwing a fictive shadow, the lack of a painted frame in our work enhances the suggestion of a real wall (see fig. 1).

Jacob Biltius was born in The Hague and listed as a pupil of Carel Hardy (c. 1620-after 1656) in 1651. Biltius was active in in The Hague until 1660, a city which had become a thriving centre of the mature game piece and whose most important game painter was Cornelis Lelienbergh (1626-after 1676). From 1661 until 1666 Biltius lived in Amsterdam, before moving to Maastricht in 1666 where he lived until 1670. He then returned to Amsterdam before going to live in Antwerp from 1671 to 1678. The artist was known for his trophy pieces and *trompe l'oeil* paintings, and dated works are known from 1655 to 1680.

WWB

Notes

1 According to A.J. van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, 21 vols, Haarlem 1854-1878, 2 (1854), p. 557: 'Biltius, a Dutch painter, who flourished around the middle of the seventeenth century, painted dead game and other subjects, all still lifes and referring to the hunt, painted on a white wall, so naturally that one thought to see the objects themselves (*Biltius, een Hollandsch schilder, die omstreeks het midden der zeventiende eeuw bloeide, schilderde dood wild en andere onderwerpen, tot het stilleven behoorende, en tot de jagt betrekking hebbende, al hetwelk hij op eenen witten grond zoo natuurluurlijk voorstelde, dat men die voorwerpen zelven meende te zien)'.*

2 S.A. Sullivan, *The Dutch Gamepiece*, Totowa (NJ) 1984, p. 50.



Detail of cat. no. 2

cat. no.3

Cornelis Bisschop
1630 – Dordrecht – 1674

A Young Woman Reading a Book and Winding a Watch

Oil on panel
36 x 31 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

'During the same period the Maiden City of Dordrecht, Holland's oldest city, produced a beautiful art flower ['Konstbloem'] during the Winter season, to which the grey Merwede river joyfully lifted her head from her frozen chill, as her neighbouring stream the Rhine beckoned her with a cheerful face. But this plant, untimely sprouted, perished before its finest heyday.'
So says proud Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), a native from Dordrecht himself.[1] The 'Konstbloem' is of course the painter Cornelis Bisschop, born on 12 February 1630, the son of the tailor and innkeeper Jacob Dionysz Bisschop and his wife Anna van Beveren of Utrecht.[2] Having grown up in Dordrecht, Bisschop went to Amsterdam towards the end of the 1640s, where he studied with his fellow Dordrecht townsman Ferdinand Bol (1616- 1680), a former pupil of Rembrandt (1606-1669). In Amsterdam he may well have been acquainted with two other Rembrandt pupils from Dordrecht, Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) and the slightly younger Nicolaes Maes (1634-1693), both of whom were to have a considerable impact on Bisschop's work. Back in Dordrecht by 1653, Bisschop married Geertruyt Botland, with whom he would have eleven children between 1654 and 1672. In his time, Bisschop enjoyed an international reputation. When the French nobleman and art lover Balthasar de Monconys (1611-1665) visited Dordrecht in 1663, Bisschop was the only artist to whom he paid a visit. This might have been due to one of Bisschop's specialties, the painting of perspectives and cut out *trompe l'oeil* paintings (so-called *'bedriegertjes'*, deceivers), with which he had great success. Houbraken mentions a candle-lit history piece by his hand in the collection of the French King Louis XIV, and tells us that shortly before Bisschop's untimely death in 1674, he was invited by the Danish king Christian V to become Court painter. Bisschop's oeuvre covers a broad range of subjects and genres. In addition to his *trompe l'oeil* works, he was active as a portraitist, a genre in which he was formal but successful. In his history pieces he tended to follow his teacher Bol, while his genre work often shows affinity with the work of Maes. Yet as the present painting demonstrates, Bisschop also looked beyond the city limits of Dordrecht.

In this intimate little painting Cornelis Bisschop grants the beholder a candid view into the life of a young woman, who quietly sits between her table and bed. On her lap is an open book, upon which she rests her left arm. While she leans on the table beside her with her right arm, she meanwhile winds her watch, which she gazes down at, pensively. Although she still wears her costly silk, fur-trimmed jacket, she has





Fig. 1 Cornelis Bisschop, *A Young Woman and a Cavalier*, oil on canvas, 97.8 x 88.3 cm., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 2 Cornelis Bisschop, *Old Woman Sleeping*, oil on canvas, 115 x 94 cm., Hamburg, Kunsthalle Hamburg



Fig. 3 Gabriel Metsu, *Elegant Lady Writing at Her Desk*, c. 1662/64, oil on panel, 39.4 x 33.5 cm., New York, The Leiden Collection



Fig. 4 Caspar Netscher, *Lady with a Watch*, c. 1665, oil on panel, 15.5 x 13.6 cm., London, The Wallace Collection

already loosened her white scarf. Is she preparing to go to sleep? At least it appears that way. The candle on the large candlestick next to her is already blown out. The scene exudes a serene tranquillity, the one arresting object being the shining dark candleholder with its spiralling stem, which Bisschop again used in his much larger *Young Woman and a Cavalier* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in which we might also recognise the same woman, who is said to be the artist's wife Geertruyt (fig. 1).[3] But more than in that painting, the emphasis here is on stillness and atmosphere. The dark and intimate interior glows from the golden yellow bed curtain and the rich red tablecloth, balanced by the green of the woman's skirt, the purple of her jacket and the orange of the book; warm colours, typical of the Dordrecht painters. Bisschop's plain, almost schematic technique, which tends to choose colour over detail, adds to that soft and silent effect.

Bisschop often chose to depict women – old and young – in a homely environment. Mostly these women fulfil virtuous domestic activities, such as sewing or preparing food; in other instances they are reading or have fallen asleep while doing so, as is the case in the *Old Woman Sleeping* in Hamburg, which notably features the same motifs – i.e. a book on the woman's lap, an hourglass and a candleholder – encountered in the present work (fig. 2). Whereas many of these paintings essentially follow the example of Nicolaes Maes, the present painting – while executed in Bisschop's typical broad style – makes the exception here of seeming to adopt its pictorial *métier* from the high-life genre painters of the third quarter of the seventeenth century, such as Frans van Mieris (1635-1681), Caspar Netscher (1635/36-1684) and Gabriel Metsu (1629-1667). These artists all produced exquisite small paintings of young, upper class women dressed in silk, fur-trimmed jackets, singled out in interiors, often recorded engaged in leisurely activities, such as playing with pets, making music or writing love letters (fig. 3). Whereas Bisschop must have had such precious works in mind, he refrained from some of these paintings' more opulent subject matter, instead adhering to the more placid iconography found in works such as Netscher's *Young Woman Winding a Watch by Candlelight* of c. 1665 in the Uffizi, Florence, or his *Lady with a Watch* in the Wallace Collection (fig. 4).[4] In the same vein, our picture recalls the contemplative atmosphere of Eglon van der Neer's (1635/36-1703) *The Reader* in New York (fig. 5).[5] Of course, we cannot be sure that Bisschop was aware of these works in particular. He might well have been, though. Netscher was active in The Hague, while Van der Neer worked in nearby Rotterdam.[6] In his own native Dordrecht, Bisschop might have seen the example of Samuel van Hoogstraten, who himself ventured into the field of high-life genre painting halfway through the 1660s with works such as *The Doctor's Visit*, now in the Rijksmuseum. Seen in reverse, the pose of the sick girl does resemble Bisschop's young woman (fig. 6, 7). Moreover, one observes a distinct similarity in the plain, schematic rendering of both of these women's arms.



Fig. 5 Eglon van der Neer, *The Reader*, c. 1663/66, oil on canvas, 38.1 x 27.9 cm., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 6 Samuel van Hoogstraten, *The Doctor's Visit*, c. 1665, oil on canvas, 69.5 x 55 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, on loan from the city of Amsterdam (Van der Hoop Bequest), detail, in reverse



Fig. 7 Cat. no. 3

Taking into consideration that Bisschop used motifs such as the book, the timepiece (or hourglass) and the candleholder – all well-known symbols of *vanitas* – more often in other paintings, we might presume that in the present work they likewise convey an undertone of transience and time passing. On the other hand, such notions should not be overestimated. Both Netscher's *Lady with a Watch* and Van der Neer's *The Reader* show candlesticks on the table, and the latter painting has been hailed as a rare example of a painting in which reading with true pleasure is the painting's subject.[7] Likewise, the true attraction of the present work – for which the painter likely used his own wife as a model – is the sense of intimacy, of reading before bed, something we can all relate to. Given the correlations with similar works by high-life genre painters from around 1665, a dating of the present work in the second half of the 1660s seems adequate.

JH

Notes

1 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718-1721, 2 (1719), pp. 220-222: 'Ter zelver tyd bragt de Maagt van Dordrecht, Hollands oudste Stad, een schoone Konstbloem in 't Wintersaizoen voort, waar op de gryze Merwe, het hoofd uit haar bevrozen kil van verheuging opstak, en de Ryn haar gebuurstroom haar met een bly gezigt toewenkte. Maar dit gewas ontydig uitgesproten, verging weer voor zyn schoonsten bloeityd.'

2 For an overview of Bisschop's oeuvre, see C. Brière-Misme, 'Un petit maître hollandais: Cornelis Bisschop (1630-1674)', in: Oud Holland 65 (1950), pp. 24-40, 104-116, 139-151, 178-192, 227-240. For Bisschop's biography, see J. Laughman, in: P. Marijnissen et al., *De Zichtbaere Werelt : schilderkunst uit de Gouden eeuw in Hollands oudste stad*, exh. cat. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum 1992-1993, p. 85. W. Liedtke, 'Cornelis Bisschop', in: idem., *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2 vols., New York 2006, 1, pp. 35-36; D. de Witt, *The Bader Collection : Dutch and Flemish Paintings*, Kingston 2014, p. 62.

3 See Liedtke 2006, pp. 36-39, cat. no. 8, esp. p. 38. See also Brière-Misme 1950, p. 188.

4 M.E. Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher and late seventeenth-century Dutch painting*, Doornspijk 2002, pp. 191-192, cat. nos. 37, 38.

5 E. Schavemaker, *Eglon van der Neer (1635/36-1703) : his life and his work*, Doornspijk 2010, pp. 459-460, cat. no. 22.

6 See on this subject P. Bakker, 'Painters of and for the Élite : Relationships, Prices and Familiarity with Each Other's Work', in: A. Waiboer (ed.), *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting : Inspiration and Rivalry*, exh. cat. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland 2017-2018, pp. 85-99.

7 G. Luijten, in: E. de Jongh, G. Luijten, *Mirror of everyday life : genre prints in the Netherlands 1550-1700*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 1997, p. 304-305, fig. 6, under cat. no. 62.

cat. no. 4

Hendrick Bloemaert
1601/02 – Utrecht – 1672

Democritus

Oil on canvas
95.5 x 73.9 cm.

Provenance:
Paris, collection Jules Porgès, c. 1880-1914 (Jan van Bijlert)
Paris, Galerie Charles Brunner, by 1919 (Hendrick ter Brugghen)
United Kingdom, private collection
Sale London, Sotheby's, 6 December 1989, lot 241 (Jan van Bijlert)
New York, Piero Corsini Inc., 1990 (Hendrick Bloemaert)
Turin, Galleria Caretto, 1992 (Hendrick Bloemaert)
Milan, collection Luigi Koelliker, 2006 (Hendrick Bloemaert)
Sale London, Sotheby's, 3 December 2008, lot 27 (Hendrick Bloemaert)[1]
United States, private collection (Hendrick Bloemaert)

Literature:
B. Nicolson, *Hendrick Terbrugghen*, London 1958, p. 46, under nos. A3 and A4 (Anonymous)
G.J. Hoogewerff, 'Jan van Bijlert, schilder van Utrecht (1598-1671)', in: *Oud Holland* 80 (1965), pp. 3-33, p. 27, cat. no. 44 (Jan van Bijlert)
A. Blankert, 'Heraclitus en Democritus : in het bijzonder in de Nederlandse kunst van de 17de eeuw', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 18 (1967), pp. 31-124, p. 62, fig. 18, p. 97, no. 30 (attributed to Jan van Bijlert)
B. Nicolson, L. Vertova, *Caravaggism in Europe*, 3 vols., Turin 1989, 1, p. 156, 3, pl. 1355 (Petrus Portengen)
F. Dabell, *Important old master paintings : within the image*, exh. cat. New York, Piero Corsini Inc. 1990, p. 70, pl. 14 (Hendrick Bloemaert)
L. Caretto, *Mostra maestri fiamminghi ed olandesi del XVI-XVII secolo*, 3 vols., exh. cat. Turin, Galleria Caretto 1992, 3 ('Collezionismo maggiore'), no. 4 (Hendrick Bloemaert)
M. Roethlisberger, M.J. Bok, *Abraham Bloemaert and his sons*, 2 vols., Doornspijk 1993, 1, p. 443, under cat. no. H3 ('attribution [to Hendrick Bloemaert] is unconvincing')[2]
P. Huys Janssen, *Jan van Bijlert : Catalogue Raisonné*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1998, p. 196, cat. no. R. 10
C. Wright, in: W. Franits et al., *French, Dutch and Flemish caravaggesque paintings from the Koelliker collection, part II*, exh. cat. London, Robilant and Voena 2007, pp. 18, 19, ill. (Hendrick Bloemaert)

Exhibited:
London, Robilant and Voena, *French, Dutch and Flemish Caravaggesque Paintings from the Koelliker Collection*, 2007, no. 4 (Hendrick Bloemaert)



Hendrick Bloemaert

Hendrick Bloemaert was born at the dawn of the seventeenth century as the eldest son of that Nestor of Utrecht painters, Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651) and his wife Gerarda de Roij.[3] It therefore comes as no surprise that Hendrick – as is confirmed by Arnold Houbraken – was taught the art of painting by his famous father. After his training, Hendrick must have travelled to Italy at some point, no doubt inspired by the exciting stories of those Utrecht painters who had recently returned from the South, such as his father's former pupil Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656). In February 1627 the artist is mentioned as being in Rome, when he was one of the witnesses signing a document on behalf of the Utrecht nobleman Joannes Honorius van Axel de Seny. Among the other signees was another Utrecht painter: Johannes Moreelse (after 1602-1634), the son of Utrecht's leading portraitist Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Apparently Hendrick and Johannes, peers since both were born at the turn of the century, and the eldest sons of the two most prominent Utrecht painters, were seeking each other's company abroad. Without evidence, we can only speculate on how close they really were (whatever the case, their fathers are mentioned together on several occasions, and moved in the same social circles), and on whether or not they jointly undertook the journey from Utrecht to Italy, and back. After his return, Johannes must have worked for several years with his father, before succumbing to the plague in 1634. Hendrick returned to Utrecht in around 1630, where in October 1631 he married Margaretha van der Eem, whose father, the lawyer Cornelis van der Eem, had been one of the founders of the Utrecht Guild of St Luke, together with Abraham Bloemaert and Paulus Moreelse, among others. The couple had three children. Soon after his return, Hendrick set up his own studio and became a master of the Guild. He remained in Utrecht for the rest of his life, becoming one of the most prominent painters of the city, as well as a meritorious poet. In 1643 Hendrick was first elected as a dean of the Guild of St Luke, a position he would fulfil almost yearly until 1664.

In a seemingly cryptic fashion, the painter/biographer Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) – a former co-pupil with Hendrick's younger brother Adriaen (after 1609-1666) in Van Honthorst's studio – remarks in his *Teutsche Akademie* that Hendrick 'was a good draughtsman, but could not push ahead his sphere of fortune deftly enough ['Klücks-Kugel'], so that this Bloom [cf. Bloemaert] was smothered beneath the hedge of timidity.'[4] Sometimes understood as an evaluation of Hendrick's artistic merit, Sandrart's curious remark seems, at least partly, to refer rather to the painter's presumably phlegmatic character, which the author opposed to that of the heartier Adriaen.[5] In fact, Hendrick's paintings – particularly his earlier production – display considerable talent. Deeply rooted in the art of his father and the Caravaggist style of his native Utrecht, his most compelling efforts are clearly the large single-figure genre and history works, such as the painting discussed here. With a smooth, loaded brush and a painterly ease betraying a life-long exposure to the practice of art, he endows his characters with a monumental yet natural appearance, and individual personality. In addition to his genre and history paintings, Hendrick was a well-respected portraitist. Whereas in later years his style evolved – in line with period taste – towards a more classicizing vocabulary, he received numerous commissions throughout his career, both public and private. After his wife Margaretha died in 1671, Hendrick followed in December 1672, and was buried the Jacobi church.

Democritus, Heraclitus and pendant pairs

The exceptionally spirited present work, which belongs to Hendrick's early period, depicts the Greek philosopher Democritus of Abdera (460-370 BC) dressed in a loose white shirt, a blue cloak lined with purple and a feathered velvet cap. Beautifully painted, with a gorgeous palette, loose ruddy brushstrokes in the whites of the shirt, rendered with smooth transitions, yet full of character and depth, this is one of Bloemaert's finest efforts. Democritus is positioned behind a terrestrial globe on which he has placed his right hand, while holding up the other hand as he grins at the beholder. This expression of mockery is hardly surprising, for

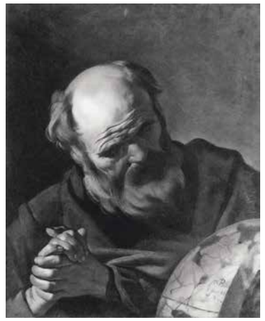


Fig. 1 Dirck van Baburen, *Heraclitus*, 1622, oil on canvas, 73 x 59 cm., present location unknown



Fig. 2 Dirck van Baburen, *Democritus*, 1622, oil on canvas, 70.5 x 57.2 cm., present location unknown

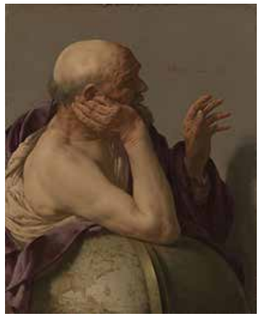


Fig. 3 Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Heraclitus*, 1628, oil on canvas, 85.5 x 70 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 4 Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Democritus*, 1628, oil on canvas, 85.7 x 70 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

he was known as the laughing philosopher. As such, he was paired with his counterpart Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC), the so-called weeping philosopher.[6] Although the two never lived at the same time, they were nonetheless staged as physical counterparts by classical authors such as Sotion (first century BC), Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) and Juvenal (c. 60-140 AD). Whereas Heraclitus – best known for his alleged phrase 'panta rhei' ('everything flows') – was a true pessimist (his epithet being 'ὁ Σκοτεινός', meaning 'the dark' or 'the obscure'), Democritus was of a different complexion altogether. His interest was universal, as he is said to have written on subjects as diverse as mathematics, physics, the cosmos, music and civilisation. Best remembered for his elaborations* of his teacher Leucippus's (fifth century BC) atom theory, he is often considered the father of modern science. According to Diogenes of Laërtius (180-240) he was an industrious and humble man: 'The chief good he asserts is cheerfulness' by which he [Democritus] understood 'a condition according to which the soul lives calmly and steadily, being disturbed by no fear, or superstition, or other passion. He calls this state *euthymia*.' Whereas Heraclitus regarded the world and the human condition with abhorrence, Democritus considered its folly with a pinch of salt.

During the Renaissance the pictorial tradition of the weeping and the laughing philosophers from Antiquity was revived in Italy. In the Netherlands a modest tradition flowered during the sixteenth century, as Democritus and Heraclitus were occasionally depicted, either together or in pendant paintings. Yet it was only at the beginning of the seventeenth century that the duo gained widespread popularity, particularly in Utrecht, where the Caravaggists showed a predilection for life-size half length figures. The earliest Utrecht example is a pendant pair attributed to the joint workshop of Dirck van Baburen (1594/95-1624) and Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-1629) from 1622 (figs. 1, 2). Soon more Utrecht pendants followed, such as the famous pair by Ter Brugghen, dated 1628, in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum (figs. 3, 4), and the engaging set by Johannes Moreelse in the Utrecht Centraal Museum, generally dated c. 1630 (figs. 5, 6).[7] The present Lilian work was part of



Fig. 5 Johannes Moreelse, *Democritus*, c. 1630, oil on panel, 59.5 x 68.8 cm., Utrecht, Centraal Museum



Fig. 6 Johannes Moreelse, *Heraclitus*, c. 1630, oil on panel, 59.5 x 68.8 cm., Utrecht, Centraal Museum

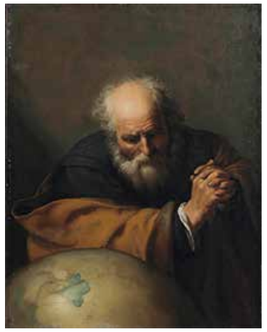


Fig. 7 Hendrick Bloemaert, *Heraclitus*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 95.2 x 74 cm., private collection



Fig. 8 Cat. no. 4

the same wave of production, and one might thus expect that a *Heraclitus* once accompanied our *Democritus*. Sure enough, a more than likely candidate is in fact available. A painting of identical measurements and with a similar background, showing the weeping philosopher behind exactly the same terrestrial globe seen in the Lilian work, was published by Bloemaert expert Marcel Roethlisberger as by Hendrick's hand in his 1993 *catalogue raisonné* on the Bloemaert family, and is here proposed as our painting's long lost pendant (figs. 7, 8).[8]

Hand gestures

The four sets by Van Baburen, Ter Brugghen, Moreelse and Bloemaert, although different in many respects, show clear iconographic parallels. For one, in all four sets the philosophers lean on globes (terrestrial globes, except for Ter Brugghen's Democritus, who curiously leans on a celestial globe), to express their respective attitudes towards the world and its inhabitants. In all four sets, moreover, Heraclitus is bareheaded, whereas Democritus consistently wears a beret. What's more, the philosophers communicate their emotions to a large extent through their gestures: in three of the four sets, Heraclitus clasps his hands, a well-known expression of sorrow, while in three of the four sets, Democritus is pointing his index finger in order to convey his mockery. Such gestures can be seen as culturally embedded semiotic codes, that were generally recognised and understood. The one instance in which Democritus makes a different gesture is in our painting, where he places his little and index fingers on the globe, while holding back his ring and middle fingers. In 1644, the English physician John Bulwer published his *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand*, a study in which he explored the field of gestural communication. Interestingly, Bulwer added a set of illustrations – so-called 'chirograms' – of different gestures and their meanings, and the gestures made by Democritus in the present work are depicted in them (figs. 9a,b, 10a,b). The gesture of his right hand is described in Latin as '*Stultitiae notam infigo*', meaning to detect signs of foolishness (stultitia), whereas the gesture of the left hand – still very common today – is described as '*dimitto*', to dismiss, but also to condone or to forgive. That this left hand gesture lends itself to a positive as well as a negative interpretation becomes all the clearer when one observes the same gesture made by Hendrick ter Brugghen's Heraclitus (fig. 3). The *stultitia* gesture is found again in another *Democritus* by Johannes Moreelse, now in the Mauritshuis in The Hague and datable to c. 1630 (fig. 11).









Figs. 9, 9a, 10, 10a
Chirograms, from J. Bulger, *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand*, London 1644



Fig. 11 Johannes Moreelse, *Democritus*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 84.5 x 73 cm., The Hague, Mauritshuis

'The Utrecht laboratory'

Such similarities and recycling of motifs are clearly no coincidence, and we might thus assume that Moreelse and Bloemaert saw each other's work, which comes as no surprise since they grew up in the same artistic milieu and they were recorded together in Rome, as we have seen. On a broader level, the cohesive, interrelated group of Democritus and Heraclitus works produced in a relatively short period by a select group of Utrecht painters comprises a fine example of what Wayne Franits has rightly dubbed 'the Utrecht laboratory'.[9] Clearly, Utrecht painters were well aware of each other's recent thematic choices, iconographic novelties and other artistic achievements, to which they reacted in their own work. They often did this so enthusiastically that it is sometimes difficult to make out who came first with what. The present *Democritus* testifies to these dynamics, not only in its subject and specific motifs, but also in its composition, for which Bloemaert carefully observed the examples of the older generation, i.e. Van Baburen and Ter Brugghen (figs. 2, 4): Democritus is positioned to the right behind a globe in the lower left corner, his hands gesturing at the globe, he wears a white shirt with a bared left shoulder and a cloak over the other, and a beret on his head. In turn, Bloemaert's work seems to have been the template for a strikingly similar *Shepherd with a Flute* in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (figs. 12, 13). Apart from the hands, which now hold the flute, the figure and his appearance – including the clothing and the feathered hat – has changed little. Who painted this work? The twentieth century attribution to Paulus Moreelse (N.B. the work is first



Fig. 12 Cat. no. 4



Fig. 13 Here attributed to Johannes Moreelse, *Shepherd with a Flute*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 94.8 x 72.7 cm., Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland



Fig. 14 Johannes Moreelse, *Shepherd with a Flute*, signed, c. 1630, oil on panel, 73 x 57.8 cm., New York, private collection



Fig. 15 Detail of fig. 13



Fig. 16 Detail of fig. 14

recorded in Florence in 1722 as by 'Murillo', which might very well be a bastardization of the name Moreelse) is no longer accepted.[10] Yet given the almost complete compositional overlap with the Lilian work, an origin in Utrecht seems likely. Could it be that Johannes Moreelse, and not Paulus, is the painter of the Edinburgh *Shepherd*? Connections between him and Hendrick have been demonstrated[11], and another *Shepherd with a Flute* by Johannes' hand, signed *JPM* (fig. 14), presents us with some interesting comparisons.[12] For instance, the rendering of the fingers and nails in both works shows a remarkable correspondence (figs. 15, 16), as does the way in which the sheepskin is painted. In fact, the shepherd, with his high, glossy cheekbones, dreamy eyes and thin moustache, might well be the same model in both works. It is our hope that further research will shed new light on this matter. Be that as it may, the Lilian *Democritus* has shown itself to be a fascinating work of art, an intriguing puzzle piece within the network of the seventeenth century artistic production of Utrecht.

