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onder redactie van het Kunsthistorisch Instituut
der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht

II



SEYMOUR SLIVE

REMBRANDT AND HIS CRITICS

1630 – 1730

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To Zoya

PREFACE

My greatest debt in the writing of this book is to my teacher Dr. Ulrich Middeldorf, who taught me the methodology of research in art history, and who guided my studies of art theory and criticism. This study, which in an earlier form was accepted as a doctoral dissertation by the University of Chicago, was begun under Dr. Middeldorf's guidance, and during all stages of its preparation I benefited from his invaluable suggestions and criticism.

A United States Government Grant enabled me to complete my researches on Rembrandt in the Netherlands, where I studied at the *Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht* with Dr. J. G. van Gelder, who was particularly generous with his knowledge and time. He read the manuscript and proofs, and offered numerous suggestions and additions which have been of great benefit to me. Special acknowledgement is made to the *Kunsthistorisch Instituut der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht* for generously finding a place for this study in the *Utrechtse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*. I am also much indebted to Dr. H. Schulte-Nordholt of the *Kunsthistorisch Instituut* for his valuable advice and his help in seeing the book through the press.

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Thanks is extended to the editors of the *Burlington Magazine* and the *Journal of the History of Ideas* for permission to reprint material published in their periodicals. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to all the museums and collectors who have given permission to reproduce works of art in their possession.

An effort has been made to transcribe literally, without amending idiosyncrasies of spelling, grammar, or punctuation, all the quotations in the text and notes which have been taken from 17th and 18th century sources.

POMONA COLLEGE
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S. S.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Bred. A. Bredius, *Rembrandts Gemälde* (Vienna: Phaidon Press, 1935).
- B. Adam Bartsch, *Catalogue raisonné de toutes les estampes qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt... composé par les sieurs Gersaint, Helle, Glomy et P. Yver* (Vienna: 1797).
- Hind Arthur M. Hind, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings*, 2d. ed., 2 vols, (London: Methuen and Co., 1923).
- HdG C. Hofstede de Groot, *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, vol. VI, (Stuttgart: Paul Neff, 1915).
- Smith John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*, vol. VII, (London: 1836).
- Thieme-Becker *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler*, edited by Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, 37 vols., (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1907-1950).
- Urk. C. Hofstede de Groot, *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt, (1575-1721)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1906).
- Wurzbach Alfred von Wurzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon*, 3 vols, (Vienna and Leipzig: Halm and Goldmann, 1906-1911).

INTRODUCTION

The Dutch have a quality which, according to an axiom of the atelier, makes them the ideal audience for the painter: they enjoy paintings with their eyes, not with their ears. They prefer to look at pictures rather than to write, read or talk about them.

J. Huizinga, the great Dutch historian of culture, views his countrymen as nominalists engaged in speechless, sceptical contemplation. This accounts, he adds, for their predilection for the visible picture as a means of expression as opposed to the word and explains the relative absence of drama, novels, memoirs and good personal letters in Holland. The Dutch seem to feel little need to put their personal experiences into closed intellectual or literary forms; they care little for ceremony or the formal compliment.¹

These national characteristics, if one is permitted today to speak of national characteristics, explain part of the joy which the 17th century Netherlander must have received from the numerous still lifes of every description, from the landscapes, seascapes, town views, genre scenes and portraits which he painted or saw and bought; but about which he seldom wrote or theoretized. It was enough simply to paint a picture or look at one; he felt no urge to use it as a point of departure for theoretical speculation. Moreover, we shall see that the kind of painting in which most Dutch artists excelled — still lifes, landscapes, genre scenes — did not lend itself to pre-eighteenth century general discussions on the art of painting.

Frits Lugt gives additional evidence for the Dutch antipathy toward closed systems in the field of art; he points out that in spite of Ploos van Amstel's advocacy in the 18th century for a Dutch equivalent of *Kunstwissenschaft*, not even the word ever took hold. The word *Kunstgelehrter*, so popular in neighboring Germany, has no Dutch equivalent. The Dutch only use the nouns *kunsthistoricus*, art historian, and *kunstkenner*, connoisseur. And Lugt, the Netherlander, does not attempt to generalize on his observations. He merely says: "This is very significant."²

At any rate, there can be no doubt that the people of the Netherlands were unusually inarticulate about their outstanding painters during the 17th century.

¹ J. Huizinga, *Holländische Kultur des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1933), 57—58.

² Frits Lugt, "The History of Art", an essay in *The Contribution of Holland to the Sciences*, a symposium edited by A. J. Barnouw and B. Landheer (New York: Querido, 1943), 184.

Houbraken did not publish his lives of the Dutch painters until 1718, almost half a century after the death of most of his country's great masters. No Dutch Leonardo left copious notes on his works and thoughts. More than a century's diligent research has not turned up a note written by Hals, Steen, Ruisdael or Vermeer.

No libretto was needed for most 17th century Dutch painting, and although all painting is mute it is possible to speak of the unique silence of Dutch painting. One need only recall that 17th century Dutch painters developed the first great school of still life painting, the most silent of all genres of painting. Dutch landscapes are hushed too. It is impossible to acknowledge tremendous skies or vast vistas if there is chatter. Emanuel de Witte found silence in church interiors; genre painters found it in kitchens, bed rooms or drawing rooms. Occasionally a lute or spinet is heard; but much more often we are in a silent interior watching an old woman praying, a servant girl peeling apples, a physician taking the pulse of a young girl or a lace maker busy at her pillow. The children painted by these artists have the unique ability of showing all the qualities which make them children except that of making noise. Their deportment, like their clothing, is a replica of that of their parents. However, the foremost master of silence, Vermeer, as the father of eleven children, apparently had little faith in the talent of children for silence; none appear in any of his genre scenes. Only Steen's children howl; they compensate for the reserve of their numerous peers.

A relative silence is found even in Dutch taverns and bordellos. Ostade in his youth had his Brouweresque moments, but in his middle and late works he tempered his initial noise and wildness. When we leave the carousers and drinkers for the streets and town views of Berckheyde or Van der Heyden we find them full of space, light and air; we then encounter a few scattered pedestrians, but never clamorous crowds. The marine painters prefer quiet, or at most moderate, seas to gales. Only a few represented battles at sea. Among the thousands of painters, and there were thousands, who worked in Holland during the 17th century, only a handful depicted clashing armies. The horrors of a bloody war of independence just won or an insurrection just quelled did not attract the quiet brush of the painter nor the contemplative eye of the patron.

As striking as the silence in 17th century Dutch painting is the reticence of the huge public which examined, bought and hung pictures in Holland during the 17th century. This factor must be borne in mind when the criticism of Rembrandt by his Dutch contemporaries is examined. However, the small

number of references to art by 17th century Dutch writers, artists and patrons must not be dismissed as merely an inherent cultural inhibition. There were a great number of reasons for the numerous 15th and 16th century Italian and 17th century French discussions on art, and one of them was certainly connected with the artist and his protagonist's struggle to prove that the artist was engaged in a liberal, not a manual art. But the Dutch 17th century artist who made revolutionary strides in the use of tonal painting, and who dismissed the pomp and rhetoric of traditional history painting still worked within the medieval framework of the guild. Even in Utrecht, the Dutch town which was closest to Italy, from the point of view of style, it was not until 1644 that the painters' guild of St. Luke petitioned to have its name changed to *Schilders-College* because of the *edelmoedig* character of the art of painting.¹ This was only a request for the change of a name. The first group of Dutch artists to show dissatisfaction with the old guild organization did so only fourteen years before Rembrandt died, when a group of artists in The Hague, in 1655, petitioned for exemption from the guild of St. Luke in order to form an Academy.² Before this time the Dutch artist, who was also frequently a stocking salesman, tavern keeper or tulip bulb specialist, was content with his membership in the guild which also included the embroiderer and wood carver.³ He was more interested in protecting his traditional rights and privileges than in theoretical discussions about the nature of art.

The relative reticence of both artist and patron in 17th century Holland is the main cause for the difficulty of arriving at definitive conclusions about what Rembrandt's contemporaries thought of his work.

One might ask: does it matter to us what Rembrandt's contemporaries thought of him? Is not the important question: what does Rembrandt mean to us today? After all we have his works and it is through the study of them that we must find the formal qualities which are the basis for our understanding of any work of art as an esthetic object. The conditions under which an art object came to be, its history, its effect upon the generation for which it was produced or upon succeeding generations are outside of the work of art *qua*

¹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1940), 130, note 1. G. J. Hoogwerff, *De Geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen en Zoon N.V., 1947), 108.

² Pevsner, *op. cit.*, 129—30; Hoogwerff, *op. cit.*, 191.

³ H. Floerke, *Studien zur niederländischen Kunst und Kulturgeschichte; die Formen des Kunsthandels, das Atelier und die Sammler in den Niederlanden von 15.—18. Jahrhundert*, (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1905), 87.

work of art. Agreed. However, even the formal qualities which are distilled out of a work of art must be interpreted and an analysis of what Rembrandt's contemporaries saw in his work will help us see it against the organic whole of the culture in which it was produced. Without attempting this task we run the danger of not seeing the work of art at all.

Although a formidable army of scholars and archivists has been busy for more than a century correcting the errors made by the 17th, 18th and early 19th century biographers of Rembrandt there is still great confusion about the work, life and character of Holland's greatest artist. To be sure we no longer find it necessary to debate whether or not Rembrandt van Rijn was ever christened Paul. We can also categorically assert that Rembrandt was not in Venice in 1638; and thanks to the recent research of Rembrandt students who proved that he was never in England we can even cautiously state that, as far as we know, Rembrandt never left his homeland.

Public museums and private collections opened to the public have made amateurs, as well as specialists, familiar with all phases of his work. Although there is no consensus on all aspects of his stylistic development there is certainly general agreement on its direction, from his early carefully finished works to his deeply moving and personalized paintings of the late fifties and sixties. With our highly refined historical sense we have no difficulty comparing him with Caravaggio, Rubens, Poussin or his Dutch peers, in order to set off the nature of his achievement. The literature devoted to Rembrandt would fill a good sized library. But the monumental catalogues raisonnés written on his paintings, etchings and drawings; the monographs devoted to his iconography as well as to his style; and the careful studies which have been made of the composition of the paint and type of varnishes he used, have done little to explode the legends which surround Rembrandt and his work.

The Ur-myth on Rembrandt states that Rembrandt was a howling success and amassed a tremendous fortune in Leiden and Amsterdam until 1642 when he painted the *Night Watch*, a group portrait of the civic guards who served under Captain Cocq. All Amsterdam was shocked, runs the tale, when Rembrandt delivered this painting. Such audacity! Rembrandt dared to attempt to change the traditional Dutch group portrait! The men who commissioned the painting were outraged by this unseemly hoax. Did they each pay Rembrandt one hundred guilders to be depicted as a dim piece of animated shade? No, this picture was unacceptable. The honest Dutchmen demanded that Rembrandt change the picture, or paint a new one or refund their money. Stubborn Rembrandt refused to listen to any of the complaints or suggestions of his

patrons. He was satisfied with his painting. He knew it was great. There was a tremendous scandal; therefore, from 1642 until his death in 1669 Rembrandt received few, if any, commissions. The *Night Watch* was cut down and hung on some obscure wall. This did not induce Rembrandt to change his way of painting. He realized that he was a misunderstood genius and refused to prostitute his art by catering to the tastes of the stupid, backward public. He spent his last years in the same fashion as Van Gogh, that other great Dutch master spent his life — misunderstood; without a friend or a guilder, or even a good piece of herring.

This biography makes a wonderfully romantic story and perhaps it finds wide acceptance today because of the current belief that it is in the nature of things that any great artist must be misunderstood by his contemporaries. There are good reasons for believing that the artist of today is suspect if he is popular. But is it impossible for us to imagine that there were periods in history when there was not an unbridgeable chasm between the artist and his public?

It is true that Rembrandt's *Night Watch* broke many traditions of 16th and 17th century Dutch group portrait painting;¹ but there is absolutely no evidence to support the assumption that his patrons were dissatisfied with the picture, and that it caused a tremendous shift in his fortune and social life.²

It is worth noting that the *Night Watch* did not receive its title until late in the 18th century. Before that time it was simply referred to as the portrait of Captain Cocq and his civic guards. As late as 1781 Sir Joshua Reynolds saw the canvas and commented upon it without giving it a special title.³ When in 1947 it was cleaned and stripped of its dark varnish and dirt it was promptly baptized the *Day Watch*. Seventeenth and 18th century writers called it

1 Cf. Alois Riegl, *Das holländische Gruppenporträt* (Reprint, Vienna: Oesterreichische Staatsdr., 1931), 192 f.

2 It is difficult to understand such statements as Elizabeth Gilmore Holt's in *Literary Sources of Art History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 430: "In 1642, the *Night Watch* was refused by its commissioners and a lawsuit was begun to recover the money paid the artist." A vast literature on this picture shows that there was no such refusal and no such lawsuit. Recent important contributions to the study of the *Night Watch* include A. van Schendel and H. H. Mertens, "De restauraties van Rembrandt's Nachtwacht," *Oud Holland*, LXII (1947), 1-52 and W. Martin, *Van Nachtwacht tot Feeststoet* (Amsterdam: Kosmos, 1947). Julius Held specifically called attention to the myth of the *Night Watch* in "Debunking Rembrandt's Legend," *Art News*, XLVIII (1950), No. 10, 21f.

3 Sir Joshua Reynolds, "A Journey to Flanders and Holland in the Year 1781", in *The Literary Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, edited by Henry William Beechy, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), II, 197. Reynolds doubted that Rembrandt painted the picture: "... it seemed to me to have more of the yellow manner of Boll (*Ibid*).

neither the Night nor the Day Watch for a very good reason: the men portrayed in the picture did not go out on night or day watches. They were members of a militia who were supposed to be ready to defend Amsterdam if the city was attacked. Dutch militia groups saw action during the 15th and 16th centuries. During the 17th century they were seldom needed for defense purposes. However, they did not dissolve, but continued as social organizations, and their time seems to have been divided between target practice and activities around a festive board.

None of the meagre evidence we have regarding the opinions of Captain Cocq and his guards on their group portrait indicates that they were displeased with Rembrandt's brilliant transformation of the relatively static traditional Dutch group portrait into a highly animated unified group. Cocq had a water color made of the painting for his family album around 1653 (fig. 34). No adverse comment was entered in the album; the picture was merely described.¹ Another small contemporary copy of the *Night Watch* by Gerrit Lundens, in the National Gallery in London, is further evidence of the picture's popularity. However, more substantial evidence can be submitted to demonstrate that the romanticized biography which uses the so-called *Night Watch* as its keystone is apocryphal.

In 1658 or 1659 Jan Pieterszoon Bronchorst and Claes van Cruysbergen, two men portrayed in the painting, testified before a notary that each man who figured in the composition paid Rembrandt about 100 guilders each, depending upon their position in the picture. Their testimony was given in order to support Rembrandt's contention that an assessment he had made of his estate was fair and just and not too high.² Their testimony makes three points clear. First of all, Rembrandt was well paid for this masterpiece. Bronchorst testified that Rembrandt received approximately 100 guilders from each man repre-

¹ The inscription reads: "Schets van de Schilderij op de groote Sael van de Clevener Doelen daerinne de Jonge Heer van Purmerlandt als Capiteijn, geeft last aen zijnen Lieutenant, de Heer van Vlaerdingen, om syn Compaignie Burgers te doen marcheren;" transcribed in *Urk.*, No. 139. Since the album became a closed book after Cocq died January 1, 1655, we can conclude that the watercolor was made before that date.

² *Urk.* 205 and 206 gives the text of the testimony given to support Rembrandt's contention that the assessment he made of his estate of 40,750 florins, in 1647, was correct. The issue was a crucial matter because of Rembrandt's declaration of bankruptcy in 1656. Rembrandt and Louis Crayer, the guardian of Rembrandt's son Titus, insisted that Titus' heritage, because he was a minor when his mother died, was 20,375 florins, that is, half of Rembrandt's estate. They wanted Titus to receive this money before any of Rembrandt's creditors received payment. The creditors were, of course, interested in proving that the assessment made in 1647 was too high. Crayer called witnesses, including Bronchorst and Cruysbergen, to prove that the estimate of 40,750 was not an exaggeration.

sented in the picture,¹ and Cruysbergen stated that Rembrandt was paid 1600 guilders for the "piece of painting."² Secondly, those who were in the picture knew what place they were going to occupy because they paid according to their position in the picture.³ There was, and is, nothing unusual about the subject of a portrait paying the artist according to whether a head, bust, half length or full length portrait has been executed. And finally, if Bronchorst and Cruysbergen were dissatisfied with their portraits, or if the members of their militia group were unhappy with the picture, they would not have testified for Rembrandt.

We also know that the painting was not hidden on some obscure wall. It was in the Kloveniersdoelen, a large new guild hall made for the civic guardsmen, with five other group portraits made by popular painters of the period,⁴ from the time it was finished in 1642 until it was moved in 1715 to the Town Hall of Amsterdam.⁵ No wall in either building can be considered obscure.

Although not all late 17th century critics applaud the *Night Watch* without reservation, available evidence proves that it received more praise than blame. And no evidence proves that it was responsible for a great shift in Rembrandt's popularity in 1642.

Then we may ask, just what did Rembrandt's contemporaries think of his work? Fortunately, there are some data which indicate how this question should be answered.⁶

¹ *Urk.*, 205: "...dooréén de somme van hondert guldens, d'een wat meer en d'ander wat minder, nae de plaets, die sij daer in hadden."

² *Urk.*, 206: "...dat het stuck schilderije staende op de Cleuveniersdoelen door den voorsz. Rembrandt van Rhijn geschildert, en daerin hy attestant mede is geconterfeijt, van schilderen wel heeft gekost de som van sestienhondert guldens."

³ Cf. note 1 above.

⁴ The pictures were painted by Bartholomeus van der Helst, Govert Flinck, Jacob Backer, Joachim von Sandrart and Nicolaes Elias; cf. W. Martin, *De Hollandsche Schilderkunst in de Zeventiende Eeuw, Frans Hals en zijn Tijd* (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1935), 218, fig. 123 for a reconstructed plan of the distribution of the paintings in the Kloveniersdoelen.

⁵ On May 23, 1715 the treasurers of the city of Amsterdam decided: "...het groote stuk schilderij van Rembrandts hangende op de saal van de Cloveniersdoelen schoon te maken en als dan hetzelfde te plaetsen op de Kreygsraatskamer van het Stadhuys;" *Urk.*, 402.

⁶ Although some new data have come to light since Hofstede de Groot published *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1906), the material he gathered remains the solid foundation upon which all studies of 17th and early 18th century Rembrandt criticism must rest. Two other studies have been made of Rembrandt's critics: Gerard Brom, *Rembrandt in de Literatuur* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1936), delivered as a lecture for the Allard Pierson Stichting; W. Martin, "Rembrandt en de Critiek 1630—1850," *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift XLVII* (1937), 225—239, delivered as a lecture for the Vereeniging Rembrandt. Also cf. J. Q. van Regteren Altena, "Rembrandt Verdichtsel," *Handelingen Ned. Philologen Congres XVII* (1937), 116—117.

CHAPTER I

AERNOUT VAN BUCHELL AND CONSTANTIN HUYGENS

When Aernout van Buchell, a jurist from Utrecht, was in Leiden in 1628¹ he wrote some notes on a few painters. This was not an extraordinary event in the life of the Utrecht jurist, for he began making notes on works of art and their creators when he was an eighteen year old student at the University of Leiden and he continued this practice until 1639. He probably intended to incorporate some of his notes into a book, *Res Pictoriae*, which would have been a valuable supplement to Karel van Mander's *Het Schildersboek* published in 1604. Van Buchell never published his notes.²

One of the notes written by Van Buchell in 1628 was a short Latin sentence: *Molitoris etiam Leidensis filius magni fit, sed ante tempus.*³ If van Buchell had Rembrandt in mind, and there is no reason to doubt it, when he wrote that the Leiden miller's son is highly, but prematurely, esteemed, he has the honor of having written the earliest extant judgement upon Rembrandt as a painter.

This short sentence, which does not even mention Rembrandt's name, is the beginning of the rivulet which late 19th and 20th century writers will turn into a roaring torrent of Rembrandt literature. In it we find two factors which later writers will expand: notice of Rembrandt's humble origin and an ambivalent attitude toward his work. Perhaps ambivalence is not the proper word to characterize the phrase *sed ante tempus*. It would be dangerous to try to squeeze too much out of this brief note on the twenty-two year old painter, for although Rembrandt already possessed some unusual qualities in 1628, it would not be difficult to defend the position that he was not yet a great master.

¹ Werner Weisbach, *Rembrandt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1926), 20, writes that Van Buchell was in Leiden on January 10, 1628. He gives no source for this date. G. J. Hoogewerff in his introduction to *Arnoldus Buchelius, "Res Pictoriae"* which he edited with J. Q. van Regteren Altena, *Quellenstudien zur Holländischen Kunstgeschichte* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1928), XV, 19, states: "In 1628 schijnt hij bijv. te Leiden geweest te zijn..." Van Buchell certainly was at Leiden in May, 1628 (*Ibid.*, 63). He made the remark on Rembrandt in the house of Theod. Schrevelius while visiting his collection.

² For a complete discussion of the history of Van Buchell's literary remains see Hoogewerff and Van Regteren Altena, *op. cit.*

³ *Ibid.*, 67. Also in *Urk.*, 14. G. v. Rijn, who first published this note, "Arent van Buchel's *Res Pictoriae*," *Oud Holland*, V (1887), 143—154, pointed out that the handwriting of the note corresponds to that of other notes written in 1628.

Nevertheless, in view of the fact that few 17th, 18th or even 19th century writers condemn or celebrate him without reservation, it is striking that these first words written about Rembrandt do not sing unqualified praise. For more than two centuries a tremendous "but" figures in the writings on Rembrandt. The reasons for this theme of simultaneous attraction and repulsion vary considerably. It would be ludicrous to attempt to hold Van Buchell responsible for setting the key for this ambivalent attitude on the basis of a single sentence which was not published until 1887.¹ Moreover, the writers who wrote immediately after Van Buchell composed his solitary sentence on Rembrandt did not mix censure with their praise of the painter from Leiden. They eulogized him.

According to Constantin Huygens, the Leiden miller's son definitely arrived just two or three years after Van Buchell wrote his note.

Constantin Huygens, one of the most outstanding men in the Netherlands during the 17th century, combined a life time of political service to his country with a mastery of all the polite accomplishments. In 1625, when he was twenty-nine years old, he became secretary to Stadholder Prince Frederick Henry, and he remained in the service of the House of Orange until his death in 1687. His activities outside the privy council include a lengthy correspondence with Descartes, verse written in Latin, French and his mother tongue, and translations of John Donne into Dutch. He was an accomplished musician; an athlete who dared to climb the spire of the cathedral of Strassburg; and a nature lover who admired the Rheinfall at Schaffhausen and the pines in the Giardino Giusti in Verona. He was also a dilettante of the arts.²

Between the years 1629 and 1631 Huygens began an autobiography, written in a rather personalized Latin, which among other things discusses painting.³

¹ G. v. Rijn, *op. cit.*

² *Catalogus der Bibliotheek van Constantyn Huygens verkocht op de Grootte Zaal van het Hof te 's-Gravenhage 1688* (The Hague: W. P. van Stockum and Son, 1903), which is a catalogue of some of the books Huygens owned at the time of his death, gives us an intimate glimpse into the intellectual life of this extraordinary man. The catalogue lists 2930 theological, jurisprudence and miscellaneous books. The titles listed under *Libri Miscellanei* include a catholic selection of classical authors and others range from *Tobacco Battered, and the Pipes Shattered* to Vasari, Serlio, Scamozzi, Junius, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Cervantes, Boyle and Kepler.

³ The manuscript, now in the Royal Library in The Hague, was written between May 11, 1629 and April, 1631. J. A. Worp first published part of the autobiography in *Oud Holland*, "Constantyn Huygens over de schilders van zijn tijd," IX (1891), 106-136, with a Dutch translation. Worp published the complete text in *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap*, XVIII (1897), 1-122; the references in our study refer to this transcription. An annotated Dutch translation of the entire autobiography was made

Huygens singles out Rembrandt and Jan Lievens, who worked together in Leiden until Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam in 1631, as artists worthy of special mention. The young, polished diplomat, who had already made a trip to Venice and three journeys to England, wrote that the miller's son Rembrandt and the embroiderer's son Lievens were already on a par with the most famous painters and will soon surpass them.¹ High praise for two young painters who were not yet twenty-five years old. This commendation becomes even more impressive when one learns how familiar Huygens was with the painters of his time, and how conscious he was of the great change which took place in Netherlandish painting during the first decades of the 17th century.

According to his own testimony, Huygens was interested in painting from his early youth.² Although his father approved of his studying drawing as one of the liberal arts, Huygens confessed that he painted in secret in order to prevent his father from learning that he neglected his other studies for painting.³ His fondness for art could not have come as a surprising shock to his parents, since his mother's brother was the miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel. Huygens writes that he was sent to study drawing with Hendrick Hondius because his father could not persuade their friend and neighbor Jacques de Gheyn II to give him instruction.⁴

He thought highly of the works of Hendrik Goltzius⁵ and Michiel Mie-

by A. H. Kan, *De Jeugd van Constantijn Huygens door hemzelf beschreven* (Rotterdam: Donker, 1946) which includes an essay by G. Kamphuis, "Constantijn Huygens als kunstcriticus," 141-147. Dutch scholars cannot be accused of overlooking the importance of Huygens as a source, but he has been neglected by others; Julius Schlosser, for example,

1 Worp, *op. cit.*, 76: "In triariis consulto reservavi nobile par adolescentum Leidensium, does not mention him in *Die Kunstliteratur*, (Vienna: Schroll, 1924). Also cf. *Urk.*, 18. quos aequare solos si dixero quae in tot magnis mortalibus portenta designavi, aliquid adhuc infra merita istorum statuero, si superaturos brevi, nihil spei addidero, quam de stupendis initiis prudentissimi quique praeceperunt."

2 *Ibid.*, 63: "Viderat, quo et Graeci procul dubio collimarunt et suâ, ut aiebat, imperitiâ didicerat fieri non posse, ut de pictura (nusquam non hodie obvia) quisquam vel modice iudicaret, qui manu non propriâ rudimenta artis quodammodo non tractasset. Viderat summos viros et ab omni maiore disciplinâ celeberrimos latis pro autoritate de picturâ sententiis, inter peritos derisui fuisse."

3 *Ibid.*, 65: "Ad colores patre nescio (utpote prae nimio studiorum avocamento haud facile permissum) quadriennio post convolare aggressus fui."

4 *Ibid.*, 64: "Ergo cum Iacobi Gheynii, artificis praestantissimi, sed, ut fortunâ tunc iam lautiore, institutionis suae nimis parci, operam frustra expetisset, Henricum Hondium elegit..." Cf. J. Q. van Regteren Altena, *The Drawings of Jacques de Gheyn* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1936), 14-22, for a discussion of Huygens' relationship with the De Gheyn family.

5 *Ibid.*, 69: "Post familiares Gheynios etiam Henricum Goltzium novisse gloriari, nisi id puero accidisset et miraculorum, quae in vitâ edidit, arbitro incapaci."

revelt,¹ but he applauded a new generation of painters. He considered Rave-
 steyn an old-fashioned portrait painter;² Hendrick Vroom was a great marine
 painter in his time, but he has been surpassed by Porcellis and others,³ and
 because of the great progress which painting has made, it is unfortunate that
 Cornelis van Haarlem was not born thirty years later.⁴ Hondius, he wrote,
 was not very competent at rendering the forms of objects which are seen in a
 landscape with light, fresh and lively lines, at which Netherlanders are most
 skillful; the drawing of his engravings is hard and tight and more suitable for
 depicting static objects than such things as grass, leaves, shrubs or the charm
 of ruins.⁵ Huygens criticized his master for his inability to depict what the
 great Dutch landscape painters represented in their work. He was well aware
 of the greatness of Netherlandish landscape painters of the early 17th century.
 One could fill a book with their names, he wrote; Poelenburgh, Uytenbroeck
 and Van Goyen are cited and special attention is called to Jan Wildens, Paul
 Bril and Esaias van de Velde.⁶ He made no distinction between artists who

1 *Ibid.*, 74: "Omnium in hoc genere (portrait painting) primatem Michaelem Mire-
 veldium nominare sufficiat, ne caeterorum ratio habeatur."

2 *Ibid.*: "Claruit hac picturâ, et adhuc superstes claret (egregius) concivis meus
 Paullus Ravesteinius, aliqua tamen se inferior, postquam ex Italia diu redux nobili ac
 recenti quondam genio vernaculum quiddam, quasi τῆς παλαιας ζύμης, immiscere
 coepit."

3 *Ibid.*, 70: "Eandem sortem Henricus Vromius natali suo debet, magni nominis in re
 marinâ artifex, sed Porcellio nunc, praeterquam aliis obscurioribus, tanto inferior, ut vix
 eodem spiritu nominandos existimen."

4 *Ibid.*: "Cornelium Harlemensem, Goltzii coetaneum et concivem, satis laudo, cum
 huic proximum recenseo. Sed quae nunc saeculi in picturâ felicitas est, minus huic bene
 fata voluissent, si tricennio posteriorem edidissent."

5 *Ibid.*, 64: "Ergo cum Iacobi Gheynii, artificis praestantissimi, sed, ut fortunâ tunc
 iam lautiore, institutionis suae nimis parci, operam frustra expetisset, Henricum Hondium
 elegit, quo ductore prima delineandi rudimenta inchoaremus, virum sane probum et
 lenitudine insitâ liberali adolescentiae idoneum, artis etiam suae non imperitum, sed, ut
 quod res est dicam, suae dumtaxat, non illius gnarum, quâ maxime opus habebamus;
 non illius, inquam, quâ hominum atque animalium formae statusque quilibet, arborum
 item fluviorum, montium et huiusmodi rerum campestrium figurae levi, florido vividoque
 ductu celeriter effinguntur, quo nunc artificio, si quisquam (nec veteres hic excipio)
 Belgae mei praestant; cuius vero habitu si destituatur quicumque rerum quarumlibet sive
 civilium, sive praesertim militarium functionem obiturus sit, operam sane luserit et infruc-
 tuosi laboris molestiam tulerit. Iam Hondii mei de vulgaribus chalcographi diversa facultas
 erat, caelatura durior, rigidi ductus et ad pylas, ad marmora et immobilia quaeque aedifi-
 ciorum exprimenda facti magis quam ut fluxa et mobilia ista, velut gramina, frondes,
 frutices, vel ruinarum in sua canitie ac deformitate elegantiam assequerentur. Neque
 prorsus tamen trimestre spatium, quo Hondio, ni fallor, operam dedi, perdidisse puto."

6 *Ibid.*, 70-71: "Ruralium pictorum (libet nempe sic appellare, qui sylvis praecipue,
 pratis, montibus pagisque operam dant) tam immensa in Belgio nostro ac praeclara seges
 est, ut, qui singulos commemorare curet, libellum impleat. Caeteris famae suae commissis,

worked in the north or south Netherlands. Wildens, a landscape painter of the Rubens school, is mentioned in the same breath with Esaias van de Velde who was one of the most important founders of the Dutch school of landscape painting.¹ According to Huygens these skillful painters lacked nothing in order to show the warmth of the sun and the movement caused by cool breezes.² It is in the representation of such things, Huygens feels, that the young painters will surpass their teachers.

Huygens seems to have recognized the possibilities of 17th century tonal painting and was not appalled by the departure from the manneristic mode. This stylistic change had its complicated roots in Italy where a similar shift took place two or three decades before Huygens wrote his autobiography. Italian Seicento critics and theoreticians also recognized the changes in style in Italian painting. Discussions of the merits of these new tendencies, Carraccesque and Caravaggesque, are to be found in their texts. Though there seems to have been a good market among the amateurs for works of the so-called Naturalists, the latter were apt to be rated lower from a strictly theoretical point of view than the Bolognese group. This was a consequence of the wide acceptance of a hierarchical arrangement of the genres of painting; the highest category was of course that of historical compositions, a fact which gave the Carraccesque style an advantage from the start, since its suitability for that purpose was generally agreed upon. In the dichotomy set up between the two groups it was pointed out that the strong, unnatural lighting used by the Caravaggio group and their dependence upon the model makes their work unsuitable for important compositions; while on the other hand, because the Caracci school selects and improves nature, gives no offence to decorum and employs more natural lighting, its method is perfect for serious, imaginative historical pieces.³

quâ profecto Poelenburgius, Uytembroeckius, Goyius aliique non proletariâ clarent, omnium instar duos, Iohannem Wildium, Esaiamque Veldium propono et Paulo Brillio, Belgae et ipsi, sed peregre vitâ functo, tantum non adaequo."

1 Wolfgang Stechow, "Esaias van de Velde and the Beginnings of Dutch Landscape Painting," *Nederlandsch Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 1947, 83-94, pointed out that Van de Velde's Summer and Winter pictures in the Mansi Collection in Lucca, dated circa 1615, accentuate his importance "as the founder of Dutch seventeenth century landscape painting."

2 Worp, *op. cit.*, 71: "Adeo sagacissimorum hominum operibus deesse ad veritatem nihil dixeris, nisi Solis teporem, et aurae motum."

3 The author is very much indebted to Mr. Denis Mahon who clarified, in an extremely interesting correspondence, the complicated question of the attitude of Italian amateurs and theorists toward the Caravaggesque and Carraccesque painters during the first third of the 17th century.

Although Huygens was keenly aware of the innovations which Dutch *rurales pictores* used to revolutionize landscape painting during the twenties of the 17th century, he would not have disagreed with his Italian contemporaries that *historiographici pictores* painted the most important scenes which artists could represent. No 17th century writer would have disputed this point. What is singular is the fact that Huygens did not demand that a certain *style* be employed when historical compositions were rendered. It is this which distinguishes him from the majority of his Italian contemporaries.

The Netherlands in his time, he stated, produced as many talented history painters as landscape artists. He lists the Utrecht Caravaggesques Honthorst, Ter Brugghen and Van Baburen to support his point. Van Dyck, Abraham Janssens, Everard van der Maes, Pieter Isaaksz, Lastman and Pynas are also cited. But Rubens is singled out as the greatest. Huygens calls him one of the wonders of the world who is learned in all branches of knowledge and who is a diplomat as well as a painter skilled in all genres of painting. The Rubens painting which he chooses to discuss, among the many he has seen, is a Medusa head which combines charm and horror, and because of the terror which it creates is usually covered with a curtain.¹

1 Worp, *op. cit.*, 71-73: "Quos historiographos pictores, nescio an parum proprie, nuncupare soleo, nec pauciores neque adeo minores Belgium meo saeculo edidit, ut Petrum Isacium, Lasmannium, Pinassium, Amstelodamenses, tum Blommartium, Honthorstium, Bruggium, Baburium, Ultraiectinos. Hagiensem Everardum Masiium, Antverpienses Snyderium, ζωγραφη, Abrahamum Ianssenium, Dyckium, alios plerosque summos artifices et mihi familiares nisi nomine tenuis non attingam; omnium coryphaeum et Apellem Petrum Paulum Rubenium inter orbis nostri miracula colloco, pictorem omnibus literis eruditum, quod Pamphili Macedonis supra elogium fuit, virum denique quem Hispaniae Principes reipublicae admovendo non soli natum pluteo docuerunt, sed et ampliora spatia laudis meritum divini ingenii dotes utilitati publicae imputare iusserunt, postquam oblectationem abunde procurasset. Non evasit sane Italorum invidiam, at neque, si diis placet, Britannorum, qui coemendis tabulis, exoticis peritiam de Rubenio iudicandi adeptos se praesumunt. Sed has nebulas quoties suo sole non discussit! Equidem sic semper statui, non extare, ne extra Belgium quidem, nec facile extitutum, qui vel inventionis copiâ, vel formarum audacissimâ venustate, vel omnium picturae generum perfectâ varietate conferri cum isto mereatur. Nam et regiunculis, nuper in secessum ruris a contagio urbis exactus, pari ubertate ac gratiâ operam dedit. Quanti voluminis argumentum sit, quae pernicillo solus edidit, stylo assequi? Certe nec huius operae capacem ullum existimo praeter ipsum Rubenium, quem hanc tabularum suarum tabulam, optimam sui effigiem, orbi dedicare saepius optavi, nec, si amicitia viri, quam temporum calamitas hactenus invidit, uti potuissem, monere desiissem. De multis unam videor mihi perpetuo ob oculos habere, quam inter magnificam suppellectilem vir amicus Nicolaus Sohierus Amstelodami spectandam aliquando exhibuit; Medusae abscissum caput est, anguibus, qui de capillitis nascuntur, implicatum. In eo pulcherrimae mulieris gratiosum adhuc, et recenti morte tamen foedis-simorumque reptilium involucro horridum aspectum tam ineffabili industriâ miscuit, ut subito terrore percussum spectatorem (velari nempe tabella solet) ipsâ tamen rei diritate,

Huygens' eulogy of Rubens is an indication of his freedom from a bias which dictated a specific style for a specific subject. The absence of this bias helped Huygens write that soon Rembrandt and Lievens would surpass their contemporaries.

Huygens mentions the humble origins of both Rembrandt and Lievens and makes much of this fact. To him their low birth is superb proof against the argument that "noble blood" is superior to "ordinary blood." To bolster his argument he cites the report of Trajano Boccalini, an Italian satirist, who wrote that when a group of doctors dissected the corpse of a nobleman in order to examine his blood, they discovered that it did not differ from that of a common burgher or farmer. Thus nobility is not a function of blood or birth.¹ Huygens also adds that neither of the young artists is indebted to his parents for his talent. It would be a mistake to conclude that Huygens underlined the artists' humble origins because of particularly democratic currents in 17th century Dutch thought. Biographers of artists have been content to accept the fact that nature can distribute artistic gifts without checking the income or social status of the recipient at least since Ghiberti wrote in his *Second Commentary* that Giotto, when but a lad, was discovered by Cimabue while drawing sheep on a stone.² Vasari informs us of the modest beginnings of Fra Filippo Lippi, Castagno, the Pollaiuolo, Mantegna, Perugino, Bramante, Andrea del Sarto and others. However, it is significant that in the numerous stories of boys from the lower classes becoming great artists a teacher is generally involved. According to Huygens, neither Rembrandt nor Lievens owes anything to his teachers. Although he does not name them, he states that they were quite ordinary because the artists' parents were poor and could not afford to send them to better ones. Furthermore, their teachers would be ashamed of themselves if

quod vividâ venustâque, delectet." The picture Huygens admired was probably similar to the *Medusa* in Vienna, reproduced in Rudolf Oldenburg, *P. P. Rubens, Klassiker der Kunst*, (5th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1921), 80; cf. J. G. van Gelder, "Rubens in Holland in de Zeventiende Eeuw." *Nederlandsch Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 1950-51, 140-141. Huygens' reaction to the *Medusa* prefigures some of the fascination which 19th century writers had for the same subject; cf. Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), "The Beauty of the Medusa," 25-50. Cf. J. H. W. Unger, "Brieven van eenige schilders aan Constantin Huygens," *Oud Holland*, IX (1891), 196-198, for an exchange of letters between Rubens and Huygens.