JH

Notes

1 The 2008 Sotheby's auction catalogue mentions that the attribution to Hendrick Bloemaert 'has been fully endorsed by Dr. Albert Blankert and tentatively supported by Prof. Marcel Roethlisberger on the basis of photographs.' See also note 8.

2 Roethlisberger later reconsidered his objections to the attribution to Hendrick Bloemaert. See notes 1, 8.

3 Biography based on M.J. Bok, 'Hendrick Bloemaert', in: A. Blankert, L.J. Slatkes, *Nieuw Licht op de Gouden Eeuw : Hendrick ter Brugghen en tijdgenoten*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum 1986-1987, pp. 218-220.

4 J. von Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura Scultura e Pittura oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau- Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, 3 vols., Neuremberg 1675-1680, 2, Buch 3, p. 298: 'Heinrich Blomart/ ware ein guter Zeichner/ konte aber seine Klücks-Kugel nicht vernünftig genug fortschieben/ dahero diese Blum unter den Hecken der Zaghaftigkeit ersticket.'

5 Bok 1986-1987. That Sandrart actually refers to Hendrick's mood, becomes apparent in his estimation of Adriaen, whom he knew well, and describes as 'much more alive and heartier than his brother ('viel lebendiger und herzhafter als sein Bruder'), after which ascribing this as the reason why Adriaen often quarrelled with students, which finally resulted in his being stabbed to death. Sandrart 1675, loc. cit.

6 For an overview of the history and pictorial tradition surrounding Democritus and Heraclitus, see the still indispensable Blankert 1967.

7 Paintings with the philosophers depicted together were produced in Utrecht as well. Cf. Jan van Bijlert (1597/98-1671) in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, inv. no. 2250 (Blankert 1967, cat. no. 29); Dirck van Baburen, attr. to, in the State M Ciurlionis Art Museum, Kaunas (Lithuania); attr. to either Abraham or Hendrick Bloemaert (Blankert 1967, cat. no. 26, attr. to Abraham Bloemaert; Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, cat. no. H3, as Hendrick Bloemaert; at the RKD the work is attributed to Paulus Moreelse by C.J.A. Wansink, 1996).

8 See Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, cat. no. H41. Roethlisberger knew the work only from a black and white photograph, and based his atribution in part on an alleged signature in the upper right of the painting. The work came up at auction in Amsterdam in 2008, as attributed to Bloemaert, without the previously recorded signature, attributed to Hendrick Bloemaert. I thank Mr. Roethlisberger for confirming the attribution of both the *Heraclitus* and the present *Democritus* to Hendrick Bloemaert, on the basis of colour photos. Email conversation September 2018. See also notes 1, 2.

9 Franits introduced the term in 2009. See W. Franits, 'Laboratorium Utrecht. Baburen, Honthorst und Terbrugghen im künstlerischen Austausch', in: J. Sander, B. Eclercy, G. Dette, *Caravaggio in Holland : Musik und Genre bei Caravaggio und den Utrechter Caravaggisten*, exh. cat. Frankfurt-am-Main, Städel Museum 2009, pp. 37-52.

10 Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, inv. no. NG52. The *Shepherd* is first recorded when acquired by Marchese Andrea Gerini (1691-1766), Florence, 12 July 1722 (as Murillo, 8 ducati). In 1786 a print after the work by Lorenzo Lorenzi (see *Raccolta di ottanta stampe rappresentanti* i quadri più scelti dei SS. Marchesi Gerini di Firenze*, 2 vols, Florence 1786, 2, pl. XXI) attributes it to the Genoan artist Andrea Morinello (b. 1490). The work is next recorded at the sale of Marchese Giovanni Gerini (1770-1825), Florence, 1 December 1825, lot 278 ('Morillo. Pastore in atto di suonar* il Flauto: mezzo Figura al natural.'). Purchased for the Royal Institution by Andrew Wilson in Florence, 13 January 1831, it was transferred to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1859. Exhibited in Edinburgh in 1832, 1833 and in 1845 as by the Spanish painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), the painting was again displayed from 1854 onwards as Andrea Morinello. In 1957 the attribution to Paulus Moreelse followed, which is presently doubted by Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis. See E. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638)*, 2 vols., diss. Universiteit Leiden 2001, vol. 2, p. 743, no. SZH100 (as not by Moreelse, possibly Dutch). Edinburgh senior curator Tico Seiffert agrees with Domela Nieuwenhuis. Clearly, the frustrated attribution history stems from confusion over the name: Morillo, Murillo, Morinello and Moreelse are all quite similar, yet the earliest attribution 'Murillo' might well have been the Italian corruption of the Dutch name Moreelse. I am much indebted to Tico Seiffert for his kind willingness to provide me with the specific provenance data (email and verbal communication May 2018).

11 Hendrick and Johannes's artistic proximity is also made evident by their joint use of the same model, a greybeard found in Bloemaert's *St Jerome* of 1624 in Munich (Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, cat. no. H1) and in Moreelse's *Alchemist* (sale Zürich, Koller, 28 September 2018, lot 3024).

12 See for discussions of this painting P. van den Brink, in: P. van den Brink et al., *Het Gedroomde Land : Pastorale schilderkunst in de Gouden Eeuw*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, Frankfurt, Schirn Kunsthalle, Luxemburg, Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art 1999-1994, pp. 216-218, cat. no. 39; E. Domela Nieuwenhuis, in: J.A. Spicer, L. Federly Orr, *Masters of Light : Dutch Painters in Utrecht During the Golden Age*, exh. cat. San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, London, National Gallery 1997-1998, pp. 326-329, cat. no. 65.

cat. no. 5

Jan Boeckhorst
Münster 1604 – 1668 Antwerp

Allegory of Africa (from the Four Parts of the World)

Inscribed upper left: AFRICA
Oil on canvas
105 x 82 cm.

Provenance:
Spain, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

A black woman is depicted three-quarter length before a cloudy, luminous sky with her right arm drawn across her breast. She is wearing a headdress of white pearls inset with a miniature of a winged Amor, a bejeweled armlet, a silk dress striped in white, gold and green silk drawn into a knot and worn over a Venetian-style white chemise, leaving her right shoulder exposed. In her right hand she holds a transparent gauzy veil emanating from her headdress, forming a counterpoint to the heavy chain which manacles her left arm. She regards the viewer with a smiling but shy vulnerability.

Around 1650, Jan Boeckhorst executed at least two different series on the allegorical subject of the *Four Continents*, of which one series is executed in a more open format, while the other series is more closely cropped and slightly smaller.[1] The latter set, which is complete, is in a German private collection (fig. 1a-d), while 'Africa' from the *Continents Cycle* is in the Hohenbuchau Collection (fig. 2). The present painting appears to be an autograph version by the artist, and belongs to a different set from the two discussed.[2]

In McGrath's view, Boeckhorst has created a remarkably original and sympathetic conception of a black woman here.[3] She concludes that the image is unique among representations of the Continent in this period, further speculating that the chain worn by Africa might be a subtle allusion to 'the slavery practiced within and upon black Africa.'[4] However during this period the overt reference can hardly have been to the Atlantic slave trade: rather it denotes the enslavement of Africans to





Fig. 1a-d Jan Boeckhorst, *Cycle of the Four Continents*, all oil on canvas, 100 x 71.5 cm., Germany, private collection



Fig. 2 Jan Boeckhorst, *Allegory of Africa* (from the Continents Cycle), oil on canvas, 134 x 116 cm., Vaduz-Vienna, Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Hohenbuchau Collection



Fig. 3 Titian, *Portrait of Laura Dianti*, c. 1520/25, oil on canvas, 119 x 93 cm., Thurgau, Heinz Kisters Collection, Kreuzlingen, Switzerland

the Turks.[5] Indeed, the gauzy veil, reinforced by the floating clouds of the background, suggests in its airiness the idea of freedom. The specific source for Africa is, according to McGrath, Titian's (c. 1488-1576) *Portrait of Laura Dianti, Mistress of Alfonso d'Este, with a Black Page* (fig. 3). This painting could have been known to Boeckhorst through an engraving by Aegidius Sadeler II (1570-1629). Another source of inspiration could have been the print *Sibille Agrippine*, from a set of twelve engravings by Gilles Rousselet (1610-1686) and Abraham Bosse (c. 1601-1676) after Claude Vignon (1593-1670) that was published around 1635-1640 and copied by Pieter II de Jode (1606-1674) in Antwerp (fig. 4)[6].

Johann Boeckhorst was the second oldest of twelve children, born into a family which numbered amongst Münster's most highly respected citizens. The spelling of his name varies between 'Boichorst', 'Bockhorst', 'Boeckhorst', 'Bronckhorst' and 'Van Boeckhorst' in the Netherlands. Among artists he was known as 'Lange Jan' ('Tall John' due to his height).



Fig. 4 Abraham Bosse and Gilles Rousselet after Claude Vignon, *Sibille Agrippine*, etching and engraving, 35.9 x 21.7 cm., London, British Museum

He started painting when he was 22 years old, settling in Antwerp at around that time where he became a pupil of Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678). He worked with Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) from circa 1627-1632. He became a member of the Guild of St Luke in 1633/34 and in 1635 he worked with Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) on the decorations for the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*. His first recorded independent commissions date from the same year. In 1637 he made a trip to Genoa and Venice, where he admired the paintings by Titian, Tintoretto (1518-1594) and Veronese (1528-1588). After his return to Antwerp, he again worked with Rubens, now contributing a History of Hercules to the decorations for the Torre de la Parada. In 1639 Boeckhorst was documented as being in Rome and may not have returned to the Netherlands for as long as a decade. From 1651 to 1655 he designed illustrations for books, alongside painting. Since Boeckhorst rarely signed or dated his works, his paintings were often misattributed.

WWB

Notes

1 See M. Galen, *Johann Boeckhorst : Gemälde und Zeichnungen*, Hamburg 2012, pp. 126-136, cat. nos. 34-40.
2 Elisabeth McGrath (Warburg Institute) as well as Boeckhorst expert Maria Galen have confirmed the attribution on the basis of photographs in 2017.
3 E. McGrath, 'Sibyls, Sheba and Jan Boeckhorst's 'Parts of the World', in: *Florissant : bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis der Nederlanden (15de - 17de eeuw) : liber amicorum Carl Van de Velde*, Brussels 2005, pp. 359-366.
4 McGrath 2005, p. 366.
5 McGrath 2005, pp. 361-362.
6 E. McGrath, 'Jacob Jordaens and Moses's Ethiopian Wife', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 70 (2007), pp. 247-285, p. 273.

cat. no. 6

Pieter Claesz
Berchem near Antwerp, c.1597 – 1660 Haarlem

Still life with a Bread Roll, a Roemer and a lying Berkemeyer, a Plate of Olives, a Knife, Oysters with Pepper and Salt on a Pewter Dish atop a Table

Signed with monogram and dated lower left: PC 1642
oil on panel
37.1 x 51.3 cm.

Provenance:
Sale London, Christie's, London, 8 October 1976, lot 16
London, Alfred Brod Gallery, by 1977
United States, Mr. and Mrs. J. Seward Johnson
Sale New York, Sotheby's, 8 January 1981, lot 9
Sale New York, Christie's, 15 January 1985, lot 36. private collection

Literature:
Advertisement Brod Gallery, in: *Apollo* 105 (May 1977), p. 400, ill.
Advertisement Brod Gallery, in: *Die Weltkunst* 47 (June 1977), p. 1147, ill.
N.R.A. Vroom, *A modest message as intimated by the painters of the 'Monochrome Banketje'*, 2 vols., Schiedam 1980, 1, p. 155; 2, p. 51, no. 242, ill.
N.R.A. Vroom, *A modest message as intimated by the painters of the 'Monochrome Banketje'*, Nuremberg 1999 (vol. 3 of Vroom 1980), p. 63, fig. 51, p.81 (as Franchoys Elout)

Exhibited:
Maastricht, Pictura, European Fine Art Fair, May 1977 (Brod Gallery London)



The painting is made from one panel of oak wood, likely of Polish origin. In a 2018 restoration, a horizontal strip (ca. 2cm) on top from a former intervention, was removed. The original bevel of the oak panel is conserved on three sides (left, right and bottom), visible on the reverse side. A (19th century?) inscription reads *Paulus Creulz. Berger 1642*, which is not an indication of provenance, rather a misnomer.[1] Vroom's opinion that this is a work by Franchoys Elout (1589-1635) is easily discredited as this still life is unlike any others by Elout. Moreover, Elout died in September of 1635, seven years before this painting was done[2].

In the first half of the seventeenth century, Pieter Claesz was Haarlem's most renowned still life painter. He was born in Berchem, near Antwerp around 1597.[3] Little is known of his early years and artistic training. There is however a clear influence in his early works of Antwerp masters Osias Beert (c. 1580-1623) and Clara Peeters (c. 1587-after 1636). In 1620, a *Pieter Clasens* was mentioned as a master painter in the membership roll of the Antwerp Guild of St Luke.[4] Roughly a year later, he moved from the Southern Netherlands to the prosperous Haarlem. It was in Haarlem, in 1622, where his son Nicolaes Berchem (1622-1683), who would go on to become famous for his Italianate landscapes, was born.[5] Claesz's earliest known still life dates to 1621. This early work features fruit and a stoneware jug,[6] revealing his stylistic Antwerpian roots as well as the influence of the elder Haarlem still life painter, Floris van Dijck. This painting places Claesz in Haarlem in 1621. In the following period, he matured and developed his skills as an expert still life painter of food, tobacco and *vanitas*. Claesz limited his use of objects and colour to develop his own style of still life: the *monochrome banketje*. He masterfully rendered materials such as silver and gold, pewter, ceramic, glass and various different foods, which he illuminated with an invisible source of bright light. Inventories of 17th century Haarlem collections reveal Pieter Claesz as the most represented still life painter in the city.[7] His fellow citizen Willem Claesz Heda (1594-1680) followed his example and began to paint still lifes in 1628. Into the early 1630's the two competed closely as successful painters of still lifes. After a forty-year long career, Pieter Claesz died in 1660 at 63, leaving an oeuvre of roughly 260 still lifes.[8]

Small in size and simple in depiction: why we are so attracted by this warmly-lit still life?

In *Still life with a Bread Roll, a Roemer and a lying Berkemeyer, a Plate of Olives, a Knife, Oysters with Pepper and Salt on a Pewter Dish atop a Table*, Pieter Claesz paints a simple meal on the far right edge of a stone table.



Fig. 1 Pieter Claesz, *Still Life with Oysters, Herrings and Smoking Implements*, signed and dated 1624, oil on panel, 35.8 x 51.5 cm., private collection

Bright light flows in from the upper left and rests on all of the objects. The eye goes immediately to the big, crunchy bread roll on the left side of the table, illuminated by the warm mid-day light. On the right of the bread, an olive green *Roemer* filled with white wine, dominates the composition. The beaker and the stem's elaborate prunts reflect the gleaming light in a myriad of directions. Nearly hidden behind the roemer and the bread, two glossy olives in a tin bowl. To the right of the Roemer, a smaller cone-shaped glass, a *Berkemeyer*, lies on its side giving the composition a strong diagonal pull. The glass offers an illusion of spatial dimension, while the loose brush work is such that it almost disappears in the background. A large shiny plate with two oysters and a crumpled sheet from an almanac sits in front of the Berkemeyer so close to the right edge that the lip of the plate bleeds over the table's edge. The triangular paper holds salt and pepper which spills on to the tin plate. The mollusks, in their shiny mother-of pearl beds, are painted with fluid brushwork with white, grey and ochre as well as minimal pink and blue tones. The interiors of the shells are contrasted by the brown greys on the outsides. A shell in the right front corner of the table lies upside down and its rough exterior is acutely perceptible. Beside the plate, sits the knife to open the oysters. This table knife with a precious mother-of-pearl patterned handle is one of the artist's favourite motifs. It lies diagonally from the table's edge to the center of the composition. The knife cutting across the table creates a trompe l'oeil which compellingly invites the viewer to take part in this intimate meal. The knife guides the eye back to the center, where its blade reflects the light cast to the table from the roemer. The balance of Pieter Claesz's composition is characterized both by the carefully calculated arrangement of objects as well as the empty space of the table. A particular compositional accent in this still life is given to the triangle created by the knife, the Roemer's stem and its reflection on the table. Here the bright light highlights two splinters of oyster shell ennobling this otherwise insignificant motif at the center of the table.



Fig. 2 Hendrick van Balen and Jan Brueghel, *The Feast of Acheloüs*, oil on panel, 56 x 92 cm., Dayton (OH), Dayton Art Institute



Fig. 3 Frans Floris, *Banquet of the Gods*, signed and dated 1550, oil on panel, 150 x 198 cm., Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Of Pieter Claesz's complete work of 260 paintings, 38 still lifes include oysters. The earliest one is dated 1624[9] (fig. 1), and seems to be the first oyster still-life painted in Haarlem. Preceding Haarlem still-life painters such as Floris van Dijck (1574/75-1651), Nicolaes Gillis (c. 1592/93-in or after 1632) and Floris van Schooten (1585/88-1656) had not yet painted oysters. As such, it seems that Pieter Claesz was the one to introduce this delicacy of a subject matter to the repertoire of Haarlem still lifes. Why might Claesz have been interested in this special food? From antiquity through to the present day, oysters have been regarded a luxury, a culinary delight.[10] This is in part due their rich flavor as well as the widespread belief that of they are an aphrodisiac.[11] In this context, oysters and oyster meals became a favoured motif for artists in Southern Netherlands around 1600 in the compositions of the feasts for the Pagan gods, i.e. mythological figures from antiquity gathering around a laid table in a paradisiacal landscape. Hendrick van Balen (1575-1632) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) had been the authors of such paintings at the beginning of the 17th century (fig. 2), but it was Frans Floris (1517-1570) in *Feast of the Gods* (fig. 3) in 1550 who introduced oyster shells, likely for the first time in this theme.

A member of the prolific Francken family, Hieronymus Francken the younger (1578-1628), a versatile painter of many genres (art galleries and *Kunstkammern*, elegant feasting couples and allegorical paintings) was the artist behind the earliest known still lifes of meals, two widely copied works, presumably a dyad: *A rich man's meal* and *A poor man's meal*.[12] The small panel (dated *1600* or *1601*) considered to be the prototype of the first one with the meal of a rich man (fig. 4), features a table with drinking vessels and luxury foodstuffs. In the foreground sit the shells of an opened oyster, white bread, confectionary, Mediterranean fruits such an orange, lemons and olives. Through an open window in the background, we see a lavishly dressed couple to reinforce the denoted prosperity.[13] This type of background scene that created additional symbolic meaning was character of the first generation of Antwerp still life painters.[14]

A contemporary of Hieronymus Francken was Osias Beert, who enrolled as a master in the Antwerp guild in 1602. He was one of the most innovative and influential painters of Antwerp still lifes and is often considered the "pioneer of the genre".[15] He built upon the sixteenth century iconographical tradition of his predecessors such as Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575) and Joachim Beuckelaer (c. 1533-c. 1574). In his early still lifes Osias Beert depicted biblical scenes in the background. Take for example his still life of oysters and pastries (fig. 5), where he renders

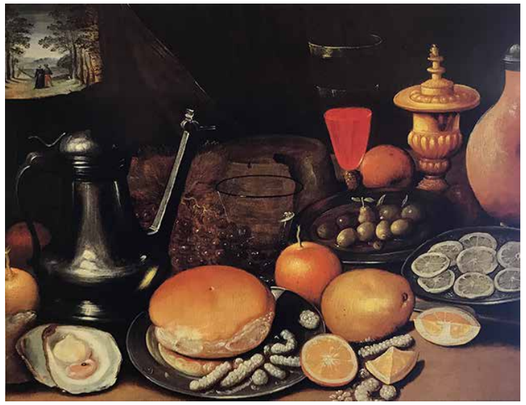


Fig. 4 Hieronymus Francken the Younger, *A Rich Man's Meal*, 1601, oil on panel, 34.5 x 44 cm., private collection



Fig. 5 Osias Beert, *Still Life with Oysters and Pastries, with Lazarus and the Rich Man*, c. 1605 -1610, oil on panel, 51 x 73 cm., England, private collection



Fig. 6 Osias Beert, *Still Life with Oysters, Wine and Delicacies*, c. 1610-1620, oil on panel, 53 x 73 cm., Washington, National Gallery of Art, Patrons' Permanent Fund

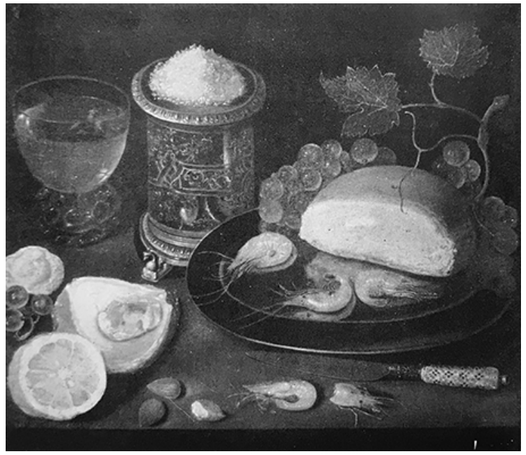


Fig. 7 Clara Peeters, *Still Life with Oysters, Bread and Shrimps*, 1608, oil on panel, 23.5 x 36.5 cm., private collection



Fig. 8 Pieter Claesz, *Still Life with Roemer, Oysters, Salt Cellar and Roll*, signed and dated 1642, oil on panel, 33 x 47.3 cm, private collection



Fig. 9 Pieter Claesz, *Still Life with Roemer, Berkemeyer, Oysters and Roll*, signed and dated 1643, oil on panel, 32 x 47 cm, private collection

the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus from Luke (Luke, 16, 19-31).[16] In his later work, he moved away from these biblical narratives, becoming a key figure in the development of the genuine still life. His technically excellent still lifes of transparent drinking vessels, goblets, tazzas of confections, bowls of sugared almonds and dried fruit and large pewter plates of oysters were immediately sought after by collectors (fig. 6).[17]

Art historians speculate that Pieter Claesz was an apprentice of Osias Beert or of Clara Peeters who was active in Antwerp between 1607 and roughly 1621. Clara Peeters had painted a still life of oysters as early as 1608 (fig. 7).[18] While it can not be proved that such relationships existed, Pieter Claesz's work reveals that both of these Antwerp painters had a major impact on him. Consider, Pieter Claesz's *toebackje* from 1624 (fig. 1). The features in this painting such as the way that the objects are displayed from an aerial view, the light flooding in, as well as the dark table that is cut off on both ends prove Beert's and Peeter's influence on him. Even in this early work, we can see Pieter Claesz's dedication to the coherence in the arrangement of the motifs which becomes a dominant trait in his art. In the *ontbijtje* dated 1642 here presented, we see the painter at the height of his mastery. Each object is impeccably placed within the composition. This painting belongs to a group of still lifes from the early 1640's (figs. 8, 9)[19] that is characterized by the artist's careful trimming of objects, ultimately culminating in a single free standing monumental Roemer. While these still lifes are titled *ontbijtjes* in contemporary written sources, they do not accurately represent a seventeenth century light meal. Pieter Claesz pays here particular attention to the oysters, the perfect subject to suit his preference for a colour palette of chromatic minimalism, as they are symbols of status and wealth. He chooses not a "modest message" [20] in his motifs and treatment of the paint, but rather he gives us the perfect expression of refined artistic reflection.

MBB

Notes

1 Pieter Claesz, who signed nearly all of his paintings just with his monogram, was therefore only known as the monogramist PC until the late 19th century. His true identity was rediscovered only in 1882/3 by Abraham Bredius and Sydney Colvin; see M. Brunner-Bulst, *Pieter Claesz : der Hauptmeister des Haarlemer Stillebens im 17. Jahrhundert : Kritischer* Œuvrekatalog, Lingen 2004, pp. 125-126. In 1988 a little tobacco still-life by Pieter Claesz with the unique signature *pieter Claessen A°* 1622 was discovered. This was the first indisputable confirmation of the identification proposed by Bredius and Colvin; cf. Brunner-Bulst 2004, cat. no. 4, pp. 12, 13 (colourplate), 155, 156, 352. P. Biesboer (ed.), *Pieter Claesz : Master of Haarlem Still Life*, exh. cat. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, Zürich, Kunsthaus Zürich, Washington (DC), National Gallery of Art 2004-2006, cat. no. 2. In 2018 another still-life with the signature *Pclaessen 1625* turned up; cf. M. Brunner-Bulst, in: J. Hillegers et al., *Salomon Lilian Old Masters 2018*, Amsterdam 2018, cat. no. 3, pp. 22.

2 See F.G. Meijer, 'Een nieuwe kijk op Franchoys Elaut (1589 – 1635)', in: *Oud Holland* 109 (1995), pp. 18-31; Brunner-Bulst 2004, pp. 167-169.

3 Two notarial acts of 29 September and 11 October 1640 record that Pieter Claesz was at that time 43 years old. In elder literature he was thought to be from Steinfurt (Westfalia), but this was a misunderstanding. He came from Berchem, as it is stated in the register of the Haarlem Municipal Orphanage, where his twin daughters were admitted several days after his death; see Brunner-Bulst 2004, pp. 134, 194 (note 185); P. Biesboer in: Haarlem/Zürich /Washington 2004-2006, p. 16; I. van Thiel-Strohman, in: N. Köhler (ed.), *Painting in Haarlem 1500 – 1850 : The collection of the Frans Hals Museum*, Ghent/Haarlem 2006, p. 124.

4 P. Biesboer in: Haarlem/Zürich/Washington 2004-2006, pp. 16, 137 (note 22).

5 In a notarial act from 9 June 1661 in Amsterdam (GAA, ONA, J. Hellerus 2488, fol. 555) Berchem is recorded as 39 years old; P. Biesboer, 'Nicolaes Pietersz. Berchem : Meister aus Haarlem", in: P. Biesboer et al., *Nicolaes Berchem : Im Licht Italiens*, exh. cat. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, Zürich, Kunsthaus Zürich, Schwerin, Staatliches Museum Schwerin 2006-2007, pp. 11, 160.

6 Private collection; see Brunner-Bulst 2004, cat. no. 1, pp. 9 (colour plate), 137, 138, 145, 146, 206; Haarlem/Zürich/Washington 2004-2006, cat. no. 1.

7 P. Biesboer, *Collections of Paintings in Haarlem 1572 – 1745* (*Documents for the history of collecting : Netherlandish Inventories* I), Los Angeles 2001; P. Biesboer in: Haarlem/Zürich/Washington 2004-2006, p. 25.

8 My catalogue raisonné published in 2004 includes 243 paintings. About 17 hitherto unknown paintings by the master have been discovered in the last 15 years.

9 Brunner-Bulst 2004, cat. no. 9.

10 See W. Richter, Auster, in: K. Ziegler (ed.), *Der Kleine Pauly : Lexikon der Antike*, Munich 1979, I, pp. 776-777.

11 See L. de Girolami Cheney, 'The Oyster in Dutch Genre Paintings: Moral or Erotic Symbolism', in: *Artibus et Historiae* 15/8 (1987), pp. 135-157.

12 F.G. Meijer, 'Meal Still Lifes in the Southern and Northern Netherlands: Reciprocal Inspiration?', in: Q. Buvelot et al., *Slow Food : Dutch and Flemish Meal Still Lifes 1600 – 1640*, exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis 2017, pp. 33, 34, fig. 19.

13 Sam Segal, *A Prosperous Past : The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands 1600 – 1700*, exh. cat. Delft, Museum Het Prinsenhof 1988, pp. 41-43, fig. 3, 4.

14 J.A. Emmens, 'Eins aber ist nötig' : Zu Inhalt und Bedeutung von Markt-und Küchenstücken des 16. Jahrhunderts', in: *Kunsthistorische Opstellen*, 2 vols., Amsterdam 1981, 2, pp. 189-221.

15 Meijer 2017, p. 34.

16 From about 1605-1610, panel, 51 x 73 cm, England, private collection; see The Hague 2017, p. 91, fig. 1d.

17 C. Rulkens, 'Osias Beert', in: The Hague 2017, pp. 88-93.

18 Meijer 2017, p. 35, fig. 22.

19 Brunner-Bulst 2004, cat. nos. 110, 115, pp. 269, 270.

20 So the title of N.R.A. Vroom's pioneering study published in 1980.



Detail of cat. no. 6

cat. no. 7

Pieter Codde
1599 – Amsterdam – 1678

A Painter in his Studio, Tuning a Lute

Signed and dated on the cross bar of the easel: PCodde 162[9?]
Oil on panel
41 x 54 cm.

Provenance:
Brussels, with art dealer Gaston Neumans, by whom sold to
Munich, collection Hermann Heinemann (d. 1920) and Sophie Heinemann née Alexander, 1912
Munich, collection Sophie Heinemann née Alexander, 1920, by whom sold to
Munich, Galerie Heinemann, 1928
Munich, collection Friedrich Heinrich Zinckgraf (Galerie am Lenbachplatz, formerly Heinemann), 1938
Dietramszell (art repository Kloster Dietramszell), Friedrich Heinrich Zinckgraf, 1942
Munich, Central Collecting Point, 1947, from where restituted by the allied authorities to
Munich, Galerie Zinckgraf, 1949
Gundelfingen, collection Eugen Zaiss and Erika Zaiss née Haas, thence by decent to the previous owners

Literature:
R. van Eijnden, A. van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw*, 4 vols, Haarlem 1816-1840, 1 (1816), p. 144
C.B. Playter, *Willem Duyster and Pieter Codde : the "Duystere Werelt" of Dutch genre painting, c. 1625-1635*, 2 vols., diss. Cambridge (MA), Harvard University 1972, 1, p. 91; 2, fig. 134
P. Torresan, 'Per una rivalutazione di Pieter Codde', in: *Antichità Viva* 14 (1975), pp. 12-23, p. 20, fig. 16
H.-J. Raupp, 'Musik im Atelier : Darstellungen musizierender Künstler in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts', in: *Oud Holland* 92 (1978), pp. 106-128, pp. 127-128, fig. 12
L.J. Deboer, *Martial Arts: military themes and imagery in Dutch art of the Golden Age*, diss. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan 1990, pp. 136-137, fig. 82
H. Buijs, in: Q. Buvelot, H. Buijs, *A choice collection : seventeenth-century Dutch paintings from the Frits Lugt collection*, exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis 2002, pp. 82-83, under cat. no. 10, fig. 10c (as Pieter Codde, circle of)
K. Kleinert, *Atelierdarstellungen in der niederländischen Genremalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts : realistisches Abbild oder glaubwürdiger Schein?*, Petersberg 2006, pp. 137-138, 141-142, 152, 196-197, cat. no. 8
J. Rosen, 'Codde not Brekelenkam: a case of mistaken identity', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 160 (2018), pp. 112-117, p. 116, fig. 7



The fourth child of Maria Jansdr and Jacob Pietersz Codde, an Amsterdam 'paalknecht' or clerk to merchants and shippers, Pieter Codde and his family lived in the 'Paalhuis' on the Nieuwebrug on the shore of the IJ.[1] Codde was first recorded as a painter in 1623, when he married 18 year old Marritge Aerents Schilt, daughter of the wealthy hat manufacturer and deputy sheriff Aerent Elbertsz Schilt. On 25 April 1624, their daughter Clara was baptized in the Oude Kerk. Like many other artists, Codde was still renting a house in the St. Anthonisbreestraat in 1628 at the latest, for following the deaths of both his father and his father-in-law he was able to buy his own house in 1630. In 1657 he purchased No. 385 Keizersgracht for 5000 guilders, where he lived until his death in 1678.

Codde was active in both artistic and literary circles. In 1627 the poet and playwright Elias Herckmans (c. 1596-1644) dedicated his tragedy *Tyrus* to the artist, inspired by Codde's now lost painting of the subject. In 1633 Codde's own poem of pastoral love 'Waerom vlucht ghy Millibe' was published in the volume of poetry *Hollands Nachtegaeltien*. The artist apparently had quite a temper, for on Pentecost, 1625, he is recorded as having thrown a jug on the head of his peer Willem Duyster (1599-1635), presumably his pupil. In 1635 Codde's only child, Clara, died, and the following year he and his wife separated. The inventory of Codde's possessions drawn up at the occasion, listing paintings by artists such as Frans Hals Jr. (1618-1669), Pieter de Molijn (1595-1661), Jan Porcellis (1584-1632), Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03-1670) and Pieter Claesz (1597/98-1660/61), has led some to believe that the artist spent time in Haarlem. However, no direct evidence for this hypothesis exists. Codde is known primarily as a painter of genre interiors with elegant figures and merry companies, or Guardroom scenes featuring soldiers in waiting rooms, the so-called 'kortegaardjes'.[2] In addition, he produced several history works and a considerable number of portraits. In 1637 he finished the so-called *Meagre Company*, now in the Rijksmuseum, an Amsterdam militia piece begun by Frans Hals (1582/83-1666) in 1633. He was particularly prolific during the 1620s and the 1630s, rarely signed after 1645, but remained active as a painter in the 1650s.

The present painting, a splendid, early example of a studio scene, has only recently been rediscovered. It was previously known only from a photo taken in Munich between 1912, when the painting was acquired from a Brussels art dealer, and 1929, when Cornelis Hofstede de Groot inspected the painting.[3] In addition to the newfound signature – a full signature 'PCodde 162[9?]' discovered on the easel's cross bar – the painting's recent restoration has brought about some notable changes, about which more below. The work depicts a painter in his wooden floored studio, seated in front of his easel, on which we see a blank canvas on a stretcher. Seated on a chair, with sheet music on a stool in front of him, the painter – who wears a dark artist's cloak over a green jacket, a rather large grey hat and house shoes – is tuning his lute, while glancing over his shoulder at the beholder. Behind the easel a number of frames, as well as square and octagonal panels, are propped up against the back wall. To the left of the painter we see a table covered with a heavy, dark red cloth. Leaning against it is a large bass viol, and on the floor a pile of books, the black lute case and a sheaf of papers, some of which seem to be prints, form a beautiful still life. As such, the scene is entirely fitting with other works by Codde from the late 1620s and early 1630s.

The theme of the artist in his studio was beloved among the Dutch painters of the Golden Age, Codde being among those who favoured it. In addition to the present work, at least two autograph works by Codde depict artists regarding the beholder while sitting behind an easel (figs. 1, 2) and several more are attributed to him. Moreover, Codde also painted pictures of studios in which art lovers are studying paintings, or artists are seen in contemplation, or in discussion with visitors.[4] For centuries attempts have been made to identify those artists depicted in



Fig. 1 Pieter Codde, *A Portrait of a Painter*, oil on panel, 30.5 x 25 cm., Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen



Fig. 2 Pieter Codde, *Smoking Painter in front of his Easel*, oil on panel, 32 x 25 cm., Stockholm, Hallwylska Museet



Fig. 3 Cornelis van Voorde after Pieter Codde, *Supposed Portrait of the Painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, 1752, pen in black, grey wash on paper, 23.6 x 21 cm., private collection



Fig. 4 Taco Hajo Jelgersma after Pieter Codde, *Supposed Portrait of the Painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, c. 1752, watercolour, 18 x 15.5 c,m., Haarlem, Noord Hollands Archief

studio scenes as real historical individuals, with reference to Codde's studio scenes too. The painter in the Rotterdam work (fig. 1), for example, was long thought to be Harmen Hals (1611-1669), the son of Frans Hals (1582/83-1666).[5] In this respect the history of the present work is every bit as noteworthy. In 1752 the Haarlem draughtsman Cornelis van Noorde (1731-1795) made a pen and wash drawing after the painter in our work, the caption identifying this man as the Leiden painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam (1622/3-after 1669) (fig. 3). In the right upper corner Van Noorde added a palette (absent in the painting), no doubt to emphasise the sitter's identity as an artist. Van Noorde doubtlessly made his drawing while sitting in front of the present painting, most probably in conjunction with his teacher, the versatile artist Taco Hajo Jelgersma (1702-1795). This, at least, is to be gathered from a watercolour by the latter that also depicts our painter (fig. 4). Jelgersma's drawing differs from Van Noorde's drawing in several details, such as the lute that he apparently removed (of which traces are still visible) and the easel with the empty canvas that he drew into the picture plane, both changes adding to the effect that the sitter is actually painting. Jelgersma's watercolour is neither signed nor dated, yet bears an inscription on the reverse reading 'Q: Brekelenkamp after the painting of himself by T. Jelgersma'.[6] To summarize so far: half way through the eighteenth century, the present painting was with (or in the possession of?) Taco Hajo Jelgersma in Haarlem, and at that point Jelgersma and his student Van Voorde made copy drawings after the sitter, erroneously presuming that the work was painted by the Leiden painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam (which it is clearly not; it is a signed and dated work by Codde), who had supposedly depicted himself as the painter in the picture.

Elaborately described by Jochai Rosen in a recent article in *The Burlington Magazine*, Jelgersma's drawing ended up in the collection of the artist biographer Adriaan van der Willigen (1766-1841).[7] While preparing the first volume of his *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst*, an important compilation of artists' biographies published in 1815, Van der Willigen must have approached the engraver Jacob Ernst Marcus (1774-1826), and requested him to engrave a number of artist portraits to enliven his book. Van der Willigen clearly provided Marcus with the drawing by Jelgersma that he owned (and which he believed to depict Brekelenkam), for on the page facing page 144 of Van der Willigens' book, we find an engraving by Marcus depicting our painter, in the company of three other artists (fig. 5). As the text at the top of page

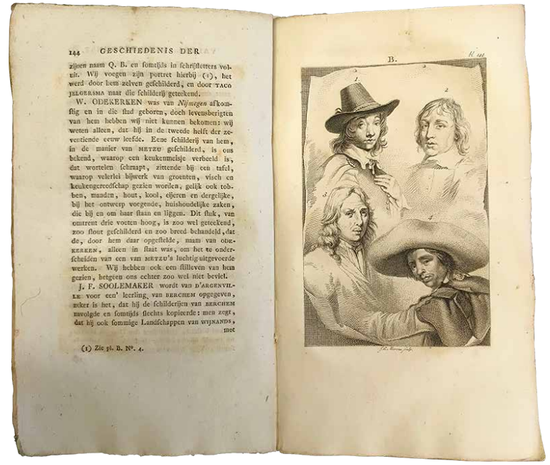


Fig. 5 Jacob Ernst Marcus, *Portraits of the painters Cornelis Visscher, Jan de Visscher, Richard Brakenburgh and Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, etching, in: Roelof van Eynden, Adriaan van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw*, vol. 1, Haarlem 1815, opposite p. 144



Fig. 6 Photo of cat. no. 7, taken c. 1912-1929

144 reads 'We hereby affix his [Brekelenkam's] portrait, it was painted by himself, and drawn by Taco Jelgersma after that painting.' This erroneous identification, then, persisted well into the twentieth century[8]

If the identification of the painter in the present picture as Van Brekelenkam was flawed, the question remains if Codde could have depicted another colleague, or possibly even himself. Current art historical research tends to be critical towards all too literal interpretations of studio scenes and the identification of specific artists in the figures portrayed in these paintings.[9] However, some studio scenes undeniably depict figures in which we recognise the features of certain painters that are known to us through other sources. In other cases, alternative kinds of evidence – such as typical paintings visible *in* the painting, or recognisable studio props used by a specific painter – justify an identification. In his afore mentioned article, Jochai Rosen has recently argued that Pieter Codde depicted not Van Brekelenkam, but himself in the present work. At the time of the article's publication in February 2018, the present work's whereabouts were still unknown, and the only material available to Rosen was the black and white photo taken in Munich between 1912 and 1929 (fig. 6). In that photo (N.B. the colour photos shown here, taken after the recent rediscovery of the painting, before and during its restoration in 2018, resemble the black and white photo completely, as nothing had been done to the painting since that photo was taken) one sees, amongst others, a landscape with cows in the background, and a scene depicted on the stretched canvas on the easel (figs. 7, 8). Based on this visual information Rosen argues that the painting on the easel is a typical *Codde-esque* 'Cortegaerdje', or a guardroom scene, which he rightly compares to a similar painting by Codde in Crakow, signed and dated 1628.[10] Following this analysis – i.e. the painting on the easel is by Codde – Rosen consequently identifies



Fig. 7 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the painting on the back wall



Fig. 8 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the stretched canvas on the easel

the painter as Codde himself. This would seem to be an agreeable hypothesis, were it not that the painting's appearance has undergone a rather significant change during its recent restoration. When taking off the varnish (a standard procedure in the restoration process, for which a very light solvent is used, which cannot affect the original paint layers), the two paintings – the *Guardroom Scene* on the stretched canvas and the *Landscape with Cows* on the far wall – dissolved with it (figs. 9, 10).[11] They must have therefore been later additions, not painted by Codde



Fig. 9 Cat. no. 7 during restoration, detail of the stretched canvas on the easel



Fig. 10 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the painting on the back wall

himself but by someone of a later period. At any rate, the disappearance of the *Guardroom Scene* in particular from the stretched canvas on the easel necessarily affects the identification of the painter as Codde himself, as proposed by Rosen. Although we can't completely rule out the possibility that the painter is *not* Codde, the painting on the easel was the essential identifying key, and with its disappearance there are no visual leads anymore to support the identification. Clearly, the fact that Codde painted the work in itself does not qualify as a valid argument as to the sitter's identity. After all, Codde also painted other artists in their studios (e.g. figs. 1, 2), and as they all have different appearances, they cannot all depict the artist.

Although we cannot be sure about when exactly the painting was so substantially altered, and the reasons underlying it, there is an interesting observation to be made. When re-examining the drawings by Van Voorde en Jelgersma, and comparing them to our painting before the recent restoration, we realise that the artist's large grey hat seen in the drawings was later considerably reduced, before it was brought back to its original shape during the recent restoration (fig. 11). This overpainting must have taken place between 1752 – the date of Van Noorde's and Jelgersma's drawings – and at the latest 1929, the ultimate dating for the black and white photo. On this basis, we might reasonably assume that this significant alteration coincided with the other huge alterations: the painting-in of the empty canvas and the addition of the landscape with cows. In retrospect this latter 'painting' actually looked slightly anachronistic, as it seemed to imitate a Paulus Potter-like landscape of the 1640s, rather than a landscape of the 1620s.[12] Why, one wonders, were these alterations brought about? Arguably they were at least in part painted for aesthetic reasons. For instance, there seems to have been no other reason to reduce the size of the large grey hat, other than that the owner at that time felt that it was somewhat monstrous. Likewise, the landscape with cows might have been added out of a sense of *horror vacui*, to fill the empty wall. As for the guardroom scene, it might have been painted in because the empty canvas (about which more below) was not understood, or considered unsatisfactory. Also, one should not exclude the possibility that it was done to strengthen the attribution to Pieter Codde (after all the signature and dating of the work were overlooked for centuries), and quite possibly – as the choice of subject matter was so 'spot on' – to reinforce the idea that Codde had depicted himself.

What are we to make, in the final analysis, of the painting's iconography?



Fig. 11 Cat. no. 7 during restoration, detail of the reappearance of the original large hat



Fig. 12 Isaac Jouderville, *Painter in his Studio Playing a Violin*, oil on panel, 47.4 x 63 cm., whereabouts unknown

Brought back to its authentic state through the removal of the later additions, we can now again appreciate Codde's original intentions, namely the depiction of a painter in his studio, tuning his lute in front of an empty canvas. The presence of musical instruments in scenes involving artists is very common. Not only were *Musica* and *Pictura* considered kindred arts within the realm of the five senses, music could stimulate the creative impulse and carried a certain social standing.[13] As such, we find musical instruments in many studio scenes, sometimes standing or lying around, but also often being played upon, either by the painter or by his model.[14] The empty canvas, too, features in a significant number of studio scenes, sometimes indeed in combination with the painter playing an instrument (fig. 11).[15] Clearly, this combination alludes above all to the finding of inspiration – the most essential part of the artistic process – right in front of the empty canvas, the *tabula rasa*. In this way, these paintings are the visual counterparts of such topical anecdotes as the one about the painter Gerard de Lairesse (1640-1711), as told by Arnold Houbraken in his *groote schouburgh*.[16] Upon Lairesse's arrival in Amsterdam, the art dealer Gerrit Uylenburgh put the painter in front of an empty canvas ('een ledigen doek'). Asked when he wanted to start, Lairesse countered by asking 'what would you want me to paint?' The subject was to be of the artist's choice, and Uylenburgh gave him painting materials. Then Lairesse sat down, pulled out a violin from underneath his mantle and played a little tune on it, after which he took his chalk and drew in one go a whole stable with beasts, Joseph, Mary and her Child. He then played some more, and before the afternoon had finished he had painted nearly the whole scene, to the amazement of all. Codde's present *Painter in his Studio* is likewise an allusion to artistic inspiration and creativity, a candid opportunity for the beholder to witness this mysterious process, and as such represents an ode to the art of painting itself.

JH

Notes

1 For biographical references, see C.M. Dozy, 'Pieter Codde : de schilder en de dichter', in: *Oud Holland* 2 (1884), pp. 34-67; A. Bredius, 'Iets over Pieter Codde en Willem Duyster', in: *Oud Holland* 6 (1888), pp. 187-195; P. Brandt, 'Notities over het leven en werk van den Amsterdamschen schilder Pieter Codde', in: *Historia : maandschrift voor geschiedenis en kunstgeschiedenis* 12 (1947), pp. 27-37; N. van de Kamp, in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols, New York 1996, 7, pp. 510-511. For Codde's activities as a history painter, see E.J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals : History Painting in Amsterdam 1630-1650*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2014, pp. 297-310.

2 See especially J. Rosen, *Soldiers at leisure : the guardroom scene in Dutch genre painting of the Golden Age*, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 50-55.

3 The painting was bought by Hermann and Sophie Heinemann from the Brussels art dealer Gaston Neumans on 27 December 1912. In August 1929 Cornelis Hofstede de Groot wrote an expertise on the painting after first-hand inspection. The inventory card of the Heinemann firm (Neuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Galerie Heinemann archive, inv. card no. 18720, *recto*) states that an 18 x 24 cm. photo was taken by 'Kaufmann'. This is in all probability the photo now still at the RKD in The Hague, no doubt donated by Hofstede de Groot, who presumably received the photo during his inspection See also RKD, Hofstede de Groot fiche no. 1667147.

4 See Kleinert 2006, cat. nos 6-9. For more possible attributions of studio scenes to Codde, and especially the Rotterdam work (here fig. 1), see F. Lammertse, *Dutch genre paintings of the 17th century : collection of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen*, Rotterdam 1998, cat. no. 11, pp. 38-40; H. Buijs, in: The Hague 2002, cat. no. 10.

5 See Lammertse 1998, cat. no. 11.

6 'Q: Brekelenkamp / na het schilderij / van hemzelven / Door T. Jelgersma'. See Rosen 2018, p. 113.

7 Rosen 2018, p. 114.

8 See H. van Hall, *Portraits of Dutch painters and other artists of the Low Countries*, Amsterdam 1963, p. 47, no. 1. See also Rosen 2018, pp. 115-116.

9 See Kleinert 2006, pp. 133-163 (ch. 6, 'Zum Realitätsgehalt der Atelierdarstellungen'), esp. pp. 151-159 (6.2, 'Atelierdarstellungen als einer Form des Selbstporträts?).

10 Rosen 2018, pp. 216-217, fig. 9, Pieter Codde, *Guardroom Scene*, 1628, panel, 41 x 54 cm., Cracow, Wrawel Castle.

11 Restoration carried out by Lara van Wassenaer, Atelier Van Wassenaer, Amsterdam 2018 (www.ateliervanwassenaer.nl). The old and strongly fluorescing varnish, of a natural resin kind (*damar* most probably), has been removed easily with an ethanol:isooctane 2:1 solution. This removed the varnish as well as the discoloured retouches simultaneously. The original paint layer was, and is, very stable and does not dissolve in the tested and used solvent mixture. I thank Lara van Wassenaer for her informed explanation regarding the procedure followed.

12 This anachronism was also remarked upon by Playter 1972, p. 91 ''a landscape with cows, remarkably like compositions Paulus Potter will effect in the later 1640s.'

13 See on this subject Raupp 1978.

14 The examples are numerous. See, for instance, Kleinert 2006, pp. 86-87 (5.5.4. 'Musikinstrumente') and cat. nos. 3-5, 8 (the present work), 11-16, 19, 25, 28, 32, 36, 39, 42-44, 46-48, 51, 56, 67- 73.

15 Kleinert 2006, cat. nos. 8 (the present work), 24, 32, 36, 39, 42, 64.

16 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718-1721, 3 (1721), pp. 110-111.

cat. no.8

Willem Drost
Amsterdam 1633 – 1659 Venice

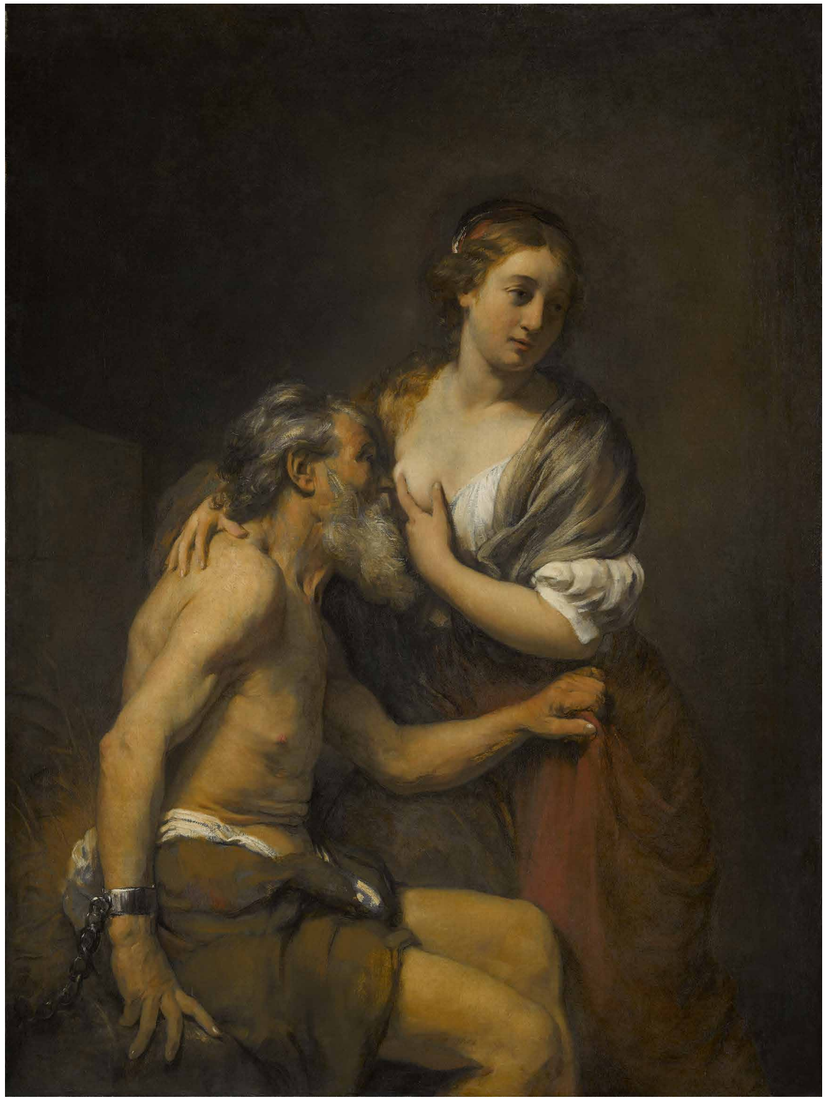
Cimon and Pero (Caritas Romana)

Oil on canvas
156.5 x 117.5 cm.