¹ Worp, *op. cit.*, 76.

² Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Denkwürdigkeiten (I Commentarii)*, ed. Julius von Schlosser, (Berlin: Julius Bard, 1912), 35; also cf. Ernst Kris und Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler, ein geschichtlicher Versuch* (Vienna: Krystall-Verlag, 1934), 33f.

they saw their pupils now, just as the teacher of a Virgil, Cicero or Archimedes would be ashamed, if he saw how far his pupil had surpassed him.¹ Huygens placed a premium upon creativity and originality. Shame, not pride and vicarious pleasure, according to Huygens, was the reward of the teacher of a great master. Because Rembrandt and Lievens are not indebted to their teachers, but to their own talent, they would have gone as far in the mastery of their art even if they had no teachers. Huygens considered this high commendation. Later writers find this a source of condemnation.

Huygens was not only able to recognize that the young generation of painters of his day had departed from the style of their teachers, but he was also able to appraise the difference between the works of Rembrandt and Lievens. The former is superior to Lievens in judgement and in the representation of lively emotional expression; Lievens, on the other hand, has a grandeur of invention and a boldness which Rembrandt does not achieve.² Huygens selects Rembrandt's *Judas Returning the Pieces of Silver*, monogramed and dated 1629 and now in the collection of Lady Normanby,³ (fig. 1), to show his superior ability to convey the expression of emotion in a small carefully worked out picture. He adds that this painting can stand comparison with any Italian or ancient picture; in it the beardless son of a Dutch miller has surpassed Protopogenes, Apelles and Parrhasius.⁴ Discounting the propensity of a man with Huygens' humanistic background to summon the names of the ancient painters

1 Worp, *op. cit.*, 76-77: "Si praeceptores quaero, quibus usos puellios constat, vix vulgi supra laudem evectos homines invenio, quales nempe res tenuis parentum viliori pretio tironibus assignavit, quique, si in conspectum hodie discipulorum veniant, eodem rubore confundantur, quo confusos credo, qui ad poesin Virgilium, ad oratoriam Ciceronem, ad methesin Archimedes primi instituerant. Ut suum cuique tribuam, nec alterum laedam tamen, (mea enim quid interest?) nihil praeceptoribus dabent, ingenio omnia, ut, si nemine praeceunte relictis olim sibi fuissent et pingendi forte impetum cepissent, eodem evasuros fuisse persuadear, quo nunc, ut falso creditur, manu ducti adscenderunt."

2 *Ibid.*, 77: "...Rembrantium iudico et affectum vivacitate Livio praestare, hunc alteri inventionis et quâdam audaciam argumentorum formarumque superbiâ."

3 Several versions of the *Judas* picture are known. On the basis of Isherwood Kay's notes, C. H. Collins Baker published the version now in Lady Normanby's collection as the original, "Rembrandt's Thirty Pieces of Silver," *Burlington Magazine*, LXXV (1939), 179-180; 235. To date no Rembrandt student has disputed this attribution.

4 Worp, *op. cit.*, 77-78: "Judae poenitentis tabulam nummosque argenteos, precium innocentis Domini ad pontificem referentis, omnium instar esse volo. Accedat Italia omnis et quidquid ab ultimâ antiquitate speciosi superest aut mirandi... Aio enim nulli aut Protopogeni, aut Apelli, aut Parrhasio in mentem venisse, nec, si redeant, venire posse, quae (obstupesco referens) adolescens, Batavus, molitor, imberbis uno in homine collegit singula et universa expressit."

at the drop of a brush,¹ we must nevertheless accept the fact that Huygens thought this painting was an outstanding one. Huygens tells us specifically what impressed him in the painting. It was Rembrandt's ability to depict expression, appropriate gestures and movement, particularly in the central figure of Judas who bewails his crime and implores for the pardon which he knows he will not receive. Rembrandt has shown a Judas whose face is full of horror, one whose hair is in wild disorder and whose clothes are torn. His arms are contorted, his hands are pressed together and the whole body of the kneeling Judas seems ravaged and convulsed by hideous despair.²

Huygens applauded Rembrandt for his ability to paint a highly dramatic episode from the Bible. He heralds the Batavian as a great painter of historical compositions and adds that although Lievens is an excellent painter he will not easily achieve Rembrandt's ability for vivacious invention in history painting.³ Thus Rembrandt first won recognition as a history painter. There is no doubt in Huygens' mind that the miller's son is capable of depicting what he considered to be the most important genre of painting. This is another point later critics will dispute; some of them will consider history painting Rembrandt's weakest genre.

The autobiography also contains the frequently quoted passage in which Huygens suggests to Rembrandt and Lievens that they should go to Italy to study, for if they became familiar with the works of Raphael and Michelangelo they would reach the heights of painting. It is interesting that Huygens only mentions Raphael and Michelangelo: obviously a serious study of either artist would put both of the Dutch painters on a completely different path than the one they were on when Huygens admired their work. Was Huygens aware of this? Or was Huygens, the humanist, merely laying incense on the altar of the

¹ Less than ten years after Huygens wrote these lines comparing Rembrandt with the masters of antiquity, Franciscus Junius published his *De Pictura Veterum* (Amsterdam: 1637). In this work the great Dutch philologist discussed at length paintings of the ancients which neither he nor anyone of his age had seen in order to convince the painters of his time that the ancients achieved a perfection which they should strive for. Junius englished his book in 1638; a Dutch edition was published in 1641.

² Worp, *op. cit.*, 78: "Unius Judae desperati gestum, ut omittam tot in uno opere stupendas formas, unius, inquam, Judae furentis, eiulantis, deprecantis veniam, nec sperantis tamen, aut spem vultu servantis, faciem horridam, laniatos crines, scissam vestem, intorta brachia, manus ad sanguinem compressas, genu temero impetu prostratum, corpus omne miserandâ atrocitate convolutum omni saeculorum elegantiae oppono et scire incsitissimos mortales cupio, qui, quod alibi insectati sumus, nihil effici magis quam dici hodie autumant, quod non dictum prius et effectum vetustas viderit."

³ *Ibid.*, 79: "In historiis enim, ut vulgo loquimur, summus utique et mirandus artifex vividam Rembrantii inventionem non facile assequetur."

gods of painting? The good diplomat reports the reply he received to his suggestion. The artists asserted that now, in the flower of their youth, they had no time for travel. Moreover, they add, the finest Italian works can be seen in Holland; paintings which one would have to look for in Italy in many different places are massed together in great abundance outside of Italy.¹

The answer the artists gave Huygens, which indicates that he knew them when he wrote his autobiography, does not in any way imply that they did not think the Italians were worth studying. It must be remembered that both received training from artists who worked in Italy. Both studied with Pieter Lastman who was in Italy during the first decade of the 17th century, and it was an Italianized Lastman who helped to introduce them to the possibilities of Biblical and historical painting. The influence of their teacher's style and subjects upon their work shows that they had great respect for Italian painting. Moreover, Rembrandt served a three-year apprenticeship with Jacob Isaacs van Swanenburgh, a painter of architectural views and scenes of hell,² who had worked in Venice, Rome and Naples. The difficulties of traveling the road to Rome and the marvels awaiting one there could not have been mysteries to Rembrandt and Lievens. Another reason given for their reluctance to go south was that the hardworking and serious fellow painters did not want to interrupt their work by taking a trip to Italy. They were not lazy; Huygens

¹ *Ibid.*, 80-81: "Tam praeclaris adolescentibus, quorum a mentione vix me avello, unum illud vitio rursus nequeo non vertere, quod, ut Livio iam exprobrabam, se secure contenti hactenus Italiam tanti non putant, cui lustrandae paucos menses opus habeant impendere. Est haec scilicet quaedam in tam magnis ingeniis mixtura dementiae, quam qui animis iuvenibus eruat, nae, quod ad artis perfectionem his unice deest, abunde contulerit. O si cum Urbinatibus ac Bonarocciis initâ, quam velim, familiaritate devorare tot oculis ingentium animarum monumenta satagant, quam brevi et excuperare istaec omnia et accessere in Hollandiam suam Italos valeant, homines ad consummationem artis, si se norint, nati! Sed ne praetextum quoque sileam, quo se velare solent, et quantum hoc est desidiae, excusare, aiunt florentibus annis, quorum inprimis ratio habenda sit, non satis otii esse, quod peregrinatione perdant; tum, quae regum hodie ac principum Cisalpinorum picturae avida dilectio est ac delectus, potissimas Italiae tabulas extra Italiam visi quaeque sparsim ibi magnâ cum molestiâ indages, cumulatim hic et ad satietatem offerri. Quam sese sic opportune purgent, non libet expendere. Testari cognor non vidisse me parem diligentiam aut assiduitatem ullo in hominum genere, studio vel aetate." Frits Lugt, "Italiaansche Kunstwerken in Nederlandsche Verzamelingen van Vroeger Tijden," *Oud Holland*, LIII (1936), 97-135, has shown that their point about the number and quality of Italian works which could be seen in Holland was not sour grapes or a lame excuse.

² Swanenburgh's hell pictures are frequently ignored; Van Regteren Altena mentions these pictures in *The Drawings of Jacques de Gheyn* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1936), XIII-XIV; 34.

worried about their health because they worked so diligently.¹ The obvious implication is that their precociousness was not purely a function of their talent.

Huygens' account of his suggestion that Rembrandt and Lievens go to Italy to perfect their art contains two important threads of the Rembrandt story: the artist's attitude toward Italian art and his working habits. Both threads become tangled and knotted long before the end of the 17th century.

The great praise and respect which Huygens, the man of the world and the man of means, had for the self-made artist who was made of different flour than his father was not limited to the written word. He also helped Rembrandt to obtain commissions and he may have had the young artist paint his portrait.² In 1632 Rembrandt painted a portrait of Huygens' older brother Maurits who was secretary of the State Council from 1624 until 1642,³ (fig. 2). A year or two later he painted a portrait of Huygens' brother-in-law, Admiral Philips van Dorp.⁴ And it is difficult to imagine that Huygens, Frederick Henry's secretary, did not have something to do with obtaining Rembrandt the commission to

1 Worp, *op. cit.*, 81: "Quam improbi laboris indefessam pertinaciam utcumque magnos subito profectus spondeat, moderari egregios adolescentes saepenumero optavi et corporum, quibus a sedentaris vitâ iam nunc parum firmis aut robustis utuntur, suam quoque rationem habere."

2 None of the attempts which have been made to recognize Huygens' features in Rembrandt portraits are completely convincing. The following have been called likenesses of Huygens. *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1632, London, Dulwich College Museum by W. R. Valentiner, "Opmerking over enkele Schilderijen van Rembrandt," *Onze Kunst*, I (1907) 162-3; this portrait has been identified as Jacques de Gheyn III, cf. page 19, note 3, below. F. Schmidt-Degener, "Het Portret van Constantijn Huygens in de Verzameling B. Altman te New York," *Oud Holland*, XXXII (1914), 221-223; this article referred to the *Portrait of a Man Wearing a Gorget*, 1644, New York, Metropolitan Museum. The *Portrait of a Young Man*, circa 1630, formerly in the William Beattie collection in Glasgow has been called Huygens by Schmidt-Degener according to a note in A. Bredius, *Rembrandt Gemälde* (Vienna: Phaidon, 1935), No. 139. The *Portrait of a Musician*, 1633, Washington, Corcoran Gallery, by Edith Greindl, "Un Portrait de Constantin Huygens par Rembrandt," *Apollo, Chronique des Beaux Arts*, No. 10, March 1942, 10-11. J. Q. van Regteren Altena suggested in the edition of Jan Veth, *Rembrandts Leven en Kunst* (Amsterdam: H. J. W. Becht, 1941), 73, note 1, which he edited, that the *Portrait of a Fashionably Dressed Man*, 1633, Cincinnati, represents Huygens.

3 1632, Hamburg, Kunsthalle, (HdG 654; Bred. 161). The foundation for this identification is much more solid than those mentioned above. The portrait is signed and dated and Maurits' name is written on the back of the panel in an old hand. In 1641 the portrait was listed in the will of Jacques de Gheyn III, cf. page 19, note 3, below.

4 This painting is lost. It is known from an engraving which is inscribed S. Savry Ex. Remb. v. Rijn, with an inscription and verse, Ao. 1634. Reproduced in W. Bode and C. Hofstede de Groot, *Rembrandt, Beschreibendes Verzeichniss...* (Paris: Charles Sedelmeyer, 1905), VIII, Catalogue of pictures by Rembrandt known by engravings, No. 14.

paint the portrait of the Prince's wife, Amalia van Solms, mentioned in an inventory made in 1632.¹ This commission signifies a considerable reputation. There is also evidence which indicates that Rembrandt painted a portrait of the Prince which was a companion piece to the portrait of Amalia.²

But the faith which Huygens expressed in his autobiography in Rembrandt's future development was not based on the artist's ability as a face painter. In fact, we have some reason to believe that Huygens was not too impressed with Rembrandt's portraits. In 1633 he wrote a distich on Rembrandt's portrait of his friend Jacques de Gheyn III (fig. 3):

Rembrandtis est manus ista, Gheijnij vultus:
Mirare, lectore, es ista Gheinius non est.³

However, these lines should not be interpreted too literally, for they can be explained as a rhetorical compliment of the sitter instead of adverse criticism

1 S. W. A. Drossaers, with annotations by C. Hofstede de Groot and C. H. de Jonge, "Inventaris van de meubels van het Stadhouderlijk kwartier met het Speelhuis en van het Huis in het Noordeinde te 's-Gravenhage," *Oud Holland*, XLVII (1930), No. 79, 213: "Een contrefeytsel van Haere Excie in profijl, by Rembrants gedaen." Hofstede de Groot, in a note to this entry, suggested that the portrait is probably the same one which is mentioned as No. 26 in a 1667 inventory of the Oude Hof as a work by A. Hanneman and as a pendant to No. 25, the *Profile Portrait of Frederick Henry* by Rembrandt. Since Hanneman went to England around 1623 and did not return to the Netherlands until 1637 he could not have painted Amalia before 1632. Rembrandt's portraits of Frederick Henry and Amalia are lost. Perhaps there is some confusion between these portraits and two profile portraits (dated 1631) by Honthorst.

2 Cf. note 1 above. Frederick Henry may have also started the collection of Rembrandt etchings which was cited in the final section of the *Catalogue of the Library of the Princes of Orange*, compiled under the direction of Constantijn Huygens, 1685: "Lyste van alle de Printboecken, die op malcander onder de Tafel liggen. No. 12. Noch een Boeck met eenige Printen van Rembrandt." Miss Katharine Fremantle kindly called the author's attention to this item which is listed in a manuscript preserved in The Royal Library, The Hague, 78. D. 14.

3 *De Gedichten van C. Huygens, naar zijn handschrift uitgegeven door J. A. Worp* (Groningen: Wolters, 1893), II, 246. The portrait dated 1632, London, Dulwich College, was listed in De Gheyn's will dated June 3, 1641, with its companion piece, the portrait of *Maurits Huygens*, now in the Kunsthalle, Hamburg; cf. A. Bredius, "Rembrandtiana," *Oud Holland*, XXXIII (1915), 33. The identification of the De Gheyn portrait made by H. E. van Gelder, "Marginalia bij Rembrandt: I. De Pendant van Maurits Huygens," *Oud Holland*, LX (1943), 33-34, was confirmed by a partly effaced inscription found on the back of the panel; cf. E. K. Waterhouse, *An Exhibition of Paintings by Rembrandt arranged by the Arts Council of Great Britain for the Edinburgh Festival Society* (Plaistow: Curwen Press, 1950), No. 5 and J. G. van Gelder "The Rembrandt Exhibition of Edinburgh," *Burlington Magazine*, XCII (1950), 328. There is a discrepancy between the transcription of the inscription given by E. K. Waterhouse and J. G. van Gelder; the latter gives the correct reading.

of the painter. Vondel's lines on Rembrandt's portrait of Anslo, written seven years later, permit the same interpretation.¹

Huygens' confidence in Rembrandt's talent as a painter of historical compositions possibly induced him to convince the Prince to buy the painting recorded in the 1632 inventory as:

Simeon in the Temple, holding Christ in his arms, done by Rembrandt or Jan Lievensz.²

It seems that there was already confusion as to which of the two friends painted which picture while the paint on their works was still fresh.

Perhaps the so-called "Minerva" by Rembrandt in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, in Berlin (fig. 4), is the painting described in the inventory as:

Melancholy, a woman seated on a chair at a table, upon which are lying books, a lute and other instruments by Jan Lievens.³

The Berlin picture agrees very well with this description and J. G. van Gelder has demonstrated, upon the basis of this entry and a careful iconographical analysis, that this *Minerva*, as well as the one in the Mauritshuis in The Hague by a Rembrandt pupil, are representations of Melancholy.⁴ Additional evidence which indicates that the Berlin picture is the one attributed to Lievens in the inventory is the fact that it came from the collection of the House of Orange.⁵ It is also quite probable that a *Rape of Proserpina* attributed to Lievens in the 1632 inventory was also painted by Rembrandt, for a picture of this subject, which has the same provenance as the *Melancholy* is also in the

1 Cf. p. 73, note 6, below.

2 Drossaers, *op cit.*, No. 64, 205: "Een Symeon in den tempel, Christus in sijne armen houdende, door Rembrants oft Jan Lievensz. gedaen." This entry may refer to Rembrandt's painting of this subject in the Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

3 *Ibid.*, No. 51, 204: "De Melancoly, sijnde een vrouw, sittende op eenen stael aen een taeffel, daerop liggende boecken, een luyt ende andere instrumenten, door Jan Lievensz."

4 J. G. van Gelder, in a lecture on the "Works of the Young Rembrandt" given at the Courtauld Institute, London, in 1952, showed that the Berlin painting (HdG 209; Bred. 466) and the Mauritshuis picture, probably by Willem de Poorter, have much in common with traditional representations of the subject as well as those made by Domenico Feti (version in the Louvre) and Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Bartsch 22). Also see Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Dürers Melancholia I* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1923).

5 Cf. HdG 209.

Kaiser-Friedrich Museum ¹ (fig. 5). If these attributions are correct we can conclude that young Rembrandt was indeed a success at The Hague before 1632.

We are on firmer ground when we examine the choice commission of a Passion series which Rembrandt executed for Frederick Henry during the 1630's. The five pictures which make up the series are all of the same format and were probably intended for a private chapel. ² There is no conclusive proof that Huygens was directly responsible for Rembrandt obtaining the commission; however, we do know from seven letters, which Rembrandt sent to Huygens, that the latter acted as the artist's agent and was rewarded for services rendered. ³ In a letter to Huygens sent in 1636 Rembrandt wrote:

I also cannot refrain from offering you something of my latest work, in token of my art's being always at your service, trusting that this will be accepted in the right spirit. ⁴

In another letter to Huygens dated January 12, 1639, Rembrandt wrote:

And since My Lord has troubled himself a second time in these matters,

¹ Drossaers, *op. cit.*, No. 43, 203: "Een groot stuck, daer Pluto Proserpine ontschaeckt, door Jan Lievens. van Leyden gemaect." In a note to this entry Hofstede de Groot writes that later House of Orange inventories mention a *Rape of Proserpina* by Rembrandt, now in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, which, in spite of the fact that it is only 83 x 78 cm, and therefore can hardly be called "een groot stuck," may be the picture cited in the 1632 inventory.

² For a discussion of studies, versions and the history of the *Elevation of the Cross*; *Descent from the Cross*; *Ascension*, 1636; *Entombment*; *Resurrection*, 1639, see HdG 130, 134, 149, 140 and 141.

³ The seven letters are reprinted in *Urk.*, Nos. 47, 48, 65, 67, 68, 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 47: "en ken oock niet naer laeten volgens myn dienstwillygen Kunst myn heer te vereeren van myn jongste werck vertrouwende dat my ten beste sal afgenomen werden..." Translation made by Charlotte van der Neer in Elizabeth Gilmore Holt's *Literary Sources of Art History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 431. Mrs. Holt's note to this translation erroneously states, *Ibid.*, 430: "The gift referred to in the letter is two small pictures, the *Elevation of the Cross* and the *Descent from the Cross* painted in 1633." These two paintings were part of the Passion Series, not the gift to Huygens. Perhaps Rembrandt only sent Huygens a few etchings, for when he finally did send Huygens a painting in 1639, the artist wrote: "...het is die eerste gedachtenis die ick aen mijn heer laet;" (cf. p. 22, note 2, below). The same note states: "Rembrandt came to know Constantin Huygens as a result of painting his brother Moritz's portrait in 1632." Internal evidence in the autobiography suggests that Huygens knew the artist when he wrote about Rembrandt's reply to his suggestion that he should go to Italy to study.

in appreciation I shall add one piece 10 feet long and 8 feet high for My Lord's own home. ¹

The large canvas Rembrandt offered Huygens was probably his *Blinding of Samson* (fig. 6) dated 1636, now in Frankfurt, since this is the only painting made by Rembrandt before 1639 which approximates the dimensions cited. Huygens apparently declined this gift, for in a letter dated January 27, 1639 Rembrandt wrote:

My Lord: with a singular joy I have read Your Highness' agreeable letter of the fourteenth and find in it Your Highness' good favor and friendliness, so that I remain cordially disposed to repay Your Highness with service and friendship, that even against My Lord's wishes, I send you this accompanying canvas, hoping that you will not mistrust my motives, because it is the first token which I offer My Lord. ²

In a postscript to this letter Rembrandt wrote one of the few extant comments which he himself made on his own work:

My Lord, hang this piece in a strong light, so that one may look at it from a distance and it may appear at its best. ³

Since Huygens acted as Rembrandt's agent for the Passion commission, it is safe to assume that he thought Rembrandt capable of painting pictures which would please, and although there are no primary written sources to which we can turn in order to learn what Huygens and the court he represented thought of the series, the fact that the *Entombment*, *Resurrection* and *Ascension* were ordered by the Prince himself as pendants to the *Elevation* and the *Descent from the Cross* is proof that the paintings found favor with the most important

¹ *Urk.*, No. 65: "Ende om dat Myn heer in desen saeken voor die 2de maels bemoyt wert sal oock tot een eerkentnisse een stuck bijgedaen werden weesende 10 voeten lanck ende 8 voeten hooch dat sal mijn heer vereer werden in synen Huijse..." Translation from Holt, *op. cit.*, 431.

² *Urk.*, No. 67: "Myn Heer: Met een sonderling vermaeck hebbe ick UE. aengenaemen missyve van den 14 deses doorleesen, bevinden daer UE. goeden gunst ende geneegentheijt, soo dat ick van harten geneegen verobblijsier blijven UE. rekumpensyve dienst ende vriendschap te doen. Soo ist door geneegentheijt tot sulx tegens mijnsheeren begeeren, dees bijgaenden douck toesenden hoopende, dat U myner in deesen niet versmaeden sult, want het is die eerste gedachtenis, die ick aen mijn heer laet." Translation from Holt, *op. cit.*, 432.

³ *Urk.*, No. 67: "Myn heer: hangt dit stuk op een starck licht en dat men daer wijt kan afstaen, soo salt best vouchen."

patron of Holland. ¹ And Huygens, who considered *Judas Returning the Pieces of Silver* a work which could stand comparison with any picture, must have applauded the depiction of expression, dramatic action and lighting in the five paintings. Would Rembrandt have rewarded Huygens with his *Blinding of Samson*, which is probably the most gruesome and violent picture he painted, if he did not think there were qualities in the picture which would please the man who testified in his autobiography that he was fascinated by the terror evoked by Rubens' painting of a Medusa? It must not be thought that Rembrandt never considered the taste of his patrons when he painted. There is evidence that Rembrandt, during the thirties, showed no sign of the insolent independence and deliberate disregard of his patrons' wishes which is so often associated with his approach to his work. In a letter to Huygens dated January 12, 1639 he wrote:

My Lord: Because of the great joy and devotion which filled me in doing well the two works which His Excellency ordered me to make, the one where the dead body of Christ is put into the grave, and the other where Christ rises from the dead to the great alarm of the guards, these same two pieces are now finished through studious diligence, so that I am now inclined to deliver them to His Excellency in an effort to please him. In both these (paintings) I have concentrated on expressing *die meeste ende die naetuerelste beweeghelicke-hey*t, and that is then the chief reason why these pictures have remained so long under my hands. ²

These lines certainly demonstrate that Rembrandt wanted to satisfy the Prince who held the Stadho'derships of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overysel and Gelderland and who was captain and admiral-general of the Union.

Of greater significance is Rembrandt's comment upon what he attempted to

¹ *Urk.*, 47: "Myn heer myn goetgunstige heer Huygens hoope dat UE. gaerne syn Excellensy sal aenseggen dat ick seer naerstigh doende ben met die drie passystucken voorts met bequaemheyt af te maeken die syn Excellensy my selfs heeft geordyneert, een graf legging ende een verrysenis en een Hemelvaert Christy. de selvyge ackoorderen met opdoening en afdoeninge vant chruys Christij." The letter is dated February, 1636 by another hand.

² *Ibid.*, No. 65: "Myn heer: Door die grooten lust ende geneegenheyt die ick gepleeght hebbe int wel wtvoeren van die twee stuckens die sijn Hoocheyt Mijn heeft doen maeken, weesende het een daer dat doode lichaem Chrisstij in den graeve gelecht wert ende dat ander daer Chrisstus van den doode opstaet dat met groote verschrickinge des wachters. dees selvij twee stuckens syn door stuydiose vlyt nu meede afgedaen soo dat ick nu oock geneegen ben om die selvijge te leeveren. om sijn Hoocheyt daer meede te vermaeken want deese twee sijnt daer die meeste ende die naetuerelste beweeghelickeheyt in geopserveert is dat oock de grooste oorsaek is dat die selvijge soo lang onder handen sy geweest." Translation from Holt, *op. cit.*, 431.

do in these paintings: that he concentrated upon expressing *die meeste ende die naetureelste beweeggelickheit*.

H. E. van Gelder suggests that Rembrandt referred to "inner" not "outer" movement when he used the word *beweeggelickheit*, because that was the sense of the word during the 16th and 17th centuries. He adds that *natureel* referred to an individual's being or essence. Therefore, when Rembrandt wrote that he gave special attention to *die meeste ende die naetureelste beweeggelickheit* he had in mind "the greatest inward emotion."¹ Jakob Rosenberg interprets the phrase quite differently. He writes that it means "the greatest and most natural movement" of the figures, and rejects Van Gelder's interpretation as unconvincing, since it "seems to be contradicted by the pictures themselves, in which outer movement in the Baroque sense still dominates, and by the aesthetics of the period."²

Rosenberg is correct when he maintains that Van Gelder's interpretation seems to be contradicted by the *Entombment* and *Resurrection*; however, Baroque art theory confirms rather than contradicts Van Gelder's interpretation. The principle that the bodily movement of the figures in a painting should express human emotions and passions was articulated as early as the 15th century by Leone Battista Alberti,³ and no 17th century theoretician or painter would have thought of denying this notion. Huygens praised the gestures and movement in the Judas picture precisely because they expressed emotion. Rembrandt himself showed his preoccupation with the expression of emotion on a drawing dated around 1637 which represents two pen studies of a Mater Dolorosa and some chalk studies of figures, when he wrote on the sheet, with the same pen which drew the mourning Virgin, that "A devoted treasure is kept in her noble heart for the consolation of her empathetic soul"⁴ (fig. 7).

1 H. E. van Gelder, "Marginalia bij Rembrandt: De natureelste beweeggelickheit," *Oud Holland*, LX (1943), 148-151. He reaffirmed his interpretation in a review of Jakob Rosenberg's *Rembrandt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948) in *De Nieuwe Stem*, 1949, 291-295. Also cf. p. 36 below.

2 Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, I, 116; 226, note 29. Wolfgang Stechow endorsed this explanation in his review of the book in *The Art Bulletin*, XXXII (1950), 253, note 1.

3 Leone Battista Alberti, *Kleinere Kunsttheoretische Schriften, Della Pictura*, ed. Hubert Janitschek, (Vienna: Braumüller, 1877), 121.

4 The drawing is now in the Prentenkabinet of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The inscription is difficult to decipher and also offers a grammatical problem. Otto Benesch, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Selected Drawings* (London: Phaidon, 1947), No. 92, catalogued the inscription as *een dijvoet tghëehor dat in een fijn harte bewaert tot troost haerer be bevende siel*. A devoted listening that is kept in a noble heart for the consolation of her trembling soul (the Virgin is listening to the words of the Saviour on the Cross).⁴ J. Q. van Regteren Altena, *Catalogo: Mostra di incisioni e disegni di Rembrandt* (Rome:

When the movement of Rembrandt's figures was more violent, as in the *Blinding of Samson*, the figures were propelled into frenzied motion in order to help express the feelings and passions involved in a dramatic story. Later in his career Rembrandt dispensed with emphatic gestures and movements in order to express intense inner emotion, but during the thirties he used the idiom of the High Baroque, which depicted dramatic events with an intensification of movement, expression and the effects of light. It was the style which was in favor at The Hague¹ and perhaps it was no accident that when Rembrandt worked for Prince Frederick Henry his paintings came closest to those of Rubens. Huygens, it will be remembered, considered Rubens the leading painter of the Netherlands. But even when evidence of Rubens' influence upon Rembrandt is most patent, as, for example, in his *Descent from the Cross* in the Passion series,² we feel that the Dutch artist was not overawed by Rubens. Rembrandt had something different to say in the language of the High Baroque and was confident enough to say it to the Prince of Orange.

Frederick Henry's interest in Rembrandt's Biblical paintings was not a passing fancy. In 1646, one year before he died, the Prince paid Rembrandt 2400 guilders for an *Adoration of the Shepherds* (fig. 8) and a *Circumcision*.³

Colombo (1951), No. 62, transcribed the inscription *een dyvoot thresoor dat in een sijn herte bewaert wert tot troost haerer beleevende siel*, which is the reading the author has accepted. Either interpretation, however, emphasizes the "inner emotion" of the Virgin.

¹ Cf. F. W. Hudig, *Frederik Hendrik en de Kunst van zijn Tijd* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1928), *passim*.

² The dependence of the *Descent* upon Rubens' famous *Descent* in Antwerp has been frequently noted. It is quite probable that Rembrandt knew Lucas Vosterman's engraving of the Antwerp picture; cf. Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, I, 116. Vorsterman's engraving is reproduced *Ibid.*, II, No. 157. Wolfgang Stechow has also pointed out that Rembrandt used part of Jacopo Bassano's *Entombment* in Santa Maria del Vanzo in Padua for the *Descent* made for the Prince; the lower left group in Rembrandt's painting derives from Bassano's picture (*Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*), "Rembrandt's Darstellungen der Kreuzabnahme," L (1929), 222. In this connection it may be added that Rembrandt also knew the composition of Titian's *Assunta*, probably from a copy which made the rounds of the studios at the time, for the *Ascension* made for the Series; cf. W. Stechow, "Rembrandt and Titian," *Art Quarterly*, V (1942), 141. These two examples of Rembrandt's use of Italian painters in the thirties are additional proof that the Northern artist had more than respect for Italian painters — he used them.

³ *Urk.*, No. 107, item dated November 29, 1646 in the Prince's *Ordonnantieboek*: "Syne Hoocht ordonneert hiermede synen Tresorier en Rentmeester Generael, Willem Ketting de Jong, te betaelen aen N. Rembrant, schilder tot Amsterdam, de somme van twee duysent vier hondert Carolusgulden, ter saecke dat hy ten dienste van Syne Hoocheyt heeft gemaect ende geleverd twee schilderijen, d'eene van de geboorte Christi, en d'ander van de besnijdinge Christi..." The *Adoration*, signed and dated 1646 is now in Munich. The *Circumcision* is lost; Hofstede de Groot suggests that it may have been the composition which is known from an old copy in Brunswick.

If we consider that Rembrandt received 1600 guilders for the *Night Watch* in 1642, we can conclude that the artist was very well rewarded by Frederick Henry for his efforts in the branch of painting which 17th century theoreticians considered most important and which Huygens recognized as Rembrandt's forte.

The 1646 payment is the last indication which we have of a link between Rembrandt and Constantin Huygens. When Amalia van Solms dedicated *Huis ten Bos* to the memory of the prince, after he died, Huygens drew up a list of 14 painters who he would like to have decorate the *Oranjezaal*. The names of Honthorst, Backer, Caesar van Everdingen and Pieter de Grebber were included, but Rembrandt's was not.¹ By the time Huygens made his list Rembrandt had already begun to express "the greatest inward emotion" without resorting to the effects found in the Judas picture, the Passion series and above all in the *Blinding of Samson*. The man who considered Rubens the greatest painter of the Netherlands was not prepared to follow Rembrandt's departure from the style of the High Baroque.

However, Huygens' omission of Rembrandt's name from his list should not be interpreted as one of the events which started Rembrandt on his journey into oblivion and which ended in total obscurity by the time of his death. That journey never took place. Huygens' famous sons, Constantin II and Christiaan, took up their father's interest in art and Rembrandt when they were young students at the University of Leiden in 1645,² and we know that Constantin II, who was a talented draughtsman, was in contact with the artist as late as 1663.³ An interest in Rembrandt, from the very beginning of his career to its end, seems to have been part of the tradition of the remarkable Huygens family.

1 The list of decorators made by Jacob van Campen, the architect of the residence, did not include Rembrandt's name either; cf. J. G. van Gelder, "De Schilders van de Oranjezaal," *Nederlandsch Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 1948-1949, 126.

2 Cf. p. 41f. below.

3 Cf. p. 42f. below.

CHAPTER II

INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM: THE FIRST PHASE

By the time the Passion series was completed Rembrandt's reputation as a successful and popular painter was well established. His portrait commissions during his first years in Amsterdam were legion and there seems to be some truth in Houbraken's statement that sitters had to beg him, as well as pay him. His reputation as a teacher was recognized long before he executed the Passion series. The very reliable and exact J. Orlers wrote in 1641 that Gerard Dou was sent to study with the *Konstrijcken ende wijtvermaerden Mr. Rembrandt* on February 14, 1628, where he remained three years and learned so well that he became an excellent master.¹ When Dou entered Rembrandt's studio as an apprentice he was just approaching his fifteenth birthday. His master was not yet twenty-two years old. Dou heads the long list of artists who come to Rembrandt to learn. During the thirties Bol, Flinck, Eeckhout, Victors and even Jacob Backer, who was only two years younger than Rembrandt, can be counted among the numerous artists who studied with him. By the end of Rembrandt's life it will be difficult to think of an Amsterdam artist who did not learn or borrow something from him.

Rembrandt's name, fame and work had already gone beyond the borders of the Netherlands before the beginning of the forties. Three paintings by the Dutch painter are recorded in an inventory. Vanderdoort made of the pictures which belonged to Charles I around 1640.² They are listed as given to the King by Lord Ancram who probably presented them to Charles after he

¹ J. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden* (2d ed.; Leiden: 1641), 380. We know Rembrandt left Leiden for Amsterdam in 1631, but the exact date of his departure is not known. Since Orlers gives us the exact date Dou started his apprenticeship with Rembrandt, February 14, 1628, and states that Dou was with Rembrandt for three years, we can assume that he was still in Leiden on February 14, 1631. For Orlers on Rembrandt see p. 35f. below. J. G. van Gelder suggested in a lecture given at the Courtauld Institute in 1952 that the *Portrait of an Artist in His Studio* in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Bred. 419) is not a self-portrait of Rembrandt, but the young teacher's portrait of Dou, painted in 1628.

² *Urk.*, 75. The inventory was first published by Mr. Vertue, *A Catalogue and Description of King Charles the First's Capital Collection of Pictures...* (London: W. Bathoe, 1757), 83f. Waagen reprinted this inventory as Appendix A in his *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (London: John Murray, 1854), II.

returned to England from Holland; he was there on a special mission in 1629.¹ Hofstede de Groot pointed out that one of these pictures, a *Young Student before a Peat Fire*, was painted by Lievens not Rembrandt. It was given to Lord Ancram by Stadhouder Frederick Henry and he in turn gave it to the King.² The two early Rembrandt paintings thought worthy of Charles' collection have been identified as a *Self-portrait* (fig. 10), and a *Portrait of Rembrandt's Mother* in Windsor Castle (fig. 9).³ Another Englishman, Peter Mundy, who was in Amsterdam in 1640, testified to the fame which Rembrandt enjoyed at the time, as well as to the popularity of painting in the Netherlands, when he noted in his journal:

As For the art off Painting and the affection off the people to Pictures, I thincke none other goe beeyond them, there having bin in this Country Many excellent Men in thatt Facullty, some att presentt, as Rimbrantt, etts, All in generall striving to adorne their houses, especially the outer or street roome, with costly peeces. Butchers and bakers not much inferiour in their shoppes, which are Fairely sett Forth, yea many tymes blacksmithes, Coblers, etts., will have some picture or other by their Forge and in their stalle. Such is the generall Notion, enclination and delight that these Countrie Native(s) have to Paintings.⁴

"Rimbrantt" was the only Dutch painter mentioned by the English visitor.

Rembrandt's early fame was not limited to his reputation among travelers, his merit as a teacher, his portrait commissions, and his paintings in the courts of the Netherlands and England; the prints made after his works show us another aspect of his success and popularity.

Before the invention of methods for the mechanical reproduction of pictures an artist could only receive general notoriety if he made prints, or if prints were made, of his work. To be sure, the written or spoken word could spread an artist's fame and regular exhibitions and sales were held at markets and fairs as early as the 15th century; and the drive which forces men to collect pictures is evident wherever and whenever easel paintings were made. But paintings were, and are, made in limited editions, usually of one; therefore they have a

1 Ursula Hoff, *Rembrandt und England* (Hamburg: Kleinert, 1935), 34.

2 *Urk.*, 75. The painting is lost; cf. H. Schneider, *Jan Lievens* (Haarlem: F. Bohn, 1932), No. 116.

3 Hoff, *op. cit.*, 36-42. The *Self-portrait* in the Louvre (Bred. 19, dated 1633 and not 1634!) cannot, in that case, be the one once in the Ancram collection (cf. HdG 567).

4 *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia: 1608-1667*, edited by Lt. Col. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, volume IV, *Travels in Europe: 1639-1647*, (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1925), 70.

limited audience, particularly before the establishment of public museums. Prints, on the other hand, can be multiplied easily. They are relatively inexpensive and are easy to transport.