Provenance:
Private collection, for several generations

Literature:
Unpublished

Until fairly recently there has been a great deal of confusion about Willem Drost, one of Rembrandt's (1606-1669) most talented pupils.[1] In his *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* of 1721, the artist's biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) failed to produce anything more on Drost – not even his first name – other than his being '... a pupil of Rembrandt, of whom I have seen a *Preaching of St John*, that was painted and drawn neatly. He has been in Rome for a long time, where he had dealings with Carl Loth and Johan van der Meer.'[2] In the centuries to follow, little was added to that information. In 1906 Alfred von Wurzbach makes foggy mention of a 'Jacob van Drost or Van Dorste, also called Cornelis van D., painter from Leiden.'[3] A few years later, in 1913, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot caused even more confusion when he created – in addition to the Rembrandt pupil – a second artist named Drost, the painter active in Italy.[4] The two supposed Drosts – the Dutch and the Italian – were only 'merged' in 1939 by Wilhelm Valentiner.[5] Although the appreciation of Drost in art historical literature rose to unprecedented heights during the second half of the twentieth century, – to him were attributed masterpieces such as *The Polish Rider* in the Frick Collection, *Saul and David* in the Mauritshuis and the *Denial of St Peter* in the Rijksmuseum, all three currently back in Rembrandt's name – it was only in 1992 that Sebastien Dudok van Heel identified the painter as the eighth and last child of the bookbinder, book seller and school teacher Jan Barentsz (1587-1639) from Antwerp, and his Amsterdam born wife Mary Claesdr (1591- after April 1656).[6]



Drost was baptised in the Amsterdam Nieuwe Kerk on 19 April 1633. When his father died in 1639 the given address was Egelantiersstraat, in the 'Kokermaker'. As his elder brother Claes was an ebony worker, it has been suggested that Drost's apprenticeship with Rembrandt was furnished through the contacts with the ebony workers and frame makers Herman Doomer (he and his wife were portrayed by Rembrandt) and his painter son Lambert Doomer (1620-1700), who was at least a follower of Rembrandt, possibly his student. Drost's apprenticeship with Rembrandt is mostly dated to the period c. 1648-1652. Mainly on stylistic grounds, Drost expert Jonathan Bikker has suggested that a period of study with Rembrandt's former pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) might have preceded this, or that Van Hoogstraten might have taken Drost under his wing while the latter was still in Rembrandt's studio.[7]

In Rembrandt's studio Drost absorbed the master's style of those years: monumental, often single figure works in medium to large format, painted with a broad handling of the brush. Certainly *Rembrandtesque*, he developed his own virtuoso vocabulary, which was more idealising, with emphasis on different surface textures and a selective use of intense local colours. From the surviving oeuvre it appears that Drost – in conjunction with his master – deliberately based himself on earlier Italian (mostly Venetian) examples, which were supposedly available to him in various Amsterdam collections, and that he could alternate effortlessly between a rough and a smooth style.[8] Most of the 24 accepted paintings from the Amsterdam period are single figure works, with only three depicting two figures. In addition to five history pieces, the group consists of twelve genre works and seven portraits, including one self portrait.[9] A painted *Portrait of a Woman* is signed and dated 1653, an indication that he was an independent master at that point. Another three works, Drost's absolute masterpiece, the *Bathseba* in the Louvre, the splendid *Man with a Plumed Red Beret* and the sophisticated *Portrait of a Woman*, are all dated 1654.[10]

Soon after his apprenticeship Drost must have travelled down south, for a Venetian inventory from 1655 mentions a painting by 'Gugliemo Trost da Ansredann, della scola di Raimbrant'.[11] A solid indication for dating Drost's arrival in Italy, it is also the only documented contemporary reference to his apprenticeship with Rembrandt during the artist's life. In Italy Drost befriended the German painter Johann Carl Loth (1632-1698). Did the two artists, as Houbraken states, spend time in Rome? Drost's name does not appear in any Roman archive, but he is mentioned in several Venetian documents and inventories. Still, the possibility of a short Roman sojourn should not be dismissed. Two of Loth's early biographers confirm his stay in that city, where he studied Caravaggio and antique sculpture.[12] In Venice the two peers soon developed a Neo-Caravaggesque *tenebrist* style, ultimately based on the example of Jusepe de Ribera (1588-1652), whose raw and violent subject matter, however, was never adopted by Drost.[13] Working closely together the two artists chose the same subjects, borrowed each other's compositions, and used the same models. Drost lived in the Calle Perdon, in the house of a certain Cornelis van Baerle, a Netherlandish patron.[14] It was also from his house that Drost, after a four-month illness, was taken to his burial on 25 February 1659, at the age of only 25.[15] Until recently, fifteen paintings from Drost's Italian period were accepted.[16] A spectacular, previously unrecorded *Flora*, offered for sale in New York in January 2017 and doubtlessly dating from the artist's Venetian period, brought this number to sixteen.[17] While forteen of these sixteen works are single figure busts, inventories do mention plural figure works from this period of Drost's career.

It is a small miracle that the present painting – unknown until now, yet by far Drost's largest work (155 x 117 cm.), its width corresponding with the length of his second largest paintings[18] – surfaced so shortly after the discovery of the abovementioned *Flora*. A greatly ambitious work, it depicts the well-known story recounted by Valerius Maximus (active 14-37 AD) in the fifth book of his *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri IX* (*Nine Books of Memorable Acts and Sayings*). In the chapter on *pietas in parentes* (filial piety), Valerius recounts the story of the elderly Cimon who is imprisoned and condemned to starve. He is, however, allowed to receive visits from his daughter Pero, who secretly suckles her father, thereby keeping him alive. Pero's deceit is discovered, but her devotion persuades the authorities to grant her father his freedom.[19] A perfect *exemplum* of filial piety, Valerius frames the narrative as if he were describing a painting, and then proceeds to laud the power of the art of painting:

'People stop in amazement and cannot take their eyes off this scene when they see the painting of it; as they marvel at what is before them the situation of that event long ago is recreated for them. In those mute figures they feel they are looking on real and living bodies.'[20]

Such a description, which elaborates on the extraordinary abilities of the art of painting to bring life to situations or stories long gone, must have challenged artists even further to depict this voyeuristic and arousing yet pious subject matter, which would have found a warm reception amongst a public of learned (male) art lovers. Tellingly, the Dutch humanist and art theorist Franciscus Junius (1591-1671) recommended it as a pre-eminent subject, because of its piety inducing qualities.[21] Drost, who was no doubt well aware of Valerius' account and Junius' recommendation, created a painting full of atmosphere and suspense, yet retaining a distinct monumentality. The greybeard Cimon, half naked, is seated on a bed of hay in his dark, damp cell. Chained by his right wrist (Drost's ability in rendering metal and its reflection making this an outstanding detail), he grasps his daughter's skirt with his left hand, accurately suggesting his dread anticipation and consequent relief. Pero, breastfeeding her father while placing her right hand on his shoulder, tensely looks over her shoulder, fearful of discovery. Painted with a warm palette, Cimon's skin tone ranges from near-tangerine to pale yellows and grey-greens, and is applied with a broad painterly plasticity which, without becoming coarse or depicting numerous wrinkles, does justice to his old age. His brown rags, enlivened with beautiful touches of grey and red paint, showcase the same *Rembrandtesque* quality. Pero's skin, on the other hand, appears smooth and young, in keeping with her idealised, oval face. This contrast of age with youth, emphasised in the differences in skin texture and body shape, seems to have preoccupied Drost.[22] One comes across it in almost all of his double figure works, both in works of his Amsterdam period such as *The Prophetess Anna Instructing a Child (Samuel?)* in the Hermitage (fig. 1) and in such Venetian works as *Mercury and Argus* in Dresden (fig. 2).[23]



Fig. 1 Willem Drost, *The Prophetess Anna Instructing a Child (Samuel?)*, oil on canvas, 117 x 89 cm., St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum

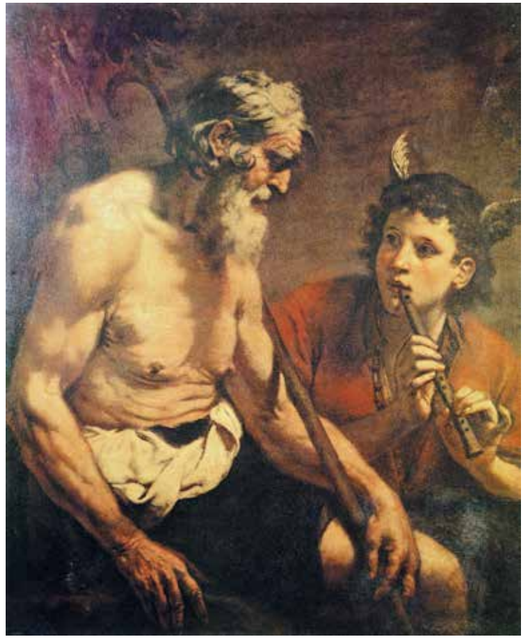


Fig. 2 Willem Drost, *Mercury and Argus*, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 98.5 cm., Dresden, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister

Following Drost's migration, the question arises if the painter executed the present work in Amsterdam or in Venice. A few observations can be made in relation to the northern situation. The theme boasted a considerable pictorial tradition, both in painting and print. In the Southern Netherlands Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) showed great interest in it, as is testified by no less than seven paintings and one drawing of the subject by his hand.[24] Moreover, prints after his works ensured widespread knowledge of his compositions. In the north the theme was popular among the Utrecht masters: Abraham (1561-1651) and Hendrick Bloemaert (1601-1672), Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638), Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-1629), Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656) and Dirck van Baburen (1592/93-1624) all produced paintings depicting Cimon and Pero. In Amsterdam Rembrandt and his circle also took up the subject with enthusiasm: we come across it in two paintings by Barent Fabritius (1624-1673) and one by Cornelis Bisschop (1630-1674), both datable to the early 1650s.[25] Rembrandt himself appears to have made several drawings of the subject. Two prints by Bernard Picart (1673-177) mention Rembrandt as the draughtsman, while another presumable Rembrandt drawing is known through a copy.[26] The Hamburger Kunsthalle holds a drawing by or after Drost's alleged first teacher Samuel van Hoogstraten, which shows Pero in a prison setting, kneeling and drawing close towards her father to suckle him (fig. 3).[27] Both stylistically and on the basis of watermarks, the drawing can be dated towards the end of the 1640s, in the period therefore when Drost was presumably studying with Van Hoogstraten, or got to meet him in Rembrandt's studio. Compositionally related to the Hamburg sheet is an anonymous Rembrandt School drawing in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett, which shows Cimon as on older, fragile man (fig. 4).[28] Another drawing, kept in the Art Institute of Chicago, was once assigned to Govert Flinck (1615-1660), but listed as anonymous



Fig. 3 Samuel van Hoogstraten (copy after?), *Cimon and Pero*, pen in brown, brown wash on paper, 20.1 x 19 cm., Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle



Fig. 4 Rembrandt School,*Cimon and Pero*, pen and brown ink over black chalk on paper, 15.2 x 11.7 cm., Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett



Fig. 5 Rembrandt School, *Cimon and Pero*, Pen and brown ink on paper, 12.3 x 9.1 cm., Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago



Fig. 6 Attributed to or after Willem Drost, *Cimon and Pero*, brown pen and wash on paper, 19.5 x 20.6 cm., Pittsburgh, Carnegie Museum of Art

by Werner Sumowski (fig. 5).[29] The figure of Cimon in this drawing in particular shows a remarkable resemblance with the present Cimon, both compositionally and in details such as the beard. Did Drost have access to these paintings and drawings? A drawing of special relevance here is kept in Pittsburgh (fig. 6). Sumowski considers this drawing, of which the Rijksmuseum holds a slightly weaker version, to be a copy after a lost Rembrandt original from around 1655.[30] The Amsterdam sheet, however, was dated to the later 1640s by Max Henkel, while Peter Schatborn tentatively attributed it to Willem Drost (or a copyist after Drost) in 1985.[31] The Pittsburgh/Amsterdam composition loosely unites the arched prison setting and typical pose of Pero as seen in the Hamburg drawing with the composition in the Berlin sheet and the figure of Cimon as seen in the Chicago and Berlin drawings. What is more, the Pittsburgh/Amsterdam composition bears a direct connection with the present painting: when viewed in reverse the grouping of father and daughter shows a striking correspondence with the present composition (thus reinforcing Schatborn's proposed connection with Drost), most conspicuously in the pose of Cimon, whose chained arm is stretched down by his side, while grasping his daughter's skirt with his other hand (figs. 7, 8). An apparent detail, this specific pose is unique in the theme's pictorial tradition, and unmistakeably derived from the so-called '*Borghese Fisherman*' in the Louvre (fig. 9). After its excavation in Rome in 1594, this statue quickly became an object of great interest



Fig. 7 Detail of fig. 6, in reverse



Fig. 8 cat. no. 8



Fig. 9 *Borghese Fisherman* (a.k.a. 'The Dying Seneca'), Roman second century AD copy after a Greek original, black marble and alabaster, Paris, Musée du Louvre

to artists and connoisseurs, being recorded in the Borghese collection as early as 1613. Known at the time as the '*Dying Seneca*', it was thought to represent the stoic suicide of the Roman philosopher. A fine *exemplum* of Roman moral virtue, Seneca's famous pose was thus conveniently fitting to the moral context of the *Caritas Romana*, and its quotation by Drost in the present painting, and by the Pittsburgh draughtsman (or the draughtsman of a presumed original, Drost? Or Rembrandt?) might well be seen within this context.

All in all, these Rembrandt School drawings form a fertile context for the present painting, whose composition was preceded by the Pittsburgh/Amsterdam composition that included the 'Dying Seneca' pose. The source for this pose might have been the print after Rubens's famous *Dying Seneca* by Cornelis Galle (1576-1650), but given the statue's renown, other routes seem possible as well. Rubens possibly also inspired the grouping of the figures in the present painting. The print after his *Cimon and Pero* by Willem Panneels (c. 1600-1634) shows, in reverse, a highly comparable composition, notably in the figure of Pero (fig. 10). A final, although hypothetical, example for Drost might have been a *Cimon and Pero* by Bartolomeo Manfredi (1582-1622). In the 1692 inventory of the Amsterdam silk merchant Abraham Peronneau the first painting listed is '1. Daer de doghter de vader de borst geeft, van Manfredo f 250' ('as the daughter breastfeeds the father, by Manfredo f 250').[32] Manfredi expert Nicole Hartje tentatively identifies this work with Manfredi's *Cimon and Pero* now in Florence (fig. 11), and suggests linking it to the collection of the Amsterdam merchant Balthasar Coymans (1589-1692) who possessed a number of paintings by Manfredi, as described (unfortunately without naming subjects) by the painter Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688), who was living in Amsterdam between 1637-1645.[33] Was the Uffizi painting indeed in Amsterdam before 1645? At least the compositional resemblance between Drost's figures and those of Manfredi is significant.

Comparing the present painting with Drost's works of the Amsterdam period, one can point to certain similarities between Pero's oval shaped face and those of Drost's Louvre *Bathseba*, or his *Young Woman in a Brocade Gown* in the Wallace Collection. However, the strongest connection exists with the aforementioned *Prophetess Anna Instructing a Child (Samuel?)* in the Hermitage (fig. 1). These works have been thought out the same way: both feature a triangular composition with a



Fig. 10 Willem Panneels after Peter Paul Rubens, *Cimon and Pero*, engraving, 14.3 x 9.5 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (in reverse)



Fig. 11 Bartolomeo Manfredi, *Cimon and Pero*, c. 1615-1616, oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm., Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi





Fig. 12, 13 Details of cat. no. 8, Cimon's hands



Fig. 14 Detail of fig. 1, the prophetess Anna's left hand

female figure to the right, placing her right hand on the shoulder of the figure opposite, who is positioned lower; both emphasize the contrast in age; and both share a strong affinity in their specific use of red, green, brown and white against a dark olive background. Comparing telling details such as hands, one observes a similar technique to suggest nails with touches of white paint. Sometimes individual fingers are demarcated or accentuated with a thin black line, seen for example in both Cimon's hands, and in Anna's left hand, figs. 12, 13, 14), and which can also be seen in other Amsterdam works, such as the Kassel *Standing Man in Armour* (fig. 15). Overall, the present work differs in its slightly looser brushwork, but this said we should not forget its significantly larger measurements.

Drost's Dutch and Italian periods as an independent master span together a mere seven years, broken only by the time it took to travel down south. The stylistic differences, however, are said to be substantial. Introducing the Italian period, Bikker states that 'Drost developed a neo-Caravaggesque style in Italy that hardly resembled his earlier work.'[34] How would the present painting fit within this later period? The obvious picture to compare it to is the *Mercury and Argus* in Dresden (fig. 2). Both are large works, depicting a semi-nude, old man sitting in a comparable pose and facing towards the right, where a younger figure balances the composition. Both men (different models) have wrinkled chests and grey beards. However, Argus is rendered with a coarser brush and more impasto than our Cimon. His hands show thick veins (fig. 16) that are absent from the swift, almost schematic hands in our painting. Whereas Cimon's beard is painted with layers of tan, greys and whites, suggesting individual tufts of hair, Argus' beard seems patchier. Meanwhile the features of Mercury are accentuated with a thin black outline, visible around his eyes and mouth, as well as around his fingers. We have seen this specific technique in both Amsterdam works and the present painting, but here it is applied abundantly, a feature unique to Drost's Italian period.[35]

Drost's *Mercury and Argus* displays an affinity to several early works by his peer Johann Carl Loth. Bikker lists a group of seven paintings by



Fig. 15 Willem Drost, *Standing Man in Armour*, oil on canvas, 116 x 94.5 cm., Kassel, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister, detail



Fig. 16 Detail of Argus' right hand

Loth that depict the same old man who modelled as Drost's Argus. Tellingly, this model was employed at least three more times by Drost as well.[36] Within this group, Loth's *Apollo and Pan* (fig. 17) is doubtlessly the closest to Drost, as it virtually repeats (in reverse) the *Mercury and Argus*. Remarkably, Loth choose to depict Pan in the same 'Seneca' pose that Drost chose for the present Cimon. Given the present context, one wonders if this is merely coincidental.[37] Although the Pittsburgh and Amsterdam drawings discussed above firmly establish the origins of the present composition in Amsterdam, we might speculate that Drost executed the concept after arriving in Italy, in a style more related to the Amsterdam manner than was previously known of him. If this is the case, Drost might have been spurred to do so after a visit to Rome, where, according to Houbraken and Loth's earliest biographers, Drost and Loth spent time together, the latter copying after antique sculpture. Bikker already demonstrated that Loth had knowledge of Roman works by Caravaggio (1571-1610) and Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) prior to 1659.[38] If the early biographers inform us well and the two artists were indeed in Rome, they might have copied the 'Borghese Fisherman' *in situ*. Following this line of thought, Drost might have seen Manfredi's *Cimon and Pero* there as well (fig. 11). After all, the Amsterdam provenance suggested by Hartje is based on an educated guess, rather than on documented facts. Unfortunately, without real evidence, such hypotheses remain very much within the domain of speculation. One last angle of approach that could be beneficial is the recognition of our models in either Amsterdam or Venetian works by Drost and/or Loth. As established, the two painters employed the same models on several occasions.[39] In this respect, one model that comes to mind is a man with a greying black beard, who was used by Loth in many paintings, including a *Cimon and Pero* (fig. 18).[40] Although his features superficially resemble those of our Cimon, this figure is significantly more muscled and fierce, both bodily and facially, than the figure in our picture. Moreover, Loth's career lasted decades after Drost had died, and it is unclear when he executed these paintings. A female model worth considering acts as Pomona in a *Vertumnus and Pomona* by Drost that is unfortunately only known through a 1669 dated copy drawing (fig. 19).[41] Although this model does to a certain degree resemble our Pero, judgement remains difficult in the absence of the painting.



Fig. 17 Johann Carl Loth, *Apollo and Pan*, c. 1655/59, oil on canvas, 115 x 96.5 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 18 May 2006, lot 98



Fig. 18 Johann Carl Loth, *Cimon and Pero*, oil on canvas, 95 x 114 cm., present whereabouts unknown



Fig. 19 Jiří Ruthard after Willem Drost, *Vertumnus and Pomona*, drawing, in: 'Imagines Galeriae', Prague, National Library



Fig. 20 Willem Drost, *Flora*, oil on canvas, 99 x 84 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 27 January 2017, lot 20

The present painting thus remains firmly rooted in the Rembrandt School. The Pittsburgh and Amsterdam drawings, especially, justify the assumption that the painting's creative genesis should be sought in Amsterdam. Stylistic comparisons do not necessarily point to Drost's Venetian output. Rather, there seem to be similarities with paintings from Amsterdam. On the other hand, the recently discovered *Flora* (fig. 20) teaches us that Drost, possibly more than previously assumed, was indeed capable of switching styles at will.[42] If one were to speculate on a Venetian origin for the present work after all, the *Flora*, although more Titian-inspired and probably painted later in the Venetian period, might provide a useful comparison (fig. 21, 22). Considering the sfumato modelling of both Flora's and Pero's face, the careful shadowing, the delicate handling of their golden brown hair, and other details such as both their shapely red lips, these women indeed seem to be created from a similar artistic vocabulary.

JH



Fig. 21 Detail of cat. no. 8, Pero's face



Fig. 22 Detail of fig. 20, Flora's face

Notes

1 See for the most complete overview on Drost, J. Bikker, *Willem Drost : A Rembrandt Pupil in Amsterdam and Venice*, New Haven/London 2005, pp. 1-47.
2 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718-1721, 3 (1721), p. 61: 'Drost [...] die een Leerling van Rembrant was, heb ik een Johannes Predicatie gezien, die braaf geschildert en geteekent was. Hy heeft lang te Rome geweest daar hy omgang hielt met Karel Lot, en Joan vander Meer.'
3 A. von Wurzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon : auf Grund archivalischer Forschungen bearbeitet : mit mehr als 3000 Monogrammen*, 3 vols, Leipzig/Vienna 1904-1911, 1 (1904), pp. 427-428.
4 C. Hofstede de Groot, in: U. Thieme, F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols., Leipzig 1907-1950, 9 (1913), pp. 576-577.
5 W.R. Valentiner, 'Willem Drost, pupil of Rembrandt', in: *Art Quarterly* 2 (1939), pp. 294-325
6 S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, 'Willem Drost, een ongrijpbaar Rembrandt-leerling', in: *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 79 (1992), pp. 15-21.
7 Bikker 2005, p. 11.
8 Bikker 2005, pp. 12-28.
9 Bikker 2005, cat. nos. 1-24.
10 Bikker 2005, cat. nos. 2, 13, 19.
11 Bikker 2005, pp. 39, 163, cat. no. L2.
12 Bikker 2005, p. 37.
13 Bikker 2005, pp. 40-47, elaborates on the relationship between Drost and the slightly older Loth, who nevertheless seems to have been taught by Drost.
14 See Bikker 2005, p. 39-40, 193, doc. 4.
15 See J. Bikker, 'Drost's end and Loth's beginning in Venice', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 144 (2002), pp. 147-156, pp. 147-148. See also Bikker 2005, pp. 40, 193, doc. 2. Drost's given age in the document confirms Dudok van Heel's identification of Drost with the son of Jan Barentsz and Mary Claesdr named Willem, who was born in 1633.
16 Bikker 2005, cat, nos. 25-38. In 2009, Irina Sokolova convincingly attributed a *Young Boy Wearing a Straw Hat* in the Hermitage to Drost. See I. Sokolova, 'Paintings by Willem Drost in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 151 (2009), pp. 86-89.
17 Sale New York, Sotheby's, 25 January 2017, lot 20.
18 Four paintings measure c. 117 cm. in length: *The Prophetess Anna*, 117 x 89 cm., St Petersburg, Hermitage; *Standing Man in Armour*, 116 x 94.5 cm., Kassel, Gemäldegalerie; *Mercury and Argus*, 116.5 x 98.5 cm., Dresden, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister; *Peasant Lighting a Pipe*, c. 117 x 95 cm. (orignal size), present whereabouts unknown. See Bikker 2005, cat. nos. 4, 15, 25, 37.
19 See for a discussion of the subject E. McGrath, *Rubens : subjects from history (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* 13.1), 2 vols., London 1997, 2, pp. 99-100; W. Franits, *The Paintings of Dirck van Baburen ca. 1592/93-1624 : Catalogue Raisonné*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2013, p. 148, under cat. no. 29.
20 Translation taken from McGrath 1997, 2, p. 99.
21 See T. Weststeijn, *The visible world : Samuel van Hoogstraten's art theory and the legitimation of painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, Amsterdam 2008, p. 196.
22 Bikker 2005, p. 42.
23 This contrast is found in Bikker 2005, cat. nos. 1, 4, 25, L33, L34 (the last two known only through drawings after the lost originals) and the present work.
24 McGrath 1997, 2, cat. nos. 18-23.
25 For Fabritius's works (oil on panel, 35.7 x 27.3 cm., formerly Oslo, private collection; c. 1655, oil on panel, 39 x 31.5 cm., York, York Art Gallery), see D. Pont, *Barent Fabritius 1624-1673*, The Hague 1958, cat. Nos. 29, 30. For the latter, see also W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandtschüler*, 6 vols., Landau/Pfalz 1983-1994, 2, p. 917, cat. no. 553; For Bisschop's work (c. 1650, oil on canvas, 130 x 100 cm., Rome Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica), see Sumowski 1983-1994, 5, pp. 3079, cat. no. 1999 (previously attr. to Govert Flinck).

d'Arte Antica), see Sumowski 1983-1994, 5, pp. 3079, cat. no. 1999 (previously attr. to Govert Flinck).