From the beginning of his career Rembrandt used the etcher's needle¹ and ample evidence indicates that his etchings were always in demand by print connoisseurs. And it seems that as soon as he started to work there were graphic artists on hand eager to reproduce his paintings and etchings. As early as 1631 Jan Joris van Vliet was making etchings after his paintings² and perhaps even a drawing.³ Willem van der Leeuw made several etchings after Rembrandt's work around the same time; one of them reproduces the artist's early painting of *David Playing the Harp before Saul* (HdG 35; Bred. 490), dated around 1627-8.⁴ In 1635 Wenzel Hollar, a graphic artist of much greater merit, copied Rembrandt's etchings of *Saskia with Pearls in Her Hair*⁵ and the *Nude Woman Seated on a Mound*,⁶ (fig. 11 and 12) which was the type of nude which shocked later 17th century critics because of its obvious deviation from classical canons of female beauty and proportion.⁷ Why did Hollar find this

1 Rembrandt's earliest dated etchings bear the year 1628 (B. 352; B. 354); however, the author tentatively suggests that the etchings categorically rejected by Arthur M. Hind, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings* (2nd. ed., London: Methuen and Co., 1923) of the *Rest on the Flight* (H. 307) and the *Circumcision* (H. 388) are attempts which the artist made with the needle around 1625.

2 *Baptism of the Eunuch*, 1631, (B. 12); *St. Jerome in Prayer*, 1631 (B. 13); *Rembrandt's Mother as the Prophetess Hannah*, (B. 18); *Portrait of an Officer Turned Toward the Right*, 1631, (B. 26). The models for these works are lost. For a study of the relation of Rembrandt to Van Vliet see Wilhelm Fraenger, *Der junge Rembrandt: Johann Georg van Vliet und Rembrandt*, (Heidelberg: 1920).

3 *Lot and His Daughters*, 1631, (B. 1) There is a drawing in reverse of this etching in the British Museum; Arthur M. Hind, *Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artists... in the British Museum* (London: 1915), I, No. 115. The drawing is superior to Van Vliet's etching and Hind suggests that this sheet may have been done by Rembrandt and used by Van Vliet for his etching.

4 Other etchings by Van der Leeuw after Rembrandt are: *Tobit and His Wife*, after a picture now in the National Gallery, London; cf. Sir Charles Holmes, "Tobit and His Wife, by Rembrandt and Gerard Dou," *Burlington Magazine*, XLIX (1926), 55-61. *Portrait of a Young Officer Turned Toward the Right*, signed Rj 1633. *Portrait of Rembrandt's Sister*; after the painting in Stockholm (HdG 698; Bred. 85), which is dated 1632. *Mariana*; perhaps one of Lot's daughters in Van Vliet's etching (B. 1).

5 Gustav Parthey, *Wenzel Hollar, Beschreibendes Verzeichniss seiner Kupferstiche* (Berlin: 1853), No. 1650; it is a reserve copy of B. 347.

6 *Ibid.*, No. 603; reverse copy of B. 198. Alfred von Wurzbach, *Niederländische Künstler-Lexikon* (Wien: Halm and Goldmann, 1910), II, 433, notes a *Democritus and Heraclitus* by Hollar after etchings by Van Vliet (fig. 15) which corresponds to a picture described by Smith, No. 157; cf. p. 32, note 1, below.

7 Cf. p. 83f. below.

nude worth copying? From a 17th century point of view it certainly was not pornography. We suggest that Hollar's sensitive reproduction of the print indicates that at this time there were amateurs and artists who did not object because Rembrandt did not choose a Greek Venus for his model.

Pieter de Baillu, Salomon Savery and Hendrick de Thier can be counted among others who were early etchers of Rembrandt's works. A comprehensive list of print makers who worked after Rembrandt was made by Alfred von Wurzbach,¹ but no attempt has yet been made to study their work and its relationship to the oeuvre of Rembrandt and his circle.

The reproductive etchers show that Rembrandt's ability to make character studies of Jews, old men, orientals and beggars was recognized immediately by his contemporaries. Huygens, we learn, was not the only one struck by the expressive power of the figure of Judas in the 1629 painting of *Judas Returning the Pieces of Silver* (fig. 14); in 1634 Van Vliet etched this figure² (fig. 13). The vogue for the Dutch master's depictions of exotic, picturesque bearded men wearing turbans, plumes, earrings and sundry other accoutrements was not confined to the 18th century when so many etchers, from the Tiepolos to J. G. Schmidt, leaned so heavily on early etchings by and after Rembrandt. Their great and immediate appeal becomes astonishingly apparent when we find them reflected in Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's work done in Genoa³ about

1 Wurzbach, *op. cit.*, II, 435-452.

2 *Afflicted Man*, (B. 22), signed RvH jnventor and JG v. vliet fec. 1634. Van Vliet did not indicate that the figure was taken from the Judas painting, but the editors of the English translation of Gersaint's *Catalogue and Description of the Etchings of Rembrandt Van Rhyn*, published by Mess. Helle and Glomy with considerable additions and improvements, translated from the French, (London: 1752), 168, noted "...the Figure joins his Hands together, and the Countenance and Attitude express great Affliction. There is a very fine painting by Rembrandt, representing Judas returning the Thirty Pieces of Silver... and it is the Head of Judas as exhibited in this Painting that Van Vliet has here copied."

3 This rapid percolation of Rembrandt's works down to Genoa has been noted by Ludwig Münz, *Die Kunst Rembrandts und Goethes Sehen* (Leipzig: H. Keller, 1934), 26f. and Anthony Blunt, "The Drawings of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, VIII (1945), 164-5. Blunt published a drawing by the Genoese artist which: "...consists of six studies of heads which are wholly Rembrandtesque in conception, but the actual line is certainly that of Castiglione in the years about 1634... It seems, therefore, that the influence of Rembrandt acted on Castiglione at about the time of his move to Rome, and probably during the last few years of his training in Genoa. His admiration for the Dutchman was, however, not to be of short duration, and we shall find echoes of it, though in less direct form, even in his latest work;" *Ibid.*, 164-5. He also published a monotype by Castiglione of an oriental in a turban, seen in profile: "The type derives from Rembrandt, but the handling is characteristic of Castiglione, though it is hard to date exactly;" *Ibid.*, 165.

1630-34. The studies which the miller's son made of heads which depicted astonishment, laughter, thought and other expressions also must have been popular. Van Vliet did an etching of a *Laughing Man*, (B. 21), signed JG. v. vliet fec. RvH juentor. These studies were probably collected by artists as well as print connoisseurs. They were excellent sources for the study of the branch of painting called expression, which was so important to artists, theoreticians and critics until the middle of the 19th century. Budding artists in 17th century Holland, as well as in the rest of Europe, began their training by drawing from prints before they graduated to drawing from casts.¹ Masters undoubtedly welcomed Rembrandt's character and expression studies for such purposes. Not until Charles Le Brun published his *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les Passions proposée dans une conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, in Paris in 1667, with engravings representing the whole gamut of emotions, was a handbook of expression available for artists and students.² It is not astonishing to find in the Print Room of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam 13 drawings made after Rembrandt's etchings by Moses Terborch around 1660, when he was about 15 years old; the striking aspect of these sheets by Gerard's precocious brother is their quality, not their existence.

Early etched heads by and after Rembrandt were not only collectors' items, nor were they only used for study purposes. An examination of some of the engraved series of portraits of famous men issued in France during the 17th century shows another use etchings after Rembrandt's work were put to, and proves that the Dutch master was known in Paris as early as the thirties of the 17th century. His studies of orientals, old men and facial expressions were baptized by French publishers and engravers soon after they were made.

Print makers and publishers, until the invention of photography, always found it profitable to issue sheets bearing portraits of famous and infamous men and women. These portraits were either commissioned or made to satisfy the public's demand for an image of the face of an emperor, king, philosopher, soldier, hero or villain of antiquity or modern times. They were frequently issued as a series, and at times were of very high quality, as for example, the *Iconography* which Van Dyck supervised and for which he etched 18 plates.

François Langlois, called Ciartres, a French print publisher and art dealer

1 Cf. Joseph Meder, *Die Handzeichnung* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1919), 257 and W. Martin, "The Life of a Dutch Artist in the 17th Century," *Burlington Magazine*, VII (1905), 125-128.

2 A Dutch edition of the *Méthode* was not published until 1698; a second edition was published soon after in 1702, a third in 1713. A German edition was published in 1704. English, 1734. The work was published in Italy with a French text in 1751.

began to publish an engraved series of portraits of illustrious men, in Paris in the thirties of the 17th century. For some of the portraits he employed engravers to make copies of Van Vliet's etchings after Rembrandt. All of the copies are crude and in reverse; but their source is unmistakable. Interesting transformations were the result of this project. Van Vliet's copy of Rembrandt's *Laughing Man*, (B. 21), when copied by Ciartres' engraver was called Democritus; his copy of the figure of Judas, the *Afflicted Man*, (B. 22), turned into Heraclitus.¹ The heads of two of Rembrandt's *Oriental*s were dubbed Mohammed, (Vliet, B. 20), and Philo Judaeus, (Vliet, B. 24), in Ciartres' workshop; figure 16 is a reproduction of the latter print. A study of an *Old Man*, (Vliet, B. 25) took on new meaning when called Faust. A *Portrait of an Officer Turned Toward the Right*, (Vliet, B. 26), turned into Scandrebec, King of Albania; and a *Portrait of a Young Man*, (Vliet, B. 47), became Gaston de Foy. Peter Aubry, a publisher of Strassburg, borrowed from Ciartres' copies of Van Vliet's copies of Rembrandt for his series of famous men and Balthazar Moncornet, a prolific publisher in Paris, made a series of 643 famous men around the middle of the century and by an inscription transmuted Rembrandt heads into, among others, Merlin, Cyrus, Plato or even Thomas More, whose portrait was known. The possibilities of these metamorphoses were infinite: Moncornet used Rembrandt's *Bearded Old Man*, (B. 171), for his Marcus Agrippa; Ciartres used the same head for his Plato;² figure 16 is a reproduction of the latter print.

Ciartres, in all the examples cited in which his engravers used Rembrandt via Van Vliet, credited the Dutch master by inscribing his name or monogram on the portrait as the author of the design. Other copyists did not always extend this privilege to Rembrandt; but there can be no doubt that portrait series helped extend Rembrandt's fame. They demonstrate that he was known and used. They also show that the immediate appeal of his early work extended far beyond the borders of the Netherlands.

We have already seen that Rembrandt was known in Genoa in the thirties; therefore, it is not surprising to learn that he was also known in Switzerland, for if his etchings went south via a land route it would have been possible for some of them to pause and even remain in Switzerland. When Matthäus Merian,

1 Hollar used these etchings for his print of *Democritus and Heraclitus* (fig. 15); cf. p. 29, note 6, above.

2 Cf. *Urk.*, 17, 28 and 31; S. Scheikevitch, "Rembrandt et l'Iconographie Française au XVII^e Siècle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXXI (1904), 417-422; H. Gerson, *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Haarlem: F. Bohn, 1942), 63; Ludwig Münz, "Rembrandt's Synagogue and Some Problems of Nomenclature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, III (1939-40), 119-126.

the Basel print-maker and publisher, printed a German edition of Thomas Garzonis' *Piazza Universale*, in 1641, he listed Rembrandt's name in the chapter on engravers and etchers with those of the great French print-makers Jacques Callot and Abraham Bosse; he was not, however, included in the chapter on painters.¹ Additional proof of the favor his early etchings won, soon after they were made, is found in the church of Hela on the peninsula of Hela in West Prussia. An altar painting there, dated 1647, is a copy of Rembrandt's large *Ecce Homo*, dated 1636, (B. 77).²

Artistic circles in France were familiar with more than Rembrandt's prints, and coarse copies of them, in the early forties of the 17th century. When Claude Vignon, the French painter who in some ways can be considered a forerunner of Rembrandt,³ wrote to Ciartres from Paris in November, 1641, he asked him to give his best wishes to Poelenburgh and Van Dyck when he arrived in London. He wanted him to tell Van Dyck that he appraised Lopez' pictures, among which was Titian's beautiful *Ariosto*, and that these pictures will be sold in the middle of December. He also suggests that the art dealer and print publisher look up Uytenbroeck in The Hague, Honthorst in Utrecht

... and in Amsterdam also give my regards to Mynheer Rembrandt, and bring back something of his. Tell him simply that yesterday I appraised his painting of the Prophet Balaam, which Monsieur Lopez bought from him and which will be sold with those mentioned above.⁴

1 Gerson, *op. cit.*, 265; cf. J. W. Enschedé, "Een gelijktijdige Waardeering van Rembrandt's Etsen in het Buitenland (1659)," *Oud Holland*, XXXI (1913), 132-4 and J. H. Scholte, "Een gelijktijdige Waardeering van Rembrandt's Etsen in het Buitenland (1641)," *Oud-Holland*, XXXIII (1915), 91-96.

2 *Urk.*, 109. The painting is monogrammed A. v. L. which doubtless refers to the donor Adriaen von der Linde. It should be pointed out that most scholars maintain that one or more of Rembrandt's etchers helped him with this plate. Lievens, Van Vliet and Bol have been suggested. But this does not alter the fact that Rembrandt was known in the vicinity of Danzig in the forties. Hofstede de Groot, *Ibid.*, states that the altar was the bequest of the Bürgermeister of Danzig, Adriaen von der Linde. He adds: "In derselben Kirche befindet sich auch eine gemalte Kopie nach der grossen Kreuzabnahme (B. 81), wenn auch nicht datiert." Rembrandt's *Ecce Homo* found its way to Estonia two decades later: "Im Rathaus im Reval befindet sich eine 1667 von J. v. Aken gemalte Copie nach Bartsch No. 77;" *Ibid.*

3 Charles Sterling, "Un Précurseur de Rembrandt," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XII (1934), 123f.

4 The letter was first published by Giovanni Bottari, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura* (Rome: 1764), IV, 303-4: "...e in Asterdamme mi saluti anche il sig. Rembrandt, e porti seco qualcosa del suo. Gli dica pure, che io feci jeri la stima del suo quadro del profeta Balam, che comprò da lui il sig. Lopez, il qual qual quadro si vendrà fra quelli sopradetti." Bottari noted that the letter was then in the collection

Monsieur Lopez, referred to by Vignon, was Alphonso Lopez, a collector, art dealer, jeweler and agent of the French crown in Holland where he bought ammunition and supplies as well as works of art.¹ It was Lopez who bought Raphael's portrait of *Baldassare Castiglione*, now in the Louvre, at the auction of Lucas van Uffelen's collection in Amsterdam on April 9, 1639.² Rembrandt also attended this sale and made a rapid pen sketch of the portrait, now in the Albertina. We can only guess whether Lopez and Rembrandt met at this auction and discussed art and business. But we do know that three famous paintings owned by Lopez in Holland around 1640 left a mark on Rembrandt's work. They were the above-mentioned *Castiglione* portrait and Titian's so-called *Ariosto* and *Flora*.³ All of these paintings may very likely have been accessible to Rembrandt for study in the home of the wealthy collector.⁴

of Pierre Mariette. He published the letter as having been written by Jacopo Stella. Mariette wrote to Bottari that Claude Vignon, his grandfather was the author; *Ibid.*, V, 270. E. W. Moes, "Een brief van kunsthistorische Beteekenis," *Oud Holland*, XII (1894), 238-40, established that the letter was written between January, 1641 and November, 1641. Moes published a Dutch translation of it. A German one is found in Ernst Guhl, *Künstlerbriefe*, 2nd. edition edited by A. Rosenberg (Berlin: Guttentag, 1880), II, 214. The letter as found in Bottari is transcribed in *Urk.*, 90. The author has not been able to trace down the original letter.

1 Cf. E. Maurice Bloch, "Rembrandt and the Lopez Collection," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXIX (1946), 175-186; Joseph Tupinier, *...Lopez, Agent Financier et Confident de Richelieu*, (Paris: 1933); Lugt, *Oud Holland, op. cit.*, LIII (1936), 115.

2 Joachim von Sandrart was Lopez's chief competitor at this auction; Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie* (Nurnberg: 1675) Preface to Book III, Part I, 55-56: "Ich habe auch für ein Contrafät Don Balthasars von Castilion, so nur ein halbes Bild und Gemälde von Raphael d'Urbino gewesen, An. 1639 den 9. April, in des von Uffelen Ausruff zu Amsterdam 3400 fl. geboten, welches mir dannoch nicht ist zutheil worden, sondern den Herrn Alfonso Lopes gegen 3500 gefolget." Also cited in Joachim von Sandrart, *Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste von 1675*, edited by A. R. Peltzer, (Munich: G. Hirth, 1925), 417.

3 Lopez bought the Raphael in Amsterdam on April 9, 1639; cf. note 2, above. There is no consensus as to the painter, subject or history of the *Ariosto*; but we do know it was in Lopez's collection, in Amsterdam, around 1640. An engraving of the painting is inscribed: "...Joachimus Sandrart del. et excud. Amster. Ex Titiani Prototypo in Aedibus Alph. Lopez," (Wurzbach: Persyn 1). Sandrart was in Amsterdam from around 1637 to 1642. (We cannot agree with E. Maurice Bloch, *op. cit.*, 179, who writes that the *Ariosto* was "in Holland as late as November, 1641" and cites Vignon's letter to Ciartres to prove this point. Vignon's letter proves that the painting was in Paris at this date where it was to be auctioned the following month. Sandrart etched the *Flora*, in reverse, and it too is inscribed: "...Amsterd. E. Titiani Prototypo in aedibus Alph. Lopez," (Wurzbach: Sandrart 1).

4 Wolfgang Stechow has shown that it was precisely when the *Flora* and *Ariosto* were accessible to Rembrandt in Amsterdam that there was: "...a considerable degree of rapprochement between the two masters... it is of course true that there existed an inherent

Vignon's letter proves that the colorful and shrewd collector of Raphael and Titian met Rembrandt and bought at least one picture from him: *Balaam's Ass* (fig. 17) of 1626, now in the Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris. We can also assert that this early picture was in excellent company in 1641 for it was included in the Lopez auction of December of that year. Rembrandt's name was also in excellent company in 1641. Vignon suggested that Ciartres see two artists in England: one of them was Van Dyck. He told the artists to see three in Holland: one of them was Rembrandt. If Ciartres did see Rembrandt in 1641 or 1642, he saw him working on paintings quite different from the one Rembrandt sold to Lopez.

Rembrandt's merits did not go unsung in the Netherlands at this time. Two citizens of Leiden, J. Orlers and Philips Angel, took pleasure in pointing with pride to the illustrious painter who was born, trained and achieved his first success, in their town.

J. Orlers, burgomaster of Leiden, had a flair for writing history. He exploited his talent and honored the city by publishing two editions of his *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden*. In the second edition, published in 1641, he presented to the world the first biography of Rembrandt.¹

Since Orlers' sober and factual account of Rembrandt's life from his birth up to 1641 is the foundation upon which many later historians and critics will build their biographies of the painter it is necessary to summarize the material he presents. It is also worth mentioning that Orlers' reliability as a historian is above average; an examination of the documents concerning Rembrandt

tendency toward a similar goal in Rembrandt's art of that period; but the specific path upon which he embarked was certainly suggested by Titian"; "Rembrandt and Titian," *The Art Quarterly*, V (1942), 143. Traces of the *Castiglione* and the *Ariosto* have been frequently noted in two of Rembrandt's self-portraits: the painting in the National Gallery, London, 1640, and an etching dated 1639, (B. 21). He also used the *Ariosto* in his *Falconer* of 1643, Grosvenor House, London. Strechow was the first to point to the influence of Titian's *Flora* on the portrait of Saskia, 1641, Dresden, and to the "sublime transmutation of this influence" in the Hendrickje of 1660, Metropolitan Museum, New York; *Ibid.*, 141. E. 2 Maurice Block, *op. cit.*, 184, did not know Stechow's article on Rembrandt and Titian for he writes: "The relative importance of Titian's *Flora* for Rembrandt has been neglected, but the availability of the picture to the artist through its presence in Amsterdam has not been known, or else completely overlooked." Rembrandt probably owned the contemporary prints made of Lopez's pictures; the 1656 inventory mentions "art books" containing prints after Titian and Raphael; *Urk.*, 169, numbers 196, 205, 214, 216 and 246.

¹ Orlers, *op. cit.*, 375; Cf. Appendix A for a transcription of this biography. The first edition of Orlers' work was published in 1614 and, of course, does not mention Rembrandt. A third edition was published in 1760; it is a reprint of the first edition. Cf. *Urk.*, 86.

confirms many of his statements. Perhaps Rembrandt's mother, who lived in Leiden until her death in 1640, gave the burgomaster information about her famous son. Orlers wrote that Rembrandt van Rijn was the son of Harmen Gerritszoon van Rijn and Neeltgen Willems van Suydtbrouck.¹ He was born in the city of Leiden, July 15, 1606.² His parents, after sending him to a grammar and Latin school, enrolled him at Leiden University in order to prepare him for city administrative work.³ However, his *natuurlicke beweginghen* was for painting and drawing — Orlers' use of *natuurlicke beweginghen* merely two years after Rembrandt wrote *naetuerelste beweeghelickeheit* is another indication that the interpretation of the phrase as referring to inner emotion and not outer movement is correct.⁴ His parents took him out of school and in order to see that he received proper training in his chosen field, sent him to a painter to learn the fundamentals of art.⁵ He was then sent to the *welschilderende* Jacob Isaacsz. van Swanenburch for three years. His work there showed he had great promise. Then his father, in order to secure his best advantage, sent him to the famous painter P. Lasman (sic), in Amsterdam, with whom he stayed about six months. He then worked independently with such success that he became one of the most famous painters of our century. Because his portraits and other pictures pleased the citizens of Amsterdam, and because they paid him well, he moved there around 1630⁶ and still lives there now, in 1641.

From this summary we can readily see that Orlers was unlike most men who wrote about art in his day, and in ours; he felt no compulsion to salt and pepper his text with anecdotes about his subject. Except for his description of Rembrandt as one of the most famous painters of his century, Orlers sticks to pure reporting. He does not attempt to pass judgement on Rembrandt's work. He does not mention a specific painting by the artist nor does he make any reference to the famous painter's etchings. No attempt is made to characterize the "portraits and other pictures" which pleased the burghers of Amsterdam.

Perhaps the burgomaster was not too familiar with Rembrandt's activities after he left Leiden. This contention gains weight when we review Orlers'

1 The names of his parents are given correctly; cf. *Urk.*, 4.

2 This is the only source for the month and day of his birth. The year is confirmed by his registration at the University of Leiden in 1620 at the age of fourteen; cf. *Urk.*, 11.

3 *Urk.*, 11 confirms his registration at the University, May 20, 1620.

4 Cf. p. 23f above. The author would like to thank J. G. van Gelder for bringing this point to his attention.

5 Orlers does not give the name of the man whose privilege it was to introduce Rembrandt to the fundamentals of art.

6 Cf. p. 27, note 1, above.

biography of Gerard Dou,¹ who we have already noted was described as a pupil of the *Konstrijcken ende wijtvermaerden* Rembrandt by Orlers. Dou did not leave Leiden. Does this account for the fact that Orlers was able to make a thumbnail, but accurate, characterization of Dou's work,² and that he made no attempt to describe Rembrandt's pictures? It would be foolhardy to attempt to determine on the basis of the short biographies which Orlers wrote of the artists whether he thought Rembrandt or Dou was the greater painter. There can be no doubt, however, that burgomaster Orlers was pleased and proud to include Rembrandt in his *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden*. He collected information about Rembrandt, it seems, as he did about other things of interest in and from Leiden. Rembrandt, the world famous artist, was born in Leiden. His parents, good Leiden citizens, did everything they could to further his career by allowing him to study with good masters. And now this Leiden boy is a success in Amsterdam. Moreover, Dou, also born in Leiden, whose paintings are much sought after by collectors and for which high prices are paid, was a pupil of precocious Rembrandt.

Although we cannot turn to Orlers for a sensitive appraisal of Rembrandt's work, his biography informs us that an important citizen of the town of his birth had good cause to believe that the painter was held in high esteem in 1641. Orlers also presents us with important facts on Rembrandt's parents, dates, education and teachers; in the following pages we will have cause to refer back to the data Orlers presented.

The miller's son, a fact by the way which Orlers does not mention, received different treatment from Philips Angel in an address he gave in Leiden on St. Luke's day, October 18, 1641.³

Angel, who was a painter and etcher as well as an author,⁴ did not write a biography of Rembrandt; he summoned the artist's name and work in order to demonstrate that painting can and should teach. This idea was not a new one; its ancient and respectable lineage went back, at least, to the famous simile *ut pictura poesis* in Horace's *Ars poetica*.⁵ The idea which stated that

1 Orlers, *op. cit.*, 377f.; cf. *Urk.*, 87.

2 *Ibid.*: "...cleyne, subtile, ende curieuse dingen, 'tsy Persoonen naer het leven, Gediereten, Insecten ofte andere saken te Schilderen."

3 *Urk.*, 91. This speech was published as *Philips Angels Lof der Schilder Konst*, (Leiden: 1642).

4 Cf. L. J. Bol: "Philips Angel van Middelburg en Philips Angel van Leiden," *Oud Holland*, LXIV (1949), 3-19.

5 Cf., Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut pictura poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin*, XXII (1940), 197-269.

painting like poetry should instruct as well as teach became a commonplace in books which sang of the worthiness of painting soon after Leone Battista Alberti incorporated it into his *Della pictura* in 1436. An obvious corollary to the axiom that painting should instruct is that the painter must be learned. We have already noted that no 17th century writer on painting would disagree with the assumption that the highest category in a hierarchy of genres of painting was the depiction of subjects taken from Biblical or ancient history; therefore, it is not surprising to find writers frequently reminding painters that if they want to attain perfection in their art they must have more than a nodding acquaintance with the Scriptures and ancient history, poetry and fables. Painters who acquired such knowledge could instruct as well as delight their audiences. All of these truisms, which were implicitly or explicitly accepted by most Renaissance and Baroque critics, were repeated by Angel in his discussion of Rembrandt.

Angel states that it is praiseworthy of painters to inform us about the past and we, the observers, must study ancient texts in order to acquire a knowledge of history so that when we see drawings, prints or paintings which depict what we have read, we can supplement our own thoughts upon the subject with those of the artist's.¹ The *wijt-beruchten* Rembrandt, the *vermaerden* Lievens, the *groot-geachten* Backer, the *aerdighe* Bleecker and other famous contemporary artists have made good use of the study of history. As an example Angel cites Rembrandt's treatment of *Samson's Wedding Feast*, of 1638, today in Dresden (fig. 18).

In this picture Rembrandt reveals his diligent spirit (*kloecke Geest*) and the careful thought which he gave to the passage in *Judges*, 14, 10. This is first of all apparent in the way he rendered the guests at the feast reclining, not seated, at the festive board; this is the way the ancients conducted themselves at table and the way the Turks still do.² Angel's little aside about the customs

¹ *Urk.*, 91: "Het is ten hoochsten prijselick dat wij ons ghewennen tot het geene de voorgheleefde Geesten betracht hebben, en noch van vele hedendaechse Meesters na ghekomen wert, ons bekomerende met neerstich de oude vermufte Boecken te doorsnuffelen om kennisse van Hystorien te bekomen; nevens welcke kennisse dan, als wy de selve willen door Teyckeninghe, Plaette, of Schilderije uytdrukken, onse hooghe naghedachten moeten voeghen, om onse gheoorloofde vryheyt daer te beter onder te mengen, sonder krencken van den sin der Hystorien en meerder vercieringhe van ons werck..."

² *Ibid.*: "Onder alle heb ick van Rembrandt eens een Simsons-Bruyloft uyt-ghebeelt ghesien, waer van wy lesen by *Iudicum 14 Cap. vers. 10* daer kond' men uyt bemercken hoe die kloecke Geest, door sijn hooge na-ghedachte die hy hier ontrent de eygentlickheyt van 't aensitten (of om beter te segghen, het aenlegghen) der Gasten aen Tafel waer genomen had: want de Oude ghebruyckte Beddekens daerse op laghen, en sy en saeten

of the Turks shows his own preoccupation with learning; it must be remembered he gave his address in Leiden, which was a university town.

In order to show that this is not an ordinary feast Rembrandt placed long-haired Samson in the foreground posing his riddle to some of the Philistines. We can tell the riddle is just being posed because Samson is grasping the middle finger of his left hand between the thumb and index finger of his right — a gesture which is *een ghewoonlicke doch seer natuyrlicke acte*.¹ Not all the Philistines are listening to the riddle; some are preoccupied with their wine glasses and others are kissing. In short, Rembrandt has accomplished two things in his *Feast of Samson*: he has shown us how wedding feasts were once celebrated and that this is a unique wedding feast. He achieved this by a precise reading of history and by carefully thinking about the meaning of what he read.²

Angel's praise of Rembrandt's excellence as a historical painter cannot be dismissed as simply an eulogy of a renowned son of Leiden given to a Leiden audience on the day of the patron saint of painters. Angel based his praise on a logically constructed argument, not upon rhetoric. He called attention to the careful study and thought which the painter gave to a passage from the most noble book which a history painter can use as a source for subjects. He demonstrated that Rembrandt was a master of expressive gesture and that he made a careful study of the customs of the ancients. Many later critics will agree with Angel's assumption that the painting of Biblical subjects is the artist's noblest occupation, and that a knowledge of appropriate gestures, manners and customs is indispensable for the serious painter; but they will not agree that Rembrandt can be considered a good history painter. Some will even claim he was illiterate, or at best could only read Dutch, and that poorly; therefore, he could not even pretend to wear the mantle of a history painter.

Both Angel and Constantin Huygens, the two Dutch writers whose prose indicates they gave more than a passing glance to Rembrandt's work during the first fifteen years of his career, underlined the painter's talent for the

niet gelijckerwijs wy nu aen Tafel sitten, maer laghen op haer ellebooghen, ghelijck sulcx noch in die Landen ghebruycklick is onder de Turcken het welcke hy seer aerdelick verthoont hadde."

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*: "...in somma, het was een vroylicke Bruyloft en niet te min schoon de beweginge soo ware als die in onse hedendaechse Feeste ghevonden werden, soo had' hy niet te min onderscheyt genoeg gemaect datmense uyt onse Bruyd-lofs-Feeste wel onderscheyden konden. Siet, dese vrucht der eygen natuerlicke uyt-beeldinge ontstont door de Hystorie wel gelesen en ondertast te hebben door hooge en verre na-ghedachten."

depiction of Biblical scenes. There was no doubt in their minds that young Rembrandt could successfully assume the moral responsibility of the learned history painter. Others, who did not have their critical apparatus, showed their approval by buying or copying his works. During these years there is no evidence of censure of any phase of his work, except perhaps for the innocuous phrase *sed ante tempus* in Buchell's single unpublished sentence on Rembrandt. On the contrary, an examination of the documents and the commissions he received demonstrate that he won only acclamation in the Netherlands and beyond her borders up to 1641 when he was chosen as one of the six artists commissioned to paint a militia piece for the Great Hall in the newly built Kloveniersdoelen in Amsterdam.

CHAPTER III

REMBRANDT'S REPUTATION IN THE NETHERLANDS AFTER THE DELIVERY OF THE NIGHT WATCH

The painting known as the *Night Watch*, which Rembrandt delivered in 1642 for the decoration of the Kloveniersdoelen, transmuted the traditional Dutch group portrait into a breathtaking burst of light, color and movement. It has already been noted there is no indication that the Dutch public found the canvas, which was Rembrandt's most ambitious and revolutionary work up to that date, incomprehensible because of its daring innovations, and therefore ignored the artist for the rest of his life. Four years after it was delivered Prince Frederick Henry ordered Rembrandt to be paid 2400 guilders for an *Adoration of the Shepherds* and a *Circumcision*. Evaluating 17th century Dutch prices is difficult, but the honorarium he received becomes impressive when we recall he received 1600 guilders for the *Night Watch*.¹ This generous remuneration should not lead us to exaggerate the estimation of Rembrandt at The Hague, for after Frederick Henry's death, in 1647, we no longer find a trace of Rembrandt working for the court. He continued, however, to find new admirers in the Netherlands.

Constantin Huygens' remarkable sons, for example, when still at a tender age followed in the footsteps of their father in their early admiration for Rembrandt. Christiaan Huygens at the age of sixteen wrote to his brother Lodewijk, in 1645, the year he matriculated at Leiden University, that he made a copy in oils of a head of an old man by Rembrandt which is so close to the original that it is hardly possible to distinguish it from the original.² Young Christiaan did not hide his ideas about his ability as a painter in his color box. In the same letter he adds that he and his brother Constantin II, who was also at the university, are currently working with pastels and if Lodewijk saw the results

1 Cf. p. 6 above.

2 *Urk.*, 104: "...imitatus sum effigiem senis a Rembrando factum coloribus cum oleo, ut vix differentiam videas..." This note may indicate that Constantin Huygens owned one of Rembrandt's studies of an old man, for it is quite probable that Christiaan copied a painting in his father's collection. Except for the *Blinding of Samson* none of the Rembrandt paintings which Huygens possibly owned can be identified.

he recently obtained with this medium he would no longer use graphite.¹

Since contemporary references to Rembrandt are relatively scarce we must even study the letter of a sixteen year old boy for clues which will help us determine how the painter's contemporaries looked at his work. It is not too far fetched to assume that young Christiaen's letter is an indication that some Dutch amateurs and dilettantes of the arts around the middle of the 17th century were still pleased with the tonal and painterly effects which the boy's father praised around 1630; it will be remembered that Constantin Huygens praised the new generation of painters for their departure from hard outlines. The fact that the amateur who just discovered the possibilities of stumping with pastels, had just copied a head by Rembrandt is most significant. Rembrandt's use of lost outlines and his exploitation of painterly effects, and the potentialities of pastels are closely related. Christiaen was enthusiastic about Rembrandt and pastels. He was so excited he wrote to his brother that he would give up the use of graphite, a medium which readily lends itself to making outlines, if he saw what could be achieved with pastels. Meder writes that around the middle of the 17th century in Holland "there was only talk of stumping and painting, not of drawing."² A preference for pastels also meant a predilection for Rembrandt's style. One can also invert the proposition and state that a predilection for Rembrandt's works led to an appreciation of stumping with pastels.

A letter Constantin II sent, in 1663, from The Hague to his brother Christiaen, who was then in Paris, reveals that the two brothers who became enthusiastic about the effects which could be achieved with colored chalks when they were still youngsters, continued to show an interest in the arts when they reached maturity. Constantin II made delicate and direct pen drawings of landscapes which raise him above the skilled amateur class.³ His sketches must have pleased his father for his light and fine touch shows grass, shrubs and trees moved by cool breezes in a warm sun, and it was at such subjects that the elder Huygens believed his own teacher Hondius failed. Constantin asked his brother Christiaen, who was at this date a famous astronomer and physicist, to see Everhard Jabach's collection in Paris

1 *Ibid*: "Pingimus nos nunc coloribus siccis quod pingendi genus doeselen appellant, si videas quod hac ratione heri feci, nihil prorsus plumbum Hispanicum facias..." *Doeselen* means stumped or softened, and *coloribus siccis* refers to pastels; cf. J. Meder, *Die Handzeichnung, ihre Technik und Entwicklung* (Vienna: Schroll, 1919), 138, 142, 145.

2 Meder, *op. cit.*, 138: "Zu dieser Zeit ist nur mehr vom Wischen (doeselen) und Malen die Rede, nicht mehr von Zeichnen."

3 M. J. Schretlen, "De teekeningen van Constantijn Huygens Jr.," *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten*. XII (1935), 163-171.

...qui est un (the collection) des plus beaux du monde pour les tableaux aussi bien que les desseins. Je le voudrois bien pour une raison particulière. Il a ce dit on entre autres choses environ une cinquantaine de paysages desseignés à la plume d'Annibal Carracci et Uylenburg dit que parmy ceux la il y en a un ou il y a beaucoup d'eau et des petites figures de gens qui se baignent. Je voudrois que si vous voyez cela vous en fissiez vittement un petit brouillon n'importe quelque mauvais qu'il soit pourveu qu'on y puisse aucunement discerner ou sont les figures et combien il y en a pour scaouvoir un peu au vray si celuy qu'a Rembrant à Amsterdam ou il y a semblablement des gens qui nagent du mesme maistre n'est pas une copie, ce que je ne croy pourtrant pas pour l'hardiesse de la plume. ¹

From this letter we can conclude that Rembrandt kept contact with members of the distinguished Huygens family from the beginning to the end of his career. Constantin's opinion of Rembrandt's Carracci drawing does not indicate explicitly what he thought of the artist in 1663. His letter does indicate, however, that Christiaan Huygens, one of the great Dutch scientists of the 17th century, could be called upon to make a sketch of a Carracci drawing in 1663, ² the year he was elected to the Royal Society and after he had already discovered a satellite to Saturn and perfected the pendulum clock. Here is proof that at least a fraction of the audience which looked at Rembrandt's work was a sensitive and cultivated one. It is not difficult to imagine Constantin II and Rembrandt discussing the *hardiesse de la plume* in a drawing — not in French to be sure; but certainly the artist and amateur were able to communicate, and understood each other.

Proof that Rembrandt did not fall into oblivion and that he was not looked upon with contempt by his contemporaries during the last decade of his life does not rest merely upon letters written by schoolboys and sons of an old friend.

Poems and epigrams on Rembrandt's work began to appear in the Netherlands during the forties. Poetic references come easily to the Dutch; chambers of rhetoricians (*Rederijkers*) were organized in the Netherlands as early as the 15th century by burghers and artisans in order to give recitations and theatrical performances and to compose poetry. These chambers flourished during the 16th and 17th centuries and in the course of the 18th century were gradually

¹ *Urk.*, 261.

² Christiaan was not able to inspect Jabach's fabulous collection until 1668: cf. F. Grossmann, "Holbein, Flemish Paintings and Everhard Jabach," *Burlington Magazine* XCIII (1951), 18, note 29.

superseded by baroque grand opera and drama. They were composed of artistically-minded members of a number of different craft guilds, just as in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* a tailor, a joiner, a carpenter and other artisans perform a play together.¹

The artistic merits of much of what was written or produced by these amateurs is questionable; but there can be no doubt that the members of the chambers developed a facility for composing verses based upon everyday experiences for their meetings and for birthdays, weddings, patriotic celebrations and other festive occasions. In fact the rhetoricians placed a premium upon facility. Albert Heppner pointed out that the kneeling man with a bald head in Jan Steen's painting of the patriotic festival *Prinsjesdag*, in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, is not kneeling because he is doing homage to the prince; he is a rhetorician who "is merely lifting his glass to his lips after having recited a poem which, in accordance with a *Rederijker* custom, he has composed 'on his knees', as proof of his facility in improvisation."²

All of the 17th century Dutch strophes which were dedicated to Rembrandt may not have been composed while the poet was on his knees; but even if they were conceived in a sitting or a standing position their depth and insight, from our point of view, is not extraordinary. We must not look for a Baudelarian sensitivity among 17th century Dutch rhetoricians. However, mediocre poetic talents are worth examining if they help us understand what Rembrandt's contemporaries thought of his work. The attitude of an outstanding 17th century Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel — perhaps Holland's greatest poet — toward Rembrandt will be discussed in another chapter.