26 See O. Benesch, *The drawings of Rembrandt*, 6 vols., London 1973, 2, p. 116, cat. no. C9a, fig. 576.

27 W. Sumowski, *Drawings of the Rembrandt School*, 10 vols., New York 1979, 4, pp. 2648-2649, cat. no. 1194x, as Samuel van Hoogstraten; A. Stefes, *Niederländische Zeichnungen 1450-1850* (*Sammlungen der Hamburger Kunsthalle-Kupferstichkabinett* 3), Cologne 2011, p. 289, cat. no. 460, doubts the attribution to Van Hoogstraten, instead suspecting as copy after a lost original.

28 See E. Bock, J. Rosenberg, Die niederländischen Meister : beschreibendes Verzeichnis sämtlicher Zeichnungen, 2 vols., Berlin 1930, 2, p. 243, cat. no. 13730; M.D. Henkel, *Teekeningen van Rembrandt en zijn school*, The Hague 1942, p. 58, under cat. no. 120; Sumowski 1979, 4, p. 2648, under cat. no. 1194x, fig. 77.

29 J.W. von Moltke, *Govaert Flinck 1615-1660*, Amsterdam 1965, p. 264, cat. no. 185; Sumowski 1979, 4, p. 2648, under cat. no. 1194x. I thank Tom van der Molen for sharing his opinion that the drawing is not by Flinck (email February 2019). The website of the Art Institute of Chicago also suggests an attribution to Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (1621-1674).

30 Sumowski 1979, 4, p. 2648, under cat. no. 1194x.

31 See Henkel 1942, p. 58, cat. no. 120, pl. 89; P. Schatborn, 'Tekeningen van Rembrandts leerlingen', in: *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 33 (1985), pp. 93-109, p. 101. Schatborn, while noticing the weakness of the Amsterdam drawing, remarks that it might well have suffered, and that it might be a copy after Drost. Apparently he was not aware of the Pittsburgh drawing.

32 A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare : Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, 8 vols., The Hague 1915-1922, 3 (1917), p. 849.

33 N. Hartje, *Bartolomeo Manfredi (1582-1622) : ein Nachfolger Caravaggios und seine europäische Wirkung : Monographie und Werkverzeichnis*, Weimar 2004, pp. 85-86, 336-337, 477, cat. no. A21, fig. 14. For Coymans' Manfredi works, see J. von Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura Scultura e Pittura oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, 3 vols., Nuremberg/Frankfurt 1675-1680, 2 (1679), p. 190.

34 Bikker 2005, p. 37, and 'Drost, who successfully mastered both Rembrandt's fine and rough technique in Amsterdam, seems to have developed an Italianate style immediately after arriving in Italy.' (p. 41).

35 Bikker 2005, p. 43.

36 Bikker 2005, pp. 104-105, figs. 25a-g. Drost employed the model in cat. nos. 25, 37, L33 and L34.

37 That Loth deliberately modelled his Pan after the 'Borghese Fisherman / Dying Seneca' does not only follow from the striking correspondence with the statue, but seems also supported by fact that one of the other paintings in the group depicts the old man as Seneca, teaching Nero.

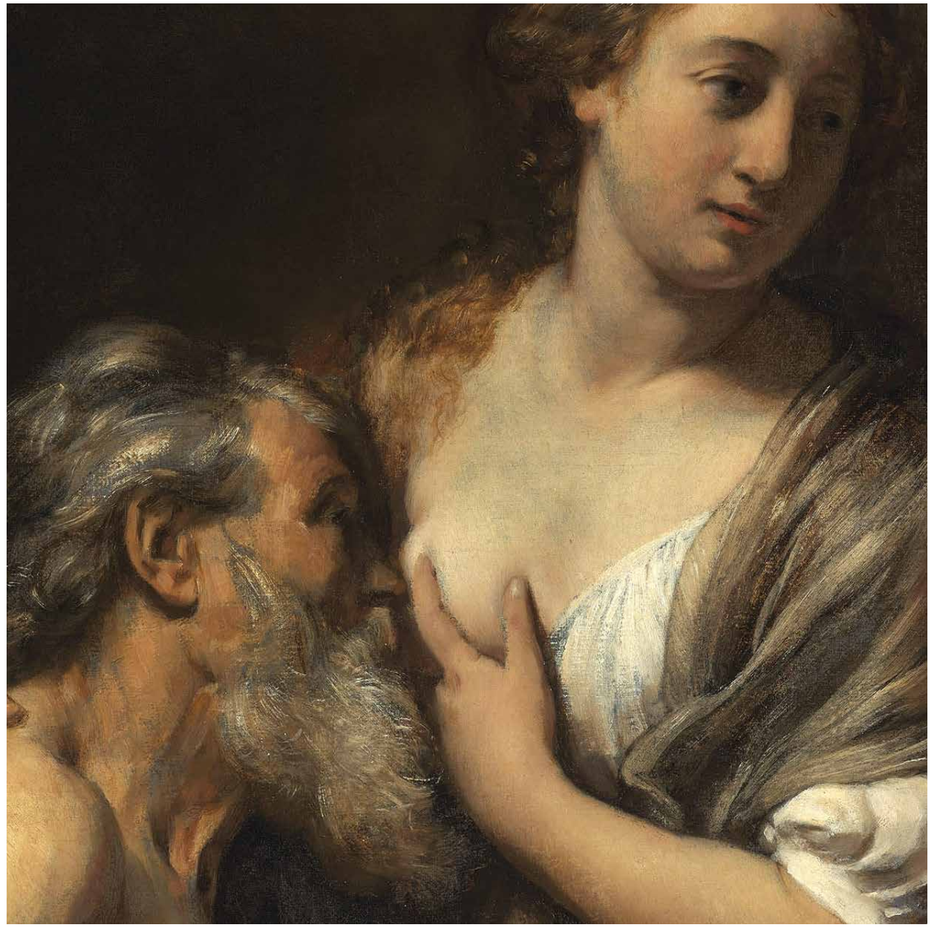
38 Bikker 2005, p. 37.

39 In addition to the old man, we also recognise Drost's Mercury as Apollo in Loth's *Pan and Apollo* (here fig. 18).

40 G. Fusari, *Johann Carl Loth (1632-1698)*, Cremona 2017, p. 217, cat. no. 223, erroneously as in the Hermitage. I thank Irina Sokolova 9 (email February 2019) for informing me that the painting is not in the Hermitage, nor in the Pushkin Museum, as is stated in earlier literature. Cat. nos. 40, 67, 74, 103, 216, 245, 309 and 313 also feature the model.

41 Bikker 2005, cat. no. L33.

42 As underlined several times by Bikker. See, for instance, Bikker 2005, p. 37. The *Flora* is, however, more easily relatable to at least two of Drost's Venetian works, his *St John the Evangelist* and *The Penitent Magdalen* (Bikker 2005, cat. nos. 29, 30).



Detail of cat. no. 8

cat. no. 9

Lambert Jacobsz
Amsterdam ca. 1598 – 1636 Leeuwarden

King David Rebuked by the Prophet Nathan

Oil on canvas[1]
102 x 120 cm.

Provenance:
Sale Stockholm, Bukowskis, 3 December 2003, lot 379

Literature:
J. Hillegers, 'Lambert Jacobsz (ca. 1598-1636) en zijn werkplaats. Atelierpraktijk in Leeuwarden rond 1630', in: *Jaarboek De Vrije Fries* 89 (2009), pp. 67-91, pp. 78-79, 81, ill.
J. Hillegers, 'The Lambert Years : Govert Flinck in Leeuwarden c. 1629-c. 1633', in: S. Dickey (ed.), *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck : new research*, Amsterdam 2017
E.J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals : History Painting in Amsterdam 1630-1650*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2015, pp. 114-115, fig. IIB-30

Copy:
After Lambert Jacobsz, oil on canvas, 97 x 128 cm., sale The Hague, Van Stockum's, 16 May 1942, lot 69 (as Aert de Gelder, *Ahasverus, Esther and Mordechai*)[2]

The exact year of birth of the Mennonite painter Lambert Jacobsz is unknown.[3] His father Jacob Theunisz, a cloth merchant from the Frisian town of Leer, became an Amsterdam citizen on 9 April 1592. Two days later he married Pietertgen Lubbertsdr, the daughter of the Mennonite preacher Lubbert Gerritsz (1534-1612). The couple's eldest child was the well-known physician and Mennonite teacher Anthony Jacobsz, named Roscius (1593/94-1624), who died tragically in January 1624, after falling through the ice of the Amsterdam IJ with his second wife and daughter. Lambert, who must have been the third son[4], is first documented on 8 July 1620 in Leeuwarden, when he married local Aechje Thonisdr (?-1632) and settled there shortly afterwards.[5] The celebrated poet Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679), friend of Lambert's family, wrote a poem for the occasion. Since Lambert's name does not appear in the baptism registers of the Amsterdam Mennonite community, he must have been baptized in Leeuwarden shortly after his marriage. Given the fact that his younger brother Isaac was born in around 1600, and that Mennonite custom prescribed baptism at around 20-22 years old, one can place Lambert's year of birth at around 1598. Although no documentary evidence survives, there are indications that Lambert was taught in the Amsterdam studio of the Mennonite Amsterdam history painter Jan Pynas (1581/82-1631).[6] A suggested apprenticeship in the Antwerp studio of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) remains highly uncertain.[7]



After settling in Leeuwarden, Lambert built up a painting career. His earliest dated work, a landscape on copper dated 1622, was mentioned at a sale in 1783.[8] In addition to his painterly activities, Lambert established himself as a well respected Mennonite teacher, preaching within and beyond the borders of the Republic. While maintaining his work in the small-figure style of the Amsterdam history painters throughout his career, in around 1628 Lambert decided on a business expansion, when he started producing large-figure history paintings and busts, all of religious subject matter, inspired by Rubens, the Utrecht Caravaggists, Pieter de Grebber (c. 1600-1652/53) and the young Jan Lievens (1607-1674).[9] Coinciding with this new direction he attracted two young and talented assistants: Jacob Backer (1608/09-1651), soon followed by the younger Govert Flinck (1615-1660), whom Lambert recruited while preaching in Kleef.[10] During the approximately four or five years of their presence – both Backer and Flinck moved to Amsterdam in c. 1632/33 – Lambert's workshop produced many large figure paintings, several of them outstanding and highly individual works of art, on a par with the best of the period.[11] Lambert's last dated works are from 1635.[12] A year later, he and his second wife Hillegont Dircks Velius (1603-1636), daughter of the well-known historian Teodorus Velius (1570-1630), died of the Plague. From his estate inventory, made up in 1637, it becomes clear that in addition to his work as a painter, Lambert was also active as an art dealer, selling works by painters such as Rembrandt (1606-1669), Lievens, De Grebber, Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656) and Cornelis van Poelenburch (1594/95-1667), in addition to copies after their work, often produced in the Leeuwarden studio. Lambert was in business with the Amsterdam Mennonite art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh (1587-1631), as both held each other's paintings in their stock. Lambert's son Abraham van den Tempel (1622/23-1672) proceeded into a prosperous career as a painter himself.

With its strong narrative quality, confident brushwork, beautiful colouring and finely preserved details such as the scratches in the wet paint to suggest individual hairs (a technique adopted from Lievens), the present painting numbers amongst the most impressive large figure history works that left the Leeuwarden studio during the period of its expansion, c. 1628-1633. It depicts a scene from the Old Testament book of 2 Samuel, which mainly deals with the Kingship of David. One day David, standing on the palace roof, observes the beautiful Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his officers, taking her bath. He summons her to him, and they sleep together. Soon afterwards Bathsheba discovers that she is pregnant. She informs David, who first tries to send Uriah home to his wife, hoping that they will sleep together, thus explaining Bathseba's pregnancy away. However, the pious Uriah twice decides to stay with the troops, forcing David to think of another solution to conceal his adultery: he orders his general Joab to manoeuver Uriah into such a position in the battle that he will fall in action. Although Joab disobeys his King's demand, he cannot prevent Uriah's death. David then marries Bathseba, who bears him a son. Displeased over this staggering cover-up, The Lord sends the prophet Nathan, confidant of David, to confront him. Nathan recounts a story of two men, one of whom is rich, with plenty of livestock, the other poor and owning just one lamb, which he cared for as if it were his child. One day the rich man had a visitor over, but he was unwilling to serve him one of his own sheep. Instead he took the poor man's lamb and prepared that for his guest. Hearing the story David, burning with anger, says that 'whoever did this deserves to die. He has to remunerate the lamb four times over for having no pity.'

Then Nathan said to David: "You are that man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you King over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. [...] Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'" Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan replied, 'The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.'
(2 Samuel 12: 7-14).

Our painting shows the dramatic moment that David recognises his sin. In shock from the implications of Nathan's words, he raises his eyes to the Lord, as he clasps one hand to his chest and makes a supplicatory gesture with the other. Lambert emphasized the narrative element of the parable of the poor man and the rich man – so essential to the story – by the contrast of clothing. Whereas Nathan is rendered in a sober, red garb, David is clad in a truly gorgeous silver and blue brocade mantle, luxuriantly trimmed with ermine. A heavy yellow silk cloak falls over his shoulder, and his turban is ornamented with gems and a crown. In spite of his wealth and status, the Lord does not accept David's immoral behaviour. Still, all is not lost for David. On the one hand the story exemplifies the Lord's indiscriminate judgement, as he orders Nathan to rebuke David regardless of his status. On the other hand, as David shows sincere repentance, the Lord is forgiving, albeit with a price. The son Bathsheba bore David died soon afterwards, yet their second son, the wise Solomon, would later rule the Kingdom of Israel.

Positioned between the two protagonists we see a young man wearing a fine red hat topped with white plumes, and behind him a soldier with a helmet and a spear. Both are apprehensive witnesses to their King's penitence. Although the Bible does not mention any bystanders, the subject was traditionally depicted within a Royal Court setting, including courtiers and soldiers. Although not widespread – prior to the present painting the theme seems to have been exclusively depicted in prints and drawings – Lambert was surely aware of its pictorial tradition. An engraving by Philips Galle (1537-1612) after Maerten de Vos (1532-1603), in particular, seems to underly the present composition (fig. 1). Part of a series depicting penance and repentance in the Old and New Testaments,



Fig. 1 Philips Galle after Maerten de Vos, *David Rebuked by Nathan*, engraving, 20 x 22.7 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 2 Workshop of Rombout van Uylenburgh, *David Rebuked by Nathan*, pen in black, brush and wash in blue and grey, heightened with white on blue paper, 27.8 x 42.5 cm., Netherlands, private collection

the engraving similarly shows Nathan's admonishing gestures to his King, who again clasps his right hand to his chest and raises his left hand in the air while lifting his eyes to the Lord. Moreover, the engraving contains a number of pictorial elements also seen in the Lilian painting, including courtiers, soldiers and the balustrade in the upper left corner (the palace roof from which David first saw Bathsheba bathing, and thus referring to the genesis of his sin[13]), another indication that Lambert relied on De Vos' composition. Interestingly, a drawing book compiled by the Amsterdam merchant and deacon of the 'Waterlandse' Mennonite community Reyer Claesz (1577-1638), containing drawings from both Rombout van Uylenburgh (1580/85-1628), the brother of Lambert's business partner Hendrick, and Lambert Jacobsz himself, features a drawing of the subject that also relates to the present work (fig. 2).[14] Attributed to Rombout's workshop, this drawing shows the prophet and the King in a palace garden setting. The pose of Nathan, especially, is reminiscent of Lambert's Nathan. Given the facts that Reyer Claesz was a prominent figure within Amsterdam's tight Mennonite community, that Lambert contributed to the book himself, and that Rombout was his business partner's brother, it seems likely that he knew of the latter's contributions. As for his David, Lambert might well have taken inspiration from Gerard van Honthorst's *David Playing His Harp*, now in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, a copy of which is mentioned in Lambert's inventory (fig. 3).[15]



Fig. 3 Gerard van Honthorst, *David Playing the Harp*, 1622, oil on canvas, 81 x 66 cm., Utrecht, Centraal Museum

In turn, Lambert's original composition was used by his chief assistant Jacob Backer as the template for one of his first independent history works (fig. 4).[16] This large painting, probably executed shortly after Backer's arrival in Amsterdam in c. 1632/33, closely follows Lambert's example, yet intensifies its dramatic tension by amplifying Nathan's gesture and movement. Instead of Lambert's concerned paternal reprimand, Backer now has Nathan fiercely accusing David, who recoils in sheer fright. Indeed, Backer's adaption makes for a spectacular



Fig. 4 Jacob Backer, *David Rebuked by Nathan*, oil on canvas, 102 x 146 cm., private collection



Fig. 5 Rembrandt, *David Rebuked by Nathan*, c. 1650, pen in brown, heightened with white on paper, 18.6 x 25.4 cm., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

painting; yet Lambert's take offers a more balanced reflection of the biblical text as a whole, which presents Nathan as a wise and trusted aide to David (after all Nathan blesses Solomon, and David names a son after Nathan), and exemplifies the Lord's forgiveness following genuine remorse. After Backer the theme remains rare, one painted example being a work from the circle of Salomon Koninck in the collection of the Utrecht Catharijneconvent.[17] Among the few artists who took a genuine interest in the theme was Rembrandt. He and his circle rendered the subject in at least thirteen drawings, mostly showing the prophet and the King engaged in a more tranquil conversation (fig. 5). A later painting of the subject by Rembrandt's last pupil Aert de Gelder (1645-1727) is kept in the Fuji Art Museum, Tokyo.[18]

Being a Mennonite teacher, Lambert had a preference for exemplifying imagery, once causing Paul Dirkse to dub his paintings 'painted sermons'.[19] Especially in his large figure works, rhetorical hand gestures play an important role. Several paintings deal explicitly with admonition and feature similar gestures, such as the two versions of *Elisha and Gehazi* in Kingston and Hannover (the latter specifically showing the same combination of gestures seen in the present work), both datable to 1629, and *The Disobedient Prophet* in Stockholm, also datable to c. 1629/30 (fig. 6a-d).[20] Whereas these works show the scene taking place against an evenly coloured background, the present work



Fig. 6a-d The admonishing hand gesture in works by Lambert Jacobsz, c. 1629-1631

makes advances on this group, showing a more sophisticated spatial arrangement, including an architectural background and an increased ability to render contrasting, more elaborate fabrics. As such, it seems comparable with *Joseph's Blood-Stained Coat Shown to Jacob* dated 1630 in the Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, and *The Parable of the Workers of the Eleventh Hour*, the best version of which is in Besançon.[21] The model for the present Nathan, finally, also features as the prophet Elisha in the Kingston *Elisha and Gehazi*. Likewise, we also come across the young courtier of the present painting in the Stockholm *Disobedient Prophet*. Seeing that his adolescent features have not changed much, we are confirmed in our dating of around 1630/31 for the Lilian work.

JH

Notes

1 Inscribed on the stretcher 'Salomon de Coningk fecit'

2 See for this painting W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandtschüler*, 6 vols., Landau/Pfalz 1982-1994, VI (1994), p. 3718 under no. 2316. According to the sale catalogue the painting (N.B. as Aert de Gelder) was accompanied by certificates by Dr. J. Rijkevorsel and Dr. A.W. de Wild. The given title (*Ahasverus, Esther and Mordechai*) seems rather odd, as no woman is seen in the painting. I thank Robert Schillemans for bringing Sumowski's mentioning to my attention.

3 For biographical references, see H.L. Straat, 'Lambert Jacobsz, schilder', in: *De Vrije Fries* 28 (1928), pp. 52-76; H.F. Wijnman, 'Nieuwe gegevens omtrent den schilder Lambert Jacobsz, I', in: *Oud Holland* 47 (1930), pp. 145-157; H.F. Wijnman, Nieuwe gegevens omtrent den schilder Lambert Jacobsz., II', in: *Oud Holland* 51 (1934), pp. 241-255; P. Bakker, *De Friese schilderkunst in de Gouden Eeuw*, Zwolle 2008, p. 197.

4 Wijnman 1934, pp. 243-245.

5 'Lambert Jacobs, schilderer Jongman geboren ende wonachtich binnen Amstelredamme ende Aechtien Thonisdr. geboren ende wonachtich binnen deser stede', Leeuwarden City Archive, marriage records 1618-1623, 1620, fol. 85. Quoted from M. van der Meij-Tolsma, 'Lambert Jacobsz (ca. 1598-1636)', in: *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen : nieuwe reeks* 15 (1989), pp. 79-96, p. 85.

6 S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt onder tijdgenoten*, thesis Radboud University, Nijmegen 2006, pp. 136-137.

7 See for the arguments in favour of, and against an apprenticeship with Rubens, Hillegers 2009, pp. 83, 89, n. 64; Hillegers 2017, pp. 52, 63, note 40.

8 Sale, The Hague, Mr. P. Steijn i.a., 7 October 1783, *Landscape*, 1622, oil on copper, 26 x 50.1 cm.

9 The earliest examples, A *Penitent Mary Magdalen* and a *Contrite Peter*, both dated 1628, are mentioned in a sale, Alkmaar, Horstok, 27 July 1802, lots 44 and 45. Lugt no. 6484

10 Various dates for Backer's arrival have been proposed by different authors. Von Moltke suggested 1622, Sumowski 1625/30, Van den Brink and Van der Veen 1626. See Hillegers 2009, pp. 75, 88, notes 38, 39, where a date of c. 1628 is suggested.

11 Various Frisian painters seem to have been connected with the workshop as well. See P. Bakker, 'Een schilder en zijn netwerk : Lambert Jacobsz en een nieuw beeld van de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst in Friesland', in: *De Vrije Fries* 88 (2008), pp. 31-64.

12 *Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the Well*, oil on panel, 40.7 x 55 cm., signed and dated *Lambert Jacobsz 1635*, Johannesburg, Art Gallery. See W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandtschüler*, 6 vols., Landau/Pfalz 1982-1994, I, pp. 141, no. 8, 147; *Elisha Refusing the Gifts of Naaman*, oil on canvas, 133 x 160 cm., signed and dated *Jacobs fecit 1635*. See V.F. Levinson-Lessing (ed.), *Gosudarstvennyj Ermitaz : otdel zapadnoevropejskogo iskusstva* (*Musée de l'Ermitage, département de l'art occidental. Catalogue des peintures*), 2 vols., Leningrad 1958, 2, p. 288.

13 I thank Natasha Broad for sharing this observation.

14 For Reyer Claesz, see J. van der Veen, 'Hendrick Uylenburgh, Factor van de Poolse koning en kunsthandelaar te Amsterdam', in: J. van der Veen, F. Lammertse, *Uylenburgh en zoon : kunst en commercie van Rembrandt tot De Lairesse 1625-1675*, exh. cat. Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis 2006, pp. 12-59, pp. 40-41. For the album of drawings, see E.P. Löffler, 'The Drawing Book of Reyer Claesz., Merchant of Danzig', in: R. van Leeuwen, *Gerson Digital: Poland : Dutch and Flemish painting in European perspective 1500 - 1900 Part I*, digital publication 2013, see gersonpoland.rkdmonographs.nl.

15 See for the inventory, Straat 1928, pp. 62-76, p. 72, no. 11: 'Een coninck Davit spelende op de harp en singende nae Mr. G. Honthorst'. This painting could be a copy after the Utrecht work, but might also be identical with Lambert's own variation, now in the Fries Museum.

16 See Hillegers 2009, pp. 81-82. V. Manuth, in: P. van den Brink, J. van der Veen, *Jacob Backer (1608/9-1651)*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis, Aachen, Suermond-Ludwig-Museum 2008-2009, pp. 92-93: cat. no. 4 relates Backer's painting to an engraving of 1575 by Philips Galle (not the present fig. 1).

17 See R. Schillemans, *Bijbelschilderkunst rondom Rembrandt*, Utrecht 1989, pp. 77-79, cat. no. 6. The painting resides in the parish of St Matthew in Warmond.

18 See J.W. von Moltke, *Arent de Gelder, Dordrecht 1645-1727*, Doornspijk 1994, cat. no. 22.

19 P. Dirkse, 'Jacob ontvangt het bebloede kleed van Jozef', in: P. Dirkse, *Begijnen, pastoors en predikanten. Religie en kunst in de Gouden Eeuw*, Leiden 2001, p. 39-44.

20 4a: *Elisa and Gehasi*, 1629, oil on canvas, 62 x 84 cm., Hannover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, see Hillegers 2009, pp. 75, 81. 4b: *The Disobedient Prophet*, c. 1629/30, oil on canvas, 107 x 136 cm., Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, see Sumowski 1982-1994, VI, cat. no. 2316; G. Cavalli-Björkman, in: I. Ember, *Rembrandt and the Dutch Golden Age*, exh. cat. Budapest, Szépmüvészeti Múzeum 2014-2015, cat. no. 72. 4c: *Elisa and Gehasi*, c. 1629, oil on canvas, 82 x 103 cm., Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, see Hillegers 2009, pp. 78-79, 81, and esp. J. Hillegers, in J. Hillegers et al., *Salomon Lilian Old Masters 2012*, Amsterdam 2012, cat. no. 8. 4d: the present work.