Four lines from a poem by Lambert van den Bos, published in 1650, in praise of the collection of the gentleman-dealer Marten Kretzer which contained paintings by Titian, Bassano, Rubens and Rembrandt, among others, gives us an idea of the tenor of this poetry:

I will not attempt your fame,
O Rembrandt, with my pen to scrawl
For the esteem you receive in every hall
Is known when I merely mention your name.³

¹ Albert Heppner, "The Popular Theatre of the Rederijkers in the Work of Jan Steen and his Contemporaries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, III (1939-40), 22.

² *Ibid.*, 45.

³ *Urk.*, 127: Ick sal niet poogen uwe roem
o Rembrant met mijn pen te malen
Elck weet wat eer dat ghy kont halen
Wanneer ick slechts Uw name noem.

It is safe to assert that these lines are not great poetry. Van den Bos mouths what can be taken for granted: the mere mention of the painter's name in 1650 is sufficient to bring to mind the honor which the painter has received. The poet does not attempt to articulate what the artist's great fame rests upon. We can imply, however, that Van den Bos considered the possession of a work by Rembrandt proof of the collector's good judgement, since the poem was written in praise of Kretzer's collection.

In 1648 Jan Zoet also believed that the mere mention of Rembrandt's name was enough to impress the Dutch audience listening to his comedy *Zabynaja of vermomdeeloosheid* that one of one of the characters in the play made the finest gold embroidery. He wrote her needle work even eclipses Rembrandt's paintings.¹ Would the poet have used the image if Rembrandt's color was not known for its brilliance?

Another example of the not too profound, but significant, poetic praise which Rembrandt received during the last decades of his life is found in a poem Jan Vos, the dramatist, poet and director of the Amsterdam theatre, wrote as a prediction of Amsterdam's glorious future. He wrote that Amsterdam will soon swarm with painters and poets because of the *broederschap*

Quoted from Van den Bos' *Konstkabinet van Maerten Kretzer, t'Amsterdam*. The picture of Rembrandt's which Kretzer owned is not known. Seven years after this poem was published Kretzer and Adam Camerarius, a painter, were called upon to appraise the pictures left by the dealer Johannes de Renialme upon his death: cf. A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915), I, 230-239. Renialme owned over 400 pictures among which were paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Dou, Titian, Tintoretto, Van Dyck, Claude and others. Even if we doubt many of the attributions given to his paintings, it is significant that Kretzer and Camerarius listed Rembrandt's *Christ and the Adulteress*, 1644, London, National Gallery, as worth 1500 guilders or 600 guilders more than any other picture in the collection.

1 W. Zuidema, "Jan Zoet," *Oud Holland*, XXIII (1905), 177:

...dat zy de schilderyen

Van Rembrant zellever, verduistert met de naald,

Die een pinceel verstrekt, daar zy met goud mee maalt.

The lines are also cited in M. C. Visser, *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt*, 1st supplement, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1906), No. 112a. This supplement contains 12 items; 6 are false. M. C. Visser was a pseudonym which W. Martin used when he published this hoax; Visser was his wife's maiden name. Martin told the author in 1952 that Hofstede de Groot knew about and helped with the supplement. T. Morren, an archivist in The Hague, and W. Nijhoff, the publisher, also helped with the deception. An anonymous review of the work was written by Martin for *De Nieuwe Rotterdammer Courant*, July 21, 1906 which demonstrated why the forged *Urkunden* were false. Those which are genuine are: Nos. 8a, 76a, Ad No. 88, 112a, 251a and 325a.

which the artists had recently established.¹ He optimistically believed, with those who founded the *broederschap*, that it would further and perfect the arts. In his poem he listed Amsterdam's leading painters: Rembrandt, Govert Flinck, Emanuel de Witte, Nicolas van Helt Stocade, Bartholomeus van der Helst, Salomon, Philips and Jacob Koninck, Jacob van Loo, Willem Kalf, Ferdinand Bol and others. These painters have spread Amsterdam's fame as far and wide as her ships have conquered the seas.² The metaphor is a favorite one with Dutch poets of the period. Vos placed Rembrandt at the head of his list of great Amsterdam painters: he was the flagship.

A few 17th century Dutch poets were more specific in their references to Rembrandt than either Van den Bos or Vos were.

Jeremias de Decker³ in a poem first published in *De Hollantsche Parnas*, an anthology of poetry compiled in 1660 which contained more than one reference to Rembrandt, singled out the artist's painting of *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene*⁴ for the subject of a poem. De Decker wrote that he is Rembrandt's friend and saw him paint this picture for H. F. Waterloos; he will use his pen

- 1 *Urk.*, 245: Zal grimmelen van Schilders en Poëeten:
Deez' zullen in dit hooft der waterstêen,
Een broederschap, door Kretsers raadt, oprechten,
Om u op 't jaargety ten dienst te staan.

Cited from "Strydt tusschen de Doodt en Natuur, of Zeege der Schilderkunst," in *Alle de gedichten van Poet Jan Vos*, (Amsterdam: 1662), 140f. Vos refers here to the union of Apollo and Apelles which took place at a festival in Amsterdam in 1653 and to the new painters' guild founded in 1654 under the guidance of Marten Kretzer, Bartholomeus van der Helst, Nicolas van Helt Stocade and Jacob van Meurs; cf. p. 68, note 1 below.

- 2 *Urk.*, 245: Hier ziet men Rembrandt, Flink, de Wit, Stokade,
Daar van der Helst, de Koningen, Quillien,
Van Loo, Verhulst, Savooy, van Zijl, wiens daade'
In 't klein zoo groot zijn dat de Doodt moet vliên:
Men ziet'er Bronkhorst, Kalf en Bol uitmunten;
En Graat en Blom en die penseel en plet,
Veel waarder schatten dan de heldre punten
Van dierbaar diamant in doudt gezet.
Die Stadt zal zich zoo ver, door haare verven
Doen roemen, als haar scheepen zee beslaan.

Cited from "Strydt tusschen de Doodt en Natuur..." in *Alle de gedichten van Poet Jan Vos*, (Amsterdam: 1662), 140f.

³ For the relation of Rembrandt to De Decker cf. K. H. de Raaf, "Rembrandt's portret van Jeremias de Decker," *Oud Holland*, XXX (1912), 1-8.

⁴ On the basis of De Decker's description of the scene depicted, Hofstede de Groot, *Urk.*, 221, concluded that the poet had the 1638 *Christ and Mary Magdalene*, now in Buckingham Palace, in mind when he wrote this poem. He believed the description does not apply to the 1651 picture in Brunswick. There is also the possibility that the poem refers to a lost painting.

to praise the artist's brush, his ink to praise his paint.¹ The poet repeats what earlier writers found laudatory in Rembrandt's work: his ability to translate a Biblical text into paint and his ability to make dead paint seem alive.² It seems, he writes, as if Christ is speaking to Mary; she believes him, to be sure, but hovers between hope and fear.³ There is nothing unique or unusual about this type of praise; but when De Decker adds that Rembrandt painted the rocks of the tomb high and full of shadows and this gives an air of majesty to the scene⁴ we can justifiably pause over these lines. Attention must be called to this approval of Rembrandt's use of shadows in a poem published in 1660. Nineteenth century critics were not the first to discover the poetry of Rembrandt's chiaroscuro.

Rembrandt painted a portrait of the poet who found majesty in his shadows and De Decker, in turn, wrote a poem as a token of his appreciation of this likeness.⁵ He began his poem in good 17th century fashion with a reference to the ancients: Alexander the Great was so proud he allowed nobody but Apelles to portray him. De Decker writes, he is not as proud as Alexander, but nevertheless he is flattered that Rembrandt, the Apelles of his time, has painted him. He adds that Rembrandt painted this portrait because of his love of art, not for mere profit. The poet would like to pay for his portrait with his poetry, instead of money; he would like to versify the painter on paper as masterfully

- 1 *Urk.*, 221: Uw' meesterlijcke streken,
 Vriend Rembrand, heb ick eerst sien gaen langs dit paneel;
 Dies moest mijn' Pen wat Rijms van uw begaeft Pinceel
 En mijnen int wat Roems van uwe Verwen spreken.

Cited from "Op d' Afbeeldinge van den verresen Christus en Maria Magdalena, geschildert door den uytnemenden Mr. Rembrandt van Rijn, voor H. F. Waterloos," in *De Hollantsche Parnas, of verscheiden Gedichten...*, edited by T. v. Domselaar, (Amsterdam: 1660, 405.

- 2 *Ibid.*: Als ick d'History lese, ons by sint Jan beschreven,
 En daer beneven sie dit kunstrijck Tafereel,
 Waer (denk ick dan) is pen soo net oyt van pinceel
 Gevolgt, of doode verw soo na gebrogt aen 't leven?
 3 *Ibid.*: 't Schijnt dat de Christus segt: Marie, en wilt niet beven,
 Ick ben 't de dood en heeft aen uwen Heer geen deel:
 Sij sulcx geloovende, maer echter noch niet heel,
 Schynt tusschen vreugde en druck; en vreese en hoop te sweven.
 4 *Ibid.*: De graf rots na de kunst hoog in de lucht gelyd,
 En rijck van schaduwen, geeft oog en majesteyt
 Aen all de rest van 't werck.

5 Rembrandt probably painted two portraits of De Decker. One, signed and dated 1666, in the Hermitage, (HdG 776; Bred., 320), is identified as the poet on the basis of prints of De Decker; K. H. de Raaf, "Rembrandt's portret van Jeremias de Decker," *Oud-Holland*, XXX (1912), 1-8. Since De Decker's poem was published in 1667 in a

as the artist depicted him on wood. To do this he would not represent his face, but his ingenious spirit, (*ab'len geest*), which he would like to show to everybody, in spite of envy, that wicked beast. But, alas, the poet pleads that he cannot undertake this task because he does not have the talents of a Van Mander or a Vasari. And moreover to attempt to add to Rembrandt's fame with his doggerel rhymes would be similar to carrying water to the sea, bringing wood to the forest or sand to the beach. Rembrandt's excellent brush does not need praise from anybody; it is known wherever Dutch ships sail. His fame has even flown over the peaks of the Alps to Rome. There his work can be compared with the work of Raphael and Michelangelo, yes it even surpasses their work (... *Daer mag 't zijn streken vrij | Bij die van Raphaël en Angelo verlijken | Ja streeftze bei verby*). Therefore, his pen can add nothing to Rembrandt's renowned brush; it can only write its eternal thanks.¹

In this poem, published two years before Rembrandt died. De Decker repeats ideas first articulated by Huygens around 1630. The artist's name summons the masters of painting for comparison. He is the Apelles of his day. Granted, this compliment is a hackneyed truism among the rhetoricians; but De Decker is not content with simply repeating the commonplace. To suggest that Rembrandt has surpassed the Italian giants is not a platitude. It is a fulfillment of Huygens' prophecy.

De Decker's statement that the artist's fame has flown across the Alps is not idle versification; we have seen that Rembrandt's etchings were known and used by Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione in Genoa as early as the thirties.² By the fifties his work was known in Sicily, the southernmost tip of Europe.³

Although De Decker apologizes for the fact that he is not a Vasari or a Van Mander, and he certainly was not, he makes two remarks about Rembrandt's

collected edition of his works, it is possible that it refers to the Leningrad picture. Rembrandt may have painted another portrait of De Decker before 1660 because in that year a poem by H. F. Waterloos was published in *De Hollantsche Parnas* on a portrait of De Decker by Rembrandt: cf. *Urk.*, 222 and p. 49 below. Obviously, a poem published in 1660 cannot refer to a portrait of 1666. Another possibility to entertain is that the date on the Hermitage portrait has been misread; this suggestion has also been put forward by J. Karsmeyer, *De dichter Jeremias de Decker* (Amsterdam: Uitg. Mij. Holland, 1934), 44. After the death of De Decker J. van Petersom (*Urk*, 290) wrote a poem on the portrait, and also the brother D. de Decker. This poem, not mentioned by HdG, starts as following:

Soo ghy de Decker nogt en saegt in synen tijd,
Siet hem hier afgebeeld met meesterlycke streken... etc.

1 Cf. Appendix B for a transcription of this poem.

2 Cf. page 30 above.

3 Cf. page 59 below.

character which are worth noting. First, he speaks of Rembrandt's *ab'len geest*, i.e. his ingenious, worthy or able spirit. These two innocent words should be underlined because shortly after the artist's death writers begin to malign his character. De Decker, who was Rembrandt's model, found nothing about his spirit to complain. The poet adds that Van Rijn did not paint for mere profit; but for the love of painting. This, of course, is not completely true. Rembrandt had to make his living by selling his work. De Decker was repeating an old commonplace in order to flatter the painter. The idea that an artist should not work because of his lust for gold, but because of a love of glory and his art is found as early as 1436 in Alberti's *Della pittura*. Alberti could afford to make such a statement; he was a member of one of Florence's most wealthy families. The idea that an artist worked for love of his art, not for profit, was part of the complex drive to graduate the arts from the manual to the liberal arts. Renaissance theoreticians argued that the painter was not a mere craftsman or worker who thought only about wages. His purpose was a higher one; he was engaged in a liberal art and worked for mankind. When De Decker wrote that Rembrandt did not paint for gain he was not breaking a lance to prove that Rembrandt considered painting a liberal art; seventeenth century rhetoricians took that point for granted. We only call attention to this piece of flattery because of the comments later writers will make on Rembrandt's miserly character. Houbraken published in 1718 that Rembrandt made many states of his etchings because of avarice, and

... such was his love of money (I will not say craving for money) that his pupils, who noticed this, often for fun would paint on the floor or elsewhere, where he was bound to pass, pennies, or two-penny pieces and shillings, etc., after which he frequently stretched out his hand in vain, without letting anything be noticed for he was embarrassed . . . ¹

De Decker's friend, H. F. Waterloos, was not as generous with his compliments of Rembrandt's work as De Decker was. Waterloos versified advice, not flattery; but he did not condemn or insult in a poem published in 1660 on a portrait which Rembrandt painted of De Decker. ² He wrote that the *wytberoemden Schilder* Rembrandt must take special pains when he depicts this extraordinary poet, for he is not an ordinary man. And if he wants his brush to surpass De Decker's pen he must not paint him the way he paints ordinary people. He must not think of a handful of idle gold; but must dip his brush in

¹ Cf. p. 191, note 2, below.

² Cf. p. 47, note 5, above.

sunshine.¹ Only if he does this will he be able to make an immortal portrait, then De Decker's poetry will bring fame to Rembrandt's painting and the painter's work will enhance the poet's creations.

Waterloos believed the subject of a portrait was an important, if not the most important, factor in determining the worth of portrait painting. His European contemporaries subscribed to the same view, for it was a corollary of any theory of art which placed an emphasis on the significance of subject. Waterloos' counsel to Rembrandt on how to achieve success was advice he was eminently qualified to follow: ...*doppen uw pinseel in held're hemelglanssen*. It is reasonable to conclude Waterloos was satisfied with the manner in which Rembrandt handled his shadows as well as the light areas: he owned the artist's *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene* which his friend De Decker found majestic because of his artistic handling of shadows.²

The lines written by the rhetoricians we have quoted made scant reference to specific artistic qualities in Rembrandt's works. De Decker made a passing remark on the artist's use of shadows and Waterloos used the metaphor "dip your brush in sunlight," and we pounced upon these references. But such references are rare — and for very good reason. The subject represented in a work of art is what most interested Rembrandt's contemporaries in an art object. This seems strange to us today. A half-century exposure to expositions on the significance of significant form and formal analysis has made many forget there can be a recognizable and discussable subject in a painting. On the other hand, experts on the content of pictures have frequently carried their commentaries so far that we no longer see the picture which was the point of departure for the discussion. Art specialists today are shocked if merely the subject of the work under consideration is discussed. Not so the layman. He is not perturbed by a discussion of Giotto which does not mention volume and pattern, nor by an analysis of Michelangelo which does not introduce Sante Pagnini or Marco Vigerio. The layman of Rembrandt's time had much the same attitude toward works of art. To prove this point one need only look at the Rembrandt drawing of the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple* (fig. 19), signed and dated 1661, in the family album of Jacob Heyblock.³

1 *Urk*, 222: En zo ghy door 't pinseel zyn pen zoekt 't overtreffen,
Zo moest ghy uwen geest al vry wat hoogher heffen
Als oft ghy slechte slagh van menschen maalen zouwt,
Ghy moest niet denken op een hant vol ydel gout;
Maar doppen uw pinseel in held're hemelglanssen...

2 Cf. p. 46f, above.

3 The drawing is in the Royal Library in The Hague; reproduced in W. R. Valentiner,

Valentiner has described this late drawing as full of a deep and mystical content and as one of the most wonderful executed by the aging master.¹ His remark is not an exaggeration and can be amplified. The figures of Simeon, Mary and Joseph are indicated only by masses of wash, bare paper and a few touches of the pen. The Child in Simeon's arms has not been sketched at all; he is a spot of light and shadow. But this sheet is not a study in values and tones. The serious expression of aged, devout Simeon, who realizes his end is near, now that he has the Child in his arms, and the intense gaze of the parents who sense the importance of the event taking place leave no doubt as to the religious intent of the artist. It can also be pointed out that Rembrandt has given us a literal transcription of the passage in *Luke* (2, 27-32), which described this event: Simeon, when he blesses the Child, says He shall be "a light of revelation to the gentiles." The aged Simeon in Rembrandt's drawing does not seem to hold the Child in his arms; he appears to be holding light.

On the page in the album facing the drawing there is a poem dated March 30, 1661 and dedicated to the honorable and very learned Domine Jacobus Heyblock and signed "A. L."² "A. L." discusses only the subject of the drawing in a familiar style: "Here Rembrandt shows us how old Simeon, with joy, takes his Savior and Messiah in his arms..."³ The poem refers only to the implications of the lines in *Luke*. No mention is made of Rembrandt's unique interpretation of the event or of the use he made of his highly personalized style. The drawing is simply not discussed; but it is obvious the poet considered

Klassiker der Kunst; Rembrandt's Handzeichnungen (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, n.d.), I, No. 318. Cf. Wolfgang Stechow, "Rembrandt's Presentation in the Dark Manner," *Print Collector's Quarterly*, XXVII (1940), 364-379 for a stylistic and iconographical study of Rembrandt's treatment of this subject.

¹ Valentiner, *Handzeichnungen*, op. cit., I, 483: "Eine der bewunderungswürdigsten Zeichnungen des alternden Meisters voll tiefen, mystischen Gestaltes."

² C. Vosmaer first published this poem in his *Rembrandt Harmens van Rijn*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1868), 313-314. He suggested that A. L. refers to A. Lydius. The poem is also reprinted *Urk.*, 240.

³ *Urk.*, 240: Aen den eerwaerhen en wel geleerden Domine Jacobus Heyblock

Hier toont ons Rembrant hoe den ouden Simeon
 Met vreucht, sijn Heylant en Messias neemt in d'armen
 En nu omt' sterven wenst, wijl sijn genaden son
 Verschenen is, die alle menschen sou beschermen
 (Vertrouwend vast op hem) voor d'hel en eeuwige doot:
 T welck leert, dat vromen voor het sterven gants niet vresen
 Want 't is der bosen schrick, der goeden hulp in noot;
 Wat kan ô Heyblock dan ons troostelijcker wesen
 Anno 1661
 den 30 Maert

A. L.

it an adequate representation of the scene from the Bible. "A. L." was not disturbed by Rembrandt's summary treatment and the absence of finish in this late drawing.

Jan Vos, the poet who placed Rembrandt at the head of his list of famous Amsterdam painters,¹ could also look at paintings from the point of view of their subject. His poem on Rembrandt's *Haman and Ahasuerus at Esther's Feast*, which probably refers to a painting formerly in the Rumianzov Museum in Moscow signed and dated 1660, describes the scene and moralizes upon it:

Here one sees Haman eating with Ahasuerus and Esther.
But it is in vain; his breast is full of regret and pain.
He eats Esther's food; but deeper into her heart.
The king is mad with revenge and rage.
The wrath of a monarch. . .²

Today we are shocked by references to Rembrandt's late religious works which make no mention of his profound interpretation of the Bible; but such passages are excellent reminders that the artist in 17th century Holland — even one who was constantly described as *wijtberoemd* — was not yet considered a member of a special race of human beings whose interpretations of the Scriptures could possibly be considered worthy of more words and thought than the meaning of the source he used. Rembrandt's contemporaries viewed

¹ Cf. p. 45f, above.

² Published in *Alle de gedichten van den Poët Jan Vos*, (Amsterdam: 1662), 565. Cited in *Urk.*, 247: Eenige Schilderyen in 't huis van den E. Heer Jan Jakobsen Hinloopen, Scheepen 't Amsterdam. Haman bij Hester en Assueer te gast, door Rembrandt geschildert.

Hier ziet men Haman bij Asueer en Hester eeten.
Maar 't is vergeefs, zijn borst is vol van spijt en smart.
Hij byt in Hesters spijs: maar dieper in haar hart.
De koning is van wraak en raazerij bezeeten.
De gramschap van een vorst...

Another *Haman and Ahasuerus at Esther's Feast*, now in Raleigh, North Carolina, was attributed to Rembrandt as one of his earliest works by H. Schneider and first published by J. G. van Gelder, "Een Nieuw Jeugdwerk van Rembrandt," *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift*, XCIII (1937), 353-5; cf. W. Martin, "Uit Rembrandt's Leidsche Jaren," *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden*, 1936-1937, 51-62 and Kurt Bauch, "Rembrandt und Lievens," *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch*, XI (1939), 240. This painting may be the one described by Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung der Königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam* (Berlin: 1786), II, 838: "Hr. Doktor Joseph Flies... besitzt eine zahlreiche Sammlung guter Gemälde; unter diesen sind... Der König Ahasverus, Esther und Haman zu Tische sitzend, halbe Figuren in Lebensgrösse, von Rembrandt"; cf. HdG 46a. An unaccounted for *Hester en Assuerus* is mentioned in the inventory made of Johannes de Renialme's effects on June 27, 1657; cf. *Urk.*, 177.

his Biblical paintings as illustrations of passages from the Bible. When writing about them more attention was given to the Bible and its significance than to Rembrandt and his. The sacred text was still more important than the picture. None of his contemporaries registered a complaint about his treatment of religious subjects. Only after his death did writers begin to suggest that his treatment of Biblical scenes left something to be desired.

Jan Vos published another poem in 1662, the same year the above mentioned poem was printed, on Rembrandt's painting of Lieven van Koppenol,¹ the famous Amsterdam school and writing master. This poem only praises Koppenol's calligraphy and makes no mention of Rembrandt's qualities as a painter.² Calligraphy, particularly in the hands of a master such as Koppenol, was considered an art worthy of comparison with that practised by painters and etchers in 17th century Holland. J. Boogaard, in a poem published in 1660, warns Rembrandt to take great care when he attempts to etch Koppenol, for if his eye glances at the writing master's calligraphy his needle will drop from his hand and his artistic ability will become paralyzed.³

Rembrandt was a member of a society which considered writing one of the arts. Apollo and Apelles, in 17th century Holland, could not ignore the men whose beautiful lines on paper helped the wheels of trade and commerce turn in a beautiful fashion. Rembrandt himself owned fine examples of calligraphy: in the inventory of his effects made at his bankruptcy in 1656 "a book with remarkable calligraphy,"⁴ is listed under *de Kunstboeken*. Perhaps

¹ Vos is probably referring to the portrait of Koppenol which is now in the Edward S. Harkness Collection in New York, (HdG 636; Bred. 291). This painting is generally accepted as a study for the famous large Koppenol etching, (B. 283), dated 1658.

² Published in *Alle de gedichten... Jan Vos*, (Amsterdam: 1662), 161. Cited in *Urk.*, 246: Meester Lieven van Koppenol Vermaart Schrijver. Door Rembrandt van Rijn geschildert.

Hier ziet men Koppenol, de fenix aller pennen:
Maar wie 't vernuft wil zien moet staaren op zijn schrift.
Op zulke vleugels weet zijn Faam om d'aardt te rennen,
Zijn ganseschacht verwint de diamantestift.
Het zonlicht rijst en daalt...

³ Published in *De Hollantsche Parnas*, edited by T. v. Domselaar, (Amsterdam: 1660), 42. Cited in *Urk.* 219:

Ay Rembrant wacht u doch van Koppenol te snyên
Het steekt te vol gevaars: de naalt zal u ontglyën.
Wanneer uw oogen haar verlusten in zijn schrift,
Dan wert ontzenuwt al de krachten van uw stift.

These lines could refer to Bartsch 282 or 283.

⁴ *Urk.*, 169. Inventory of Rembrandt's effects made July 25 and 26, 1656: Item 260, "Een dito (boeckie) met treffliche Schriften."

it was used to help educate his son Titus, who was fifteen when this inventory was made; calligraphy was at that time considered an important branch of education. Or perhaps Rembrandt collected specimens of fine writing as a modern collector accumulates beautiful manuscripts or pages of Chinese or Persian writing.

Koppenol copied verses in his own hand on impressions of the large etching, (B. 283), which Rembrandt made of him. On one of them he wrote, in 1667: art glistens differently in man — every one has his own talent; thus the master of calligraphy is depicted.¹ Koppenol's art was writing; Rembrandt's was etching. The master calligrapher, who must have had a prepossession in favor of accurate, controlled lines which made flourishes, embellishments and decorations, was not adverse to comparing his work to Rembrandt's. Apparently the etcher's irregular lines and unsystematic hatching did not disturb him; Rembrandt made two etchings of him.² A later generation will demand "clean outlines" from the artist; Koppenol, the writing master of Amsterdam, did not.

The picture we receive from a review of written references in the Netherlands to Rembrandt's work from the time he completed the *Night Watch* until his death is that he was respected by men of reputation and position in his community. His name came easily to the lips of his peers when they thought of painters; but none of them suggest he was an unparralleled genius or an uncompromising rebel.

1 *Urk.*, 289: De Kunst blinct in den Mensch verscheidelyck verdeelt
Dus leeft de Meester van de schryf Kunst afgebeeld.

This inscription was reported to have been seen by Mariette on a copy of the large etching of Koppenol in Crozat's collection: cf., P. J. Mariette, *Abecedario*, (Paris: J. B. Dumoulin, 1857-58), 355-6. For other inscriptions on etchings of Koppenol cf. *Urk.* 238 and 262.

² The two etchings of Koppenol, (B. 282, the so-called small plate and B. 283, the so-called large plate), are usually dated around the beginning and end of the fifties respectively. Lieven Willemsz. van Koppenol, born in 1598 and died after 1667, was Rembrandt's close contemporary. Cf. H. F. Wijnman, "Mr. Lieven van Coppengel," *Amstelodamum*, XXX (1933), 92-187.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM: THE SECOND PHASE

It can be demonstrated that Rembrandt was held in high esteem outside of the Netherlands during the last decades of his life. In neighboring Flanders, Cornelius de Bie, in his *Het Gulden Cabinet*, published in Antwerp in 1661, had nothing but bombastic praise for Rembrandt's compositions, portraits and etchings.¹ Rembrandt's Dutch critics, up to this date, also praised these facets of his work; but not one of them mentioned all of them in a single breath. Hofstede de Groot wrote: *Vermuthlich kannte de Bie dies Alles nur vom Hörensagen.*² If this is true, we can conclude Rembrandt's reputation was such that a Flemish writer penning a critique of the Dutch painter around 1660 immediately thought of his *ordonnantien*, *conterfeytsels* and work on the *copre plaet*. De Groot's assumption that De Bie probably wrote from hearsay gains weight when we learn that the painting by Rembrandt which the Fleming singled out for praise was *Samson's Wedding Feast*, painted in 1638. This painting, it will be recalled, was the one Philips Angel applauded in an address he gave in Leiden in 1641 and which was published in 1642.³ De Bie also recalled this fact; he repeated in *Het Gulden Cabinet* what Angel had said about the painting twenty years earlier.⁴ If De Bie was familiar with Rembrandt's work and if he was impressed by it, he would not have had to use Angel's words and ideas. In any event, the laudatory things which were said about the artist in Leiden in the forties could be repeated in Flanders in the sixties.

¹ Cornelius de Bie, *Het Gulden Cabinet van de Edel Vry Schilder-Const...*, (Antwerp: 1661), 290:

Mijn pen staet roereeloos, soo ick eens gaen besichten
Sijn ordonnantien, die jeders gheest verlichten,
Sijn Conterfeytsels die naer t'leven sijn ghedaen
En door de vaste Const ghelijk het leven staen,
Jae tot de proeven toe die Rijnbrant weet te schetsen
En op de copre plaet met groot verstant te etsen...

Cited in *Urk.*, 236.

² Note to *Urk.*, 236.

³ Cf. p. 38f. above.

⁴ Cornelius de Bie, *op. cit.*, 361. Cited in *Urk.*, 237.

When we consider the early popularity Rembrandt's etchings had in France and that French collectors and dealers knew his paintings early in his career, it is not astonishing to learn that Frenchmen continued to show an interest in his work during his lifetime.

Michel de Marolles, Abbé de Villeloin, one of the greatest collectors of prints in history, catalogued his fabulous collection of 123,400 prints and drawings in 1666, which included works by more than 6000 artists. In the catalogue he prepared for Colbert, who arranged to buy the collection for Louis XIV, we read:

RHINBRAND. L'oeuvre de ce Peintre et Graveur Holandois consiste en force Pièces dont j'ay recueilly dans ce volume jusques au nombre de 224, où, il y a des Portraits et des Caprices fort curieux. ¹

Although we have no way of checking the 224 prints which de Marolles attributed to Rembrandt, we can assume he owned about three-quarters or four-fifths of Rembrandt's etched work. ²

¹ M. de Marolles, Abbé de Villeloin, *Catalogue de livres, d'estampes et de figures en taille-douce. Avec un dénombrement des piéces qui y sont contenues*, (Paris: 1666), p. 54, No. LXIV. Arthur Hind refers erroneously to a second edition of this catalogue, dated 1672; Arthur M. Hind, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings*, (2d ed. London: Methuen and Co., 1923), 5. Marolles did publish a catalogue in 1672; but it was not another edition of the 1666 volume. For a discussion of the 1672 catalogue see p. 57f below. The 1666 catalogue, in which Marolles described his collection, has been called by Frits Lugt "le premier catalogue de ce genre que nous possédions," *Les Marques de Collections*, (Amsterdam: Vereenigde Drukkerijen, 1921), 339. The Abbé's collection was appraised by Félibien and Pierre Mignard and was purchased in 1667 for 28,000 livres: "L'inventaire manuscrit de l'achat, en 4 vol., est conservé à la Bibl. Nat.," *Ibid.* Félibien's task of appraising Marolles' prints gives us good reason to believe that he at least thumbed through Rembrandt's etchings; this experience may have helped him pen the lines he wrote on them in his *Entretiens*; cf. p. 116f. below.

² Quantitative estimates of Rembrandt's etchings vary considerably. Around 1730 Valerius Röver listed Rembrandt's complete etchings as 308; cf. p. 175 below. In 1751 Gersaint, who published the first list of the etchings, listed 370; however, Gersaint included plates known even then not to be original, so that his catalogue was probably the itemization of an old bound oeuvre. Bartsch listed 375 plates in 1797. Late 19th century and early 20th century Rembrandt students carefully examined the 18th century catalogues raisonnés and they "eventually received fairly severe handling from Alphonse Legros (who was inclined to accept no more than about seventy etchings as authentic), by Seymour Haden, and in catalogue form by Hans W. Singer, who edited the volume of Rembrandt's etchings in the *Klassiker der Kunst* series, and rejected all but about 140"; Arthur M. Hind, *Rembrandt* (2d ed. London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), 147. Hind describes his position as one of moderate conservatism, and admits something between 250 and 300 plates as authentic; *Ibid.*

The Abbé of Villeloin may have very well believed he almost owned a complete set of Rembrandt's etchings. The only other 17th century estimates which we have of Rembrandt's etched oeuvre were made by Roger de Piles and Florent le Comte around 1700; both writers put the figure around 280.¹ This number is the earliest extant calculation made of Rembrandt's plates.

In the preface of his 1666 catalogue Michel de Marolles stated that he was working on a grandiose history of art in which

... je feray mention de plus de huit mille personnes de diverses Nations, qui ont excellé, ou qui du moins se sont acquis de la reputation en l'Art de Portraiture, de Peinture, et de Sculpture. J'y comprendray aussi l'Histoire des scavans Architects, des meilleurs Maistres d'Escriture, et de ceux qui ont travaillé avec le plus de succès en Broderie, en Orfévrie, en Menuiserie, en Minature, en Peinture sur le verre, en Emaux, ou qui se sont signalez par leurs admirables Ouvrages en Fonte et en Poterie.²

This encyclopedia of the arts, which would have been an invaluable handbook of 17th century French art, was never published and its manuscript has not been found. However, Marolles did publish a summary of this work, written in quatrains, in 1677: *Le Livre des Peintres et des Graveurs*, which is little more than a list of names. Rembrandt's name is included:

Les Hollandais le sont: Vaterlo, Polembout
Velde, Lives, Rhinbrand, Vischer, Ostade, Gout...³

After Marolles sold his first collection to the crown in 1667, he started another collection. He doubtless wanted prints in order to facilitate the writing of his projected history of art; but on the other hand, no man who collected on the colossal scale upon which the Abbé worked could ever stop accumulating prints and drawings. By 1672, five years after he disposed of his first collection, he had gathered together 111,424 prints and drawings in 237 volumes! The indefatigable collector catalogued also these sheets. And he did not forget to procure Rembrandt etchings for his new cabinet. In the introduction of his *Catalogue de Livres d'Estampes et de figures en Taille-Douce* published in 1672

¹ Cf. p. 135f. below.

² Marolles, *op. cit.*, 18-19.

³ Michel de Marolles, *Le Livre des Peintres et Graveurs*, ed. Georges Duplessis (Paris: Daffis, 1872), 26. André Fontaine, *Les Doctrines d'Art en France*, (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1909), 131, states on the basis of these lines that "Michel de Marolles ne le (Rembrandt) distingue pas d'hommes assez médiocres..." In light of the fact that Marolles owned 224 Rembrandt etchings and continued to collect them it is reasonable to question Fontaine's conclusion. Fontaine does not mention the Abbé's inventory of 1666. Marolles was also overlooked by Hofstede de Groot in *Die Urkunden* where only Le Comte's reference to Marolles is cited; *Urk.*, 377.

he wrote that he has works by Marcantonio, the Carracci, Dürer, Lucas van Leyden

... et que pour les ouvres de Sylvestre de Ravene, de Calot, de Rubens, de Rhimbrand, de Bloëmar, de Baptiste Franc, de Georges Mantuan, et presque de tous les autres Maistres, nous les avons dans leur perfection.¹

Another Frenchman, Balthasar de Monconys, who kept a journal on his visit to Holland in the sixties, paused in Rotterdam on August 3, 1663 to admire Jacob Loys' collection of paintings. If we can trust the attributions listed by Monconys, *Monsieur Loys, marchand de drap, qui peint aussi*, had a cabinet which included Titian, Lucas van Leyden, Holbein and *il a aussi force testes de Rimbram...*² Monconys also listed paintings by Bloemaert, Dou, Saftleven, Brouwer, Van Dyck *et autres*. Rembrandt was found worthy of mention.

John Evelyn included Rembrandt in his *Sculptura or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper*, published in London in 1662. The *Sculptura* was to have been part of Evelyn's projected great work, *A General History of All Trades*. In the section on German and Flemish chalcographers we read:

To these we may add the incomparable Reinbrand, whose Etchings and gravings are of a particular spirit: especially the old Woman in the furr: the good Samaritane, the Angels appearing to the Shepheards;

1 M. de Marolles, Abbé de Villeloin, *Catalogue de Livres d'Estampes et de figures en Taille-Douce*, (Paris: 1672), 11. Other references to Rembrandt, which include his name among lists of artists, are found on pages 17, 18, 26, 70. Lugt, *Marques, op. cit.*, 340, writes: "En 1672 il (Marolles) en publia le catalogue... plus rare encore que le premier. Il contient la plus ancienne liste de monogrammes. Une notice dans l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal nous apprend que ces pièces furent vendues 'à différentes personnes' après le mort de l'abbé, et qu'on a perdu de vue le manuscrit de son Histoire des Peintres, à la-quelle cette collection avait fourni les matériaux. Il semble que les feuilles de cette seconde collection n'ont jamais porté de marque, il est donc impossible de les identifier." Also cf. *Ibid.*, for additional bibliographical material on this fascinating collector. It is the 1672 catalogue of the second collection which Hind incorrectly called a second edition of the 1666 catalogue; cf. p. 56 note 1 above. A copy of the rare 1672 catalogue is in the Art Library at the University of Chicago.

2 *Urk.*, 260. Cited from *Journal des voyages de Monsieur de Monconys, Conseiller du Roy... Seconde partie, voyage d'Angleterre, Pais-bas, Allemagne et Italie*, (Lyon, Paris: 1677), 131 f. The inventory made of Loys' collection on October 30, 1680, after his death in 1676, lists two portraits by Rembrandt:

Een oude manstrony van Reynbrant
Nogh een oude mans trony van dito.

The inventory is published in A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1918), V, 1588f. The Rembrandt paintings are numbers 39 and 40 in the inventory.

divers Landskips and heads to the life; St. Hierom, of which there is one very rarely graven with the Burine; but above all, his Ecce Homo; descent from the Cross in large; Philip, and the Eunnuch, etc. ¹

Evelyn's reference to Rembrandt's "gravings" is an error; but his characterization of the prints as "of a particular spirit" strikes a note which later writers use constantly. The list of prints which he compiled, which is the earliest one published, is also similar to the one other early Rembrandt critics use as the basis for their comments on the etchings.

We would run the danger of distortion and inaccuracy if we tried to read too much into the passages cited from De Bie, Marolles, Monconys and Evelyn. There can be no doubt, however, that in artistic circles in Flanders and France during the fifties and sixties of the 17th century Rembrandt's name was known. Moreover none of the writers cited utter a word of negative criticism.

It has been noted that Castiglione used Rembrandt's etchings in Genoa in the thirties and we will now examine material which proves that Rembrandt's works crossed the Alps in the fifties and even got down to Sicily.

In 1652 Don Antonio Ruffo, a Sicilian collector who lived in Messina, ordered a painting of a philosopher from Rembrandt. ² This commission was by no means Ruffo's introduction to collecting; an inventory made of his collection in 1648 lists, in addition to frescoes and medals, 166 paintings. Three of them were by Mathias Stomer ³ who was a Honthorst pupil; thus Ruffo was not unacquainted with the manner of northern Caravaggesque painters when he gave Rembrandt his first commission.

¹ John Evelyn, *Sculptura or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper with an ample enumeration of the most renowned Masters and their Works*, (London: 1662), 81. A second edition was published in 1755 which contains Evelyn's biography. The specific prints which Evelyn referred to were probably *Rembrandt's Mother*, 1631,, (B. 348); the *Good Samaritan*, 1633, (B. 90); *the Angel Appearing to the Shepherds*, 1634, (B. 44); and the prints which impressed him most were the *Ecce Homo*, 1635-6, (B. 77); the *Descent from the Cross*, 1633, (B. 81); and the *Baptism of the Eunuch*, 1641, (B. 98). It is difficult to determine which St. Jerome etching he had in mind.

² The source for the relations between Rembrandt and Don Antonio Ruffo is Vincenzo Ruffo, "Galleria Ruffo nel Secolo XVII in Messina," *Bollettino d'Arte*, X (1916), 21 f. The author is also indebted to Jakob Rosenberg's "Rembrandt and Guercino," *The Art Quarterly*, VII (1944), 129-134 and to the same author's *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, 165-170. Also cf. G. J. Hoogewerff, *Oud-Holland*, XXXV (1917), 129 f; Corrado Ricci, *Rembrandt in Italia*, (Milan: 1918); H. Schneider, *Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt*, XXX (1918), 69 f; Hofstede de Groot in *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, December 5, 1927 and *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, L (1929), 135 f.

³ Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 42.

The philosopher Rembrandt painted for the Sicilian nobleman was listed in his catalogue as *Aristotele che tiene la mano supra una statua, mezza figura al naturale*; ¹ it has been identified as the *Aristotle with the Bust of Homer*, dated 1653, now in the Erickson collection in New York (fig. 20). The painting was delivered to Ruffo in 1654. ² Rembrandt's painting was not hung on an obscure wall in the Don's gallery and forgotten. There can be no doubt that he was pleased with the picture, for in 1660 he asked one of the great Italian Baroque masters, Guercino, to make a pendant for this picture. Ruffo believed, for very good reason, that Guercino's *prima maniera gagliarda* would be more suitable than his late style for a picture which was to be a companion piece to a Rembrandt painted in 1653. Guercino agreed to this request and sent Ruffo the following letter:

As for the half-figure of Rembrandt which has come into your hands, it cannot be other than complete perfection, because I have seen various works of his in prints which have come to our region. They are very beautiful in execution, engraved with good taste and done in a fine manner, so that one can assume that his work in color is likewise of complete exquisiteness and perfection. I sincerely esteem him as a great artist.

Then as to the half-figure which you desire from me as a companion piece to that of Rembrandt, but to be done in my first broad manner, I am quite ready to agree, and to carry it out according to your orders. Will you, therefore, kindly send me the measurements, both the height and the breadth of the painting, so that I, on my part shall not fail to use the same dimensions, and as much as my poor ability will allow, you yourself will see expressed in this picture.

If you would also, on the occasion of sending me the measurements, be willing to honor me with a little sketch of Rembrandt's picture, done by some artist, so that I could see the disposition of the half-figure, I should consider it the greatest favor, and should be better able to make a counterpart, as well as to place the light in the right place. I shall wait also for the subject which I am to represent, in order to be able to conform more closely to your wishes. . .

Bologna, June 13, 1660. ³

¹ *Ibid.*, 318.

² *Ibid.*, 127-8.

³ Translation cited from Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," *op. cit.*, 130. It was made by Miss Ruth Magurn. For the Italian text of the letter cf. Appendix C. The painting which Guercino executed is lost. It is interesting that he was willing, at the age of 69, to undertake a work in his early manner. Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1947), 106, note 178, has pointed out that because Guercino accepted this commission one should not assume he could work in his early and late styles at one and the same time. "Guercino had no very good reason

Guercino's letter is an extraordinary document because it proves that the Italian Seicento master did not consider it beneath his dignity to make a pendant to a painting by a Netherlander. Guercino shared none of Michelangelo's contempt for Northern artists; or at least Michelangelo's contempt as reported by Francisco de Hollanda. The Italian artist's approach to his commission is also revealing: he asks Ruffo for dimensions, a sketch to show the disposition of light and even for his subject in order to conform more closely to his patron's wishes. It is too frequently assumed that a declaration of independence of painters was signed in 1400, in Italy; and that after 1500, painters signed a declaration of genius and would submit to no outside pressure.

The letter also proves that one of the leading Italian painters of Rembrandt's day had a genuine appreciation for his etchings. Guercino's praise of Rembrandt's execution and good taste cannot be dismissed as an attempt to please the Sicilian who had a predilection for the Northern artist's work. Another artist, Abraham Bruegel, who was by no means Guercino's artistic equal, did not hesitate to malign Rembrandt when he wrote to Ruffo.¹

Guercino's letter permits us to infer one more important point: neither the famous Italian patron nor celebrated painter believed in 1660 that a Rembrandt and a Guercino could not be companion pieces.

On August 18, 1660, Guercino acknowledged receipt of the sketch he asked for of Rembrandt's painting;² and on October 6 he wrote to Ruffo that he judged Rembrandt's half-figure to represent a Physiognomist, therefore, he thought it appropriate to paint a Cosmographer as a pendant

... è la mezza figura per accompagnare quella del Rembrandt da mè giudicato rapresenti un Fisonomista ho pensato esser molto proposito farli un Cosmografo come appunto hò fatto...³

Apparently Ruffo did not supply him with a subject and Guercino interpreted

to refuse the commission and doubtless introduced stronger light effects than he was wont to do normally at this period; but to suggest that the picture could have resembled an early work is going altogether too far ... a suggestive sequel to this commission, which shows that D. Antonio (no doubt instructed by experience) does not repeat his request for the impossible, but instead shows himself desirous, as Guercino puts it in a letter of 9 March 1663 (Ruffo, *Bollettino d'Arte*, X (1916), 106), *di qualche quadro fatto in mia Gioventu*. This wish for a picture actually painted in Guercino's youth was not satisfied until 1665..."

1 Cf. p. 80f. below.

2 Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 101-102.

3 *Ibid.*, 102.

Rembrandt's *Aristotle* running his hand over a bust of Homer as a physiognomist at work.¹

In 1661 Ruffo ordered another companion piece for Rembrandt's *Aristotle* from Mattia Preti. The Neapolitan accepted the commission and wrote the following to Ruffo:

I have waited to write to you in order to see whether, along with my letter, I might send the picture with the half-figure which also has a turban wound about its head, just as in the other two extremely beautiful works already in your possession. Mine will represent Dionysius of Syracuse. . .²

Preti was no more disturbed than Guercino was, a year earlier, when he was called upon to make a pendant to the Netherlander's historical portrait.

1 Jakob Rosenberg suggests that a drawing in the Museum of Princeton University is the one Guercino made for the painting, which is now lost; Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," *op. cit.* He writes that the drawing corresponds to a description made of the painting in an inventory of Ruffo's collection: "Cosmografo con un turbante turchino in testa che considera un mappamondo tenuto con la mano sinistra sopra un tavolino e con la destra va accennando..."; cf. Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 126. Two differences between the description of the painting quoted above and the Princeton drawing should be noted: the Cosmographer in the drawing is not wearing a *turbante turchino*, but a hat with a crown which is trimmed with fur; and his left hand is not holding a geographical globe on a table, but a pair of dividers. The Guercino drawing is reproduced in Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," *op. cit.*, fig. 1, p. 133 and in his *Rembrandt, op. cit.*, II, fig. 241. Mattia Preti also writes that the figures in Rembrandt's and Guercino's paintings wore turbans: cf. note 2 below. Would a 17th century Italian call the hat which the figure in the Princeton drawing wears a *turbante turchino*? Did Guercino change the head gear his Cosmographer wore when he painted him? If one of these questions cannot be answered affirmatively there is a possibility that the Princeton sheet is not Guercino's study for his pendant for Rembrandt's *Aristotle*.

2 Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 241: "Mi sono trattenuto a non scrivere a S. S. Ill.ma per vedere di mandarli assieme con la lettera un pezzo di quatro con una meza figure che ancha lega il torbante in testa come l'altri due che tiene assai belle e il mio sara Dionisio Seragoseno..." Preti's picture, which is lost, was delivered in 1662 and is described as "Dionisio di Siracusa maestro di scuola, ovato — Palmi 5 x 6;" *Ibid.*, 318. If we examine Rembrandt's *Aristotle* in light of the phrase in Preti's letter which states he painted his Dionysius with a turban wound around his head just as Rembrandt and Guercino did, we are confronted with a problem. The *Aristotle* represented in the Rembrandt painting in the Erickson collection is *not* wearing a turban wound around his head. He is wearing a huge beret. Of course, it is possible that Preti believed the figure was wearing a turban: he too may have asked for a sketch and he may received an ambiguous one. On the other hand, a careful examination of the *Aristotle* now in New York may reveal that the beret the philosopher wears is overpaint. (In light of the date of the *Aristotle*, the Ruffo documents concerning its shipment and the description of it in Ruffo's inventory, one can rule out the possibility that the Erickson painting is not the one which Ruffo had in his gallery in Messina.)

The fact that Ruffo called upon two outstanding Italian masters to make companion pieces for the *Aristotle* did not signify that he lost interest in the Dutch painter. In 1661 he acquired an *Alexander the Great* from Rembrandt. This picture has not been identified. It probably was similar in character to the so-called *Mars* in Glasgow, signed and dated 1655 and to the *Athena* now in the Gulbenkian collection in Washington. Both of these figures "are surprisingly close to the image of Alexander on the medallion worn by *Aristotle*. Therefore we may assume that the lost Alexander resembled these paintings in general character."¹ Ruffo was not completely satisfied with this painting; he objected to the fact that Rembrandt made the half-figure he ordered by enlarging a canvas, which had a head on it, on all four sides. We do not know how this disagreement was resolved; but we do know that it did not cause a rupture in the relations between the patron and the painter, for around 1662 Ruffo ordered a *Homer* from Rembrandt. It is described in the inventory as "Homer, seated, giving instructions to two pupils."² This picture is the painting of *Homer*, now in the Mauritshuis, in The Hague (fig. 21); it has been cut down and in the lower right hand corner of the painting the trips of two fingers can be seen. There were difficulties between Ruffo and Rembrandt over this painting too. Ruffo complained that it was unfinished and sent it back to the artist. It was finally accepted in 1663.³

In spite of the quibbling between artist and patron, the repeated commissions show that Ruffo had a predilection for Rembrandt's late life-size portraits of classical heroes. He bought none of Rembrandt's early carefully finished works, and collected those which according to legend none of the painter's contemporaries were able to appreciate. And Ruffo, as well as Guercino, had an understanding for the master etcher's prints: in 1669, the year of Rembrandt's death, he ordered and received 189 of them.⁴

That Don Antonio held Rembrandt in the highest esteem, and that he did not collect his works as a curiosity of the North, is stated explicitly in a letter which Abrahaam Bruegel, Ruffo's agent in Rome, wrote to Don Antonio on January 24, 1670:

By your letter of December 29, I see that you have had made various

¹ Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, *op. cit.*, 168. The painting is described in Ruffo's inventory as "Alessandro Magno seduto, mezza figura al naturale"; Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 238.

² *Ibid.*, "Omero seduto che insegna a due discepoli, mezza figura al naturale." The dimensions of all of Ruffo's Rembrandts are given as 8 x 6 palmi.

³ Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, *op. cit.*, 165 and 168.

⁴ Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 313.

half-figures by the best painters of Italy, and that none of them approach those of Rembrandt. It is true that I agree with this. But. . .¹

We will reserve our discussion of Peter Bruegel's great-grandson's interesting "but" for another chapter.

It is clear that the Sicilian nobleman believed various half-figures he owned by the best painters of Italy did not approach those of Rembrandt. The compliment is impressive and carries more weight than similar ones given to Rembrandt by his Dutch fellow countrymen. The faintest possibility of flattery, friendship, local pride or even chauvinism weakens, for example, Jeremias de Decker's rhetoric.² It is impossible for such qualifications to color the categorical compliment made by Rembrandt's exacting Italian patron less than a year after the artist's death.

Ruffo and the Bolognese and Neapolitan painters whom he employed to make companion pieces to the philosopher were not the only Italian admirers of Rembrandt's late work. When Cosimo de Medici, later Grand Duke Cosimo III of Tuscany, visited Holland in 1667 and 1668 he saw Rembrandt. No legend tells of Cosimo picking up the artist's brush, and there is no indication that 25 year old "vain, weak, tyrannical, entirely wanting in brains and sunk in superstition and bigotry"³ Cosimo had any understanding of Rembrandt's art. We can only assert that the call which the prince made on December 29, 1667 proves once again that the artist was not forgotten during the last years of his life. Apparently none of the paintings in his studio pleased Cosimo, or perhaps Rembrandt had few canvases in his atelier when the future Grand Duke came to call, for Pieter Blaeu, who was Cosimo's guide, escorted him to other collections in order to find suitable works.⁴ Cosimo possibly bought one

1 Cf. page 81f. below.

2 Cf. page 46f. above.

3 G. F. Young, *The Medici* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1909), II, 457.

4 G. J. Hoogewerff, "De twee reizen van Cosimo de Medici, Prins van Toscane door de Nederlanden, (1667-69)" *Historisch Genootschap*, (Utrecht), III serie, Nr. 41, (Amsterdam: Johannes Muller, 1919) 67, entry for Thursday December 29, 1667 in *Viaggi d'Alemagna, Paesi Bassi del 1667 e di Spagna, Francia, Inghilterra e Olanda del 1668 e 1669, fatte dal Serenissimo Principe Cosimo di Toscana, di poi Gran Duca Terza di quei, Nome, scritti dal Marchese Filippo Corsini, coppiero di Sua Altezza Serenissima e figliolo de marchese Bartolommeo Corsini*: "Geovedi 29 di buon ora il tempo era buono ma freddissimo, si rabbruscò verso le 17, che secondo la proprietà del clima si condensano le nebbie, e durano fino alla notte, la quale per ordinario è serena. S. A. udita la messa andò col Blaeu e col Ferroni a vedere pittura di diversi maestri, come del Wan Welde (W. van de Velde I), del Reinbrent, pittore famoso, del Scamus (R. Nooms?; A. Storck?), che fa le marine, e d'altri, i quali non avendo appresso di loro opere perfette et additando alcune case ove poterle vedere, ivi pure si trasrerri l'A. S. e fu accolta con ogni maggiore alto di stima e di amorevolezza."

of the *Self-portraits* of Rembrandt, now in the Uffizi, (HdG 539; Bred. 45), when he was in Holland. The other Uffizi *Self-portrait* (fig. 22), which is dated in the sixties, (HdG 540; Bred. 60), was bought by Cardinal Leopold de Medici, who began the famous Medici collection of portraits of artists. It was listed in the inventory made of Leopold's effects in 1675, the year he died.¹ A third late Rembrandt, *Old Man with Folded Hands*, was most probably purchased by Cosimo's father, Ferdinand II, while Rembrandt was still alive² (fig. 23).

There is no evidence that the Medici collectors thought as highly of Rembrandt as Ruffo did. Cosimo may have bought a self-portrait; Cardinal Leopold did — but then, he collected them. Cosimo's possible purchase and Leopold's acquisition have nothing in common with Don Antonio's close contacts with Rembrandt. Historical caution only permits us to say the Medicis brought Rembrandt's painting to Florence, and that they did not overlook him.

However, we can justifiably assert that by the time of his death Rembrandt had acquired what can be called an international reputation. His name and works were not only well known and greatly appreciated in his homeland,³ but were also known and praised by eminent collectors and men of letters in Flanders, Florence and France as well as in England, Naples, Danzig and Messina.⁴ A roll call of some of his pupils also points up his popularity: Gerard Dou, Jacob Backer, Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout, Christoph Paudiss, Jurriaen Ovens, Bernhardt Keil, Carel Fabritius, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Nicolaes Maes, Willem Drost, Johann Ulrich Mayr

¹ C. Ricci, *Rembrandt in Italia* (Milan: Alfieri and Lacroix, 1918), 54. This portrait is published as the one which belonged to Leopold in 18th century catalogues of Leopold's collection; cf. Francesco Moucke, *Serie di Ritratti degli Eccellenti Pittori... imperial galleria di Firenze* (Florence: 1756), III, facing page 79. The *Self-portrait* (HdG 539; Bred. 45) in the Uffizi seems to be a copy. There is also a Rembrandt *Self-portrait*, dated 1634, in the Pitti, (HdG 538; Bred. 20); it belonged to the Gerini family already in 1724. The panel was sold to the Pitti in 1818.

² Ricci, *op. cit.*, 53-4, writes it is "indicate nell'Inventario della Guardaroba Medicea del 12 aprile 1698 come proveniente dall'eredità del Principe Ferdinando." Since Ferdinand died in 1670 it is reasonable to assume that the canvas was in Italy before Rembrandt's death.

³ Further indication of Rembrandt's popularity in the Netherlands is the frequent occurrence of his name in the 17th century inventories published by A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915), 7 vols.

⁴ This list of place names is not exhaustive. The catalogue made of Leopold Wilhelm's collection in Vienna in 1659 lists: "553. Ein stuckh von Oehlfarb auf Holcz, warin ein Astrologe an einem Tisch siczt unddt hatt ein Buch führ sich unddt auf dem Tisch stehet ein Globus, ein Todtenkopff unddt andere astrologische Instrumenta. In einer Ramen von Aichenholcz, hoch 3 Spann 1 Finger unddt 2 Spann 7 Finger Braidt. Original von dem Rheinbrandt ausz Hollandt." Cited from *Urk.*, 215. The picture is lost.

and Aert de Gelder. The list of pupils can be expanded: there are over fifty. The citation of their names, or of those who were obviously influenced by him suggests an important facet of the history of his reputation which we have only mentioned in passing; that is, his reputation among the artists of his time, not as seen in their writings, as in Guercino's letter to Ruffo, but as reflected in their works of art.

Artists can use their own work to analyze, appraise and criticize other works of art with a depth and sensitivity which is not always found in a critical essay, historical treatise, metaphysical system or a poem. It is possible to defend the proposition that artists best understand other artists, although it does not follow that this must needs be true. This is a justification, if one is needed, for the much maligned game of "influences" with which art historians are so frequently accused of wasting their time. "Influences" give the reaction of one artist to another; they register applause or blame. Artists who record their reactions to their fellow artists' creativity or clichés on pages of a journal or in letters to the editor or in other forms of writing can be cited; but they are not common. Most artists confine their response to another artist's art object to their own work. In short, what artists from Gerard Dou to Aert de Gelder or artists such as G. B. Castiglione, Claude Vignon or Stefano della Bella¹ chose to ignore or use in Rembrandt's work is an important aspect of his reputation during his lifetime. A detailed analysis of this type of acceptance or rejection would make an excellent subject for another Rembrandt monograph.

Our purpose has been to demonstrate to what extent Rembrandt was more widely known and accepted during the last decades of his life, than has been generally acknowledged. From the data presented so far one could conclude he was only a complete success during his life. Not a single contemporary word of protest against his work has been cited. There was, however, some opposition to his work; the following chapter will discuss the nature of that opposition.

¹ The complex problem of Rembrandt's influence on Italian etchers has never been examined thoroughly. Gerson, *op. cit.*, 163, has suggested Della Bella as the middleman in this transaction: "...während seines Aufenthaltes in Paris 1642 von Langlois Radierungen Rembrandts erworben hat. Della Bella ist 1647 in Amsterdam gewesen, wo er die holländische Kunst an der Quelle studieren konnte. 1651/54 arbeitet er in Rom." Cf. R. Maranini in *Boll. d'arte*, XXVII (1933), 18; H. Nasse, *Stefano della Bella*, (Strassburg: 1913).

CHAPTER V

JOOST VAN DEN VONDEL

Since C. Vosmaer¹ pointed out about one hundred years ago that Joost van den Vondel, who is generally accepted as Holland's greatest 17th century poet, virtually ignored 17th century Holland's greatest painter, few Rembrandt scholars have failed to call attention to this singular fact.² Nevertheless, it would be impossible to review Rembrandt's reputation during his lifetime without examining this material once again.

Before citing the few lines which Vondel devoted to Rembrandt a few words must be written about Vondel as an art critic.

It is not necessary to labour the point that during the 17th century no man spent his time doing nothing but explaining, reviewing, commending and condemning works of art. The more peculiar animal who spends his time reviewing and analyzing the critic was even more remote. Vondel wrote on the representational arts; but this was by no means his major preoccupation. After having written thirty-two poetic dramas, he had every right to consider himself a serious dramatist and poet. But since verse came easy to him, and because he was a 17th century poet, there was nothing unusual about the fact that he wrote wedding and birthday odes and even composed advertisements in verse from the beginning until the end of his career. He composed an ode for Willem Bartjens' book on ciphering;³ and as late as 1673 he was employed by the art dealer Gerrit Uylenburgh to compose verses to help advertise a public auction of the pictures which the Elector of Brandenburg refused to buy from the dealer because they were denounced as fakes.⁴

¹ C. Vosmaer, *Rembrandt Harmens van Rijn*, (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1868), 331-335.

² The most extensive analysis of the relationship of the painter and poet is F. Schmidt-Degener's study *Rembrandt und der holländische Barock* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1928), which is a German translation of an article which appeared in *De Gids*, LXXXIII (1919). The article is reprinted F. Schmidt-Degener, *Rembrandt*, edited by A. van Schendel Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1950). 27-78.

³ *De Werken van Vondel*, ed. J. F. M. Sterck, et. al. (10 vols.; Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1927-40), I, 136 f.: "Lof-Zangh toe-geeygent Mr. Willem Bartjens," The poem was written in 1606-7.

⁴ Uylenburgh was Rembrandt's wife Saskia's cousin. For details of the scandal in which he was involved, see Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 293 f. Apparently Vondel's poem,

Much of Vondel's verse on the arts falls into the category of hack verse, although one would hesitate to maintain that Vondel drew a clear distinction between a pot boiler and what was truly creative. Amsterdam's artistic and intellectual elite by no means considered Vondel a poor critic of the arts; on the contrary, they accorded him great distinction, perhaps the greatest, by giving him the seat of honor at a dinner given by the painters and rhetoricians on October 20, 1653 in order to celebrate the union of Apelles and Apollo.¹ No contemporary text informs us whether Rembrandt took part in the celebration.

Vondel, because he was Amsterdam's first poet, must have been considered particularly competent to judge the art of painting. *Ut pictura poesis* was not a foreign phrase to the 17th century guests who celebrated the union of painting and poetry.

Vondel had words of the greatest praise for Rembrandt's teacher, Pieter Lastman. Of the Italianate Dutchman's *Sacrifice at Lystra*² (fig. 24) he wrote
 ...our Apelles had in this picture constructed his scene with so much knowledge that even the genius of Rome and Greece never winged itself up to greater height.³

The praise is of the familiar type: the modern Apelles has surpassed the ancients. What is significant, however, is the date at which Vondel finds

quoted *Ibid.*, 295-6, and one written by J. Antonides did little to help Uylenburgh's reputation; less than two years later he declared himself insolvent: cf. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare*, V, 1660 f. After this ill fortune, according to Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 297, he went to England where he painted backgrounds for Peter Lely's portraits.

¹ Houbraken, *op. cit.*, III, 329-30, looked back in 1718 at the sixth decade of the 17th century as the high point in Dutch art: "In dezen tyd bloeide de Konst in Nederland, inzonderheid te Amsterdam. De Vrede stond voor de deur, die Bellona vyandin der konsten aan band leggen... Konstlievenden en Konstenaren reiken nu elkander hart en hand, (en 't waar te wenschen geweest dat de wangunst en eigenbaat dezen band niet had verbroken) in eendraft toe. Dit is my gebleken uit zekere vaerzen, 't eene op de vereeniging van Apelles en Apollo &c. 1653. Het andere heeft tot tytel Broederschap der Schilder-konst, ingewydt door Schilders, Beeldthouwers en derzelver begunstigers. Op den 21 van Wynmaand, 1654 in Amsterdam. Op de volgende bladzyde staan de hoofden der opregters, als M. Kretser, B. van der Elst, N. van Heldt Stockade, J. Meuris gemelt; en is dit vaars aan gemelden Heer Maarzeveen opgedragen, uit naam van allen door T. Asselyn."

² Kurt Freise, *Pieter Lastman* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt, 1911) No. 88; formerly in the collection of Count Stetzki, Romanow Castle, Wolhynia.

³ ...onze Apelles zyn Toneel
 En grond met volle kennis bouwd,
 En zoo deze Offerstaatsie houd,
 Dat zelf de geest van Rome en Grieken
 Nooit hooger zweefde op zyne wicken.

Cited in Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 98-9. The translation is taken from A. J. Barnouw, *Vondel* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Son, 1925), 167.

Lastman the stellar painter of the epoch. The poem was published in 1657; Lastman died in 1633. Vondel considered the painter who made the trip across the Alps in the first decade of the century, and who came back with vivid memories of what he had seen, as Holland's Apelles in the sixth decade of the century. He undoubtedly considered Lastman's classicistic treatment of a classical subject superior to the way in which Rembrandt was handling classical themes during the late fifties—for example his *Philemon and Baucis*, now in the National Gallery, in Washington.

Vondel himself gives Jan Pynas, another Dutchman who worked in Rome around 1605—10 with that interesting group of artists made up of Elsheimer, Lastman, Goudt, Hagelstein, Tengenagel and Jakob Pynas, credit for serving as the source of inspiration for the monologue he wrote for Reuben in his *Joseph in Dothan*. Vondel wrote that Jan Pynas' painting of *Joseph's Bloody Coat*¹ (fig. 25), was the touchstone for his description of how Jacob would receive the bloody multi-colored coat and news of Joseph's death as given by Reuben.²

Since the great poet had a preference for the "pre-Rembrandtesque" history painters, Lastman and Pynas, we can assume that he would have been pleased with Rembrandt's early history paintings; however, he did not write a strophe on any of them. One of his favorite painters of the generation which followed the early Italian Dutchmen was Govert Flinck — not the early Flinck who was such a careful pupil of Rembrandt's during the thirties that his work has often been confused with that of his master's; but the later, more fashionable Flinck whose work can be confused with work done by Bartholomeus van der Helst. Vondel, and many of Amsterdam's leading citizens, showed a distinct preference for Flinck who, as Hofstede de Groot so neatly pointed out, was able to combine cool colors and correct drawing with the proper bourgeoisie dignity.³ Flinck was not only given choice portrait commissions, but painted

¹ The picture, dated 1618, was formerly in the Schuvaloff Collection in Leningrad. See Kurt Bauch, "Beiträge zum Werk der Vorläufer Rembrandts: I. Die Gemälde des Jan Pynas," *Oud-Holland*, LII (1935), 153, fig. 10, and H. T. van Guldener, *Het Jozef-verhaal bij Rembrandt en zijn school* (Amsterdam: C. H. van Houten, 1947), 93, 118.

² *De Werken van Vondel*, *op. cit.*, IV, 74, Dedication of "Joseph in Dothan": "Josephs verkooping schoot ons in den zin, door het tafereel van Ian Pinas, hangende, neffens meer kunstige stukken van Peter Lastman, ten huise van den hooghgeleerden en ervaren Dokter Robbert Verhoeven (van der Hoeven); daer de bloedige rock den Vader vertoont wort..."

³ Article in *Thieme-Becker* on Flinck by Hofstede de Groot, vol. XII, 99: "In der späteren Zeit, in der Flinck vor allem Bildnismaler war, weiss er zwar in kühlen Farben korrekte Zeichnung mit der Wiedergabe bürgerliche Würde (der Holländer sagt 'deftigkeit') zu verbinden..."

pictures for the Burgomaster's room and council chamber of Amsterdam's new city hall; and in the late fifties was awarded perhaps the most important commission given to any Amsterdam artist during Rembrandt's lifetime: the task of making the paintings which were to fill the lunettes of the great gallery in the new city hall, the "eighth wonder of the world."¹

When Flinck remarried in 1656 Vondel commemorated the event with a poem. He complimented the artist by stating that he knew how to give each object in a painting its form, value and own character. He knew how to keep the rules of art without trespassing the laws of nature. It is Flinck who gives us clarity and the advice to follow life and truth.²

De Prins der Nederduitsche Dichteren placed a premium upon *klaerheit* in painting, and in his poem on Philips de Konink's *Sleeping Venus* he tells us more specifically that he does not consider darkness in a painting a virtue:

Painting also bears sons of darkness,
Who like to live in shadow like an owl.
He who follows life can do without fictitious gloom,
And as a child of light hides not in the dusk.³

1 Cf. page 77 below.

2 *De Werken van Vondel, op cit.*, VIII, 200: Ter Bruilofte van den Kunstrijcken Govaert Flinck, en de E. Iongkvrouwe Sofia van der Hoeven:

Wie, in schilderkunst bedreven,
Ieder beelt, naer tijt en aert
Dus zijn' omtreck weet te geven,
Verf en eigenschap, bewaert
Best de regels en de wetten
Van de kunst, die nimmer weeck,
Noit de treden wou verzetten
Van Natuure, en haere streeck.
Hierin lichte met zijn klaerheit
Ons de Bruigoms voorbeelt voor,
Die het leven en de waerheit
Altijt, op Apelles spoor,
Volghde...

3 *Ibid.*, X, 630, Op De Zelve Venus door F. de Koning:

Dus baert de schilderkunst ook zoons van duisternisse,
Die gaerne in schaduw verkeerren, als een uil.
Wie 't leven navolgt kan verzierte schaduw missen,
En als een kint van 't licht gaet in geen scheemring schuil.

Vondel wrote another poem on the same painting, "De Slapende Venus," *Ibid.*, 628. H. Gerson suggests that Vondel may have had Koninck's *Jupiter and Antiope* (?), signed and dated 1670, in mind when he wrote these poems. In any event, Gerson adds, Vondel confused his poetic description of the painting: "He writes about a Venus and reports that Jupiter descends in a golden rain. Did he mean Danæ?" Cf. Horst Gerson, *Philips*

Vondel obviously approved of this former Rembrandt pupil's "light manner" in portraiture: he wrote poems praising Koninck's portraits of Maria van Oudtshoren,¹ Margaretha van Rijn,² as well as three poems dedicated to likenesses the artist made of him.³ *De Vader der Nederduitsche Dichtkonstoeffenaren* did not tire sitting for Koninck. H. Gerson accepts six of the many painted portraits of Vondel as genuine Konincks in his catalogue of the artist's works; he lists ten others known from old copies, prints or mentioned in sales catalogues.⁴ More than a dozen drawings of the poet were made by or are attributed to Koninck.⁵

Light colors and a light tonality in painting constituted the *dernier cri* in Amsterdam during the fifties and sixties; but the new vogue was not given complete support. De Decker's poem published in 1660 in praise of Rembrandt's *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene*, it will be recalled, approved of the way Rembrandt painted the rocks high and full of shadows.⁶

Joachim van Sandrart was another painter who was honored by Vondel in verse; so much so that there is probably much truth in Barnouw's statement that if Vondel had been king, Sandrart would have been his court painter.⁷ The artist, who was considered during his lifetime as one of Germany's greatest painters but who is today much more highly esteemed for his work as an art historian, arrived in Amsterdam in 1637 as a cosmopolitan man of the world. He had already studied with Honthorst in Utrecht, had visited London and had met and worked with the most famous painters in Italy.⁸ Before he left Amsterdam, around 1645, he had met Vondel and painted him. He also painted

Koninck, (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1936), 52 and No. 137; the painting was destroyed by fire in Rotterdam during World War II. Houbraken, in his biography of Koninck in *De Grootte Schouburgh*, quotes Vondel's poem on the Venus and interprets the lines as criticism of Rembrandt: cf. Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 54. Vondel also had little use for darkness in poetry. He poked fun at the admiration which Constantin Huygens and Maria Tesselschade showed for John Donne's "dark sun" in "Op de Diepzinnige Punt-dichten van den Engelschen Poet John Donne vertaelt door C. Huygens"; *De Werken van Vondel*, *op. cit.*, III, 415.

1 *Ibid.*, X, 683. The painting is lost.

2 *Ibid.*, VIII, 212. This poem is dated 1656: Koninck married Margaretha van Rijn in 1657. The painting is lost.

3 *Ibid.*, VIII, 212; IX, 672; X, 675. Gerson identifies two of these poems with portraits in the University of Leiden Library and in the collection of M. F. van Lennep in Amsterdam; cf. Gerson, *Koninck*, *op. cit.*, Nos. 220 and 224.

4 *Ibid.*, Nos. 220-230.

5 *Ibid.*, No. Z.277 to Z.283.

6 Cf. p. 46f above.

7 Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 169.

8 For a more detailed discussion of Sandrart see page 84, below.

members of the poet's circle: Barlaeus, Hooft, Coster and Vossius. Sandrart executed one of the group portraits for the Great Hall of the Kloveniersdoelen where Rembrandt's *Night Watch* hung; he painted the *Corporalship of Cornelis Bicker*, dated 1639, which shows the men grouped in front of a bust of Marie de Medici, the French Dowager Queen. Sandrart painted a sheet of paper in this picture which has on it five verses by Vondel.¹

It is tempting to conclude that Sandrart, who has the distinction of having written the first extensive negative criticism on Rembrandt in his *Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, published in 1675, gave Vondel his ideas on art and art theory. Schmidt-Degener came to this conclusion; he wrote that the ideas Sandrart put into print in 1675 he also gave to Vondel when they were friends in Amsterdam from around 1637 until 1645.² But there is no proof that Sandrart must accept this responsibility; what Sandrart wrote about Rembrandt in his *Academie* is not necessarily what he thought about the painter thirty years earlier. We do know, however, that Vondel was much closer to the German painter than he ever was to Rembrandt. He dedicated ten of his poems to Sandrart — and even composed a poetic catalogue of the objects in Sandrart's collection.³ When Vondel published his acknowledged masterpiece *Lucifer* in 1654 he dedicated it to the Emperor Ferdinand III; Sandrart was working in Vienna at that time and he obtained the Emperor's consent for this dedication.⁴

Vondel had eyes for greater and lesser talents than Sandrart's. In the dedication of his drama *The Brothers*, published in 1639, he wrote that Rubens, the glory of painting of our age, could best translate his ideas into paint;⁵ and a

¹ *Catalogue of the Pictures... in the Rijksmuseum*. (Amsterdam: 1910), No. 2117, page 295.

² Schmidt-Degener, *op. cit.*, 13: "Aus sich selbst hatte Vondel so wenig Auge für die Kunst der Malerei, wie einen Begriff ihres Wesens; sein Urteil war unsicher; glücklicherweise aber kam ihm Joachim Sandrart zu Hilfe. Sandrart war ein Pedant, dessen überreichem Theoretisieren sich eine flauere Barockmanier gut anpasste; ein banaler Geist, mit eleganter Glätte und hohler Leichtigkeit... Dieser Deutsche erfüllte hier die nämliche Rolle, wie später der bissige Wallone Gérard de Lairesse. Diese Fremden wussten sehr genau, wie in Holland gemalt werden musste."

³ *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, IV, 594 f., "Op Schilderkunst, Tekeningen en Marmerbeelden, ten huize van Sandrart."

⁴ Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 170.

⁵ *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, III, 801, in the dedication to: "Den welwijze en hooggeleerde Heere, Geeraerd Vossius... Hier word ick belust, om door Rubens, de glorie den penseelen onzer eeuw, een heerlijk en koninglijk tafereel, als een treurtooneel, te stoffeeren. Hy valt aen het teekenen, ordineeren, en schilderen, nocht zijn wackere geest rust eer het werkstuk voltoit zy."

book of his verse published in 1650 included a poem on Rubens' *Dead Leander*.¹ The poet also had praise for painters of less consequence than Flinck, Koninck and Sandrart — not to mention Rubens. He dedicated lines to Cornelius Brizé,² the still-life painter who also kept a refreshment bar at the Amsterdam theatre where Vondel's plays were performed; to Abraham van Diepenbeeck;³ to Jurriaen Ovens;⁴ and to Karel van Mander III.⁵ None of these poems reveal that Vondel was a great connoisseur of painting; they only show that he was familiar with painting and painters.

And what did the great poet have to say about Rembrandt? Very little. Vondel only cited the painter's name twice in his published works.

The first mention is made in a epigram of four lines which the poet dedicated to a portrait Rembrandt made of the Mennonite preacher, Cornelius Anso. The lines, which probably refer to the portrait Rembrandt painted of the preacher and his wife in 1641, now in Berlin, or to an etching of Anso, dated 1641, (B. 271), were published in 1644:

O, Rembrandt, paint Cornelius' voice.
 The visible is the least important part of him:
 The invisible one only learns through the ears.
 He who wants to see Anso, must hear him.⁶

These lines should not be interpreted as an affront to the artist — although an admonition to paint a man's voice, even if it is a preacher's, is not the most complimentary thing which one can say to a painter. Vondel's intention was to flatter Anso: he did not mean to criticize Rembrandt.

The other poem which mentions Rembrandt is "Ter eere der Schrijfkunste van Mr. Lieven van Koppenol," of 1658. In this verse Vondel wanted to honor Koppenol, the calligrapher.⁷ He did so by rhyming the idea that it is not

1 *Ibid.*, V, 505.

2 *Ibid.*, VIII, 215.

3 *Ibid.*, 218.

4 *Ibid.*, IX, 248, 259, 798; V, 537.

5 *Ibid.*, VIII, 611-614. Karl van Mander III was the grandson of Karl van Mander I. Vondel probably knew the latter who died in Amsterdam in 1606; both were Brabanders living in exile in Holland. The poet visited the grandson in Copenhagen in 1657 and wrote a poem under a portrait of the author of the *Schilderboek* in the grandson's possession: *Ibid.*, 613.

6 *Ibid.*, IV, 209, Op Cornelis Anso:

Ay, Rembrant, mael Cornelis stem.

Het zichtbre deel is 't minst van hem:

't Onzichtbre kent men slechts door d'ooren.

Wie Anso zien wil, moet hem hooren.

7 Cf. page 53f. above.

enough that clever Rembrandt painted Koppenol with his fine brush, and he implied that Quellinus' carved marble portrait could do greater justice to the subject and his calligraphy because of the eternal quality of the medium the sculptor used. The reference is similar to the conceit dedicated to Anslø: it is eloquent verse in praise of the subject at the expense of the artist.¹

Two other poems by Vondel may refer to portraits by Rembrandt. One reads: "Here Anna appears living, she gave life to Six..."² Since Rembrandt painted a portrait of Jan Six's mother, Anna Wijmer, these words may refer to the portrait dated 1641 which is now in the Six collection in Amsterdam. The poem, however, does not mention Rembrandt's name. The other is dedicated to Jan Six: "Here one paints Jan Six, in the flower of his life..."³ Again we may conjecture that Vondel had a Rembrandt painting in mind when he wrote this verse, since Rembrandt painted Jan Six in 1654. We would prefer to think that Vondel was not referring to Rembrandt and the famous Six portrait, now in the Six collection, with the words, "Here one paints..."