21 For *Joseph's Blood-Stained Coat Shown to Jacob*, see Dirkse 2001. For *The Parable of the Workers of the Eleventh Hour*, see Sumowski 1982-1994, VI, cat. no. 2315.

cat. no. 10

Willem van Mieris
1662 – Leiden – 1747

Portrait of a Man with White Feathered Hat
Portrait of a Man with Feathered Beret

The first signed and dated left: W. Van Mieris / Ao 16...
Both oil on panel, oval
10.5 x 8.5 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

Willem van Mieris painted numerous small portraits on an oval wooden support such as the present work, reflecting the popularity of miniature portraits in the seventeenth century. This portrait type evolved from the practice of miniature painting, executed in watercolour or gouache on vellum, and held in great esteem by the late sixteenth century. These miniatures in turn evolved from medieval manuscript illumination. Willem van Mieris, along with other painters from the Leiden School in the seventeenth century, transformed the portrait miniature into a small scale cabinet picture, exemplified in the present works. Their contribution lies in providing the viewer the full qualities of easel painting, although on a reduced scale. In the same way as miniatures, a key function of these small portraits was to serve as a reminder or keepsake of a distant friend or lover. These cabinet sized portraits, displaying van Mieris' meticulous attention to detail, the smoothness of the paint surface, and the refined treatment of colour, are a fine example of the Leiden *fijnschilder* technique. In the signed and dated portrait a rather portly, middle-aged sitter, wearing a fanciful costume and placed in an outdoor setting, gazes sidelong to his left, smiling. The autumnal dark greens, burnt orange and crimson of his costume harmonise beautifully with the hues of the deep orange sky and dark horizon of eventide. The sitter so closely resembles the figure portrayed in *The Merry Toper*, dated 1699, in the collection of the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden (fig. 1), that they appear to be one and the same model, and the crimson waistcoat and the feathered hat appear identical. Considering the date on this painting, and assuming that the sitter is the same figure in *The Merry Toper*, the present pair of paintings can be dated to the end of the 1690s. The figure in the pendant



Actual size



Actual size



Fig. 1 Willem van Mieris, *The Merry Toper*, signed and dated 1699, oil on panel, 25 x 20 cm., Dresden, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister

portrait is portrayed in an interior with a sheet of paper suspended from the wall to his left, regarding the beholder with a knowing smile. He wears a deep green, velvet beret with red silk ear flaps. The deep folds of a floppy white ruff counter balance the folds of his chin, supported by his left hand. His smiling features, together with the fancy beret, suggest the man is a jester.

Willem van Mieris was a painter and draughtsman who trained with his father Frans van Mieris (1635-1681) and contributed to several of his father's later works. The earliest examples signed and dated by Willem himself are from 1682, after which he produced a large oeuvre of dated works up to the 1730s, when the artist became partially blind. In 1693 van Mieris joined the Guild of St. Luke in Leiden, for which he served as Headman several times and once as Dean. In around 1694, he founded a drawing academy together with Jacob Toorenvliet (c. 1635-1719) and Carel de Moor (1655-1738), which he and De Moor directed until 1736. Early in his career Willem concentrated on history painting and genre scenes. Eventually he became established as a portraitist in his native Leiden, and his ability in painting landscape is clearly illustrated by the present portrait pair. After 1700 Van Mieris focused on genre scenes in shops and kitchen interiors depicted through arched windows, usually with a painted bas-relief below. Their colouring became cooler and the light more evenly diffused. His technical virtuosity continued unimpaired until the end of the 1720s and thereafter declined.[1]

WWB

Note

1 E.J.Sluijter in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols., New York 1996, 21, pp. 488-489.

cat. no. 11

Jan Miense Molenaer
1610/11 – Haarlem – 1668

A Domestic Interior with an Old Woman Sewing, a Man and a Cat by the Hearth

Signed lower left: Jmolenaer
Oil on panel
43.2 x 32.2 cm.

Provenance:
Hechingen, collection Hohenzollern
Hamburg, art trade A. Gottschewski, 1924
Amsterdam, art trade Dr. Nicolaes Beets (as by Q. van Brekelenkam)[1]
New York, art trade Robert Simon, 2001
Amsterdam, Salomon Lilian, 2002
Belgium, private Collection

Literature:
Unpublished

Jan Miense Molenaer was born in Haarlem in 1610, as the eldest son of the tailor Jan Mientsen Molenaer, and his second wife Grietgen Adriaens. The artist's brothers Bartholomeus (c. 1618 – 1650) and Nicolaes (1628/29-1676) were also painters. The name of Jan Miense Molenaer is first mentioned in the contribution list of the guild of St. Luke of 1634, but it is not known exactly when he joined the guild. The early years of Jan Miense Molenaer's career prove extremely difficult to reconstruct.[2] His earliest known work dates from 1629, when he was approximately 19 years old. Molenaer occasionally collaborated with his nephew Claes Molenaer (1630-1676), a landscape painter. In around 1629 Jan Miense Molenaer and Judith Leyster seem to have used the same studio props, which may indicate that they worked in the same studio then.[3] In 1636 the pair were married in Heemstede. In the same year, following the court's confiscation of Molenaer's property to pay debts, they moved to Amsterdam. One year later Molenaer was commissioned to paint an elaborate wedding portrait for the van Loon family, the *Wedding of Willem van Loon and Anna Ruychaver* (Museum van Loon, Amsterdam). The artist's financial situation appears to have improved during his Amsterdam years, thanks in part to an inheritance received by Leyster in 1639. It was during this period that the painter Jan Lievens (1607-1674) briefly lived with Molenaer (1644). According to a notarial deed of 1 March 1644, Jan Lievens worked on a landscape in Jan Miense's house in Amsterdam. After twelve years spent in Amsterdam, Molenaer purchased a house in Heemstede, where he moved in October 1648. The final phase of his career began in Heemstede and spanned twenty productive years. Unfortunately, mounting debt, relocations,



energies directed to securing a second income, illness, and above all, Judith Leyster's death in 1660, all took their toll. The artist died in his hometown of Haarlem, one year after his last dated painting.

The present painting is likely to date from about 1630, when the young artist was still living in Haarlem. According to Dennis Weller, a number of pictures showing the same type of sparse interior and similar scale of figure to space seems to have been painted at that time.[4] During this period, Molenaer made reference to the paintings of Dirck (1591-1656) and Frans Hals (c. 1582-1666), Willem Buytewech (1591/92-1624), Adriaen Brouwer (c. 1605-1638) and even the emerging talents of his wife Judith Leyster (1609-1660). This painting features a seated elderly woman, shown full-length and absorbed in her sewing, her glasses perched on the end of her nose, while a seated male figure – possibly her husband – spreads his hands before a blazing fire, a cat at his feet. The woman is a model of domestic virtue, with her basket overflowing with sewing resting beside her. Her beautiful wrinkled face and hands, as well as her white apron and headscarf, are strikingly lit by an unseen source of light, reflected in the highlights on her glasses; her glowing white figure stands out against the earth tones of the background. The womanly activities of spinning and sewing were regarded as being as being as representative of virtue as reading the bible, and their presence as a symbol of domestic virtue and decorum in Dutch painting became very popular around the middle of the seventeenth century, although it was still rare in the early decades. The famous painting by Judith Leyster of a *Man Offering Money to a Young Woman*, dated 1631, in the collection of The Mauritshuis in The Hague and painted in the same period (fig. 1), represents a woman who pointedly bends her head over her sewing, as she ignores the advances of the male figure. The message is given that the woman is making it quite clear to the male figure that she is choosing the proper and virtuous path, and refusing his attentions. Given the striking similarity between Leyster's young lady and the older lady in the present painting, we might presume that the two artists knew of each other's compositions. This confirms the above proposed dating of circa 1630/31.

WWB



Fig. 1 Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Young Woman*, signed and dated 1631, oil on panel, 30.9 x 24.2 cm., The Hague, Mauritshuis

Notes

1 Illustrated in Collection Beets I t/m VII, album III, in the RKD collections, archive no. NL-HaRKD.0572.

2 D.P. Weller et al., *Jan Miense Molenaer : Painter of the Dutch Golden Age*, exh. cat. Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Manchester, Currier Museum of Art 2002-2003, p. 9

3 J.A. Welu, 'Introduction', in: P. Biesboer, J.A. Welu, *Judith Leyster : a Dutch master and her world*, exh. cat. Haarlem, Frans Halsmuseum, Worcester (MA), Worcester Art Museum 1993, pp. 11-14, p. 12.

4 According to Dennis Weller in an e-mail correspondence on the basis of a photograph, dated 11 December 2018.



Detail of cat. no. 11

cat. no. 12

Marten Rijckaert
1857 – Antwerp – 1631

A Panoramic Landscape with Tobias and the Angel

Signed with monogram and dated lower right: MVR/1622

Oil on copper
43 x 56.2 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

The present signed and dated work is a prime example of Rijckaert's mature style. Everything in this panoramic landscape is depicted with a great eye for detail, and in it Rijckaert displays his abilities at their height. The landscape is painted after Hendrik Goudt's (ca. 1583-1648) engraving *Aurora*, dated 1613, which repeats Adam Elsheimer's (1573-1610) *Landscape at Dawn* of circa 1606, now in the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig (fig. 1, 2).[1] In 1604 Hendrik Goudt traveled to Rome, where he lived with Adam Elsheimer until 1610, as both his student as well as patron. Goudt created this print following his departure from Rome, and probably modeled it after a painting in his own collection. He made six other engravings after paintings by Elsheimer, including the story of Tobias and the Archangel Raphael from the Apocrypha which was depicted by the German artist in three different painted compositions. By means of Goudt's engravings, Elsheimer's compositions became widely disseminated in the Netherlands. The *Aurora* engraving by Goudt was an important source of inspiration for Rijckaert. Although Goudt's *Aurora* engraving does not include Elsheimer's huntsman figure, Rijckaert was probably inspired by the Tobias and the Angel theme familiar from Goudt's engravings after Elsheimer. In the present painting, the Archangel Raphael, who holds a silver vessel which contains the fish's gall, guides the young Tobias, holding the fish. The Archangel Raphael (whose wings the young Tobias could not see) was sent to guide the young Tobias and his dog on his travels to Ecbatana to collect money owed to his father, as recounted in the Old Testament Book of Tobit. On their travels a great fish leaped out of the River Tigris and would have devoured Tobias, but with Raphael's





Fig. 1 Hendrik Goudt, *Aurora*, engraving, dated 1613, 17.5 x 15.5 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 2 Adam Elsheimer, *Landscape at Dawn*, c. 1606, oil on copper, 17 x 22.5 cm, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum

help he caught it and gutted it, setting aside the heart, liver and gall. Raphael instructed the boy that the first two, when burned, were effective in driving off evil spirits, and the gall would cure the blindness of Tobias' father, Tobit. As with many Flemish landscapes from this period, the overall view is framed by tall, darkened elements on one side, in this case the high ground of a mountain, while the viewer's eye is led across the wooded mountain slopes of the midground to a castle and then along a river meandering through a flat plain into the blue mountainous distance.

Marten Rijckaert was born in Antwerp in 1587, as the son of the painter David Rijckaert I (c.1559 - c.1606), who was his first teacher. As the result of a birth defect, he only had one arm, although this did not prevent him from becoming a successful painter. After being first taught by his father, he became a pupil of Tobias Verhaecht (1561-1631), who was also Rubens' (1577-1640) first teacher. In 1607 Rijckaert became a member of the guild of St Luke – where he was registered as "the one-armed painter". Following the artist's travels to Italy between 1607 and 1610, he joined De Violieren, the Chamber of Rhetoric. Rijckaert was a close friend of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), who painted his portrait, which would remain in Rijckaert's quite extensive art collection until his death; today, it is in the Prado, Madrid. Rijckaert mostly painted small imaginary landscapes in a style reminiscent of Paul Bril (c.1553-1626).

WWB

Notes

1 K. Andrews, *Adam Elsheimer : paintings, drawings, prints*, New York 1977, p. 183, cat. no. 18, ill. 76.



Detail of cat. no. 12

cat. nos. 13/14

Peter Paul Rubens
Siegen 1577 – 1640 Antwerp

Portrait of the Roman Emperor Aulus Vitellius Germanicus Augustus (15 – 69 AD)

Portrait of the Roman Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasian (9 – 79 AD)

Both oil on panel
33.3 x 26.7 cm.

Provenance *Vitellius*:
Probably Antwerp, collection Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)
Ghent, collection Thomas Jodocus Loridon de Ghellinck, by c. 1790
His deceased sale, Ghent, Goesin, 3 September 1821, lot 68 (40 francs to Murphy)
Paris, collection P.A. Chéramy, 1908-1913
Paris, collection Joseph Schnell, by 1922
His sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 18-19 May 1922, lot 91
Belgium, private collection
Sale Brussels, Galerie Georges Giroux, 15 March 1926, lot 41 (as 'Vespasian')[1]
Sale New York, Sotheby's, 29 January 2009, lot 14, where sold to Christian Levett
Mougins, collection Christian Levett, 2009
Mougins, Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins, inv. no. MMoCA.NC53

Literature *Vitellius*:
Anonymous, *Catalogue d'une très-belle et riche collection de Tableaux [...] qui composent le cabinet de Monsieur T. Loridon de Ghellinck [...] à Gand*, Ghent c. 1790, p. 20, cat. no. 71
E. Haverkamp-Begemann, *Olieverfschetsen van Rubens*, exh. cat. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 1953-1954, p. 69, under no. 48
M. Jaffé, 'Rubens's Roman Emperors', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 113 (1971), pp. 294-303, p. 298, fig. 4
A.J. Adams, in: E. Haverkamp-Begemann, A.J. Adams, *Dutch and Flemish Paintings from New York Private Collections*, exh. cat. New York, National Academy of Design 1988, p. 105, under cat. no. 40
M. Jaffé, *Rubens : Catalogo Completo*, Milan 1989, p. 298, cat. no. 870, ill. (erroneously as 'with Sedelmeyer, Paris, 1817')
M.E. Wiesemann, in: P.C. Sutton, M.E. Wieseman, *Drawn by the Brush : Oil Sketches by Peter Paul Rubens*, exh. cat. Greenwich (CT), Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum 2004-2005, p. 150, under cat. no. 16
D. Alberge, in: M. Merrony (ed.), *Mougins Museum of Classical Art*, Mougins 2011, pp. 291-294, fig. 3
M. Merrony, *Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins : La Collection Famille Levett*, 2012, p. 78
K. Jonckheere, *Portraits after Existing Prototypes* (*Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* 19-4), London 2016, pp. 37, 40-48, 104-106, 113, cat. no. 47, fig. 168
A. Libby, 'Julius Caesar', in: A.K. Wheelock Jr. (ed.), *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, New York, note 6 (www.theleidencollection.com, accessed January 2019)



Provenance *Vespasian*:
Probably Antwerp, collection Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)
Ghent, collection Thomas Jodocus Loridon de Ghellinck, by c. 1790
His deceased sale, Ghent, Goesin, 3 September 1821, lot 67 (40 francs to Murphy)
Paris, collection P.A. Chéramy, 1908-1913
Paris, collection Joseph Schnell, by 1922
His sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 18-19 May 1922, lot 95
Paris, with art dealer Alvin-Beaumont
Brussels, collection Jean Decoen
Berlin, collection Dr. Ernst Friedman
His sale, Berlin, Paul Cassirer and Hugo Helbing, 23 November 1927, lot 71, where acquired by Dr. Ludwig Burchard (1886-1960)
London, collection Wolfgang Burchard, by descent
Sale London, Christie's, 5 July 1985, lot 78 (£16,200)
Yattendon (Berkshire), collection Alec Cobbe Esq.
Maastricht, Noortman Master Paintings, by 1995
Amsterdam, collection Eric Albada Jelgersma, acquired from the above
Mougins, collection Christian Levett, 2009, acquired from the above
Mougins, Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins, inv. no. MMoCA.NC83

Literature *Vespasian*:
Anonymous c. 1790, p. 21, cat. no. 72
Haverkamp-Begemann, in: Rotterdam 1953-1954, pp. 69-70, cat. no. 49
Jaffé 1971, p. 297, fig. 3
Jaffé 1989, p. 298, cat. no. 871, ill.
Wiesemann, in: Greenwich/Berkeley/Cincinnati 2004-2005, p. 150, under cat. no. 16, fig. 1
Alberge, in: Merrony 2011, pp. 291-294, fig. 4
Merrony 2012, p. 78
Jonckheere 2016, pp. 37, 40-48, 104- 106, 113-114, cat. no. 48, fig. 170
Libby, 'Julius Caesar', in: Wheelock, *Leiden Collection* (www.theleidencollection.com, accessed January 2019)



Prelude

Little needs to be added about the genius of Peter Paul Rubens. The greatest Flemish artist of his time, Rubens grew up in an intellectual milieu, his fascination for the world of antiquity deriving from his erudite upbringing. His father Jan Rubens (1530-1587), a descendant of an Antwerp merchant family, travelled to Rome as an adolescent, where he obtained a doctor's title in canon law in 1554. After returning home he married Maria Pypelinckx in 1561, and upon climbing the social ladder became an Antwerp magistrate in 1562. His choosing sides with the Calvinists in the religious turmoil of these years eventually caused him and his wife to flee to Cologne, where Jan was appointed to the entourage of William of Orange's wife Anna of Saxony, with whom he started an affair. After fathering her illegitimate daughter, Jan faced the death penalty, but was pardoned through Maria's intervention. While living under house arrest in the small town of Siegen, Peter Paul was born as the family's youngest son in 1577. In 1578 Jan was allowed to return to Cologne, where Peter Paul and his older brother Filips (1574-1611) grew up amidst books on law and theology, while being taught Latin and Greek by their father. When Jan died in 1587, the Rubens family returned to Antwerp. Whereas Filips continued his studies at Leuven University under the humanist Justus Lipsius, Peter Paul attended Antwerp's Latin Cathedral school. After briefly serving Countess Margaret of Ligne as a servant in around 1590, Rubens embarked on his artistic career. Initially apprenticed to the landscape painter Tobias Verhaecht (1561-1631), he later studied under Adam van Noort (1562-1641) and Otto van Veen (1556-1629), respectively. It was particularly under the tutelage of the latter, a learned humanist artist who himself had worked in Rome between 1575 and 1580, that his fascination with the antique took further shape.

In the context of the *Vitellius* and *Vespasian* discussed here, it is noteworthy that between the year 1598, when Rubens became a master of the Guild of St Luke, and 1600, when he left for Italy, he had already painted an eighteen-part series of the Roman emperors of which several, such as the *Vitellius* (fig. 1) survive, while others, such as the *Vespasian*, are known through copies only (fig. 2).[2] Rubens must have been thoroughly familiar with the emperors' characters and historical background from his study of such historical accounts as Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae*, Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* (*Lives of the Caesars*) or, of more recent date, Giovan Battista Cavalieri's *Romanorum Imperatorum Effigies* of 1583, which combined prints of the emperors with their biographies. In preparation for his ambitious



Fig. 1 Peter Paul Rubens, *Vitellius*, 1598-1600, oil on panel, 68.5 x 52.5 cm., Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie



Fig. 2 After Peter Paul Rubens, *Vespasian*, oil on panel, 63.5 x 48.2 cm., sale New York, Christie's, 12 June 1981, lot 222-226

series, Rubens was able to consult a variety of pictorial sources. As both surviving paintings and prints reveal, as well as the study of archival sources of the latter sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, emperor series grew increasingly popular in the Southern Netherlands during the period. In addition to series of foreign prints, Netherlandish artists such as Lambert Suavius (c. 1510-1567), Frans Floris (1519/20-1575) and Johannes Stradanus (1523-1605) also produced emperors, in painting and print. In 1557 Hubert Goltzius (1526-1583) had published a numismatic book with woodcuts after ancient Roman coins depicting emperors, and Antwerp inventories mention an abundance of anonymous series, mostly consisting of twelve, but sometimes of eighteen emperors, in media as diverse as paintings, water colours, prints, books, papier-mâché, German agate, silver statues, as well as large quantities of antique medals.[3]

Although Rubens had various sources at hand in Antwerp, the young painter was hungry for first-hand experience, and so he followed in his father's and teacher Otto van Veen's footsteps and headed for Italy in May 1600. During his eight-year sojourn there he proved to be a tireless student of antiquity, drawing arduously after antique sculptures.[4] He even formulated his ideas on its imitation in a separate part of his theoretical notebook, 'De imitatione statuarum' (*On the imitation of statues*), in which he asks the painter to imbibe only the best sculptures, and above all, to avoid the taint of the appearance of stone, as the artist's goal was always to imitate, or even perfect nature itself.[5] Painting, in that sense, was an ideal medium to surpass even antique sculpture, as it offered more convincing ways to suggest movement and life, and the ability to transform, or humanise, stone into flesh and blood. In Italy he sharpened his ideas on *aemulatio*, the honourable and creative emulation of predecessors and contemporaries, and *paragone*, the competitive comparison between the art of painting, sculpture and architecture. Likewise, he further immersed himself in the study of physiognomy, and the theoretical tracts that were published on this subject during the sixteenth century which championed the idea that a person's character was reflected in their physical appearance.[6] The fundamental importance that Rubens assigned to these art theoretical concepts, and his enduring dedication to them, would essentially lay the ground for the genesis of the present works. When the tidings of his mother's illness urged him back to Antwerp in the fall of 1608, Rubens returned a seasoned artist, fully equipped to ascend Antwerp's cultural throne. The next decades would bring him – and Antwerp as a cultural centre – unprecedented success and fame. In October 1609 Rubens married Isabella Brant, daughter of the prominent Antwerp humanist Jan Brant. A year later, in 1610, the couple bought a house and a considerable parcel at Wapper, a wealthy street in Antwerp, which in the following years was completely rebuilt into what we know now as the Rubenshuis, the epicentre of the artist's self-created universe, the studio where he created his work and the gallery where he displayed his collection.

Rubens, Vitellius and Vespasian

Painted in Antwerp at the peak of Rubens's career, the present *Vitellius* and *Vespasian* fully exude this air of cultivated, artistic excellence steeped in Antiquity. Notwithstanding their relatively modest size, these oval portraits of two of the most (in)famous rulers of the ancient world immediately incite the beholder's marvel. Executed with the intuitive spontaneity of Rubens' most outstanding oil sketches – Rubens at his purest – yet at the same time completely convincing as sovereign portraits, they combine virtuosity with deeply personal psychological depth. As recently remarked by Koenraad Jonckheere in the *Corpus Rubenianum*, they are 'little panels by Rubens at his best'.[7] Indeed, there is plenty to enjoy in these ovals, which have benefited tremendously from a recent restoration.[8] Throughout all areas of the two paintings one observes the priming, over which Rubens with such apparent ease distributed his paints, transparent and opaque, modelling his figures with admirable economy. Against a dark brown, patchy background and a daring green area to provide contrast to his facial contour, Vitellius stares to the right with glimmering, shifty, unsound eyes. His face is rendered with a limited carmine, ranging from soft pink to rose pompadour, and Bordeaux in the darkest shadows, all to a spectacular, full-fed effect. Grey hatchings further model the bulging chin, and add a rugged element to the portrait. A neatly preserved ridge of tiny white hatchings of hair demarcates the face from the sketchily indicated laurel wreath that adorns the head. While the restoration revealed the original, fleshy quality of the chest, the emperor's tunic and toga regained their intense, sometimes translucent palette, with warm orange and even hints of greyish-blue. Vespasian's portrait, on the other hand, is brighter in atmosphere. The patchy background is lighter, fading from steel to pale blue grey, beautifully contrasting with the olive-green of the Imperial laurel wreath. In rendering Vespasian's face Rubens was even more sparing than with Vitellius, using lighter flesh tones and leaving plenty of transparency. The emperor confronts the beholder with a piercing, stern glance, seemingly reflecting his character formed in the military. Accordingly, Vespasian wears a bright red *paludamentum* (the iconic cape fastened at one shoulder by a *fibula* and worn by military commanders) over his *lorica*, or cuirass.

Among the most intriguing aspects of these portraits is that they are true studies of the supposed characters of these emperors: Vitellius, a disquieting glutton, Vespasian, a fierce 60-year old, conveying a law-and-order militarism. The former was killed by the army of the latter. Whereas Rubens' early emperor portraits made in Antwerp tended to caricature these characteristics (figs. 1, 2), the present portraits are rather diligent efforts in naturalism. Rubens clearly knew the individual emperors' personalities inside out – as well as their decisive roles during the so-called 'Four Emperor Year' of 69 AD – from his close-reading of Suetonius above all. The writer's account of Vitellius' life – objective or not – is utterly scandalous.[9] Born in 15 AD as the son of a Roman consul, Vitellius spent most of his youth at Capri, where he belonged to the perverted emperor Tiberius' catamites and answered to the nickname *Spintria*, 'sphincter artist.' Growing up 'stained by every sort of meanness,' Vitellius' wickedness – they said he poisoned his son and starved his mother to death – was exceeded only by his gluttony. Nevertheless, his fawning personality won him the intimacy of Caligula, Claudius and Nero. When Galba succeeded Nero after his suicide in June 68 AD, he sent Vitellius off to govern *Germania Inferior*. In January 69 AD, just weeks after arriving, Vitellius learned that Galba had been

murdered, and Otho proclaimed emperor. Supported by his troops he decided to march on Rome. After his army defeated Otho's at Bedriacum (Lombardy) in April 69 AD, and Otho committed suicide, Vitellius was declared emperor (the third that year!). As Suetonius states, Vitellius' reign was characterised 'by luxury and cruelty [...] delighting in inflicting death and torture on anyone whatsoever and for any cause whatever'. By taking emetics in order to throw up (Suetonius disapprovingly describes colossal banquets with 'two thousand of the choicest fishes and seven thousand birds' and prodigious platters on which were mingled 'the livers of pike, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of flamingos and the milt of lampreys' brought from all over the Empire), he was able to feast night and day. Yet he overplayed his hand: in October 69 AD Vespasian defeated Vitellius' army. After his chicken-hearted proposal to abdicate was refused, Vespasian's soldiers entered Rome on 20 December, captured the hiding tyrant, dragged him to the forum, and tortured him until he died. His body was thrown into the Tiber.

Contrary to this debauchery, Suetonius presents Vespasian's life as a rags-to-riches story. Born in 9 AD, Vespasian was raised by a relatively modest Sabine equestrian family. After serving the military in Crete and Cyrene, he married Flavia Domitilla, with whom he fathered two future emperors, Titus (39-81 AD) and Domitian (51-96 AD). During Claudius' reign, Vespasian was appointed Legate of the Legions in Germany and Britain, respectively, where successful campaigns earned him a Consulship, and later the Governorship of Africa. Suetonius tragi-comically relates how Vespasian, whilst touring Greece in Nero's entourage, lost Imperial favour, either for absenting himself when Nero was singing, or falling asleep if he remained. Banished by the bitterly offended emperor and even fearing for his life, he was called back to suppress the Jewish revolt in Judea, in 66-68 AD. Leading two legions himself, his son Titus leading a third, he fought a tough war, ending with the sack of Jerusalem by Titus's troops. According to Suetonius, Vespasian did not shy away from danger, getting wounded himself (Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus, who knew Vespasian personally, writes of him as fair and humane in his famous *Antiquitates Judaicae*, which Rubens surely knew). As the chaotic years 68-69 AD evolved and Otho and Vitellius – following Nero's and Galba's violent deaths – battled over power, Vespasian started to believe that certain omens predicted that he would be the next emperor. While in Egypt to secure grain, the call amongst his soldiers for his emperorship surged, and finally he sent his troops to fight Vitellius. After the siege of Rome and Vitellius' subsequent murder, Vespasian was declared emperor at the very end of 69 AD, the fourth that year. Reigning for another ten years, he contained the extravagance that had taken root in Rome, and restored peace. He founded the Flavian dynasty, which continued under Titus' reign (79-81 AD) and ended with the passing of Domitian in 96 AD.

These strikingly opposing, strong characteristics, then, Rubens masterfully modelled into the physiognomies of his 'sitters', measured and realistic, without recourse to caricature.[10] Yet intimate as they are, the portraits also incite in us a sense of awe for the historic leadership they represent. Rubens's ability to convey this merging of emotional perspicacity and Imperial reverence must result from his long-term engagement with these emperors. Building on his initial Antwerp encounter, the present portraits reflect his increased, first-hand knowledge and understanding of antique examples. Since the



Fig. 3 So-called Grimani Vitellius, c. 130 AD, Venice, Museo Archaeologico



Fig. 4 Peter Paul Rubens, *Head of Vitellius*, black and white chalk, heightened with white on paper, 33.2 x 22 cm., Valence-sur-Baïse, Simonow Collection

early sixteenth century, the features of Vitellius were recognised in the physiognomy of a rather fleshy man with a double chin and short hair, as found in an antique bust known as the so-called 'Grimani Vitellius' and the many Renaissance copies after it (fig. 3). Twentieth century art historians have proven the identification to be incorrect – the bust actually dates from the first half of the second century[11] – but for Rubens and his contemporaries he was Vitellius, and a drawing datable to the Roman period clearly conveys Rubens' desire to grasp the bust's essence (fig. 4).[12] A set of drawings kept at Chatsworth House further exemplifies Rubens's fascination for the emperors, as they show him copying their profiles from antique coins. Again we recognise Vitellius (whose rather plump appearance makes the identification with the Grimani Vitellius understandable) and the sturdier Vespasian, who shares several features with the present Vespasian, such as the hooked nose, the skin folds and the pursed lips (fig. 5, 6). While not all scholars agree if the set was made before or after the artist's departure for Italy, they nevertheless underline Rubens's recurrent engagement with the subject.[13]

A special series for a special location

The existing literature on the two present Lilian portraits is relatively limited. The first to discuss the works was Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who in 1953 authored the catalogue for the Rubens oil sketches exhibition in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. The exhibition featured two oval emperor's heads by Rubens: the present *Vespasian* and the *Julius Caesar* that is now part of the Leiden Collection, New York.[14] The owner and lender of both panels to the Rotterdam exhibition was no less than the great Rubens scholar Ludwig Burchard (1886-1960), and it is interesting to read that Haverkamp-Begemann factually writes down Burchard's orally communicated opinion on works from his own collection. As the author explains, it was Burchard's idea that the portraits originally formed part of a series comprising the twelve earliest Roman emperors. This set was never recorded as complete, but the 1790 catalogue of the Ghent art dealer / collector Thomas Loridon de Ghellinck makes mention of six of these oval emperor portraits. In addition to the *Julius Caesar*, the *Vespasian*, *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, *Vitellius* and *Titus* remain. The anonymous author of the 1790 catalogue generously describes them as 'légérement colorés, d'une belle couleur, bien definés, & peints avec vigueur; ils sont de forme ovale'. Haverkamp-Begemann, listing the works at that point



Fig. 5 Peter Paul Rubens, *Study of a Roman Coin: Vitellius*, pen and brown ink on paper, 7 x 5 cm., Chatsworth (Derbyshire), Chatsworth House, Devonshire Collection



Fig. 6 Peter Paul Rubens, *Study of a Roman Coin: Vespasian*, pen and brown ink on paper, 7 x 5 cm., Chatsworth (Derbyshire), Chatsworth House, Devonshire Collection

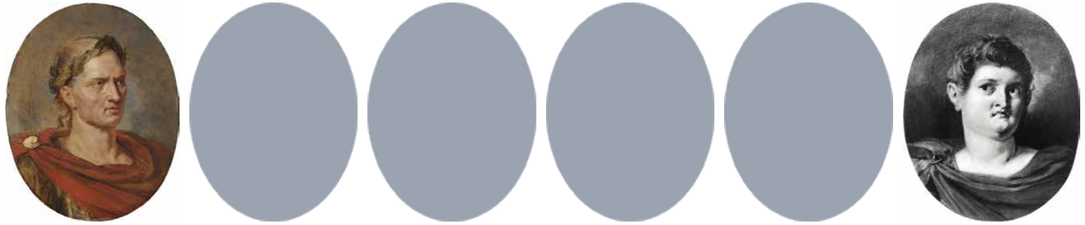




Fig. 7a-l Peter Paul Rubens, Series of the first Twelve Roman Emperors, all oil on panel, c. 33 x 26.5 cm. (*Julius Caesar*, New York, Leiden Collection; *Nero*, present whereabouts unknown; *Galba*, Belgrade, National Museum; *Otho*, Scunthorpe, Normanby Hall, Country Park and Farming Museums; *Vitellius* and *Vespasian*, Amsterdam/Geneva, Salomon Lilian; *Titus*, present whereabouts unknown)

known to him from an image, mentions (in addition to the exhibited *Julius Caesar* and the *Vespasian*) a *Nero*, a *Galba*, a *Vitellius* (the present Lilian work) and a *Titus*. In 1971 Michael Jaffé, in an article in *The Burlington Magazine*, added a seventh panel to the group, an *Otho* in the museum in Scunthorpe (Lincolnshire).[15] Since then no other emperors from the same series have surfaced; the *Augustus* and *Tiberius* (both mentioned in the possession of Loridon de Ghellinck) as well as the *Caligula*, *Claudius* and *Domitian* are therefore missing (figs. 7a-l).[16]

With regard to the dating and function of these emperor busts, neither Haverkamp-Begemann nor Burchard come up with any suggestions. Michael Jaffé, on the other hand, dates the series to around 1625 and speculates that Rubens might have created the oval panels after his Paris meeting with three antiquarians in the entourage of the special Legate of Pope Urban VIII, Cardinal Francesco Barberini: Girolamo Aleandro, Giovanni Doni, and Cassiano dal Pozzo.[17] As Jaffé does not expand on this idea further, it remains nothing more than a brainchild, playing upon the idea that such a series would be appreciated mostly by learned men with a deep knowledge and understanding of the art of antiquity. Yet Rubens knew many such people, of whom he himself was the most avid. With that in mind, Koenraad Jonckheere, in the *Corpus Rubenianum*, has recently proposed a substantiated and persuasive hypothesis; that Rubens painted the series for himself.[18] As mentioned above, in 1610, two years after his return from Italy, Rubens had bought the house and parcel at Wapper. Not long after, he started his great rebuilding project, which also foresaw a grandiose decoration program for the exterior of the house, including a combination of antique sculpture and paintings by Rubens himself, as seen in a later print by Jacob Harrewijn (fig. 8). This decorative program intended to glorify the artist's creativity and allude to the emulative qualities of the art of painting in general, the *paragone* or creative competition with sculpture, and Rubens' own superb abilities in this field, thus creating a magnificent new personal synthesis.[19] Not without pretention, Rubens identified himself with Apelles, the most celebrated painter of antiquity, of whom Karel van Mander (1548-1606) wrote that 'his painted images were better and cleverer than the best sculptures of the ancients one still sees.'[20] Among the new additions was the so-called 'Pantheon', a semi-circular structure with an oculus in the top, based on the Pantheon in Rome. Rubens had it built as an extension to his picture gallery in order to display his sculpture collection, as his own private museum.[21] The Pantheon's construction was doubtlessly spurred by Rubens' acquisition in 1618 of the magnificent collection of antique sculptures owned by Sir Dudley Carleton, at that point the English ambassador in The Hague.[22] A year before, Carleton had (against his wish) become the owner of this spectacular collection in Venice. He had it shipped to London and subsequently to The Hague, and had found in Rubens the ideal buyer, who was willing to pay him with several of his own paintings. In return, Rubens received some 100 pieces of antique sculpture, among them (we know this from Carleton's two shipping invoices from Venice to London, and from London to The Hague) a substantial number of Roman emperor busts, totalling fourteen emperors, including a Vitellius, and some duplicates.[23]



Fig. 8 Jacobus Harrewijn after Jacques van Croes, *The Rubenshuis*, 1692, engraving, 34 x 43.3 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Although Rubens' Pantheon does not survive, we have a fairly accurate idea of its appearance. In his *Teutsche Akademie*, the painter Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) stated that Rubens built himself a "Kunst-Cammer' in the form of a Rotunda, with light falling down from above, containing well-ordered curious paintings and statues, both from his own hand and other artists, alongside several collected curiosities'.[24] Moreover, two visual sources inform us of its appearance as well. One is Rubens' former pupil Willem van Haecht's (1593-1637) *Alexander the Great Visiting the Studio of Apelles* in the Mauritshuis, executed around 1630, in which a grandiose artist's studio featuring an abundance of paintings – many alluding to Rubens – opens up onto a gallery and Pantheon in the background (figs. 9, 10). It is more than likely that Van Haecht referenced Rubens here (who was, after all, the Apelles of his time), and that the Pantheon resembled that of his teacher. That this is indeed the case also follows from a detail in Harrewijn's print of the Rubenshuis, which depicts the actual Pantheon (fig. 11). Both painting and print show that the space was divided into separate bays, with niches for the display of busts. Whereas it was not necessarily Van Haecht's intention to literally document the Rubenshuis Pantheon, Van Harrewijn's print of 1692– which does precisely that – was executed during a period in which the house was owned by the rich canon Hendrik Hillewerve, who had turned Rubens's Pantheon into a chapel. However, on combining the information of the two sources, it becomes clear that there were twelve niches, in which twelve busts were originally displayed, and that above every niche hung an oval portrait. When one re-considers Rubens's fascination with antiquity, his fundamental interest in imitation, *aemulatio* and *paragone*; the exterior decoration program, which displayed both classical sculpture and Rubens's own paintings; and the fact that Rubens had just bought a brilliant collection of emperor busts and other precious antique sculptures, Jonckheere convincingly argues that the oval emperor series, to which the present works belong (fig. 7a-l), were painted by Rubens after and as complements to the busts in his possession, as part of the interior decoration program of his Pantheon. As observed in Van Haecht's painting and Harrewijn's print, the ovals hung above the niches which displayed the emperor busts, where they formed the perfect embodiment of Rubens' art theoretical ideas and demonstrated how painting - especially *his* painting – through its colouristic possibilities, and the depiction of character through physiognomy, could render life and emotion to otherwise lifeless marble. As such, they form a highpoint in Rubens' on-going dialogue with Antiquity. They functioned as pendants for his sculptures, accolades to Rubens himself, demonstrations of his art theoretical ideas and furnishing ultimate



Fig. 9 Willem van Haecht, *Alexander the Great Visiting Apelles's Studio*, c. 1630, oil on panel, 105 x 149.5 cm., The Hague, Mauritshuis



Fig. 10 Detail of fig. 9, the 'Pantheon'



Fig. 11 Detail of fig. 8, the 'Pantheon'

conversation pieces for visitors to the house.

On the basis of this exciting and stimulating idea it follows that Jaffé's dating of c. 1625 should be reconsidered, and that a dating immediately following the purchase of Carleton's collection in 1618, when the Pantheon was built, is historically a far more logical option. Obtaining such a treasure so suddenly must have inspired the never-tiring Rubens to indulge even more in the world of antiquity so dear to him. That the present ovals are the result of that intense period seems not only historically and stylistically more apt, but all the more logical since around the same time Rubens also contributed a *Julius Caesar* (now in Brandenburg), to a series of the twelve Roman emperors ordered by the House of Orange, for which the best painters of the time were commissioned, among others Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), Abraham Janssens (1567-1632), Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-1629) and Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656).[25] Datable to 1619, the Brandenburg *Julius Caesar*, albeit of a larger format, shares much in common with the *Julius Caesar* belonging to the present oval series (fig. 7a), suggesting a similar dating. Yet – quoting Jonckheere – although the Brandenburg *Julius Caesar* 'is doubtlessly related to Rubens's intimate oval portraits, it lacks the finesse enlivening those little sketches.'[26]

JH

Notes

1 Sold with certificates by Wilhelm von Bode and Ludwig Burchard. See Jonckheere 2016, p. 113, note 1.
2 See for this so-callled 'Stuttgart series' Jonkheere 2016, pp. 84-104, cat. nos. 21-38.
3 E. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 14 vols., Antwerp 1984-2009, 14 (2009), p. 175, provides an index with mentions of the subject in Antwerp inventories. See for a more elaborate and annotated overview of Emperor series in different media in Antwerp J. Hillegers, in J. Hillegers et al., *Salomon Lilian Old Masters 2013*, Amsterdam 2013, pp. 80-83, cat. no. 20, Otto van Veen, *Nero*; Jonkheere 2016, pp. 88-89.
4 M. van der Meulen, *Rubens : Copies after the Antique* (*Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* 23), 3 vols., London 1994, 1, pp. 25-39, 'Introduction'.
5 See J.M. Muller, 'Rubens's Theory and Practice of the Imitation of Art', in: *The Art Bulletin* 64 (1982), pp. 229-247; J.M. Muller, 'De verzameling van Rubens in historisch perspectief', in: K. Belkin, F. Healy, *Een huis vol kunst : Rubens als verzamelaar*, exh. cat. Antwerp, Rubenshuis 2004, pp. 10-85, p. 19.
6 Jonckheere 2016, pp. 35-37.
7 Jonckheere 2016, p. 41.
8 Restoration carried out by Studio Redivivus, The Hague. Report available at request.
9 The fact that Suetonius' father was an officer in the army that was defeated by Vitellius' army at Bedriacum might explain certain biases.
10 Jonkheere 2016, p. 106, describes Vitellius' physiognomy as 'fairly sympathetically limned'. I fail to see much sympathy in these features.
11 See A.N. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, 'A Creative Misunderstanding', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 23 (1972), pp. 3-12.
12 Van der Meulen 1994, 2, pp. 150-151, cat. no. 131. See also Jonckheere 2016, fig. 120.
13 Van der Meulen 1994, 2, p. 215 argues for an Italian dating, whereas Jonckheere 2016, p. 88 suggests a dating c. 1598-1600.
14 See Libby, op. cit.
15 Jaffé 1971, p. 294, fig. 1.
16 See for this series Jonckheere 2016, pp. 104-115, cat. nos. 39-50. It has rightly been pointed out by some authors that some identifications of Emperors from this series might have been mixed up over time. See, for instance, Haverkamp-Begemann, in: Rotterdam 1953-1954, p. 69; Wieseman, in: Greenwich/Berkeley/Cincinnati 2004-2005, p. 150.
17 Jaffé 1971, p. 300.
18 Jonckheere 2016, pp. 40-48, 104-107.
19 See E. McGrath, 'The Painted Decorations of Rubens's House', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), pp. 245-277.
20 Quoted from Jonckheere 2016, p. 44.
21 B. van Beneden, in: B. Uppenkamp, B. van Beneden, *Palazzo Rubens : de meester als architect*, exh. cat. Antwerp, Rubenshuis 2011, pp. 13-20.
22 See J.M. Muller, 'Rubens's Museum of Antique Sculpture: An Introduction', in: *The Art Bulletin* 59 (1977), pp. 571-582; Muller 2004, pp. 43-48.
23 Muller 1977, pp. 581-582, Appendix, the lists name busts of 14 of the 18 first imEmperors (including Julius Caesar). Missing are Vespasian, Titus, Nerva and Commodus. The Vitellius is found in crate 28, no. 11.
24 J. von Sandrart, *L'Academia Tedesca* della Architectura Scultura e Pittura oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, 3 vols., Nuremberg/Frankfurt 1675-1680, 2 (1679), p. 292.
25 See Jonckheere 2016, pp. 115-118, cat. no. 51.
26 Jonckheere 2016, p. 41.

cat. no. 15

Cornelis Saftleven
Gorinchem 1607 – 1681 Rotterdam

A Sabbath Scene

Oil on panel
46 x 75 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection

Literature:
Unpublished

Cornelis Saftleven was born into a family of artists, including his father Herman Saftleven (c. 1580-1627) and his brother Herman (c. 1609-1685).[1] After training in Rotterdam with his father, Cornelis travelled to Antwerp in around 1632. Among his earliest works are portraits and peasant interiors influenced by Adriaen Brouwer (1605/06-1638). In 1634 Cornelis was in Utrecht, where his brother Herman was living, and the two began painting stable interiors, a new subject in peasant genre painting. By 1637 Cornelis had settled in Rotterdam, where he became Dean of the Guild of St Luke thirty years later, in 1667. His subject matter was varied, ranging between rural genre scenes to portraits, beach scenes, biblical and mythological themes. The artist's extraordinarily individual images of Hell and the supernatural realm are arguably his most individual contribution to Dutch painting. Equally innovative were his satires and allegories. Saftleven excelled at painting animals which he often portrayed as active characters, occasionally with a hidden allegorical role. As a draftsman, Saftleven is best known for his black chalk drawings of single figures, usually young men, and his studies of animals, which show Roelandt Savery's (1576-1639) influence. About two hundred of his oil paintings and five hundred drawings survive.

The present painting depicts the practice of sorcery and superstitious imaginings, and is an outstanding example of Cornelis Saftleven's innovative work in a traditional Netherlandish genre. We are witness to a scene on the shore of a river or sea, dominated by a kneeling sorcerer and a satyr with butterfly-like wings mounted on a fantastical, skeletal steed which appears to wear its windpipe on the outside. At the creature's





Fig. 1 Detail of cat. no. 15

feet, the sorcerer, absorbed in his incantations, is surrounded by human remains placed in a magic circle around him, including skulls and bones, as well as a glass flagon, a ceremonial sword and a broomstick, preventing the demons from entering the realm of divine power. An open spell book is propped up in front of him as he pours blood (presumably) from a scabbard into a hollowed out recess in the sand. The sorcerer is attended by cats, a dog and several demons. An impressive demon from whose brow a great ray of fire streams out into the sky, stares out at the beholder while another demon holds an extinguished candle. Beneath the arc of fire there appear to be faint Hebrew characters which are not however decipherable. In the background several anthropomorphic creatures enliven the scene, some in boats and others dancing in the water, possibly alluding to the River Styx across which souls were ferried to Hell. All the figures are all gathered for the Sabbath meeting. In an illuminated part of the dark sky an old man in a green cloak is carried aloft by demons (fig. 1). Although the meaning of this scene is ambiguous, an interpretation is tempting. He is likely to be Saint Anthony, who according to medieval lore was tormented by demons. An engraving by Martin Schongauer (c. 1450-1491) shows an early representation of this subject dating to circa 1480, which is clearly comparable to the scene in the present work (fig. 2). In this engraving several demons are trying to pull the saint out of the sky, attacking his practice of rigorous asceticism. The satyr so prominently portrayed might also allude to Anthony, for another story recounts the saint's meeting in the desert with that mythological creature. On the other hand, the old man borne aloft in our painting may also represent Saint James, attacked by demons conjured by Hermogenes the magician; the latter would therefore be the sorcerer in the magic circle in the foreground. This iconography is visualized by Saftleven's contemporary Leonard Bramer (1596-1674) in his *Saint James and Hermogenes the Magician* (fig. 3). Beliefs in astrology and alchemy, as well as superstitious fear of necromancy and the hybrid forms of the monsters seem to embody the painting's obscurity and ambiguity.

Saftleven's paintings of witchcraft demonstrate his familiarity with similar works by David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690) and David Rijckaert III (1612-1661), as well as with literature relating to witchcraft. It was probably the influence of Teniers and Rijckaert that Saftleven chose to include the occult in his paintings. These works are macabre, entertaining and all the more intriguing for their rarity in his oeuvre - he only produced a small group of paintings depicting this theme. Indeed, Saftleven's particular contribution to Dutch painting consists precisely in this small group of works. Pioneered by Hieronymous Bosch (1450-1516) and given new life by Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) and Jacques de Gheyn the Younger (1565-1629) a century later, such morbid subjects were aimed at an audience of sophisticated collectors. Saftleven's work is included in major museum collections; *A Witches' Sabbath* and *The Temptation of St. Anthony* by Saftleven, both datable to around 1650, are in The Art Institute, Chicago (fig. 4), while a highlight in the collection of the Bowes Museum, Saftleven's *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, was John Bowes' earliest known acquisition of a painting (fig. 5). Comparing the subject as well as the stylistic features of our painting to these works, our painting was, in all probability, also executed in the early 1650s.

WWB



Fig. 2 Martin Schongauer, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, c. 1480, engraving, 29.4 x 20.9 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 3 Leonard Bramer, *Saint James and Hermogenes the Magician*, oil on slate, 41.4 x 51.5 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 26/27 January 2006, lot 101



Fig. 4 Cornelis Saftleven, *A Witches' Sabbath*, c. 1650, oil on panel, 54.3 x 78.2 cm., Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago



Fig. 5 Cornelis Saftleven, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, oil on panel, 42.5 x 51.7 cm., Durham Barnard Castle, The Bowes Museum

Notes

1 For biographical references, see W. Schultz, in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols., New York 1996, 27, pp. 516-517.

cat. no. 15

Southern Netherlandish, c. 1550

Still Life of an Illuminated Manuscript

Oil on panel
70.5 x 65.5 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection since the nineteenth century

Literature:
Unpublished

Other versions:
Oil on panel, 66.7 x 66.7 cm., Poughkeepsie (NY), Vassar College, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Oil on panel, 70.2 x 65 cm., Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

Against a completely black background a monumental, illuminated book opens up, its leaves fanning open. It leaves no shadow, there is no desk, no lectern; just this large, impressive book, a timeless entity of itself, as if it had always been there and will be there for eternity. Its loose leather straps remind us that the book can be closed off, emphasising its precious content. As the pages are flicking open, we are granted a peep inside. We see beautiful calligraphy in black and red ink, handwritten in fictive Latin, with ornamented capitals and graceful descenders. Looking further, we recognise a music score. The last opened page shows us a fine illumination. Although partly obscured, a skull and a foot emerging from a red cloak readily identify the illumination as the Crucifixion of Christ with John the Evangelist standing beside the cross (fig. 1). The margin around it is decorated with gold leaf upon which exquisite strewn flowers and insects cast their shadows, some of which refer to the crucifixion, such as the columbine, which symbolises the Holy Spirit and the Passion, whereas the daisy was associated with the Virgin Mary, and the butterfly is an emblem for redemption and the human soul.[1] The book is thus a liturgical manuscript, most probably a missal, and from the specific style of the illuminations and margin decorations it becomes clear that it was produced in Ghent or Bruges around 1500-1520.[2] Containing prayers, texts and hymns required for the celebration of Mass throughout the year, the missal was essential to Roman Catholic liturgical practice.

The singular depiction of open liturgical books boasts a long pictorial tradition in Flemish art, with its roots in the early fifteenth century. Whereas previously books had been the steady attributes of scholars and



saints – exuding wisdom and authority – we come across an open prayer book as the central motif in the middle panel of the famous Merode Altar Piece of around 1427, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (fig. 2). Attributed to the Doornik workshop of Robert Campin (c. 1375–1444), the altarpiece, celebrated for its detailed observation and rich imagery, depicts the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, who is seated at an oval table, reading the open book in her hands. Placed exactly in between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary another book, its pages fanning open, is prominently displayed on the table, representing the word of God and the promise of redemption, embodied by the Annunciation of Christ (fig. 3). Further steps in emancipating books from larger compositions soon followed. In around 1445, Barthelemy d'Eyck (c. 1420-1470), also from the Southern Netherlands, depicted two separate book still lifes in the lunettes of the left and right wing panels to his *Aix Annunciation*, above the portraits of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah (fig. 4). And in around 1470-1480, an artist from the immediate circle of Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1400–1464) – himself a pupil of Robert Campin – painted a remarkable *Still Life with Books, Water Jug and Basin* on the reverse of a panel depicting the Virgin and Child in a landscape (fig. 5).[3]



Fig. 1 Detail of cat. no. 16, crucifixion



Fig. 3 Detail of fig. 2, book with flipping pages on the table



Fig. 2 Workshop of Robert Campin, *Merode Altar Piece*, c. 1427, oil on panel, 64.5 x 117.8 cm., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig.4 Barthélémy d'Eyck, *Still Life with Open Book*, c. 1445, oil on panel, 30 x 56 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (originally part of the left wing panel, now in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam)



Fig. 5 Circle of Rogier van der Weyden, *Still Life with Books, water Jug and Basin*, c. 1470/80, oil on panel, 21 x 14 cm., Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

In Renaissance Italy a similar emancipation of still life elements, with a prominent place for books, is seen in the art of *intarsia*, or wood inlaying. Possibly the most magnificent example of *intarsia* is the famous *Studiolo* from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio, ordered by *condottiere* and humanist Federico de Montefeltro in 1478 and displayed in its entirety in the Metropolitan Museum.[4] In the context of a pre-eminently intellectual, learned surrounding, the *intarsia* of the *studiolo* creates the illusion of a library packed with books and instruments. It features numerous outstanding book still lifes, with some books seemingly piled up in feigned cabinets, others singled out on a lectern (figs. 6, 7). Most of all, the *intarsia* of the Gubbio *studiolo* shares with the Lilian work its *trompe l'oeil* effect, the optical illusion created to deceive and entertain the viewer. This specific quality, which evolves around the artist's special abilities to fool the eye, has been central to the art of painting since antiquity. Doubtlessly the most famous anecdote in this respect is Pliny's (AD 23/24-79) account of the painting contest between Zeuxis and Parrhasius. When Zeuxis unveiled his work – a painted bunch of grapes – the fruit looked so lifelike that birds flocked to it. Overconfident following his success, Zeuxis then asked Parrhasius to push aside the curtain in front of his (i.e. Parrhasius') painting. However, this curtain turned out to have been painted. Zeuxis admitted that he had been outdone, because he had only deceived the birds, but Parrhasius had deceived him, a human being and a painter to boot.