If the lines in the two poems cited above refer to paintings by Rembrandt they certainly demonstrate that Vondel was not very sensitive to the artistic merits of the artist's work. If they do not, they establish that Vondel only referred to Rembrandt twice in his published works during his long and distinguished career. It also significant that Vondel, who wrote memorial poems to so many of Amsterdam's leading citizens and artists upon their death, did not compose one for Rembrandt. Further, as far as we know, Rembrandt never painted a portrait of the poet. We have already mentioned that Koninck painted the author of *Lucifer* at least six times.

1 *Ibid.*, VIII, 689-90: 'T is niet genoegh dat Rembrandt eël
Hem maelde met zijn braef penseel:
Quellijn laete ons dien helt aenschouwen,
En levendigh in marmer houwen,
Met zijne veder in de hant.
Zoo hou de schrijfkunst eeuwich stant.

Cf. H. F. Wijnman, "Drie Onbekende Gedichten van Vondel op Mr. Lievens van Coppenol," *Vondelkroniek*, IV (1933), 1-8 and "Mr. Lieven van Coppenol," *Amstelodamum*, XXX (1933), 92-187.

2 *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, IV, 295. "Op de schildery van mejoffer Anna Wijmers," first published in 1660:

Aldus schynt Anna hier te leven
Die Six het leven heeft gegeven.

3 *Ibid.*, IX, 288: "Op d' Afbeeldinge van den geleerden en beleefden heere, nu Commissaris Johan Six":

Zoo maelt men Six, in 't bloeiens van zyn jeught...

Why did Vondel refuse to sit for Rembrandt? What accounts the silent treatment he gave the artist?

First of all, one can assert that Vondel simply was not a great connoisseur of paintings. This point has not been emphasized enough by the authors who have studied the relations of the official poet and Holland's greatest painter. The assertion is not made merely because he wrote more on Lastman, Pynas, Flinck, Koninck, Sandrart, Ovens, Karl van Mander III and others, than he did about Rembrandt. A more specific idea of his qualifications as a critic and connoisseur is received from Geeraardt Brandt's biography of the poet published in 1682. Brandt, who knew Vondel, reported that the poet dedicated his *Mysteries of the Altar*, 1645, to the Archbishop of Malines.¹ The Archbishop sent him his thanks and a picture:

At first out of ignorance, he was pleased with the present, believing it to be an artistic piece of work, and he reciprocated that supposed benefaction with a beautiful poem; but when the connoisseurs saw it and told him it was a worthless copy, he became so disgusted with the gift that he sent it as a present to his sister Katharina van den Vondel at Hoorn, not wishing to keep that hateful reminder of a poor reward before his eyes.²

Was Vondel less ignorant of the art of painting when he was given the seat of honor at the celebration of the union of Apelles and Apollo on St. Luke's Day in Amsterdam in 1653? There is no evidence which suggests he had become more sensitive to artistic quality after he was fooled by the Archbishop. We must answer why, if this is so, the followers of Apelles were willing to allow him to occupy the seat of honor.

A clue to the respect he received is found in the dedication of his Dutch trans-

1 Vondel became a Catholic in 1641: "In the *Litterae Annuae* of the Jesuits, in which they reported the progress of their activities to the Vatican, Vondel is on record as having entered the Church of Rome in 1641, not long after his daughter Anna became a communicant." Cited from Barnouw, *op. cit.* 109.

2 Geeraardt Brandt, *Het Leven van Joost van den Vondel*, edited by P. Leendertz, Jr., (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1932) 40: "Eerst was hy met de gift, door onkunde, meenende dat het een kunstig stuk werks was, vermaakt, en beantwoordde die ingebeelde weldaadt met een heerlyk dankdicht: maar toen het de kunstkenners zaagen, en zeiden, dat het een slechte kopy was, stondt hem 't geschenk zoo teegen, dat hy 't zyne zuster Katharina van den Vondel, die te Hooeren woonde, vereerde en toezondt; niet willende die haatelijke gedachtenis der armelyke vergeldinge langer onder zyn ooggen zien." Translation cited from Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 168.

lation of Horace's *Odes and Art of Poetry*, published in 1654.¹ He dedicated this translation to the "fellows in Art of St. Luke, at Amsterdam, Painters, Sculptors, Draughtsmen and their Persons" as an expression of thanks for the reception he received from them. A man who could translate Horace and argue in his dedication that poetry, painting and sculpture are arts which have much in common since they are

...based upon measure and number (and) cannot dispense with geometry, which fact, instead of detracting from the glory of these arts, makes them seem more divine; for of God Himself, the creator of all things, it has been said by the Oracle of Wisdom that 'He has ordered all things by measure, number and weight'²

would not be accused by a 17th century man as being ignorant of the theory of painting. He may be unable to distinguish an original from a bad copy; but he could argue skillfully that the divine order of the universe, and of classical models, must find its reflection in works of art. These arguments exalted painting.

The Amsterdam painters knew that the poet who at times wrote doggerel verse, basically was a serious poet who treated biblical and historical themes with dignity and majesty. His elevated subjects made exalted poetry. He also knew there had to be rules which were found in nature and in the ancients; Vondel translated Seneca, Euripides and Sophocles as well as Horace. The poet even wished for an academy for poets in his *Introduction to Dutch Poetry*, published in 1650:

It were to be wished that choice spirits, under the auspices of learned Maecenates, would sometimes discuss these matters and found something like a New Parnassus, after the manner of Italy, where, without envy and impartiality, each one's old and new poems could

1 *Lierzangen en dichtkunst*, (Amsterdam: 1654). Cited in Ernest Kletsch, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus: Editions not located in the U.S. through the Union Cat. of the Lib. of Cong.*, (Washington: Mimeoform Service, 1937), 18. Reprinted in *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, VII, 259 f.

2 *Ibid.*, 261: "Aen de Kunstgenooten van Sint Lukas, t'Amsterdam, Schilders, Beelthouwers, Tekenaers, en hunne begunstigers. Hoewel elke kunst haer eige bepalinge heeft, nochtans worden zommighe Kunsten door eenerhanden bant van onderlinge gemeenschap verknocht, en gelijk vermaeghschapt: hoedanige zijn Poëzy, Schilderkunst, Beelthouwerij en andere Kunsten, die, te gelijk op maet en getal gegront, de Wiskunst niet ontbeeren mogen: en zeker dit vermindert zoo weinigh den luister van deze Kunsten, datze hierom te goddelijker te achten zijn: want van Godt zelf, aller dingen Schepper, wordt gezeit, by het Orakel der wijsheit, dat Hy alle dingen, in mate, getal, en gewichte, geordineert heeft." The translation from Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 164-5.

be tested, so as not only to strive for beauty and effect, but also to avoid, out of a noble ambition, our mistakes, and thereby to give to Dutch poetry its full splendor.¹

In 1655 Amsterdam inaugurated its new City Hall, which is now one of the Royal Palaces of the Netherlands. It was designed by Jacob van Campen, the architect whose list of painters selected to decorate Huis ten Bos did not include Rembrandt.² Van Campen was a careful student of Scamozzi and Palladio. When he died Constantin Huygens wrote in his epitaph that he restored the art of building and gave the foolish Gothic style the manly dignity of Rome and expelled an old heresy with an older truth.³

Vondel, as one would predict, celebrated the inauguration of the classicistic Stadhuis in a poem dedicated to the city fathers,⁴ which catalogued the virtues of the city government, gave a history and description of the city and culminated in a description of Van Campen's masterpiece. The poem also gave explanatory verses of the historical paintings in the building, including a description of the eight paintings which were to fill the lunettes in the large gallery surrounding the central hall.⁵ These spaces were to be filled with scenes representing the revolt of the Batavians under the leadership of Julius Civilis against the Romans, as described by Tacitus. Holland's recent revolt and victory against Spain was not considered a suitable subject; the poet as well as the builder went back to an older truth.

Flinck was given the choice commission to execute the paintings for the large gallery. He prepared the sketches for this project, but died on February 2, 1660 before he could execute them. The commission was then distributed among several artists, and Rembrandt was selected to paint a picture for the series: the *Conspiracy of Julius Civilis* (fig. 26), which is frequently called incorrectly the *Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*.⁶ This was the first scene and it

¹ *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, V, 484 f., "Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche Dichtkunst." Translation from Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 206-7.

² Cf. page 26, note 1, above.

³ Worp, *De Gedichten van Constantijn Huygens, op. cit.*, VI, 247.

⁴ *De Werken van Vondel, op. cit.*, V, 857, "Inwydinge van Het Stadhuis t'Amsterdam toegeigent Den E. E. Heeren Burgemeesteren en Regeerderen der Zelve Stede." The poem was published in 1655.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 897 f.

⁶ The source of the story is Tacitus, *Historiae*, IV. Tacitus uses the name Julius Civilis, as do Frontinus and Plutarchus; only in Tacitus, *Historiae*, IV, 13, at the beginning of the story of the uprising does the manuscript use the form Claudius Civilis; cf. A. W. Byvanck, *Nederland in den Romeinschen Tijd* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1943), I, 224, note 1. Perhaps his name was Julius Claudius Civilis.

depicts the secret meeting at night of Julius Civilis and his fellow conspirators; the pretext of the meeting is a banquet, but the Batavians, under the leadership of Civilis, use the opportunity to swear that they will oust their Roman conquerors. The night scene which Rembrandt painted — and it is significant that he was commissioned to render a nocturnal scene — was in place in the City Hall in 1662;¹ but for reasons which Rembrandt specialists are still debating it was removed. By 1663 its place was taken by a painting by Jurriaen Ovens, who painted over Flinck's original full size water color sketch. Ovens' version is still *in situ*. A fragment of Rembrandt's version — the complete canvas was six by five and one half meters and was the largest he painted — is now in the museum in Stockholm.

In spite of the most careful examination of available evidence it is still not known why the *Conspiracy of Julius Civilis* was removed from the Stadhuis.²

1 M. Fokkens in his *Beschrijvinge der wijs vermaarde Koop-Stadt Amstelredam*, (Amsterdam: 1662), 159 f., describes the painting and states that it was painted by Rembrandt; cf. *Urk.*, 249.

2 Wolfgang Stechow reviewed contributions to a solution of this problem in "Recent Periodical Literature on 17th Century Painting in the Netherlands and Germany," *Art Bulletin*, XXIII (1941), 227-228. He pointed out that Arnoldus Noach, in an article published in *De Gids*, November, 1937, and again in an article in *Oud Holland*, "De Maaltijd in het Schakerbosch en de Versiering van het Stadhuis," LVI (1939), 145-157, attempted to demonstrate that Rembrandt's *Civilis* painting was not rejected because of "an irreconcilable antagonism between the classicists and the late Rembrandt." Noach argues that the authorities asked Rembrandt to change his painting because of architectural alterations, not because they objected to his style. The vaults in the great hall were first planned, and even executed as elliptical wooden emergency vaults (in 1659 for the visit of Amalia of Solms), when they were decorated with Flinck's sketches. Thus the compositions were planned and completed with elliptical tops. When the stone vaults were first planned, and even executed, as elliptical wooden emergency vaults (in 1659 change. Rembrandt made a sketch, according to Noach, which indicated these alterations (HdG. 412, not HdG. 409 as stated in Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, I, p. 230, note 39). His picture was returned to him, concludes Noach, because he asked more for the alterations than Ovens did for his entire new work (48 guilders). Stechow has pointed out that Valentiner, *Rembrandt Handzeichnungen; Klassiker der Kunst*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, n. d.), II, 404, has rejected the drawing which Rembrandt supposedly made to indicate the changes in his composition (HdG 412) as a forgery: "If HdG 412 is a forgery Noach's ingenious theory would not collapse entirely but it would become very shaky, and the interpretation which blames the classicistic taste of the burgomasters for the rejection of Rembrandt's works would not have been convincingly refuted — particularly since Noach himself is inclined to believe that the burgomasters preferred an Ovens at 48 guilders to a Rembrandt which would have cost them more." In the same review Stechow reviews an article written by H. van de Waal, "Tempesta en de Historie-Schilderingen op het Amsterdamsche Raadhuis," *Oud Holland*, LVI (1939) 49-65, in which Van de Waal attempts to prove that a classicistic bias was responsible for the rejection of the *Civilis* painting by Rembrandt: "He emphasizes the influence exerted in

We do not know if the painting was rejected; and until we do, it is illogical to speak of the incompatibility of Rembrandt's late style and the classicistic taste of the town officials.

There was certainly a classicistic vogue in Amsterdam during the fifties and sixties. This explains in part why Flinck, and not Rembrandt, was given the original commission for the complete set of *Civilis* paintings. But this taste had by no means petrified into a set of universally accepted immutable principles. Nor was it the only taste in Amsterdam at the time; after all, Rembrandt *did* receive the commission to execute the *Civilis* picture. An academic classicism was not formulated in Holland during Rembrandt's lifetime. Facets of such a doctrine were present; but they had not yet been systematized into a code under which Rembrandt could be tried, found guilty, condemned and sentenced. Moreover, it is possible to cite Amsterdamers of note who did not have a classicist's respect for the ancients. For example, Jan Vos, the popular poet, dramatist and successful theatre manager, wrote in the preface to his drama *Medea*, printed in 1667, that his *Medea* would hurl her children to their death and splash their blood and brains in the face of Jason although this is against the law of Horace, which was translated into Dutch by Vondel. According to Vos modern poets need not obey that law because Horace gave it without reason and no law can prevail which does not evolve from reason. Antiquity need be followed only when it is right. If Homer, Virgil and Ovid, the greatest of all poets, were alive today and knew only Dutch they would still be the greatest poets, for poetry is not a daughter of languages. Vos held that a man is what he is by nature's gifts, not by a study of the ancients.¹ And Vos, it will be recalled, listed the great painters of Amsterdam in a poem printed in 1662, the year Melchior Fokkens reported he saw Rembrandt's *Civilis* painting in place in the Stadhuis; in this poem he placed Rembrandt at the head of the list of painters who spread Amsterdam's fame as far and wide as Dutch ships sail the seas.²

various degrees upon the present classicistic decorations by Tempesta's etchings after van Veen, and advances the opinion that Rembrandt's work was rejected because he refused to make use of the same source in a similar spirit. A slight methodical drawback of his analysis of the changes made by Tempesta in his adaptation of van Veen's compositions lies in the fact that van Veen's originals have not survived, but have to be hypothetically reconstructed from a different set of paintings by the same master illustrating the same subject matter."

¹ Jan Vos, *Alle de Gedichten* (Amsterdam: 1726), II, 114-121; cf. Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 158.

² Cf. page 46 above.

Even if we interpret the fact that the *Civilis* picture was taken down and not rehung as an official rebuff, and although Vondel virtually overlooked Rembrandt, it is incorrect to assert that Rembrandt was passé during the last years of his life. Schmidt-Degener simplifies the picture too much when he writes: "In der zweiten Hälfte seines Lebens geriet Rembrandt in Konflikt mit dem Geschmack seiner Zeitgenossen."¹ Rembrandt came in conflict with the taste of some of his contemporaries; the qualifying adjective is very important here. One may very well ask what was the taste of his contemporaries during the second half of his life: was it represented by those who preferred the Flemish or French manner; or was it those who had a predilection for the school of Delft; or those who favored the painters of *Feinmalerei*; or by the *Staalmeesters* who had Rembrandt paint their portraits in 1662? As late as 1661 Aert de Gelder was sent to be Rembrandt's pupil.² De Gelder remained loyal all his life to the style he learned in the master's studio.

Rembrandt died in 1669. In that year Vondel was sponsor of a new literary society in Amsterdam called *Nil volentibus arduum*, nothing is too difficult for those who will. The purpose of the group was to familiarize poets of talent with the rules of poetry and subject their work to collective criticism. This group seemed to answer Vondel's wish for an Academy in Holland which he voiced in his *Introduction to Dutch Poetry* in 1650.³ However, he soon left the group, and a contemporary critic suggests why, when he described *Nil* as a "poetical inquisition... which curses and rejects everything that does not conform to the Canon."⁴

Soon after Rembrandt's death, his work was brought before an inquisition which rejected all that did not conform to the Canon; but by no means was the verdict at which the tribunal arrived, accepted by all concerned. There were always some members of the court who were convinced that Rembrandt was not a heretic.

But during his lifetime no critic articulated an opinion which can be interpreted as negative criticism. The only words of protest written against Rembrandt while he was still alive were penned by Abraham Bruegel on May 22, 1665 in a letter that he wrote from Rome to Don Antonio Ruffo, the Sicilian

1 Schmidt-Degener, *Rembrandt und der holländische Barock*, *op. cit.*, 4.

2 K. Lilienfeld, *Thieme-Becker*, XIII, 359. Lilienfeld describes Rembrandt as "von seiner Mitwelt ganz vergessenen Rembrandt" when De Gelder was sent to work with him. The contrary is true, for Rembrandt was probably working on the *Civilis* picture when this faithful disciple came to his atelier.

3 Cf. p. 76 above.

4 Barnouw, *op. cit.*, 207.

collector who had already acquired Rembrandt's *Aristotle, Alexander* and *Homer*. Bruegel, who was Ruffo's agent and a mediocre still-life painter, wrote that Rembrandt's paintings were not very highly thought of in Rome. It is true, he adds, that they are beautiful as mere heads; but here in Rome one can invest his money better.¹

This criticism, if indeed it can be called that, is certainly tame. If Bruegel attempted to discredit Rembrandt in Ruffo's eyes with his mild words he failed, for he wrote to Don Antonio on January 24, 1670, three months after Rembrandt's death that:

By your letter of December 29, I see that you have had made various half-figures by the best painters of Italy, and that none of them approach those of Rembrandt. It is true I agree with this...²

This is an admission on the dealer's part that his patron still thought the Dutch master's half-figures were better than those made by the "best Italian masters." Bruegel continued his letter with a stronger attack

...but one must consider that great painters, like those by whom you have had your half figures made, are not usually willing to lower themselves for a trifling draped half figure in which the light shows only the tip of the nose, and in which one does not know where the light comes from, since all the rest is dark. The great painters try to show a beautiful nude body, in which one can see their knowledge of drawing. But an incompetent person, on the contrary tries to cover his figures with dark clumsy garments; and this kind of painter does the contours so that one does not know what to make out of it... what I merely want to say is, this is no business of great men, to occupy themselves with such trifles, which almost anyone can do. But I beg you to forgive me for speaking so freely. My love of painting leads me to do so...³

¹ Ruffo, *op. cit.*, 174: "Quanto alli quadri del Rembrant qua non sono in gran stima, è ben vero che per una testa sono belli, ma si possono spendere in Roma li quadri meglio."

² *Ibid.*, 186: "Per la favorita de V. S. Ill.ma del 29 caduto vedo che V. S. Ill.ma ha fatto fajre parecchie mezze figure dalli meglio pictori d'Italia et che neciuna arive a quella del Rymbrant, e vero io pour sono d'acordo..." Translation from Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," *op. cit.*, 132-4; it was made by Miss Ruth Magurn.

³ *Ibid.* "...ma bisogna considerare, che li pictori grandi, conforme quelli che V. S. Ill.ma à fatto le mezze figure, non vogliono si assucittare ad una bagatella d'una mezza figura vestita e de che sola vene un lumino soudra il poijuto del paso, e che non si sa da che parte se ne vene perchè tout il reste è ouscure. Li pictori grandi studino a fajre

Bruegel's 1670 letter is the earliest extant written criticism of the artist which can be classified as anti-Rembrandt. His accusation that Rembrandt used shadows because he could not draw beautiful nudes was not written for publication; this idea was first put into print by Sandrart in his *Teutsche Academie* five years later. Vondel's reticence about Rembrandt's qualities and the praise which he had for the painter's sitters are indeed innocuous judgements compared to the complaints which are registered against the artist soon after his death.

vedere un bel corpo niudo, e dove si vede il sapere del disegno, ma al contrario, un inniorante cerca di coprire di vestiti ouscuri goffi, et il contorno questi sorti di pictori... voglio dire che non sono cosse de homino grandi, de stare in torno de una bagatella simula, che quasi oniumo sa fayre, pero supplico V. S. Ill.ma d'excusarmi che parlo cossi liberamente l'affetto della pittura mi spingie cossi..."

CHAPTER VI

THE CLASSICISTIC CRITIQUE

Jan de Bisschop, an extremely talented amateur artist, published *Paradigmata Graphices variorum Artificum* in 1671 which contained etchings he made after classical sculpture and works by Italian masters.¹ The work was designed as a handbook for Dutch artists, students and amateurs to show them the beauty of the ancients and the Italians. Here prints of nudes which followed the all-important rules of proportion could be studied. De Bisschop noted in his dedication of the work to Jan Six that things were in such a sorry state in the Netherlands that even if a Leda or a Danaë is to be rendered, a naked woman with a fat swollen belly, hanging breasts, garter marks on her legs and with other such characteristics is depicted.² J. J. M. Timmers pointed out that De Bisschop's reference to garter marks had a great success; they were referred to by Samuel van Hoogstraten seven years later and Andries Pels used the image in 1681.³

Although De Bisschop does not mention Rembrandt's name his graphic imagery was probably directed against the type of model which Rembrandt represented in his etching *Nude Seated on a Mound*, dated around 1631 (B. 198) and which Wenzel Hollar found worth reproducing in 1635⁴ (fig. 11 and 12). De Bisschop's work and words are an indication of the greater importance classicistic art theory will play in the judgement of Dutch art immediately after Rembrandt's death. Further evidence of the shift are the names of the two men

¹ Joh. Episcopius (Jan de Bisschop), *Paradigmata Graphices variorum Artificum. Voor-beelden der teken-konst van verscheyde Meesters* (Hagae-Comitis: 1671).

² *Ibid.*, dedication to Jan Six, pages not numbered: "Ja selfs als een Leda of Danaë soude werden uytgebeeld (soo veer gingh de ghewoonte) wiert gemaectt een vrouwe-naect met een dicken en gheswollen buyck, hangende borsten, kneepen van kousebanden in de beenen, en veel meer sulke wanschaepeñheit."

³ J. J. M. Timmers, *Gérard Lairesse* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1942), 76, was the first to note that the passage was used by Samuel Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilder-Konst* (Rotterdam: 1678), 64: "Zie toe, of de Knien door den Kouseband niet bedorven zijn, of de Knie-muskulen, als bij d'ouden is waergenomen, haer eygene gedaante hebben, of de Scheenen en Kuiten niet met kneepen door 't binden vervalst zijn."

⁴ Cf. p. 29 above.

to whom De Bisschop dedicated, in 1671, his two-volume *Signorum Veterum Icones*, a work similar to the *Paradigmata*. The two men were Jan Uytenbogaert¹ and Constantin Huygens. When Rembrandt worked for them, and Jan Six, he was not requested to endorse a classical canon.²

More specific references to Rembrandt are found in Joachim von Sandrart's biography of Rembrandt in the first volume of his *Teutsche Academie der Edelen Bau-, Bild- und Malerey-Künste*, published in 1675.³

Sandrart was born in 1606, "fast ohne einigen Schmerzen seiner wehrten Gebährerin, an das Licht hervorgetreten,"⁴ in Frankfort am Main. After

1 Jan Uytenbogaert, receiver general and dilettante of the arts, is the subject of Rembrandt's etching the *Gold Weigher*, dated 1639, (B. 281).

2 The report in Ernst Guhl, *op. cit.*, II, 201, cited from Eduard Kolloff, "Rembrandt's Leben und Werke," Fr. von Raumer: *Historisches Taschenbuch* (Leipzig, 1854), 474, that De Bisschop dedicated volume II of *Signorum Veterum Icones* to Rembrandt is an error.

3 Julius Schlosser has justly called the complete title of this work an infinite one; however, since it gives an excellent summary of the contents of the book it is worth quoting it in full: *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura, Scultura et Pictura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Malerey-Künste: Darinn enthalten Ein gründlicher Unterricht von dieser dreyer Künste Eigenschaft, Lehr-Sätzen und Geheimnissen, von den Bau-Steinen und fünferley Bau-Arten, von den Statuen und ihrer Zugehör, von der Erfind- und Zeichnung, von Maass und Proportion der Leiber, vom Fresco-Stein- Landschaft- Bild- und Historien-Mahlen, von Nachtstücken, vom Mahlen mit Oel und Wasser-Farben, von den Affecten und Gewändern, von der Perspectiv, und vom Mahl-Zimmer, auch von den Farben, deren Gebrauch, Ursprung, Natur und Bedeutung: Durch langen Fleiss und Erfahrung ergriffen, und Auf inständiges Erinnern hoher und vornehmer Personen, allen Kunst- und Tugend-Liebenden zu Ehren und Nutzen; Neben Aller Egyptischen, Griechischen, Römischen, Italiänischen, Hoch- und Nieder-Teutschen, auch anderer Alten und Neuen Virtuosen, Leben und fürnehmsten Kunst-Werken, beschrieben, Auch mit 38 Platten von der Architectur, 68 Alt-Römischen Statuen, ganz und halben Bildern, 74 Medaglionen, 180 Contrafäten, durch die Hand der bästen heutigen Künstler gezieret...* The second and last volume of the work was published in 1679. A Latin edition was published in 1683. J. J. Volkmann edited a new edition in 1768 which is only a faint echo of Sandrart's original work; an analysis of the extensive changes which Volkmann made to Sandrart's biography of Rembrandt belongs to a chapter on Rembrandt and his late 18th century critics. An analysis of Sandrart's sources and an excellent biography are found in *Sandrarts Teutsche Academie kritisch gesichtet* by Jean Louis Sponzel, (Dresden: Wilhelm Hoffmann, 1896). A. R. Peltzer's edition of the *Academie*, (Munich: G. Hirsh, 1925), which contains valuable notes is not a reprint of the entire work. An English translation of the Rembrandt biography is included in T. Borenius, *Rembrandt, Selected Paintings*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1942), 21-22.

4 The source of most of the detailed information about Sandrart is found in the lengthy biography which appears at the end of the 1675 edition of the *Academie*; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 19-46. There is some doubt as to whether it is an autobiography. Peltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 8, writes: "Sandrart selbst hat uns seine Lebensgeschichte, und besonders ausführlich diese eindrucksvollen römischen Jahre, wohl die glücklichste Zeit seines Lebens, in einem 24

studying painting in Germany and Prague he worked with Gerard van Honthorst in Utrecht. In 1627 he was in London with Honthorst and from there he went to Venice, Bologna, Rome,¹ Naples and Malta. During these years he was on familiar terms with an enviable number of his famous contemporaries. In England he knew Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel; he writes of having worked after nature in the Roman Campagna with Claude;² and from the biographies which he wrote of his peers, and from the life of Sandrart in the *Academie* one can conclude that he knew, among others, Poussin, Rubens, Pieter van Laer, Domenichino, Reni, Pietro da Cortona, Bernini and Ribera. From 1637 until about 1645 he was back in the Netherlands and active in Amsterdam.³ His activities there as a collector; the etchings which he made of Alphonso Lopez' pictures; the militia piece which he painted of the Corporalship of Captain Bicker in commemoration of the part they played during the visit of Maria de Medici to Amsterdam; and his relation to Vondel have already been mentioned. After he left Amsterdam Sandrart worked in Munich, Nürnberg, Vienna and Augsburg. In 1651 he was characterized by Samuel van Hoogstraten as Germany's greatest painter.⁴ By the time the well travelled

Folioseiten starken Bericht geschildert. Diese lebensvolle und inhaltsreiche Erzählung beansprucht, wenn Sie auch vielleicht nicht von Sandrart persönlich zu Papier gebracht worden ist, als erster Versuch einer deutschen Malerbiographie ein weitgehendes literarisches Interesse, steht sie doch am Anfang einer Entwicklungsreihe, die mit so bedeutenden Büchern, wie den Lebenserinnerungen W. Tischbeins, W. von Kügelgens und Ludwig Richters oder Kellers Grünem Heinrich, abschliesst." *Ibid.*, 381, note 1: "Inhalt wie Diktion lassen darauf schliessen dass Sandrart selbst der Verfasser ist. Zum mindesten hat er, wie Paul Kutter, *Joachim von Sandrart als Künstler*, (Strassburg: Heitz, 1907), S. 58, 13 sagt, 'die Abfassung überwacht, die Grundlagen selbst geliefert und das ganze Werk gebilligt.' Sponzel, *op. cit.*, S. 92 u. 109, hält für wahrscheinlich, dass Sandrarts Nürnberger Freund... der eigentliche Autor sei."

1 For a brilliant study of Sandrart's recklessness with the truth about some of his activities in Rome see Jane Costello, "The Twelve Pictures 'ordered by Velasquez' and the Truce of Valguarnera," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XIII (1950), 237 f.

2 Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part I, Book III, Chap. VI, p. 71: "Die Landschaft-Mahler, haben hierinn, indem sie viel nach dem Leben gezeichnet, sich wol-erfahren gemacht... Ich selbst thäte solcher, etliche Jahre lang. Endlich aber, als mein nächster Nachbar und Haus genoss zu Rom der berühmte Claudius Gilli, sonst Loraines genant, immer mit ins Feld wolte, um nach dem Leben zu zeichnen... als haben wir ursach genommen... in offnem Feld, zu Tivoli, Frescada, Subiaca, und anderer Orten..."

3 The article on Sandrart signed H. V(ollmer), in Thieme-Becker, XXIX, 397, states he was "1637 bis mindestens April 1642 (Mitt. A. Bredius) in Amsterdam ansässig." However, Sandrart writes that he saw Gerard Segers in Amsterdam in 1645: Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, Chap. XVII, 301; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 170.

4 Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 170-1: "Ook melt S. v. Hoogstraten in een Brief geschreven uit Wenen den 9 van Oegstmaant 1651 van eenen Luix (maar wat hy door zyn penceel

German wrote the *Academie* he had the glibness and aplomb of an academic doctinaire who was very familiar with ancient, Renaissance and baroque texts on art.¹

In his biographies of artists Sandrart assumes the role of judge more frequently than the part of reporter. His biography of Rembrandt is not a factual account like the one published by Orlers in 1641; and one of the few facts which he offered his reader is an incorrect one. He states that Rembrandt was survived by his son; Titus, however, died in 1668.² There is no evidence which indicates that Sandrart relied on Orlers at all; he does not cite a single date in his life of Rembrandt nor does he even mention the artist's birthplace. He probably based his biography and estimate of Rembrandt's worth on what he remembered about him while he was in Amsterdam, although at no point in the discussion does Sandrart state that he knew Rembrandt. He does not mention a specific work by the artist; and because he states in his biography of Gerard Dou that this Rembrandt pupil was quite different from his master,³ we may assume that Sandrart was not too familiar with Rembrandt's early paintings. If Sandrart did leave Amsterdam around 1645⁴ it is strange that he did not cite the *Night Watch* since it hung in the same room in the Kloveniersdoelen with Sandrart's militia piece of Captain Bicker. The painting was certainly considered worthy of special mention around the time the *Academie* was published; in 1678 Samuel van Hoogstraten wrote that the *Night Watch* made other group portraits look like playing cards.⁵

Sandrart began his biography by stating that although it is amazing that Rembrandt, a mere Netherlander and miller's son who studied with Lastman, went as far as he did by virtue of his natural talent and hard work — Sandrart

vermocht weet ik niet) aldus: 'Hier komt een donderend gerucht en nieuwe tyding. Men bootschapt my de komst van Duitslants grootsten Schilder Sandrart, die (zoo men zeit) by den Keizer eer en glorie zoekt...'" Luicx (Frans Luyckx) was a Rubens pupil who worked in Vienna as a court painter.

1 He included an extensive bibliography in the *Academie* and cited, among others, Dürer, J. Amman, Lomazzo, Borghini, Armenini, Zuccaro, Varchi, Pomponius Gauricus, Junius, Bosse, Vasari, Baglione, Ridolfi, Ripa, Lencker, Leonardo, De Bie and Van Mander. Cf. *Academie*, *op. cit.*, 104-105.

2 Titus was buried on 3 February 1668; cf. *Urk.*, 301.

3 Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, Chap. XXI, 320; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 195: "Gerhard Dau von Leyden wurde zwar von Rembrand in unserm Kunstgarten gesäet, aber es wurde eine ganz andere Blume, als der Gärtner sich eingebildet, ich will sagen, er habe ganz eine andere und zuvor niemal gesehene Manier angenommen..."

4 Cf. p. 85, note 3, above.

5 Cf. p. 97f, below.

mentions Rembrandt's natural gifts and assiduousness¹ more than once — he missed true greatness because he never visited Italy and the other places where the ancients and the theory of art may be studied.² Unfortunately he followed his own bent and contradicted the rules of art. The rules of art were something quite concrete to Sandrart; he devoted fifteen chapters of the *Academie* to the subject. The defect of not following them was all the more serious, he continued, because Rembrandt could hardly read Netherlandish, thus he could profit but little from books. Sandrart listed "our" rules of art which Rembrandt did not hesitate to oppose and contradict: anatomy, proportions of the human body, perspective, the usefulness of classical statues, and the reasonable education and academies so necessary for our profession.

Rembrandt's justification for this heresy, wrote Sandrart, was that one should be guided by nature and no other rules.

Sandrart assumed that talent and industrious application cannot reward a painter with greatness if he does not know the works of the ancients, Raphael's drawing and the theory of art which were all to be best learned in Italy. It was true that Rembrandt was never in Italy — neither was Frans Hals, Jan van Goyen, Jacob van Ruisdael, Jan Steen or Johannes Vermeer. It is also true that Rembrandt was not as familiar with the works of the ancients as Sandrart was. Rembrandt never accepted a classical canon of corporeal beauty; Sandrart devoted a chapter of the *Academie* to this subject. And the only ancient statue which Rembrandt used in his paintings is the bust of Homer in the *Portrait of Aristotle* which he painted for Ruffo.³ But the learned and cosmopolitan German erred when he implied that Rembrandt was virtually illiterate. Constantin Huygens, Phi'lips Angel and Jeremias de Decker all praised Rembrandt for his ability to follow closely the texts which he read, and the seven extant letters which he sent to Huygens prove conclusively that he had no difficulty

1 In the Preface to the Book on Painting in the *Academie*, Part I, Book III, 58, ancient and modern artists are listed with their single outstanding trait; Rembrandt is given honors in *Arbeitsamkeit*. Sandrart used and expanded the list of ancient painters and their special talents which Van Mander recites in his *Lehrgedicht*; cf. R. Hoecker, *Das Lehrgedicht des Karel van Mander* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff) 1916, 12 and 14.

2 Cf. Appendix D for a complete transcription of the biography.

3 The inventory of 1656 (*Urk.* 169) mentions a few ancient statues and busts which were in Rembrandt's collection; apparently they were used more frequently as subjects for his pupils to draw than as props for his paintings. Cf. Emil Kieser, "Ueber Rembrandts Verhältnis zur Antike" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, X (1941-2), 129-162 and Hendrik Bramsen, "The Classicism of Rembrandt's 'Bathsheba,'" *Burlington Magazine*, XCII (1950), 128-131 for studies upon Rembrandt's relation to the ancients.

reading or writing. We also have Orlers' word that he was inscribed at a grammar and Latin school as well as Leiden University.¹

Sandrart, the learned academician, was quite critical of the miller's son; but Sandrart, the painter who had studied with Honthorst, was not blind to Rembrandt's extraordinary chiaroscuro and color.

He wrote that Rembrandt approved of using light and shadow and the outlines of objects in his paintings even if they were in contradiction with the horizon,² if he felt that this practice helped the picture. Rembrandt had difficulty with drawing, he added, and since clean outlines must be in their true place he filled the outlines in with pitch-black (*finsterschwartz*) in order to circumvent this weakness; he asked that his outlines and dark backgrounds do nothing but keep together the universal harmony of the picture.

The observation that Rembrandt's work did not have the clarity of classical sculpture or of Raphael's drawing was correct; but the implication that Rembrandt used dark backgrounds to hide bad or slovenly drawing was not. The outlines which Constantin Huygens considered old-fashioned around 1630 were a *sine qua non* for great painting, according to the classicistic aesthetic doctrine of the late 17th century. However, Sandrart was not an inflexible dogmatist; although he wrote that Rembrandt broke "our" rules, he was not blind to his brilliant use of light and shade. He states that Rembrandt was excellent at using chiaroscuro to keep together the universal harmony of the picture. He comments upon the fact that Rembrandt used little light; but the Honthorst pupil does not insist that little light or light which is only cast on the main subject is deplorable. Sandrart also complimented Rembrandt for his use of reflections by which light penetrates shade and he concluded that Rembrandt used light and shade around the central subjects artistically.

Rembrandt's "excellent glowing color" was praised even more generously than his treatment of light and shadow; and to Sandrart, color was as important

1 Cf. p. 36 above.

2 By contradiction with the horizon Sandrart meant errors in perspective. Among the rules for history painting Sandrart *op. cit.*, Part I, Book III, Chap. X, 79, writes: "Insonderheit ist, in solchen Gemälden, (history paintings) eine Durchsicht zu machen, zu Erkennung des Horizonts Höhe: welcher allemal, wo es nötig, niedrig seyn soll, zu mehrer Erhebung der Bilder." It is worth continuing the quotation: "Die hinterste Theile des Horizonts, soll ein Mahler nicht durch andere mahlen lassen, wie die meiste Italiäner thun, welche gänzlich nur ihrer eignen Meinung folgen, und also ingemein, wie man zu sagen pflegt, zween Köche die Suppe versalzen."

as drawing:¹ when he wrote, it was not yet necessary to align oneself with the *pousinistes* or *rubénistes*. Sandrart felt that Rembrandt knew how to break and imitate colors in conformity with their character and with the true harmony of their appearance in life. His method of using color shows those who are more dyers than painters that if hard and coarse colors are placed insensitively next to each other, they have nothing in common with nature; the colors of such artists resemble the color boxes seen in shops or cloth bought from the dyers.

The chapter on the "Placing and Harmony of Colors" in the first part of the *Academie* also calls attention to Rembrandt's skill and success in handling color.² After paying homage to Pausias and Glycera of Sicyon who in ancient times made thousands of harmonious combinations of flowers and after mentioning that an artist should study the harmonious distribution of colors in flowers, birds and shells,³ the chapter makes clear just what Sandrart expected a painter to do with color.

Pure colors, as used by playing-card painters and by dyers are not to be used; they are as unpleasant as eating raw meat taken directly from the butcher shop. All hard, light, strong and high colors must be softened or broken. The old *Teutsche* masters, such as Holbein, Amberger, Lucas van Leyden, Sotte Cleef and others could do this well. The Netherland masters, and particularly, in recent times, the Dutch, mix and break raw colors until they approximate nature. In a large picture in which many colors are used the painter must make them blend and stay in their proper place according to the rules of perspective.

¹ Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, Chap. XX, 315-316; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 188: "Es ist denen Kunstmählern eben so hoch nöhtig, dass sie den Pensel und die Farben wohl verstehen, als dass sie gute Zeichner seyen, in deme ich oft und viel, sonderlich bey den Italienern gesehen, dass ihre junge Leuthe, welche früh zu zeichnen angefangen, die Reglen oder Theoria wol verstanden, mündlich darvon zu reden gewust und alle antiche Gemälde von Raphaël meisterhaft nachgezeichnet, nicht weniger auch... aufs Papier gebracht, und also so wol in der Zeichnung als Discursen davon trefflich beschlagen gewesen, welches alles sonder Zweifel wol dienlich, um desto balder ein perfecter Mahler zu werden. Es sind aber gleichwol dieselbe, ob sie schon biss in die 30, 45, 50 und mehr Jahre darinnen verharret, dennoch sehr hart and das wohl Mahlen kommen, ja meistentheils nimmermehr gute Mählere worden..."

² Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part I, Book III, Chap. XIII, 85. W. Martin first called attention to this reference in his review of Hofstede de Groot's *Urkunden in Nederlands Spectator*, 1906, 60-61. It is also one of the genuine references in the supplement to the *Urkunden* published by Martin; cf. p. 45, note 1, above.

³ The classical reference and the suggestion to study colors in nature are also from Van Mander's *Lehrgedicht*: Chap. 11, "Van het sorteren, en by een schicken der verwen"; cf. R. Hoecker, *Das Lehrgedicht des Karel van Mander* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1916), 256-263.

This is very important and seldom done; it can be learned from the remarkable Pieter van Laer, and also from others. Particularly from assiduous, and therefore very wise, Rembrandt, who wonderfully observed the true harmony according to the rules of light, without hindering the quality of any particular color, just as in nature. ¹

Sandrart did not condemn Rembrandt for studying nature; on the contrary, he recommended such studies and he himself worked from nature. ² He suggested that other painters study Rembrandt's color because it approximates the color of nature. His major complaint against Rembrandt was that he did not use nature according to the rules; he did not improve and ennoble it. His color was marvelous; he could depict the simplicity of nature accurately in his portraits — although Sandrart is careful to point out, in his biography of Flinck, that the pupil's portraits were better liked than the master's because of their superiority in likeness and appearance. ³ Rembrandt could paint old people, and by carefully and industriously depicting their skin and hair his work approximated ordinary life; and his little pieces, elegant costumes and other

¹ Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part I, Book III, Chap. XIII, 85: "Im übrigen ist diss meine gründliche Meinung, wie sehr ihr auch mag widersprochen werden, dass alle harte, helle, starke und hohe Farben ingesamt zu meiden und zu verwerfen seyen, als eine Sache, worinn die ganze *Discordanz* eines Gemähls bestehet: wann nicht deren hart krelige Art gebrochen, und gedämpfet, oder mit Vernunft durch andere annehmliche und verträgliche temperirt wird. Dann diese frische ganze Farben, wie von Kartenmahlern und Färbern, auch wol von andern, die in unserer Kunst etwas verstehen wollen, gebraucht werden, sind so wenig in einem vernünftigen Gemälde zu dulden, als wenig gesund und angenehm ist, das rohe Fleisch aus der Metzsig ungekocht essen. Diesem werden beyfallen alle so die Warheit lieben, und erkennen, dass etliche alte Teutsche, als Holbein, Amberger, Lucas von Leyden, Sotte Cleef und andere, uns mit diesem Liecht wol vorgegangen: welchen die Niederländer, sonderlich zuletzt die Hollander, lehrhaft gefolget, und diese Kunst in den höchsten Grad erhoben, wie man alle Farben mischen, brechen, und von ihrer *crudezza reduciren* möge, bis dass in den Gemählen alles der Natur ähnlich kommen. In einem grossen Alter, oder auf einem andern Blat, das vielerley Farben bedarf, ist zu beobachten die *disminuirung*: dass man nach und nach, in gerechter Masse, sich verliere, und die Colorit ungehindert, nach der Perspectiv Regeln, von einem Bild zum andern netto folge und ihr Ort bekomme: welches wir auf Niederländisch *Hauding* nenen. Diss ist eine sehr notige Observanz, wird aber wenig erkannt. Und hierinn haben wir zu lern, von unserm verwunderbaren Bambots, (Pieter van Laer), auch von andern, insonderheit von dem laboriosen und dissfalls hoch vernünftigen Rembrand: welche, wie in deren Leben zu ersehen, gleichsam Wunder gethan und die wahre Harmonie, ohn Hinternis einiger besondern Farbe, nach den Regeln des Liechts, durchgehends wol beobachtet."

² Cf. p. 85, note 2 and the biography of Pieter van Laer, *Academie*, Part II, Book III, Chap. XIX, 311; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 181.

³ Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part. II, Book III, Chap. 20, 319; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 194: "Er folgte in der Manier viel seinem Lehrmeister, wurde aber in Gleichheit und Annehmlichkeit der Contrafäten glücklicher geschätzt."

such pretty things (*kleinen Stucken, zierlichen Kleidungen und andern Artigkeiten*) were admired. This was all very good; but Sandrart significantly added that Rembrandt painted few subjects from classical poetry, allegories or history. This was a corollary to the complaint that Rembrandt did not know the ancients. Rembrandt, according to Sandrart, painted only charming, ordinary subjects found in nature and which were without special significance; they were subjects which pleased him and were those which the Netherlanders call *schilderartige*.¹ The painter of such scenes could not join the ranks of artists of first magnitude:

Kan man nicht die Vollkommenheit, wie schon gesagt, in allem, sonderlich in grossen Historien und fürnehmen Bildern ergreifen, so sey es in Thieren, Kuchen-Früchten, Blumen, Landschaften, Gebäuden, Perspectiven, Compartimenten, Nächten, Brünsten, Contrafäten, Schiffen, Seen, Fischen und anderer Mählerey.²

The accusation that Rembrandt did not paint scenes of special significance is not correct; at least one quarter of his paintings can be placed in the category which Sandrart maintained that he never used. Sandrart either chose to ignore them because they did not follow "our" rules and therefore could not be taken as seriously as Huygens, Angel or De Decker took them: or he did not remember them after a thirty-year absence from Amsterdam. In any event, Sandrart has the honor of first categorizing Rembrandt as a painter of portraits and pleasantries without special significance.

Rembrandt's character as well as the style and subjects of his paintings were reviewed. As a collector and as the author of lines in the *Academie* on collectors and collecting, Sandrart applauded Rembrandt as a great lover and shrewd

¹ *Schilderartig* is usually translated as picturesque or from the point of view of a painter; however, a careful study must be made of the use of the word during the 16th and 17th centuries before we can determine precisely what Sandrart meant when he used the word. Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque, Studies in a Point of View* (London and New York: Putnam, 1927); Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in 18th Century England*: (Oxford University Press: 1925); Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) have examined aspects of "the Picturesque" during the 18th century; but, as far as the author knows, the use of the notion *pittoresco*, *pittoresque*, *picturesque* and *schilderachtig* during earlier epochs and the relation of these to later theories is an unwritten chapter in the history of art theory and taste.

² Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part I, Preface to the third book, 58. He lifted this passage literally from Van Mander's Preface to his *Lehrgedicht*. "Ist niet de volcomenheydt in beelden en Historien, so mach het wesen Beesten, Keucken, Fruyten, Bloemen, Lantschappen, Metselrijen, Prospectiven, Compartimenten, Grotissen, Nächten, Branden, Conterfeytselen nae t'leven, Zeen, en Schepen, oft soo yet anders te schilderen." Hoecker, *op. cit.*, 14.

collector of pictures, drawings, engravings and all sorts of foreign curiosities.¹ Because of his collecting he was highly thought of by many people. He mentioned the many etchings of various subjects published by him, which is another indication of his industriousness — nothing else is said about the etchings in the *Academie* and there is not a word about his drawings. The great number of young people from good families who came to him for instruction, as well as his paintings, gave him a good income. Sandrart, completely unaware of the bankruptcy of 1656, proceeds to count Rembrandt's money: the students paid him 100 florins annually and Sandrart estimated that Rembrandt made about 2,000 to 2,500 florins from the work which he sold that was done by each of his many pupils.²

However, if the great and wealthy collector knew how to get along with people and if he knew how to look after his affairs with greater care he would have been even wealthier. For, although he was not a spendthrift, he did not know how to keep his station, and he always associated with the lower classes, and this also hampered his work. This is indeed severe criticism, for those who subscribed to the doctrines of the academy not only wanted to achieve beauty by rules, but they also wanted to raise the social status of the artist. Sandrart repeated all he old saws in the preface to the "Book on Painting" in the *Academie* to the effect that painting was a noble profession which had always been considered worthy by heroes and scholars of every epoch and which at one time was only practised by the nobility.³ The biography of Sandrart in the *Academie*

¹ The famous inventory made of Rembrandt's house in 1656 (*Urk.* 169) proves that Sandrart was well informed about Rembrandt's collection. Moreover, Sandrart had a first hand report on Rembrandt's collecting from Johann Ulrich Mayr, who studied with the Dutch master; Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, Chap. XXII, 329; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 206. In the biography of Lucas van Leyden Sandrart writes: "...der Kunst-berühmte Herr Johann Ulrich Mayr versichert, dass er seinem Lehrmeister, Herrn Rembrand, für 14 Stück von dieses Künstlers saubersten Abdrucken... in einem öffentlichen Ausruff 1400 Gulden bezahlen sehen." Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, Chap. VI, 240; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 86. We can only guess what other information Mayr gave Sandrart about his former master.

² There was nothing unusual about a 17th century Dutch painter selling the work of his pupils. Cf. Hanns Floerke, *Studien zur niederländischen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte*, (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1905), 131: "Solange man Schüler war, durfte man seine Bilder nicht signieren. Alles was man malte, wurde Eigentum des Meisters." *Ibid.*, 208, footnote 273: "Artikel XV der Statuten der Maler-Genossenschaft 'Pictura' im Haag, von 1656 lautet: 'Ein Schüler oder Lehrling, der so weit ist, dass er seinen Namen unter seine Arbeiten setzen darf, soll gehalten sein, sich als Meister in die Zunft aufnehmen zu lassen'."

³ Sandrart, *op. cit.*, "Vorrede über das dritte Buch," 55.

characterizes him by mentioning his *leutsige Manier* and *höfliche Weise*¹ and states that while he was in Amsterdam

...hat Er einen Kunst-vollen Parnass der Edlen Mahlerey aufgerichtet und gleich anfangs, durch hochgepriesene Werke sich in so grossen Ruhm gebracht, dass Er von männiglich, nicht allein, wegen seiner weltkündigen Kunst-wissenschaft, sondern auch wegen tugendlichen Wandels, höflichen Comportements und zierlichen Conversationen, dergleichen alda vorher wenig Künstler von sich scheinen lassen, hochgeschätzt, geehrt und gepriesen worden.²

Sandrart, who seemed to be the very essence of Castiglione's Courtier, was disturbed by one "wer hat seinen Stand gar nicht wissen zu beachten und sich jederzeit nur zu niedrigen Leuten gesellet." This may even explain why Sandrart failed to mention that he knew Rembrandt. Rembrandt was a great colorist; but he was also a blot on the profession. The beginning of the lengthy legend of Rembrandt the Slob has its origin in Sandrart.

Some of Sandrart's opinions of Rembrandt are also revealed in the engraving of the artist which he included in the *Academie*³ (fig. 27). The engraving is a reasonable likeness of Rembrandt; it represents him wearing a fur hat and a jacket open at the throat which reveals his double chins. It would be foolhardy to attempt to read exactly what expression Sandrart tried to put into Rembrandt's face via Kilian's burin; but there can be no doubt that he was not conceived of as the Rubens or Van Dyck type. He does not wear velvet, a lace collar or a gold chain, and his mien suggests one who could associate with *niedrigen Leuten*. In a sense Rembrandt is responsible for the conception which Sandrart had of him; the engraving could have been based on one of Rembrandt's etched or painted self-portraits made around 1655 when he no longer assumed a cavalier air or put on a fanciful or courtly costume for his self-portraits.⁴ However, it is important to remember that Rembrandt also made self-

1 Sandrart, *op. cit.*, *Biography*, 12; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 31.

2 Sandrart, *op. cit.*, *Biography*, 12-13; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 32.

3 It is signed "I. v. Sandrart del., Philipp Kilian f" and is found in the *Academie* facing page 256.

4 There is a resemblance between the engraving and the famous Vienna self-portraits, (Bred. 42; HdG 580 and Bred. 49; HdG 581); also cf. the Uffizi *Self-portrait*, (Bred. 45; HdG 539). None of the extant etchings bear a close relationship to the engraving; nor is the fur cap found on any of the self-portraits in any medium.

portraits which represented him as the grand seigneur around 1640,¹ just when Sandrart was active in Amsterdam. Sandrart had a choice of seeing Rembrandt as a Castiglione or as a melancholic, slovenly old man.² He chose the latter as his representation of the man who, in spite of having "invented his own rules of painting," was nevertheless viewed as colorist *par excellence* who could "teach painters the correct artistic use of colors."³

Sandrart's estimate of Rembrandt can be summed up by stating that he considered him a great colorist and a master of chiaroscuro, but also a painter who broke all the important rules of painting. The German art historian made no explicit attempt, as others did, to pigeon-hole the exact worth of a painter who he judged had these positive and negative qualities.

Samuel van Hoogstraten found much more to praise in Rembrandt's work than Sandrart did; but he too found it necessary to make reservations about some of the master's qualities in his *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilder-Konst anders de Zichtbaere Werelt*, published in 1678,⁴ Hoogstraten's book is designed as a handbook with the rules of painting and advice for dilettantes and artists. It does not contain biographies of painters or a systematic appraisal of them;⁵ however, since Hoogstraten studied with Rembrandt it is not surprising to find references to the artist among the many painters cited in the book. He includes in his list of great Dutch artists "den verzierlijken Rembrandt" who was "nae de dood van mijn Vader Theodor mijn tweede Meester."⁶

1 *Rembrandt Leaning on a Stone Sill*, (B. 21), and the *Self-Portrait* in the National Gallery in London, dated 1640, (Bred. 34; HdG 550) are good examples. Cf. page 34 above.

2 An interesting essay on the opinion which critics had of Rembrandt from Sandrart up to Jakob Rosenberg and H. E. van Gelder could be written by discussing the etching, painting or drawing by Rembrandt which they chose as a frontispiece to their work.

3 At the beginning of Chap. XXII, Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, 326; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 202, the biographer gives an excellent summary of what he thought of his subject: "Rembrand von Ryn. Ersinnet sich eigene Mahlreglen. Sein Reichthem. Lehret die Mahlere den rechten Kunst-Gebrauch der Farben. Seine Art zu mahlen."

4 The book was published in Rotterdam by his brother Francois. Hoogstraten planned to publish a companion volume entitled *De onzichtbare Wereld*. Upon his death Houbraken, his pupil, obtained the manuscript of this work and he intended to publish it after he completed his *Groote Schouburgh*; Houbraken, unfortunately, died before this was done. Cf. Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 161. The manuscript is lost.

5 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 257; *Urk.*, 341: "...mijn voornemen is niet van de Schilders, maer van de Schilderkonst, te handelen; een ander, die beter tijd heeft, mag haere leevens beschrijven, en Karel Vermander vervolgen."

6 *Ibid.*, Hoogstraten's father died on December 12, 1640; article on Dirck (Theodor)

Hoogstraten's early works are in the manner of Rembrandt, and by the year of his death, in 1678, he had executed history paintings, portraits, interiors in the style of De Hooch and Metsu, still-lives, landscapes, *trompes l'oeil* and peep boxes.¹ His brush was a facile one and, it must be admitted, frequently not a very inspired one. Hoogstraten is most interesting to us as a well-rounded 17th century Dutch artist. He had been to Vienna and enjoyed the favors of Emperor Ferdinand III; he joined the Bent in Rome; he wrote plays and poems and was, of course, familiar with the classics; he was director of the mint at Dordrecht; and was the teacher of Arnold Houbraken, Godfried Schalken, Aert de Gelder and Cornelis van der Muelen.² His passing references to Rembrandt can be taken as those of a cultured, agreeable Netherlander of the time.

In writing about Raphael's graceful frescoes in the Farnesina in his chapter on "Hoe de Schoonheyt by d'ouden is betracht" Hoogstraten states that in them one finds a mirror of antiquity full of beauty without being ostentatious; but in them one should not look for Tintoretto's knowledge (*opdoeningen*), Veronese's composition, Fabritius' perspective or Rembrandt's color.³ Hoogstraten also has very high praise for Rembrandt's flesh tints;⁴ his ability to make his

van Hoogstraten in Thieme-Becker, signed Hofstede de Groot, XVIII, 463. Therefore Hoogstraten was probably with Rembrandt in 1641 when he was 13 years old. Since his first signed picture, *Self-portrait*, in Rotterdam, is dated 1644, we can assume that his apprenticeship was over by that date. W. R. Valentiner, "Rembrandt and Samuel van Hoogstraten," *Art in America*, XVIII (1929-30), 123 f. has shown on the basis of Hoogstraten's oeuvre that his contacts with the master continued until the time of his trip to Vienna and Rome, and adds that there is no reason to assume that they were not friends after Hoogstraten's return to the Netherlands in 1654.

1 Cf. Clotilde Misme, "Deux 'boites-à-perspective' hollandaises du XVIIe siècle," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1925, 156 f. and Edgar P. Richardson, "Samuel van Hoogstraten and Carel Fabritius," *Art in America*, XXV (1937), 141 f. for accounts of this interesting aspect of Hoogstraten's work.

2 See Houbraken's biography of his teacher in the *Groote Schouburg*, *op. cit.*, II, 155 f.

3 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 291; *Urk.*, 343: "...men behoeft in deze stukken niet te zoeken, of Tintoretse wondere opdoeningen, of Veroneesche ordinantien, oogenbliklijke bewegingen, of gewone schikking: veel min Fabritische deurzichten, of Rembrandische verwen: maer de Grieksche statuen in den bevallijken Rafaël, de schoonheyt zonder pronk, en een spiegel van d'oprechte outheit."

4 *Ibid.*, 227-8; *Urk.*, 340a: "Vermander zegt, dat eenen Jaques de Bakker tot Antwerpen eerst een vleeschachtige maniere van schilderen invoerde, koloreerende zoo niet met enkel wit, maer verhoogende met een natuerlijke karnatie. Zeker, zijn naemgenoot Jaques de Bakker tot Amsterdam is hem zoo wel in deze prijslijke waerneming naegevolgt, als hy hem in naem is gelijk geweest. Ik zwijge van Rembrandt en andere die dit konstdeel wonderlijk hoog achten."

figures convey emotion;¹ and the graceful manner in which he arranged figures in his compositions.²

Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is recommended to the neophyte for special study in the chapter on "Schikking van schaduwen en lichten." Hoogstraten agrees with Junius that too many lights and shadows should not be used in a picture, for they make a painting look like a chessboard. Those used must be pleasantly grouped; strong lights should be united with those which are not quite as bright. This, he assures the pupil, will give a wonderful effect. The deepest shadows should be surrounded by browns, so that they get greater strength from the light. In conclusion he stated that Rembrandt united lights and shadows to perfection and he was also accomplished in making combinations of different colors.³ Elsewhere he calls attention to Rembrandt's etchings (*bruine printjes*) where he has cleverly utilized candle-light for chiaroscuro effects.⁴

Rembrandt was also a master at painting reflections; this, in fact, was really his *metier*. But it was too bad that he did not understand the basic rules (*grondregels*) of reflections better, continues Hoogstraten in his chapter "Van 't beslooten of Kamerlicht," than one who merely relies on his eye and experience,

1 *Ibid.*, 75: "Wie ook der Italiaensche of Nederlandsche groote Meesters is 'er oit geweest, die of in't geheel der konst, of in eenich deel, niet iets byzonders als eygen gehad heeft? ...zoo was Durer gezet op meest eenerley stof van kleederen, Lukas van Leyden op zedicheit, Rubens op rijklijke ordinantien, Antony van Dijk op bevallijkheit, Rembrand op de lijdingen des gemoeds..."

2 *Ibid.*, 191: "Niet dat uwe beelden als op elkanderen gepakt schijnen, maer gy moetze een vrye zwier laten... Tintoret en Paul van Verone waren hier meester in; en den begrasiden Rafaël verwonderlijk. Rembrandt heeft deeze deugd dikmaels wel begrepen, en de beste stukken van Rubens, en zijn navolger Jordaens, hebben een byzonder welstandige sprong en troeping."

3 *Ibid.*, 305-306: "En Junius, van wien wy dit gemelde ontleenen, berispt de harde aeneenstooting van licht en bruin, en zegt, dat dergelijke Schilderyen wel schaeckberden gelijken... Daerom beveele ik niet te veel met lichten en schaduwen door een te haspelen, maer de zelve bequamelijk in groepen te vereenigen; laet uwe sterkste lichten met minder lichten minlijk verzelt zijn, ik verseeke u, datze te heerlijker zullen uitblinken; laet uwe diepste donkerheden met klaere bruintens omringt zijn, op datze met te meerder geweld de kracht van het licht mogen doen afsteeken. Rembrant heeft deeze deugt hoog in top gevoert, en was volleert in 't wel byeenvoegen van bevriende verwen."

4 *Ibid.*, 268: "Rembrandt heeft de maet van een kaerslicht in eenige bruine printjes nae zijn vermoogen uitgebeeld, maer als men die lichjes toedekt, zoo blijft de rest van 't werk donker; daer wy gewoon zijn, als men ons iets by de kaers laet zien, onze hand voor 't licht te houden, op dat het onze oogen niet en belette alles op 't klaerst en kenlijkt te onderscheyden."

particularly since knowledge of the rules is so easy to obtain.¹ The complaint is similar to Sandrart's: Rembrandt is to be studied and emulated; but it is too bad that he did not know the rules.

Hoogstraten corroborates Sandrart's report that Rembrandt was a collector who was willing to pay high prices for prints;² but his remarks about his former master are not limited to categorizing his qualities and reporting how much he was willing to pay for works of the *papierkunst*. He also discussed two specific works by Rembrandt: the *Night Watch*, which Hoogstraten probably saw Rembrandt working on when he was his pupil,³ and the grisaille of *St. John the Baptist Preaching* dated around 1635, now in Berlin, (Bred. 555; HdG 97).

The reference to the *Night Watch* is found in the chapter "Van 't ordineeren in 't gemeen" where it is singled out as a picture noteworthy for its composition. Painters should not, writes Hoogstraten, place their figures next to each other in a row, as one finds them in Dutch militia pieces. True masters unify their work:

Rembrandt did this excellently in his militia piece in Amsterdam, but in the opinion of many he made the large picture too much a work executed according to his own wishes than one of individual portraits, which he was commissioned to do. However, this work, no matter

¹ *Ibid.*, 273; *Urk.*, 342: "Wonderlijk heeft zich onzen Rembrandt in reflexeeringen gequeeten, jae het scheen of deze verkiezing van 't wederom kaetsen van eenich licht zijn rechte element was, had hy hem maer wat beter op de grondregels deezer konst verstaen; want die alleenlijk op zijn oog en gewaende ondervindinge steunt, begaet dikmaels feylen, die den spot van leerjongers, ik zwijge van meesters, verdienen: en zoo veel te meer, daer deeze zekere kennissen, voor die 'er zich een weynig aen laet gelegen zijn, zoo gemakkelijk zijn te bekomen."

² *Ibid.*, 212; *Urk.*, 340: "Deze liefde tot papierkunst is in onze dagen zoo hoog gesteegen, dat ik voor een moezelmannetje, gezegt Uilenspiegel, van Lucas van Leyden, by de tachtich rijksdaelers, door Rembrandt, heb zien geeven: en de ronde passi van den zelven meester is noch voor ongelijk meerder prijs verkocht."

³ Valentiner pointed out in "Rembrandt and Samuel van Hoogstraten," *op. cit.*, p. 126, note 5: "How strong Hoogstraten's youthful impressions in Rembrandt's house were can be seen from the fact that he mentions several works of Rembrandt, as well as other artists, which were in Rembrandt's collection at that time, such as the *Shipwreck of Peter* by Aertgen van Leyden, named in Rembrandt's inventory of 1656, or *Hero and Leander* by Rubens, which it can be proved was owned by Rembrandt from 1637 to 1644 (*Urk.*, 54). We are likewise frequently reminded of Rembrandt's art possessions by the mention of the engravings of Schongauer and Israel van Meckenem, Dürer's *Theory of Proportion*, paintings of Brouwer and Hercules Seghers, etc. If Hoogstraten could have also been acquainted with works of this kind in Dutch collections, it is scarcely accidental that his knowledge strikingly coincides with Rembrandt's interests."

how much it can be censured, will survive all its competitors because it is so painter-like in thought, so dashing in movement, and so powerful that, according to some, all the other pieces there (in the Klove-niersdoelen) stand beside it like playing cards.¹

Hoogstraten concludes, and we can almost hear him sigh: "I should have wished him to use more light."²

The pupil was quite aware of his master's revolutionary conception of a group portrait and definitely wanted to go on record, about 35 years after it was painted, as approving of it. Hoogstraten is the first critic to point out that some thought that Rembrandt worked too much according to his own wishes; but he did not censure him for this. In fact, his independence raised the *Night Watch* above the run of the mill group portrait; it allowed him to unify his composition — and this is the achievement Hoogstraten wanted to praise. There is no suggestion that the patrons of the *Night Watch* were displeased with the piece. The only objection concerns the light in the painting; the reservation is not astonishing coming from a man who painted fashionable portraits in the style of Jan de Baen.

St. John Preaching (fig. 28) is discussed by Hoogstraten in the chapter on propriety in painting.³ He writes that the picture is a nicely composed piece; in it one sees that wonderful attention has been given to depicting the people of all classes who are listening to St. John; and this is most praiseworthy.⁴ Here

1 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 176; *Urk.*, 338: "T en is niet genoeg, dat een Schilder zijn beelden op ryen nevens malkander stelt, gelijk men hier in Hollant op de Schuttersdoelen al te veel zien kan. De rechte meesters brengen te weeg, dat haer geheele werk eenweezich is, gelijk Clio uit Horatius leert:

Breng yder werkstuk, zoo 't behoort,
Slechts enkel en eenweezich voort.

Rembrandt heeft dit in zijn stuk op den Doele tot Amsterdam zeer wel, maer no veelere gevoelens al te veel, waergenommen, maekende meer werks van het groote beelt zijner verkiezing, als van de byzondere afbeeldsels, die hem waren aenbesteed. Echter zal dat zelve werk, hoe berispelijk, na mijn gevoelen al zijn meedstrevers verdueren, zijnde zoo schilderachtich van gedachten, zoo zwierich van sprong, en zoo krachtich, dat, nae zomiger gevoelen, al d'andere stukken daer als kaarteblaren nevens staen."

2 *Ibid.*, "Schoon ik wel gewilt hadde, dat hij 'er meer lichts in ontsteeken had."

3 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 181: "Van de minzaeme harmonie, of gevoeglijkheyt en maetschiklijkheit in hoegrootheid."

4 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 183; *Urk.*, 339: "'t Gedenkt my dat ik, in zeker aerdich geordineert stukje van Rembrant, verbeeldende een Johannes Predicatie, een wonderlijke aendacht in de toehoorderen van allerleye staeten gezien hebbe: dit was ten hoogsten pryslijk..."

Rembrandt is again praised for excellency in a facet of the art of painting which Philips Angel found commendable in the *Wedding Feast of Samson*; namely, his ability to represent every individual according to his or her station in life and age with representative expressions, gestures and postures.

Hoogstraten continues the analysis of the grisaille by pointing out that it also shows two dogs copulating. Now, even if this is a possible and natural occurrence, it is an abominable indecency in such a picture. One would think that it represented the preaching of Diogenes instead of St. John.¹ We are informed that Rembrandt is irreverent and has shown a despicable lapse of taste. He is indecorous, for he has not conformed with what is proper to a certain taste, morality or religion.² How can a history painting fulfill its all-important function of edifying if it is indecent, immoral and irreverent? How can painting be considered a noble profession if such subjects are represented? When 17th and 18th century critics used a moral criterion instead of an esthetic one in judging Rembrandt, they found him deficient. Hoogstraten made an excuse for his former master. He wrote that such pictures show Rembrandt's silly simplicity (*onnoozel verstant*). The implication is that he did not know any better. Representations of this type are all the more ridiculous, he concludes, because they contain errors which can easily be avoided.³ This is the second time Hoogstraten contends that Rembrandt ignored rules which are easy to acquire.

In a few passages of the *Inleyding* Hoogstraten quotes conversations between himself and other Rembrandt pupils which supposedly took place when he was studying with the master in Amsterdam. These passages should not be cited as ideas which Hoogstraten and his colleagues received from Rembrandt; it is important to note that he never quotes the master as the spokesman for any of the dictums which he wants to give to his reader. For example, Hoogstraten

¹ *Ibid.*, "...maer men zach 'er ook een hondt, die op een onstichtlijke wijze een teef besprong. Zeg vry, dat dit gebeurlijk en natuerlijk is, ik zegge dat het een verfoeilijke onvoeglijkheit tot deze Historie is; en dat men uit dit byvoegzel veel eer zou zeggen, dat dit stukje een Predicatie van den Hondschen Diogenes, als van den Heyligen Johannes vertoonde."

² Cf. R. Lee, *op. cit.*, 231-235 for a discussion of decorum in Renaissance and Baroque art theory. Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* was the most notorious example of indecorum during the late 16th century. Dolce, for example, complained that the fresco was indecent because it depicted sacred personages naked; he suggested the work belonged in a brothel not the Sistine Chapel.

³ Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 183; *Urk.*, 339: "Zoodanige uitbeeldingen maeken het onnoozel verstant des meesters bekend; en zijn te bespotlijker, alsze in geringer opmerkingen dwaelen."

reports that when Carel Fabritius asked him how one can tell if a youngster shows promise as an artist, he answered that one knows this if the pupil is in love with representing charming nature; it is not enough for the pupil to merely display a predilection for art.¹ This reply was an atelier commonplace and should not be considered an unique observation which Hoogstraten learned at the feet of Rembrandt.² When Hoogstraten relates that Abraham Furnerius told him in their school days that one can tell if a history painting is well done by knowledge of the story,³ we know that Rembrandt would not have objected to this axiom, but we also know that he did not coin it. And in the very chapter in which Hoogstraten takes Rembrandt's impropriety to task he cites Furnerius as saying to him, when they were students, that the first rule of good composition is to select and organize the most noble things in nature.⁴ This dictum was certainly not learned from Rembrandt, for shortly after Hoogstraten quoted and accepted this rule, he stated that unfortunately his teacher was too simple to know how to avoid rendering a most despicable scene in a noble history painting.

Hoogstraten had assimilated much of the same learning which Sandrart had acquired by the time he wrote the *Inleyding*. The Rembrandt pupil could now write involved chapters on the canon of proportions of men, women and children.⁵ His teacher never troubled him with such matters; but he was kind, grateful or sensitive enough not to censor Rembrandt nudes which did not

1 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 11, *Urk.*, 337: "Onze Fabritius, mijn meedeelerling, stelde my in onze jeugd deeze vraag voor: Welk zijn de gewisse kenteykenen, en vruchten van den geest in een jong leerling, om een goet Schilder uit te verhoopen? Ik antwoorde, na de maete mijns begrijs in dien ouderdom: Dat hy niet alleen schijne de konst te beminnen, maer dat hy in der daet, in de aerdicheden der bevallijke natuur uit te beelden, verliest is."

2 Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, I, 197, interprets the reply as truly Rembrandtesque because it emphasizes "an emotional approach, rather than a rational and aesthetic one such as contemporary art theories demanded..." Asking a young artist during the 17th century to be in love with representing nature should not necessarily be considered an "emotional approach," since all 17th century "rational and aesthetic" art theories advised young artists to study nature.

3 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 95; *Urk.*, 337: "Ik stelde wel eer in onze Schilderschool aen Furnerius, die namaels in zijn lantschappen zeer aerdich was, deeze vraag voor: Waer uit datmen zoude weeten en kennen, of een Historie wel was uitgebeelt? Hy antwoorde: Uit kennis van de geschiedenis."

4 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 181; *Urk.*, 337: "Wy hadden toen ik noch Discipel was, dit vraagstuk: Welk daer was de grondles en regel van wel te ordineeren; Fabritius antwoorde, De edelste natuerlijkheden te verkiezen, en by een te schikken."

5 Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 57-64.

follow learned canons. Hoogstraten did not completely condemn his former teacher's pedagogical methods. He tells us that when he was Rembrandt's pupil he bothered his master with too many questions on the origin of things. Rembrandt wisely told the student: "Take it as a rule to use properly what you already know; then you will come to learn soon enough the hidden things about which you ask." ¹

Hoogstraten could not take issue with all of Rembrandt's subjects as specifically as Sandrart did because he himself was a painter of small pieces which Sandrart would have called inconsequential. Houbraken wrote that Hoogstraten's house was full of painted pleasantries: painted fruit on painted sideboards, painted slippers and shoes placed under chairs, and even a painted dry net which hung on a peg behind a door. ² The author of such pictures was not likely to point out that Rembrandt did not paint enough histories. He contented himself with demonstrating that he was aware of Rembrandt's shortcomings: deficient in decorum and knowledge of the rules of reflections — and perhaps a bit too dark. But in spite of this, he believed in 1678 that Rembrandt was one of the greatest painters in Holland during the 17th century. ³

Mathias Scheits, a German painter who was a pupil of Philips Wouwermans, sums up what was thought of Rembrandt during the decade after his death in a short note which he wrote in his copy of Van Mander in 1679:

Rembrant, called van den Rein, because he was born in a place on the Rhine, studied with Pitter Lastman. His father was a miller. He lived

¹ *Ibid.*, 13; *Urk.*, 337a: "Als ik mijn meester Rembrant eens lastig viel, met te veel oorzaak vragen, zoo antwoorde hy zeer wel: Schikt u daer nae, dat gy 't geene gy alreets weet, wel leert in 't werk stellen, zoo zult gy de verborgentheden, daer gy nu na vraegt, tijts genoeg ontdekt zien."

² Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 157: "Ik heb daar van nog overblyfzelen aan zyn huis gezien: daar een Appel, Peer, of Limoen in een schotelrak: ginder een muil, of schoen op een uitgehakt plankje geschildert, en geplaatst... onder een stoel, als mede zoute gedroogde schollen, die op een gepluimuurt doek geschildert... agter een deur aan een spyker op-hingen..."

³ Hoogstraten, *op. cit.*, 257; *Urk.*, 341: "Om echter te toonen, dat de konst, sedert de Beelstoring in de voorgaende eeuw, in Holland niet geheel vernietigt is... zal ik eenige met naemen aenwijzen, die meest op 't gros der konst en de edelste verkiezing hebben gezien. Als daer is geweest Strazio Voluto of Gilliam Fermout, Lastman, Miervelt, Theodorus Babuere: Pieter Fransen de Grebber... Pieter Leely, die in 't hof te Withal van Koning Karel den Tweeden tans als een alderuitgelezenste bloeme bloeit; Hondhorst, Ravesteyn, den verzierlijken Rembrant, nae de dood van mijn Vader Theodoor mijn tweede Meester: Jacques de Bakker, Govert Flink, Gerrit Douw, Stokkade, Jan Lievens, Mieris, Doudeins, de Baen, maer holla, ik wil de thans nog levendige, om geen jalouzie te verwekken, overslaen."

in Amsterdam and because of his art was esteemed and greatly respected, however this has somewhat diminished recently. He died in September, 1669.¹

An acquaintance with and acceptance of tenets of classicistic art theory meant that some reservations had to be made about Rembrandt's work; however, nobody thought of criticizing him without insisting that he had great, even unrivaled, qualities as an artist.

Even Andries Pels, who was most articulate in listing Rembrandt's errors in a poem published in 1681,² was not completely negative in his appraisal of the artist. According to Pels, he was a talent who ranked with the greatest; but he did not follow the rules. It is the familiar "but" which Sandrart and Hoogstraten recorded. Rembrandt, the foremost heretic of the art of painting (*de eerste ketter in de Schilderkunst*), could have held his own even in the company of Titian, Van Dyck, Michelangelo and Raphael as far as conception (*houding*) and power of color (*kracht van koloryt*) was concerned; but when he painted a nude woman:

He chose no Greek Venus as his model
But rather a washerwoman or a treader of peat from a barn
And called this whim "imitation of nature."
Everything else to him was idle ornament. Flabby breasts
Ill shaped hands, nay, the traces of the lacings
Of the corsets on the stomach, of the garters on the legs,
Must be visible, if nature was to get her due.
This is *his* nature, which would stand no rules
No principles of proportion in the human body.³

It has been already noted that the physical characteristics of Rembrandt's nudes as catalogued by Pels was not completely original. But more than Rembrandt's naked, instead of nude, models disturbed Pels. He complained that Rembrandt's perspective and space did not follow the rules of art either; they were based upon what his eye saw. He searched the whole city on bridges, in

¹ Published by W. Bode, "Frans Hals und seine Schule" *Von Zahn's Jahrbüchern für Kunstwissenschaft*, IV (1871), 64; also cf. *Urk.*, 348: "Rembrant, toe genamt van den Rein om dat hei in een Plaets aen den Ryn gelegen gebohren was, hadde geleert by Pitter Lastman, sein vader was een Molenaar, hei hielt sein Wohnung t'Amsterdam, was achtbaer ende groht van aensien door sein konst geworden, het welck doch in 't lest mit hem wat verminderde, hey starf Anno 1669, in de Maent September. Dit geschreven, Anno 1679, den 23 Juny. M. S." Rembrandt died in October, 1669; cf. *Urk.*, 306.

² Andries Pels, *Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels*, Amsterdam: 1681, 35-36. Cf. Appendix E for a transcription of lines of the poem which concern Rembrandt.

³ Translation from Borenius, *op. cit.*, 26.

corners, in the New and North Market for armour, helmets, Japanese daggers, furs, and rags which he found *schilderachtig*.¹ What a pity for art that a talent such as his did not use his native talent for a better purpose, Pels concludes. The greater the talent, the greater its errors when it accepts no principles or rules and imagines it knows everything of itself. Pels indeed considered art's loss a great one, for he rhetorically asked:

“Who surpassed him in painting?”

1 Cf. page 91, note 1 above.

CHAPTER VII

FILIPPO BALDINUCCI

In 1686 Abbot Filippo Baldinucci published in Florence, *Cominciamento, e progresso dell'arte dell'intagliare in rame, colle vite di molti de' più eccellenti Maestri della stessa Professione*; it is the first extensive historical treatise on engraving and etching, and is comprised of a series of biographies of the most excellent graphic artists. This type of art historical writing rests heavily upon the framework which Vasari erected in his famous *Vite*; but unlike Vasari, the Florentine Abbot did not limit his study to Italian artists. Marcantonio Raimondi, Antonio Tempesta, Stephano della Bella and Pietro Testa were the only Italians included among the eighteen masters whose lives and works were discussed. Dürer and Aldegrever represented the Germans; Callot, Nanteuil and François Spierre, the French; Johann, Raphael and Egidius Sadeler, three members of the distinguished family of engravers and publishers from Antwerp were chosen; and from the North Netherlands Baldinucci singled out Lucas van Leyden, Hubert and Hendrick Goltzius, Abraham Bloemaert, J. Saenredam and Rembrandt.