The Lilian painting is a synthesis of these developments and concepts: it reflects both the intellectual, scholarly and religious revaluation of knowledge so essential to the Renaissance, and simultaneously fits in with the artistic developments of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century when the meticulous rendering of reality led to the rebirth of *trompe-l'oeil*, and the singling out of motifs that had previously been part of larger compositions and themes led to the birth of new genres. In painting, the Flemish masters of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were the first to adopt the still life as a subject for their works, thus paving the way for the popularity and spread of a genre that was to reach new heights in the seventeenth century.

Judging the style of the flower strewn border and the fanciful descenders on some of the letters, the manuscript depicted in the Lilian work can, as mentioned above, be identified as a product of the Ghent-Bruges school, a movement in manuscript illumination that developed in the Southern Netherlands during the later fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century led by a group of manuscript illuminators and scribes who were principally active in the Flemish cities of Ghent and Bruges. Among the best known of these illuminators are masters such as Lieven van Lathem (1430-1493), Gerard Horenbout (c. 1465-1540/41) Alexander Bening (d. 1518/19), his son Simon Bening (1483/84-1561) and the latter's

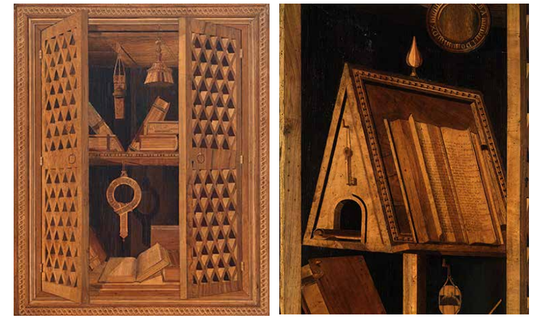


Fig. 6, 7 Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, *Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio*, c. 1478, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 8 Simon Bening, *Crucifixion*, c. 1520, illumination, in: Manuscript MS M.307, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

daughter Levina Teerlinc (c. 1515-1576). In fact, the illuminations seen in our manuscript show clear parallels to the work of Simon Bening. A manuscript illuminated by him, containing a similar crucifixion with comparable floral motifs and insects in its margin, is kept at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (fig. 8).

The previously unrecorded Lilian work now joins two other versions of the same composition and similar size that were already known, one in the Uffizi in Florence, the other in the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie (NY) (fig. 9).[5] In the past, these two versions have sometimes been attributed to either the German painter Ludger tom Ring the Elder (1496-1547), or his son, Ludger tom Ring the Younger (1522-1584), due to a small detail in the fictive text supposedly reading 'Ludevi Rinki'. The attributions to both Ring generations have, however, rightly met with scholarly scepticism.[6] To the rejection on formal and stylistic grounds one might add that neither father nor son Ring ever signed in this way; moreover, the Latin translation of 'Ring' is 'circulum', not 'Rinki'. Rather, the anonymous painter of these works should – in line with the book's Flemish origin – be sought in the Southern Netherlands, around the mid sixteenth century.

In addition to the painting's aesthetic qualities, the present work contains a deeper spiritual, religious dimension. In order to clarify this, it is useful to take a closer look at the skull lying underneath the cross, a common motif in crucifixion scenes. We might understand the skull to be an allusion to the fact that Christ was killed on Golgotha, which means the Place of the Skull, or regard it as a *vanitas* allusion to the phrase 'Memento mori', 'remember that you have to die', and Christ's subsequent resurrection. Surely these associations are valid and correct, yet the skull that we see is – quite literally – that of Adam, the first man. Ancient Jewish traditions assume that Adam was buried just outside of where the city Jerusalem was to be founded, and that Calvary (Golgotha) is near that place. St. Jerome, in 386 A.D., wrote in a letter that Adam was buried near Christ. Legend holds that the skull of Adam was lifted up in the earthquake that erupted after the crucifixion. Tellingly, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem has a chapel for Adam exactly one floor below the altar of the crucifixion.

Whereas Adam committed the original sin, which affected mankind ever since, Christ – as a second Adam in the typological sense – redeems his forefather. His blood washes us all clean from Original Sin and we

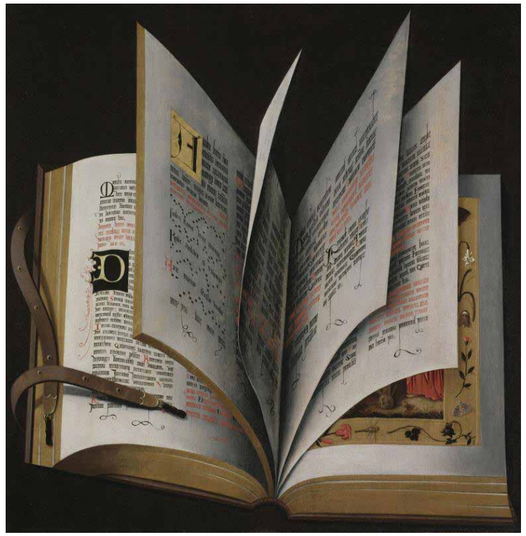


Fig. 9 Southern Netherlandish, c. 1550, *Still Life of an Illuminated Manuscript*, oil on panel, 66.7 x 66.7 cm., Poughkeepsie (NY), Vassar College, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center

are free to be with God in Paradise once more. The skull at Christ's feet is thus an extra reminder that we are redeemed and that our sins are washed clean, through Jesus' sacrifice. The key to understanding the present painting is the movement we sense in the work. While the painting appears to be an early version of a 'snap-shot' it is really quite fluid. Not only does the composition make one's eyes dart about, taking in each element of the colourful missal, but it is rendered as if someone has just tapped the front cover of the book, causing some of the pages to gracefully fan out from right to left. It is significant that the pages we can see on the left are covered with illuminated handwriting while the page on the farthest right is the aforementioned crucifixion scene. The idea that Christ had been prophesied in text and then manifested in flesh is thus symbolically rendered by the movement of pages in this seemingly straightforward painting of a liturgical text, as words become flesh. Thus, while the present work is an immensely beautiful painting, it is also a meaningful historical, cultural, and personal artefact, a true treasure.

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Notes

1 See J.O. Hand, in: Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, *Deceptions and illusions : five centuries of trompe l'oeil painting*, exh. cat. Washington, National Gallery of art 2002-2003, pp. 184-185, cat. no. 33.

2 I thank Till-Holger Borchert Director, Musea Brugge in Brugge (Bruges), Belgium, and Professor Sandra Hindman, president and founder of Les Enlumineurs, for confirming the book's origin from the Ghent-Bruges School, c. 1510.

3 See J. Giltaij, in: F. Lammertse et al., *Van Eyck to Bruegel 1400-1550 : Dutch and Flemish painting in the collection of the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen*, Rotterdam 1994, pp. 48-51, cat, no. 6.

4 See O. Raggio, *The Gubbio studiolo and its conservation*, 2 vols., New York 1999.

5 A composition showing an (unilluminated) book against a black background is found in another group of paintings, often said to be produced in Southern Germany during the first half of the sixteenth century. See A. Schneckenburger-Brosheck, *Altdeutsche Malerei : die Tafelbilder und Altäre des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts in der Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister und im Hessischen Landesmuseum Kassel*, Kassel 1997, pp. 269-284.

6 See A. Lorenz, *Die Maler tom Ring*, 2 vols., exh. cat. Münster, Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte 1996, 1, cat. no. 89 (Poughkeepsie version), 'Beide Zuschreibungen sind unwahrscheinlich'. See also S. Segal, 'Blumen, Tiere und Stilleben von Ludger tom Ring d.J.', in: Münster 1996, 2, pp. 109-149, pp. 144, 149, note 192.

cat. no. 17

Michael Sweerts
Brussels 1618 – 1664 Goa

Old Woman Spinning

Indistinct traces of a signature lower left
Oil on canvas
43 x 34 cm.

USA, private collection

Provenance:
London Matthiesen Gallery, 1984
Paris/New York, Haboldt & Co., 2001
California, private collection, acquired from the above

Literature:
M. Waddingham, in: *Apollo* 117 (1983) pp. 281-283, pl. I
R. Kultzen, in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 40 (1987) p. 211, n. 12, fig. 3
R. Kultzen, *Michael Sweerts : Brussels 1618 - Goa 1664*, Doornspijk 1996, pp. 24, 59, 96, cat. no. 31, ill.
G. Jansen, in: G. Jansen, P.C. Sutton, *Michael Sweerts (1618-1664)*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, San Francisco, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art 2002, pp. 71, 73, under cat. no. II, fig. II-I

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Michael Sweerts was still thought to have been a Dutchman.[1] Willem Martin, who published the first study on the painter in 1907, hailed him thus as the 'enigmatic Dutch Le Nain.'[2] However, Martin's wishful assumption was proven incorrect when Sweerts was later identified as the son of merchant David Sweerts and his wife Martynken Balliel from Brussels, where the painter was baptised on 29 September 1618. We only hear of Sweerts again in 1646 when he is documented as being in the Via Margutta in Rome. Nothing is known about any training, previous journeys abroad, or possible artistic output before that date, although it can be assumed that he had already arrived in Rome at an earlier date, since according to an acquaintance, he was well travelled and spoke seven languages.[3] Although not recorded as a member of the *Bentvueghels*, the society of Netherlandish artists in Rome, documents show that in 1646 he was entrusted with collecting contributions among the Netherlandish painters for the feast of St Luke, on behalf of the Accademia di San Luca. Mentioned as being in the Via Margutta until 1651, Sweerts enjoyed success during this period with paintings in a style that was close to the *Bambocciant*i, often choosing common-life local subjects and showing a special interest in depicting artist's studios, yet rendered with a solemn and slow monumentality that was completely his. In Rome he enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy Amsterdam Deutz brothers, who visited the city during their Grand Tour. Their inventories mention numerous pictures by Sweerts, among them their portraits, genre works and some self portraits by the painter.[4] Another important patron was the young nephew of Pope Innocent X, Prince Cardinal Camillo Pamphilj





Fig. 1-6 *Spinsters* by Michael Sweerts, from left to right, top to bottom:
1) oil on canvas, 41.5 x 33.5 cm., Germany, private collection; 2) oil on canvas, 41 x 33 cm., Rome, Capitoline Museum; 3) oil on canvas, 52 x 43 cm., Nimes, Musée des Beaux-Arts; 4) oil on canvas, 40 x 31.5 cm., private collection; 5) oil on canvas, 43 x 34 cm., Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum; 6) oil on canvas, 52.5 x 42.5 cm., Gouda, Museum Gouda

(1622-1666), who owned at least four paintings by Sweerts. It was in all probability through Camillo Pamphilj that *Cavaliere* Sweerts received his papal Knighthood. Pamphilj's account book shows that Sweerts performed other tasks for Pamphilj as well. In addition to painted scenery for a performance, the most interesting entry in the book is the last one, dated 21 March 1652, which mentions 'various amounts of oils used since 17th February in His Excellency's Academy'. From this and further circumstantial evidence, it has been concluded that Sweerts set up a painting academy in Pamphilj's palace.[5] Sweerts was back in Brussels at the latest by July 1655, when he stood as godfather to his nephew. A document of February 1656 indicates that he had set up another academy. However, as the document states that he had been running it for a long time ('ende nu lange tijt'), we can presume he had been back for a considerable period, a hypothesis also supported by Sweerts's collaboration with the Brussels painter Lodewijk de Vadder (1605-1655), who died in August 1655.[6] While establishing his ambitious academy, Sweerts suddenly decided to join the just-founded evangelical *Societé des missions Etrangères*, or French Missionaries, which is probably why he left for Amsterdam in 1660. As a farewell gift he donated his *Self Portrait* to the Brussels guild of St Luke at the beginning of that year. The diary of fellow missionary Nicolas Etienne, with whom Sweerts visited the churches and the poor of Amsterdam, describes Sweerts's life as 'tout extraordinaire et miraculeuse', and the artist as being a vegetarian, sleeping on the floor and sharing everything with others.[7] In December 1661 the missionaries sailed to Palestine, but during the trip Sweerts started to exhibit uncontrolled outbursts, finally leading to his dismissal from the mission at arrival in Tabriz (modern day Iran). The next we hear of is our painter's death in Goa, India, with the Portuguese Jesuits in 1664. He left behind an oeuvre of a little over 120 surviving paintings, only three of which are dated.

Among Sweerts' favourite themes is that of the spinster, of which no less than seven depictions by his hand exist, the present work included (figs. 1-6).[8] All are painted on canvas – five of nearly identical measurements (roughly the size of the present work), two slightly larger (c. 52 x 43 cm.) – and all are full frontal portrayals of women in dark interiors. Yet despite these similarities, all exude a distinctly personal character, as if the painter purposely meditated on the subject to fully grasp its essence. The present work seems to fit in to the early Roman period, at the beginning of Sweerts's career. Our lady is depicted in full length, while seated on a low wooden chair in what seems to be a simple, brick-floored interior. While the sleeve of her grey-green dress is enlivened with some red bows and a little gold embroidery, it is the lady's pristine white linen headscarf, and to a lesser extent her greyish-white apron, which stand out against the dark background. The canvas is cropped rather closely around her, her figure drawing a broad diagonal from top left to the bottom right. Crossing this diagonal at right angles is her distaff, which is tucked under her left arm. Meanwhile her left hand, on which we notice a beautiful ring, languidly twists the virgin wool into a thread, which she in turn winds onto a spindle with her right hand. As if interrupted in her monotonous labour by the beholder's presence, she has turned her head round to her right to regard us with a seemingly knowing smile. Her face looks older, but her features are delicate and her wrinkles are soft. Sweerts took great care in meticulously rendering them. Just as one wonders what to make of the spinning woman's faint smile, and of her sensitive eyes, our own eye is led beyond, towards the door that enigmatically opens to an adjacent room. We are not given much information; all we're allowed to see is a glimpse of a plain window with wooden shutters, through which unfiltered light floods in.

If compared to Sweerts's other renditions of spinning women, the formal overlap with the painting in a German private collection (figs. 1, 7), datable to c. 1648, is most apparent. The spinning woman in that work is similarly positioned within the picture plane, she likewise looks at the beholder, and the window in the wall reminds us of the vista through the opened door in the present work. However, in contrast to the subdued palette that characterises the Lilian work, a stronger emphasis on colour dominates this picture. In addition, the woman's more rugged physical appearance seems to indicate that she belongs to a different social sphere, which also goes for the woman depicted in the painting in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (fig. 5). The Cambridge painting and the present work, of identical size, share the same provenance. When these works were jointly discovered in 1983, they were considered a pendant set. On comparing these presumed pendants, Sweerts expert Rolf Kultzen, observed the 'well-to-do affluence' of the present spinning woman, versus the 'meagre poverty' of the Fitzwilliam spinster.[9] While this may be a slight over-polarisation, the latter's dress surely identifies her as a '*contadina*', an Italian peasant woman, in whose leathery face we can read a life of work in the countryside. The same woman was again portrayed by Sweerts as the spinster in a work in a private collection, this time holding a dry loaf of bread (fig. 4).

Although the present work and the Fitzwilliam painting were seen as pendants around the time of their discovery and publication – and were

still considered as such by Kultzen in his 1996 monograph on Sweerts – it seems that the works lack true compositional counterbalance, as one would expect. The spinsters' proportions in relation to the picture plane, and their respective positions in relation to each other, do not necessarily support the view that they were originally intended to belong together. That Sweerts in fact did produce pendant pairs that included spinsters is, however, proven by the afore mentioned *Spinning Woman* in a German collection, which is accompanied by a *Man Drinking* (figs. 7, 8), and Sweerts' *Spinning Woman* in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, whose pendant is an *Old Peasant* in the same collection (figs. 9, 10). Both pairs are compositionally and proportionally fitting, and clearly correspond with each other, as one would expect. The combination presented by Sweerts in the first pair – that of a laborious spinster versus a drinking slacker proposing a toast – seems to deliberately play with the opposition of the virtue of diligence versus the vice of sloth or intemperance. Indeed, the pictorial history of Diligence as an allegorical figure shows that artists did depict her (Diligence) as a spinster (fig. 11). Yet one should be cautious in equating specific pictorial motifs too easily with certain (allegorical) meanings.[10] After all, the strong opposition of the former pendants is largely absent in the latter pair. The Capitoline old peasant (or is he rather a traveller?) can hardly be accused of undesirable behaviour, as he simply eats his bread. Basically, he and the spinster are merely representatives of the common people that populate Sweerts's art, a theme that he had already been familiar with back in Flanders, and to which he was reintroduced in Italy through the work of the *Bamboccianti*, the painters of unadorned Italian low-life genre, headed by Pieter van Laer (1599-1641/42) alias 'Bamboccio' (big baby). Sweerts surely picked up themes and elements from Van Laer and his followers (who found an eager buying public among the Roman élite), yet even in his early pictures – such as the present painting – he displays a serenity alien to their work. Just as much as a representation of virtue or diligence – elements that are certainly at play – the Lilian spinster is a quiet ode to quotidian beauty.



Fig. 7 Michael Sweerts, *Spinster*, oil on canvas, 41.5 x 33.5 cm., Germany, private collection



Fig. 8 Michael Sweerts, *A Man Drinking*, oil on canvas, 42 x 36 cm., Germany, private collection



Fig. 9 Michael Sweerts, *Old Peasant*, oil on canvas, 42.5 x 34.5 cm., Rome, Capitoline Museum



Fig. 10 Michael Sweerts, *Spinster*, oil on canvas, 41 x 33 cm., Rome, Capitoline Museum



Fig. 11 Crispijn de Passe after Maerten de Vos, *Landscape with Father Time and Diligence*, c. 1600, engraving, 21.6 x 25.7 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Notes

1 P.C. Sutton, 'Introduction', in: Amsterdam/San Francisco/Hartfort 2002, pp. 11-24, p. 12. For Sweerts' biography, see mainly Kultzen 1996, pp. 1-11, 'Life History'; J. Bikker, 'Sweerts's Life and Career – A Documentary View', in: Amsterdam/San Francisco/Hartfort 2002, pp. 25-36.

2 W. Martin, 'Michiel Sweerts als schilder. Proeve van een Biografie en een Catalogus van zijn schilderijen.', in: *Oud Holland* 25 (1907), pp. 133-156, p. 134. For Sweerts's historiography, see Kultzen 1996, 'Introduction', pp. XV-XX.

3 Kultzen 1996, p. 81, appendix G; Bikker 2002, pp. 25, 27 convincingly suggests that Sweerts might be identified with a 'Michele' who lived in the same Via Margutta in 1640. In this respect, Bikker points to the fact that Jan Six owned two works by Sweerts, which he might have bought in Rome during his grand Tour, c. 1641/43.

4 J. Bikker, 'The Deutz brothers, Italian paintings and Michiel Sweerts : new information from Elisabeth Croymans's Journael', in: *Simiolus* 26 (1998), pp. 277-311, pp. 283, 293.

5 See the recent L. Yeager-Crasselt, *Michael Sweerts (1618-1664) : shaping the artist and the academy in Rome and Brussels*, Turnhout 2015.

6 Bikker 2002, p. 32.

7 See Kultzen 1996, pp. 77-83, Appendixes, for source documents.

8 Kultzen 1996, cat. nos. 9, 11, 25, 29, 30, 31, 65.

9 Kultzen 1987, p. 211.

10 See for this analysis G. Jansen, in: Amsterdam/San Francisco/Hartfort 2002, cat. no. I.

cat. no. 18

Philips Wouwerman
1619 – Haarlem – 1668

A Cavalry Fight

Signed with monogram lower left: PHSW
Oil on canvas
54.5 x 67 cm.

Provenance:
London, collection George Field, Esq. (1777-1854), by 1853
His sale, London, Christie, Manson & Woods, 10 June 1893, lot 43
Paris, Galerie Charles Sedelmeyer, 1895
Sale Paris, Charles Sedelmeyer, 25 May 1907, lot 209
Paris, art dealer Paul Mersch, May 1909
Paris, private collection

Literature:
British Institution : Catalogue of the Ancient Exhibition, London 1853, p. 11, cat. no. 112
W. Bürger, *Trésors d'Art en Angleterre*, Paris 1857, p. 300
G.F. Waagen, *Galleries and cabinets of art in Great Britain: being an account of more than forty collections of paintings, drawings, sculptures, mss., &c. &c.* (suppl. of G.F. Waagen, *Treasures of art in Great Britain*, 3 vols., London 1854), London 1857, p. 193
G.F. Waagen, *A walk through the Art-Treasures exhibition at Manchester : a companion of the official catalogue*, London 1857, p. 33, cat. no. 981
Anon., *Illustrated Catalogue of the second hundred of Paintings by Old Masters [...] belonging to the Sedelmeyer Gallery*, Paris 1895, p. 59, no. 51
C. Hofstede de Groot, *A catalogue raisonné of the works of the most eminent Dutch painters of the Seventeenth Century*, 10 vols., London 1907-1928, 2 (1908), p. 505, no. 780
B. Schumacher, *Philips Wouwerman (1619-1668) : The horse painter of the Golden Age*, 2 vols., Doornspijk 2006, 1, p. 273, cat. no. A257; 2, pl. 239

Exhibited:
London, British Institution, 1853, no. 112
Manchester, *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, 1857, no. 981
London, British Institution, 1866, no. 76



In this powerful and wonderful preserved work from about 1655, Wouwerman depicts a violent skirmish between Dutch and Spanish soldiers. As the fierce confrontation rages on, dead bodies of soldiers and horses lie strewn on the ground. Instead of extolling the heroism of military exploits, Wouwerman bears witness to a brutal display of human violence and the suffering that results. For all of the cold realism of the subject matter, Wouwerman painted this scene with a remarkably subtle palette and close attention to detail. Every element is carefully integrated into a dynamic composition that displays his considerable artistic skill at perspective and lifelike representation of bodies in motion. The figures shooting from the fields also suggest there are bandits ambushing a group of travelers coming by in wagons, depicted in the middleground. These kind of battle scenes by Wouwerman are collected in many public collections in the world.[1]

In his early career Wouwerman already specialized in expressive depictions of military encounters. Wouwerman's dynamic vision of men and horses in the midst of battle seems to have been inspired by pictorial sources, which he would have known primarily through prints. Chief among these was Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630), whose etchings of battle scenes featuring rearing horses and close combat were widely circulated and enormously influential during the early seventeenth century. The first representations of violent attacks in painting, appear in the paintings of the Flemish painters Gillis Mostaert (1528-1598), David Vinckboons (1576-1631) and Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573-1647). In the North, especially some painters from Haarlem, like Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630), Pieter van Laer (1599–1642) and Wouwerman, favoured the subject. The dramatic poses of men and horses also recall the oeuvre of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). Images of warfare had a long tradition in Netherlandish painting, from sixteenth-century representations of peasant revolts to the various combat scenes that were popular during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). For Wouwerman, this long-drawn-out and devastating war may have become a particularly contemporary subject following his short period of study in northern Germany in 1638–1639, where he may have witnessed or heard firsthand accounts of the armed conflicts in that country.

Philips Wouwerman was a prolific artist, producing more than one thousand paintings during his lifetime.[2] The artist enjoyed a successful career as a painter during his lifetime, but his works enjoyed even greater popularity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century amongst aristocratic collectors, reflected in collections of major museums in St Petersburg, Dresden and The Hague, all of which contain a large number of his works. He is particularly associated with painting horses, which feature in hunting scenes, cavalry battles and views of army camps. Philips Wouwerman was the eldest son of Pouwels Wouwerman (d. 1642) and his fourth wife, Susanna van den Bogert. Philips may have had his first painting lessons from his father. According to the writer Cornelis de Bie (1627-1711/16), Philips was next apprenticed to Frans Hals' (1581/5-1666) studio, although there is no visible influence of Hals' style in Wouwerman's work. According to the German painter Mathias Scheits (1625/30-c.1700), Philips worked for some weeks in Hamburg in 1638 or 1639, in the studio of the German history painter Evert Decker (d. 1647). In 1640, the artist returned to Haarlem where he entered the Guild of St Luke.

WWB

Notes

1 Schumacher 2006, 1, pp. 262-272.

2 See: F.J. Duparc, 'Philips Wouwerman, 1619-1668', in: *Oud Holland* 107 (1993), pp. 257-286, no. 3.



Detail of cat. no. 18

Colophon

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