The *Cominciamento, e progresso dell'arte dell'intagliare in rame* was not the work of a dilettante who merely had a casual interest in art historical writing. In 1681 the first volume of his six volume work *Notizie de'Professori del disegno* was published.¹ In the same year he published *Vocabulario Toscano dell'arte del disegno* for *La Crusca*, the Florentine Literary Academy. A year later the prolific Abbot produced a lengthy biography and catalogue of the works of Lorenzo Bernini which Christina of Sweden commissioned him to write.² Baldinucci also did more than write about artists and their jargon; he was a trusted connoisseur who bought works of art for Cosimo III, and was

¹ The final volume of *Notizie de'Professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua, per le quali si dimostra come e perche le bell arti di Pittura, Scultura e Architettura, lasciata la rozzezza della maniere greca e gottica si siano in questi secoli ridotti all'antica loro perfezione* appeared in 1728, thirty-two years after Baldinucci's death.

² Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita del Cavaliere Lorenzo Bernino, scultore, architetto e pittore, Alla Sacra e Reale Maesta di Cristina Regina di Svezina*, Florence: 1682.

chosen by Cardinal Leopold Medici to classify the Medici collection of drawings.¹

It is, of course, significant that the learned Florentine considered Rembrandt the only Netherlander of his generation worthy of mention in his history of the graphic arts. The Van de Velde, Seghers, Goudt, Lievens, Ostade, Bega, Saftleven, Ruisdael, Everdingen, Potter, Berchem, Both and all the other outstanding 17th century Dutch graphic artists who worked after the Mannerists were ignored.

We have seen that the Italians Castiglione, Guercino and Ruffo preceded Baldinucci in realizing that there was special merit in Rembrandt's etchings. There is also good reason to believe that Rembrandt's prints were on the art market in Rome during the sixties of the 17th century. The inventory made of Cornelis de Wael's effects after his death in 1667, in Rome, listed 134 etchings by Rembrandt.² De Wael was a Flemish painter, etcher³ and dealer who lived in Italy for more than 50 years; he was in Rome from around 1656 until his death.⁴ However, Baldinucci was the first Italian who attempted to characterize the quality of Rembrandt's etchings in print; he also deserves credit as the author of the first Italian biography of Rembrandt.

Baldinucci believed that etching was Rembrandt's true metier, and he wrote that it was as an etcher, not a painter, that "Reimbrond van Rein, cioe Rembrandt del Reno, Pittore e Intagliatore in Amsterdam" distinguished himself. He stated that with his bizarre style of etching which he invented, and which employed irregular scratches and hatchings, Rembrandt achieved deep chiaroscuro and great power in a completely *pittoresco* taste. He covered parts of his plate with intense blacks and in other places he permitted the white of the paper to play; and according to the amount of color which he wanted to give to the costume of the figures in the fore-or background, he was satisfied with using a

¹ Cf. Schlosser, *op. cit.*, 417-421, for a discussion of Baldinucci's work.

² Maurice Vaes, "Cornelis de Wael," *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, V (1925), 232, "10. Un libro con dentro 64 stampe de Reimbrant grandi e piccole; 14. Una carta don dentro 24 stampe del Reimbrant...; 15. Un altra carta con dentro trenta varie stampe di Reimbrant; 30. Sedici stampe di Reimbrant grandi e piccole." The numbers refer to items listed in *Inventarium bonorum haereditatis Q. Cornelii de Wael Flandri*, Appendix IX of Vaes' article.

³ F. Winkler in a review of Vaes' article in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, LI (1930), 44, wrote that De Wael's prints were: "...anspruchlose sittenbildliche Folgen etwa auf der Stilstufe des jungen Rembrandt." Wael's prints are indeed unpretentious; but traces of stylistic similarities with Rembrandt's early work are rather remote.

⁴ Cf. article in Thieme-Becker, signed H(ans) V(ollmer), XXXV, 18.

light shadow or even a single stroke and nothing more.¹ The description indicates that Baldinucci had more than a nodding acquaintance with Rembrandt's etchings; nevertheless, this is all that he tells us about Rembrandt's work as an *intagliatore*, except to note that he signed his name on these works in a poor hand.²

Although he writes that Rembrandt's fame was greater than his excellence as a painter (*pittore in vero d'assai più credito, che valore*³), Baldinucci devoted most of his biography to the Dutch artist's work with oils and the renown which it brought him. Baldinucci stated explicitly that he only knew of two of Rembrandt's paintings in Italy: a head of a man with a small beard, wearing a turban, in the collection of Prince Doria Pamfili in Rome; and a *Self-portrait* in the gallery of portraits of painters in the Royal Gallery in Florence.⁴ The portrait which was in the Doria, can no longer be traced.⁵ The *Self-portrait*

1 Filippo Baldinucci, *Cominciamento, e progresso dell'arte dell'intagliare in rame, colle vite di molti de' più eccellenti Maestri della stessa Professione*, Florence: 1686, p. 80: "Quello, in che veramente valse quest' artefice, fu una bizzarrissima maniera, ch'egli s'inventò d'intagliare in rame all' acqua forte, ancor questa tutta sua propria, ne più usata da altri, ne più veduta, cioè, con certi fregghi, e fregchetti, e tratti irregolari, e senza dintorno, facendo però risultare dal tutto un chiaro scuro profondo, e di gran forza, ed un gusto pittoresco fino all' ultimo segno; tignendo in alcuni luoghi il campo di nero affatto, e lasciando in altri il bianco della carta, e secondo il colorito, che e'volle dare agli abiti delle sue figure, o ai vicini, o ai lontani, usando talvolta pochissim'ombra, e talvolta ancora un semplice dintorno, senz'altro più. E vaglia la verità, il Rembrandt in questo suo particolar modo d'intagliare fu da' professori dell' arte assai più stimato, che nella pittura, nella quale pare, ch'egli avesse, come sopra dicemmo, più tosto singolarità di fortuna, che d'eccellenza." Baldinucci's life of Rembrandt is also reprinted in *Urk.*, 360. A free English translation is given in Borenius, *op. cit.*, 22-23. Also see Emile Michel, "Francesco (sic) Baldinucci et Les Biographes de Rembrandt," *Oud Holland*, VIII (1890), 160-172.

2 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 80: "Ne' suoi intagli usò per lo più di notare con mal composte, informi, e strapazzate lettere, la parola Rembrandt."

3 *Ibid.*, 78.

4 *Ibid.*, 78: "In Italia, per quello solamente, ch'è venuto a nostra cognizione, sono due quadri di sua mano, cioè; in Roma nella Galleria del Principe Panfilio una testa d'uomo di poca barba, con un turbante in capo, ed in Firenze nella Real Galleria nella stanza de ritratti de' pittori, il proprio ritratto suo."

5 Ettore Sestieri, *Catalogo della Gallerina ex-fide commissaria Doria Pamphilj* (Rome: Palazzo Doria-Pamphilj, 1942) has accepted none of the attributions of pictures in the Doria to Rembrandt. *The Shepherd with a Bagpipe*, No. 311, (Cat. 1922, No. 296, 311), .75 x .64, Sestieri calls "Incognito, Sec. XVIII... Raffigurato a mezzo busto, volte versa sinistra, il capo reclinato, ornato di foglie. Un vello caprino, gettato sulla spalla destra, gli lascia scoperta parte del petto. Stringe nella mano una zampogna e un bastone. La tela reca a destra, una scritta: Rembrandt f. 1649, della dubbia grafia, e che malgrado qualche favorevole parere (Rusconi-Frizzoni) non presenta alcun carattere di attendibilità. Gli elementi del dipinto del tutto estranei all arte di Rembrandt ce ne

referred to is the one now in the Uffizi, (HdG 540, Bred. 60); it was purchased by Cardinal Leopold de Medici who established the *stanza de' ritratti de' pittori*.¹ Baldinucci did not know Rembrandt's *Old Man with Folded Hands*, in the Uffizi, (HdG 380; Bred. 285), which was acquired by Cardinal Leopold's brother, Ferdinand II, before 1670.² Nor did Baldinucci know about the *Aristotle*, *Alexander* and *Homer* portraits which Ruffo commissioned from Rembrandt.

Baldinucci was too good an art historian to write an account of a painter on the basis of his acquaintance with merely two of his pictures. He informs us that he used an oral source: Bernhardt Keil, a Danish painter who was born in Helsingor in 1624. Keil studied with Rembrandt in Amsterdam from about 1642 until 1644 and remained in the metropolis until he left for Italy in 1651;

offrono la più sicura conferma. Devesi dunque credere ad una vera e propria contraffazione, almeno per quanto riguarda la firma. Per il quadro, non senza verisimiglianza il Venturi ha accennato che possa risalire a Luca Giordano (Guido del Touring Club Italiano (Milan: 1925), 264). I potesi che la facile scorrevolezza di pennello, insieme alle accese colorazioni del volto, rendomo plausibile." The *Portrait of an Old Man*, No. 177, (Cat. 1922, No. 105, 177) .75 x .60, was attributed to Rembrandt by J. O. Kronig, "Un Rembrandt sconosciuto a Roma," *Bolletino d'Arte* (1921—22), 145. Sestieri gives it to "Strozzi, Bernardo — (Scuola di)... Raffigurato a mezzo busto, visto quasi di faccia, il volto formto di lunga barba canuta. Nella serie dei *Filosofi e Personaggi celebri*, esistente in questa Raccolta, e alla quale certo si recollega, il quadro rappresenta l'esemplare più note vole e riuscito. L'autore vi rivela un accentuato studio dei fiamminghi tanto che il Kronig credette, erroneamente, di attribuirlo al Rembrandt." This painting belongs to the same series as Nos. 143, 171, 172, 180, 181, 184, 185, 186. H. Voss, "Bemerkungen zu Seicentisten in Römischen Galerien," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, N.F. III (1910), 215, wrote: "Die Zuschreibung an Strozzi ist absolut willkürlich; in Wahrheit ist der Stil der Bilder römisch oder neapolitanisch." A third Doria picture, *Portrait of a Man with a Turban*, No. 271, (Cat. 1922, No. 249, 271), .44 x .34, was attributed to Rembrandt by Hofstede de Groot. "Varia omtrent Rembrandt — Geen Rembrandt in de Galerij Doria Pamfili te Rome," *Oud Holland*, XIX (1901). Of this picture Sestieri writes: "Incognito Genovese, Sec. XVII... Raffigurato a mezzo busto, volto di tre quarti verso sinistra, lo sguardo diretto al riguardante. Sul capo un turbante bianco e rosso. Attribuito nel Cat. fide commissario al Rubens, si deve escludere questa attribuzione per assoluta deficienza qualitativa. Le pennellate lunghe, costruttive e la intonazione accesa, proprie all'ambiente pittorico dello Strozzi, ne indicano vice versa quale autore un maestro genovese del '600." A fourth picture, suggested by J. Six "Een Rembrandt te Rome," *Oud Holland*, XVIII (1900), 188-9, was rejected by Hofstede de Groot in the article cited above. The author is indebted to Prof. J. Q. van Regteren Altena for lending him his copy of the Sestieri catalogue, which is, unfortunately, not easily available.

¹ Cf. page 65 above. There are two other Rembrandt *Self-portraits* in Florence. One of them, (HdG 539; Bred. 45), may have been acquired by Cosimo III, the nephew of Cardinal Leopold, when he was in Holland in 1667; cf. page 64 above. The other, dated 1634, (HdG 538; Bred. 20), came to the Pitti in 1818.

² Cf. page 65 f. above.

he remained there until his death in Rome in 1687.¹ It is safe to assume that Keil knew the *Night Watch* intimately — he may have seen it painted; and that he knew Rembrandt's work and reputation for about a decade. He was a good source, and since Baldinucci admitted that he only knew two of Rembrandt's paintings, and because he wrote in such detail about Rembrandt's life and character, one is justified in considering much of what Baldinucci wrote as Keil's biography of his master.

The fact that Baldinucci begins his life of Rembrandt with a discussion of the *Night Watch* supports the assumption that Keil is largely responsible for the biography. Baldinucci states that the picture brought him the kind of fame which few painters in Holland ever achieve. The chief reason for this is that a captain in the group portrait is represented with his foot raised in the act of marching, holds a halberd in his hand which is so well drawn in perspective that, though upon the picture surface it is no longer than half a *braccio*, it yet appears to everybody to be seen in its full length.²

This reference is probably to the spontoon which Lieutenant Willem van Ruijtenburg, the figure to the right of Captain Cocq, is carrying. It is not as

1 Roberto Longhi, "Monsù Bernardo," *Critica d'Arte*, III (1938), 121 f. is responsible for establishing the artistic personality of Keil. Longhi separated Keil's work from that of Antonio Amorosi (c. 1660-1740), a painter of small Rococo bucolic scenes. Also cf. Vitale Bloch, "'Monsù Bernardo' in het Mauritshuis," *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunst*, XXII (1946), 77 f. Baldinucci quotes Keil as a direct source for information on the amount of money paid for a Rembrandt drawing, see page 110, note 4, below. And at the end of the biography Baldinucci gives Keil credit for material used in his life of Rembrandt when he wrote: "Questo è quanto abbiamo fin qui potuto rintracciare di notizia di quest'artefice da chi in quel tempo il conobbe, e familiarmente il pratico... Restarono alcuni, ch'erano stati quòi discepoli, cioè il soprannominato Bernardo Keillh di Danimarca..." Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 80. Further evidence that Keil is the source referred to is found in Baldinucci's statement that Keil "...stato otto anni nella sua (Rembrandt's) scuola..." *Ibid.*, 79. Baldinucci writes more explicitly in his biography of Keil in *Notizie de' Professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua opera* (Milan: 1812), VIII, 414—415, that Keil went to Amsterdam when he was 18, worked with Rembrandt for two years, after which time he worked in Uylenburg's Academy for three years, and that he continued to keep in contact with Rembrandt. In light of this protracted association with Rembrandt and his circle one wonders how much of a hand Keil had in the Rembrandt school pieces which are dated in the forties. For Rembrandt's connection with Uylenburg cf. p. 160, note 4.

2 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 78: "Costui avendo dipinta una gran tela, alla quale fu dato luogo nell' Alloggio de' Cavalieri forestieri, in cui aveva rappresentata un ordinanza d'una di quelle compagnie di Cittadini, si procacciò sì gran nome, che poco migliore l'acquisto giammai altro artefice di quelle parti. La cagione di ciò fu più che ogni altra, perch'egli fra l'altre figure aveva fatto vedere nel quadro un Capitano, con piede alzato in atto di marciare, e con una partigiana in mano, così ben tirata in prospettiva, che non essendo più lunga in pittura di mezzo braccio, sembrava, da ogni veduta, di tutta sua lunghezza."

strikingly foreshortened as Captain Cocq's right arm; but, in any event, Keil must have been impressed by Rembrandt's *trompe l'oeil* effects. Roger de Piles will also call attention to Rembrandt's ability to create an illusion which can be confused with reality.¹

Keil believed that the rest of the *Night Watch* was so jumbled and confused that the figures could scarcely be distinguished from one another, although they were all studied from life.² This statement is the beginning of the "Refusal of the *Night Watch*" legend. Keil, however, was careful to point out to Baldinucci that his contemporaries greatly admired the picture and that Rembrandt received 4000 scudi for it. Keil more than doubled the amount which the sources state that Rembrandt received for the painting.³

No complaint is found in this biography about the subjects which Rembrandt painted. Keil specialized in painting near life size genre pictures when he worked in Italy;⁴ he could not very well object to Rembrandt's insignificant themes. Special mention was given to historical paintings by Rembrandt; Baldinucci wrote that he painted scenes from Ovid in oil on the wall of the house of a merchant who was also a magistrate.⁵

Baldinucci attempts to characterize Rembrandt's style of painting. It is called unique and personal — the same comment which was made about the etchings. He dispensed with outlines and by the aid of small repeated strokes, which seem haphazard, he achieved a powerful chiaroscuro, without making shadows seem opaque.⁶ Since Baldinucci wrote that Rembrandt's color gave him great prestige, but that his drawing was not equal to his color, and that Govert Flinck followed his master's manner in color, but was superior in

1 See page 129 below.

2 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 78: "...il rimanente però, avuto riguardo a quanto doveva volersi da uomo tanto accreditato, riuscì appiastato, e confuso in modo, che poco si distinguono l'altre figure fra di loro, tutto che fatte fossero con grande studio dal naturale."

3 *Ibid.*, "Di quest'opera, della quale per ventura di lui gridò quell'età, ebbe egli 4000. scudi di quella moneta, che giungono a compire il numero di circa a 3500. de' nostri Toscani." Cf. page 6f. above for a discussion of the amount of money Rembrandt received for the picture.

4 Cf. R. Longhi, *op. cit.*, *passim*; V. Bloch, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

5 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 78: "In casa un Marcante del Magistrato condusse molte opere a olio supra muro, rappresentanti favole d'Ovidio." It is improbable that Rembrandt painted in oil on a wall; the reference is probably to Rembrandt paintings of scenes from Ovid.

6 *Ibid.*, 79: "Questo pittore, e intagliatore insieme... fecesi una maniera, che si può dire, che fosse interamente sua, senza dintorno sì bene, o circoscrizione di linee interiori, ne esteriori, tutta fatta di colpi strapazzati, e replicati con gran forza di scuri a suo modo, ma senza scuro profondo."

outlining his figures,¹ we can conclude that Rembrandt's outlines did not completely meet with Keil's approval. With Sandrart, he agreed that Rembrandt's chiaroscuro and color were superior to his drawing.

We are told that Rembrandt could have painted a great number of portraits because of the fame his color achieved in Holland, but since he worked with unheard-of slowness and sometimes spent two or three months on a portrait, few people chose to sit for him. The reason for this slowness is that when one of his paintings dried he worked upon it again so that at times the pigment in a given place was more than a half a finger thick. Hence it may be said that he always worked ceaselessly, painted much and finished few pictures.² These observations upon Rembrandt's assiduousness again corroborate statements made by Sandrart; one regrets that Keil did not give Baldinucci more detail on Rembrandt's method of creating his impasto.

The comment that Rembrandt's laborious and slow method of painting kept him from getting portrait commissions is difficult to understand in light of the fact that there are about 150 extant commissioned portraits by the artist. Perhaps this number seemed small when compared with the 10,000 portraits Sandrart reported that Michiel van Mierevelt painted!³

In spite of Rembrandt's slowness, Baldinucci reports that the much praised Bernhardt Keil of Denmark told him that the artist retained such esteem that one of his drawings, in which little or nothing could be seen, was sold at an auction for 30 scudi.⁴ This statement is the first written proof that Rem-

1 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 80: "...Goubert Flynk d'Amsterdam, e questi nel colorito sequitò la maniera del maestro, ma assai meglio dintornò le proprie figure..." Keil and Dou are the only other Rembrandt pupils mentioned by Baldinucci.

2 *Ibid.*, 79: "E quel che si rende quasi impossibile a capire si è, come potesse essere, ch'egli col far di colpi operasse si adagio, e con tanta lunghezza, e fatica conducesse le cose sue, quanta nessun' altro mai. Avrebbe egli potuto fare gran quantità di ritratti per lo gran credito, ch'e' s'era procacciato in quelle parti il suo colorito, al quale però poco corrispondeva il disegno; ma l'essersi già fatta voce comune, che a chi voleva esser ritratto da lui conveniva lo stare i bei due, e tre mesi al naturale, faceva sì che pochi si cimentavano. La cagione di tanta agiatezza era perchè subito, che il primo lavoro era prosciugato, tornava a darvi sopra nuovi colpi, e colpetti, finchè talvolta alzava sopra tal luogo il colore poco meno di mezza dito; onde si può dir di lui, ch'e' faticasse sempre senza riposo, molto dipignesse, e pochissime opere conducesse."

3 Sandrart, *op. cit.*, Part II, Book III, 302; Peltzer, *op. cit.*, 171: "Er (Mierevelt) hat selbst zum oftern gedacht, dass er wol zehntausend Contrafäte verfärtiget, worunter viele Königliche, Fürstliche, Gräfliche und andere Standspersonen, fürdern etliche er 150 Gulden, für andere mehr oder weniger bekommen..."

4 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 79: "...contuttociò mantenessi egli sempre in tanta stima, che un suo disegno, nel quale poco, o nulla si scorgeva, come racconta Bernardo Keillh di

brandt's shorthand drawings were appreciated and sought after by some of his contemporaries. But the comment that the drawing showed little or nothing indicates that neither the biographer or his informant placed much value upon his rapid sketches. The marine painter Jan van de Capelle can probably be included among the collectors who would offer 30 scudi for a Rembrandt sheet which only had a few brush, quill, reed or crayon strokes upon it. At the time of Van de Capelle's death in 1680 his drawing collection included 277 landscapes, 135 drawings of women and children, 56 history drawings and some unidentified drawings by Rembrandt.¹

The rest of Baldinucci's account concerns Rembrandt's life and character. He knew that Rembrandt was born in Leiden in 1606;² and he reported that he was Mennonite, but added that he did not know if he adhered to his false religion up to the time of his death.³ He did not know who Rembrandt's teachers were.⁴ Baldinucci also attained distinction as one of the few early biographers of Rembrandt who did not mention the occupation of the painter's father; but he did present a number of personal remarks about him which give his account an immediacy which none of the other 17th century lives of Rembrandt have.

Mention is made of Rembrandt's lack of conformity,⁵ and it was pointed

Danimarca, pittore lodatissimo, che opera in Roma, stato otto anni nella sua scuola, fu venduto all'incanto per trenta scudi."

1 *Urk.*, 350. The inventory also lists seven paintings by Rembrandt.

2 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 78: "...Reimbrond Vanrein... nato 1606... nato in Leida."

3 *Ibid.*, 78-9: "Quest' Artefice professava in quel tempo la Religione dei Menisti, la quale, tutto che falsa ancor' ella, è però contraria a quella di Calvino, perchè non usano battezzarsi, che di 30. anni. Non eleggono Predicanti lettetati, ma si vagliano a tale ufico d'uomini di vile condizione, purchè da loro siano stimati, come noi diremmo, Galantuomini, e Giusti, e nel resto vivono a lor capriccio." *Ibid.*, 80: "Se poi egli perseverasse in quella sua falsa Religione non è venuto a nostra cognizione." Jakob Rosenberg reviews Rembrandt's relation to the Mennonites in his monograph on the artist and concludes: "From the various records still extant as to the church affiliations in Rembrandt's family one cannot come to any definite conclusions for or against assuming his adherence to the Mennonite creed"; Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, I, 225, footnote 25. Rosenberg, *Ibid.*, 112, also notes: "With all the evidence, outward and implied, that can be brought to prove Rembrandt's sympathy toward the Mennonites, it would be a false assumption to consider his religious art as based exclusively upon their creed."

4 At the head of each chapter in the *Cominciamento, e progresso dell'arte dell'itagliare in rame*, Baldinucci listed the teacher of each graphic artist discussed; for Rembrandt he wrote: "Discepolo di..."

5 Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 79: "Questo pittore, e intagliore insieme, siccome fu molto diverso di cervello dagli altri uomini nel governo di se stesso, così fu anche stravagantissimo nel modo del dipignere..."

out that the singularity of his way of painting corresponded to his way of life. He was an *umorista* of the first order and disdained everybody. When he worked he would not receive the greatest monarch in the world; a king would have to return again and again until he finished his work.¹

There is documentary evidence to support the statement that Rembrandt showed signs of independence. In 1654 Señor Diego Andrada, a Portugese merchant, testified to a notary that he commissioned Rembrandt to paint a portrait of a young girl and that he gave the painter a 75 guilder deposit, with the understanding that the balance would be paid when the painting was finished. The merchant felt that Rembrandt made a poor likeness and he wanted the artist to make the painting look more like the sitter. If Rembrandt refused to do this he did not want the painting and he wanted his deposit refunded. Rembrandt's reply to Andrada's complaint was that he would not touch the painting in question until he received the balance due or security for the balance. Only after receiving the balance would he finish the portrait; and then he would show it to the officials of the Guild of St. Luke and allow them to judge if it was, or was not, a good likeness. If they concluded that it was not he would change it. Thus, in this case, Rembrandt was willing to accept the opinion and criticism of his colleagues, but not of his patron. And if this arrangement did not suit Andrada, the painter stated that he would finish the portrait at his convenience and sell it at an auction.²

It is not known which Rembrandt portrait the Portugese merchant refused to accept, nor do we know how the dispute was finally settled; but the case does prove that Rembrandt refused to satisfy every whim of every patron. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to conclude from this single incident that Rembrandt worked with a public-be-damned attitude. The letters which he wrote to Constantin Huygens during the thirties in regard to the Passion Series for Prince Frederick Henry prove that he did not always refuse to consider his patron's tastes.³ However, it is possible that 30-year old Rembrandt working for the Prince of Orange had a different attitude than 50-year old Rembrandt working for a merchant. It is also possible that Señor Andrada was an unreasonable crank who was impossible to please.

¹ *Ibid.*, "Conquesta sua stravaganza di maniera andava interamente del pari nel Rembrandt quella del suo vivere; perch-egli era umorista di prima classe, e tutti disprezzava... Quando operava non avrebbe data udienza al primo Monarca del mondo, a cui sarebbe bisognato il tornare, e ritornare, finchè l'avesse trovato fuori di quella faccenda."

² Experts of Señor Andrada's testimony before the notary Adriaen Lock are published in *Urk.*, 154. The statement is dated February 23, 1654.

³ Cf. p. 23 above.

The Andrada incident supports the statement that Rembrandt disdained everybody, (*tutti disprezzava*), only if we amend Baldinucci's testimony to read that he disdained those who he did not consider worthy of passing judgement. We can also believe that Rembrandt found his work more important than the most important visitor. But Keil's statements to Baldinucci and the Andrada affair are not enough to establish Rembrandt's reputation as the paradigm of the rebel-artist.

Baldinucci gave additional weight to Sandrart's statement that Rembrandt associated with people below his station when he wrote that the artist's ugly and plebian face was accompanied by dirty and untidy clothes because it was his habit to wipe his brushes on himself while he worked and to do other things of a similar nature.¹ An artist who knew how to keep his station would never do such things. The dirty, offensive painter often went to auctions where he bought old and used clothes which he thought were bizarre and *pittoreschi*; he hung these, irregardless of their filthy condition, on the walls of his studio among the beautiful things which he loved to collect, such as all sorts of ancient and modern arms: arrows, halberds, daggers, sabers, knives and other such things — and an innumerable number of drawings, prints, medals and everything which may prove useful to a painter.² An injunction to be conscious of one's personal importance was here extended to a demand for an awareness of the relative importance of material objects. Rembrandt failed on both counts.

At auctions he displayed a laudable, but extravagant, trait. When paintings or drawings of great masters were offered, he bid so high that no one bid against him; he did this, Baldinucci wrote, in order to emphasize the prestige of his profession.³ Rembrandt's generosity was also praised; he was willing

¹ Baldinucci, *op. cit.*, 79: "Lo scomparire, che faceva in lui una faccia brutta, e plebea, era accompagnato da un vestire abietto, e fucido, essendo suo costume nel lavorare il nettarsi i pennelli addosso, ed altre cose fare, tagliate a questa misura."

² *Ibid.*, 79-80: "Visitava spesso i luoghi de' pubblici incanti, e quivi faceva procaccio d'abiti d'usanze vecchie, e dismesse, purchè gli fossero paruti bizzarri, e pittoreschi, e quegli poi, tutto che talvolta fossero stati pieni d'immondezze, appiccava alle mura nel suo studio tra le belle galanterie, che pure si diletta di possedere, come sarebbe a dire, ogni sorta d'armi antiche, e moderne, come frecce, alabarde, daghe, sciabre, coltelli, e simili; quantita innumerevole di disegni, di stampe, medaglie, ed ogn'altra cosa, che e' credeva poter giammai bisognare ad un pittore."

³ *Ibid.*, 80: "Merita egli però gran lode per una certa sua, benchè stravagante bontà, cioè ch'è par la stima grande, che e' faceva dell'arte sua, quando si subastavano cose appartenenti alla medesima, e particolarmente pitture, e disegni di grand'uomini di quelle parti, egli alla offerta ne alzava tanto il prezzo, che non mai trovavasi il secondo offerente, e diceva far questo, per mettere in credito la professione."

to lend his props to any painter who needed them for his work. ¹

The early biographers of Rembrandt, who were interested in status, computed his income as well as described his physiognomy and laundry. Sandrart reported how much Rembrandt's students paid him and how much he earned per year selling their work. It has already been noted that, according to Baldinucci, 4000 scudi was paid for the *Night Watch*. Baldinucci also wrote that Rembrandt did not paint rapidly enough to earn much money by painting portraits; however, according to his first Italian biographer, Rembrandt's prints brought him great riches which gave him such pride and conceit that it seemed to him that his prints did not sell at the prices which he thought they should bring. He, therefore, bought up his etchings at an intolerable expense from all over Europe — another indication that his prints were well known. He paid any price for them; thereby hoping to create a desire for them. At an auction in Amsterdam he paid 50 scudi for an impression of the *Raising of Lazarus*, while he possessed the plate. This wonderful idea of buying up his prints led him to spend all his riches and he was reduced to poverty. He went bankrupt, a thing which, according to Baldinucci, seldom happens to men engaged in the noble profession of painting. After this unfortunate occurrence he left Amsterdam and worked for the King of Sweden, in whose service he died miserably around the year 1670. ²

Keil's reliability as a source of information about Rembrandt's fortune and fate diminished when he discussed events which occurred after he left the Netherlands in 1651. He had heard of his master's bankruptcy, and could only attribute it to Rembrandt's conceit which forced him to buy his own prints at outrageous prices. An examination of the inventory made of Rembrandt's possessions at the time of the bankruptcy in 1656 does not confirm this

¹ *Ibid.*, "Era anche assai liberale nell'imprestare quelle sue miscee ad ogni pittore, a cui per far qualche lavoro fossero abbisognate."

² *Ibid.*, 80: "Conquesti suo intagli egli giunse a posseder gran ricchezza, a proporzione della quale si fece sì grande in lui l'alterigia, e'l gran concetto di se stesso, che parendogli poi, che le sue carte non si vendesser più il prezzo, ch'elle meritavano, pensò di trovar modo d'accrescerne universalmente il desiderio, e con intollerabile spesa fecene ricomperare per tutta Europa quante ne potè mai trovare ad ogni prezzo, e fra l'altre una ne comperò in Amsterdam all'incanto per 50. scudi, ed era questa una Resurrezione di Lazero, e ciò fece in tempo, ch'egli medesimo ne possedeva il rame intagliato di sua mano. Finalmente con tal bella invenzione diminuì tanto suo avere, che si ridusse all'estremo, ed occorre a lui cosa, che rare volte si racconta di altri pittori, cioè, ch'ei diede in fallito; onde partitosi d'Amsterdam, si portò a'servij del Re di Svezia, dove circa all'anno 1670, infelicemente si morì."

explanation; the inventory does not list a stock of Rembrandt etchings.¹ However, Rembrandt's urge to collect art objects other than his own may have very well contributed to his financial difficulties.² ×

The statement that Rembrandt died *circa all'anno 1670* is quite accurate; but there is no documentary evidence which indicates that Rembrandt was ever in Sweden.³ The artist died in Amsterdam,⁴ not in Sweden during the Regency of Charles XI.

Baldinucci knew Rembrandt's etchings and he judged them to be outstanding. His interest in them probably made him curious enough about the etcher to interrogate Keil at length for information about Rembrandt. He worked out characterizations of Rembrandt's etchings and paintings with understanding; but finally accepted Keil's opinion that Rembrandt had more prestige than true greatness. In the last analysis, Rembrandt was as interesting to Baldinucci, and perhaps to Keil, as an original as he was as an artist. Rembrandt's personality lent itself to diverting discussion, particularly to historians who considered anecdote an essential ingredient of art historical writing. This possibility produced interesting results in the hands of historians whose sources were further removed from Rembrandt than the one which was used by Baldinucci.

1 The bankruptcy inventory of 1656 (*Urk.*, 169) only lists: "238. Noch een boeck van all de wercken (etchings) van Rembrant" and a few items such as "235. Een Oostindies benneken (basket) daar in verscheijde prenten van Rembrant, Hollaert (Hollar), Cocq en andere meer."

2 For a discussion of Rembrandt's monetary problems cf. Jan Veth, "Rembrandt's verwarde zaken," *De Gids* (1906), 14-37; J. F. Backer, "Rembrandt's boedelafstand," *Elsevier's Maandschrift*, LVII (1919), 1-17; 97-112; 173-182; J. F. Backer, "Les tracés judiciaires de Rembrandt," *Gazette des Beaux-arts* IX (1924), 237-248; X, 219-240; 361-368; XI (1925), 50-60; W. R. Valentiner, "Rembrandt's Landscape with a Country House," *Art Quarterly*, XIV (1951), 341-347.

3 In light of the fact that the *Julius Civilis* painting turned up in Sweden, and since Baldinucci had contact with those who could give him information about Sweden — Queen Christina commissioned his life of Bernini — one is tempted to entertain seriously Baldinucci's contention that Rembrandt went to Sweden; but the *Civilis* picture only appeared in Stockholm around 1785, and the interesting Queen cannot be considered an impeccable source of information. The picture was given to the Academy in Stockholm in 1798 by Mrs. Peill-Grill, the last member of the Peill family; it has been said that this family helped the sick Rembrandt during his stay in Stockholm. (Ath. Coquerel, *Rembrandt...* Paris, 1869, p. 148—149).

4 Rembrandt was buried in Amsterdam on Oct. 8, 1669. Cf. *Urk.*, 307.

CHAPTER VIII

ANDRE FELIBIEN AND ROGER DE PILES

One of the most important functions of the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, which was established in Paris in 1648, was to train art students; thus when André Félibien, one of the leading theoreticians of the *Académie* wrote *Entretiens sur la vie et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres* it contained precepts for the student as well as lives of painters. The didactic value of a painter's life or work was of as much interest to Félibien as objective data about an artist's biography or oeuvre. His discussion of Rembrandt in the *Entretiens*, published in Paris, in 1684,¹ is, in fact, worthless as a source of factual information. Only one event in the life of Rembrandt is reported, and that is the year of his death; it is given incorrectly as 1668.² However, Félibien's consideration of Rembrandt is noteworthy because it gives us some idea of the estimation of the artist in French academic circles less than two decades after his death.

Félibien knew Rembrandt's etchings. He was one of the connoisseurs who appraised the 123,400 prints which Marolles sold to the French crown in 1667; in this mountain of sheets there were 224 by Rembrandt.³ But Félibien was not particularly interested in the etchings. He only mentioned that they were singular and that he has seen many which are *très-curieuses*, among which there are some very beautiful portraits which are quite different from ordinary

¹ André Félibien, *Entretiens sur la vie et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres, anciens et modernes* (Paris: 1666—1688), 5 vols. The fourth volume which contains the life of Rembrandt was "achevée d'imprimer" October 31, 1684. The entire work was reprinted frequently, and was translated into German (1711) and Italian (1755). Hofstede de Groot reprinted part of Félibien's discussion of Rembrandt in *Die Urkunden*, No. 358. He omitted what he called an "theoretischer Exkurs" which fills more than five pages. Félibien's theoretical discourse is quite relevant to his appraisal of Rembrandt. The entire passage on Rembrandt in the *Entretiens* has been transcribed in Appendix F.

² The same year is cited in the rare *Noms des Peintres les plus celebres et les plus connus, anciens et modernes* (Paris: 1679), 51-2: "Rimbrans faisoit fort bien des portraits, et d'une manière très-particulière, n'estant que touchez fortement. Il mourut vers l'an 1668." This work was published anonymously; in the *Catalogue de la bibliothèque d'art de George Duplessis* (Lille: L. Lane, 1900), 97, Félibien is quoted as the author.

³ Cf. p. 56, note 1, above.

prints. Painting, not the graphic arts, was the subject which Félibien chose to analyze for the enlightenment of his readers.

Félibien called Rembrandt a *peintre assez universel*, who has made a great number of portraits. It was important for Félibien to note that Rembrandt was more than a portrait painter. He set up the first explicit hierarchy of kinds of painting in the preface he wrote to the *Conférences pour l'année 1667*, in which painters were ordered according to their favorite subject: the lowest on his scale was the still-life painter, then came the landscape painter, next the painter of living animals, then the portraitist, and finally, at the top of the list, the history painter.¹ This hierarchy was not Félibien's invention; the notion, which as Rensselaer Lee noted is better implied than formulated, is an essential part of the art theory which declared that a noble subject was a *sine qua non* of the grand style that aimed at universal truth through the imitation of *la belle nature*.² Félibien would have conceded that a painter who only made portraits could not attain perfection in painting.

1 "Ainsi celui qui fait parfaitement des payages est audessus d'un autre qui ne fait que des fruits, des fleurs ou des coquilles. Celui qui peint des animaux vivants est plus estimable que ceux qui ne représentent que des choses mortes et sans mouvement. Et comme la figure de l'homme est le plus parfait ouvrage de Dieu sur la terre, il est certain aussi que celui qui se rend l'imitateur de Dieu en peignant des figures humaines est beaucoup plus excellent que tous les autres. Quoique ce ne soit pas peu de chose de faire paraître comme vivante la figure d'un homme et de donner l'apparence du mouvement à ce qui n'en a point, néanmoins un peintre qui ne fait que des portraits n'a pas encore atteint cette haute perfection de l'art, et ne peut prétendre à l'honneur que reçoivent les plus savants. Il faut pour cela passer d'une seule figure à la représentation de plusieurs ensemble; il faut traiter l'histoire et la fable; il faut représenter de grandes actions comme les historiens, ou des sujets agréables comme les poètes; et, montant encore plus haut, il faut, par des compositions allégoriques, savoir couvrir du voile de la fable les vertus des grands hommes et les mystères les plus relevés." From Félibien's preface to his *Conférences pour l'année 1667*; cited from André Fontaine, *Les Doctrines d'Art en France*, (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1909), 56-7. Also cf. Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *The Art Bulletin*, XXII (1940), 213, note 78. Lee is prepared to defend this doctrine, with some qualifications: "But no liberal humanist of today will deny that individual genius is a more important factor than choice of subject matter in producing painting that is humanly significant, even though he will not admit — and neither, certainly, would Reynolds — that (granting them to be equal in purely pictorial skill) the painter of still-life is in the last analysis the equal of the painter of human action and emotion. For it is one thing to admit that in the minds of the Academicians *ut pictura poesis* was a doctrine that tended to circumscribe and formalize the art of painting, denying it conditions proper to its own development; it is another to deny with the aesthetic purists of the twentieth century that there is any virtue in the doctrine whatsoever." *Ibid.*, 213-214.

2 See Rensselaer W. Lee, *op. cit.*, 210-213 and *passim* for a discussion of this idea and its complicated sources.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Félibien noted the *manière très-particulière* of the painter's work which was quite different from the licked (*lechée*) manner of most Netherlandish painters. According to this French historian, Rembrandt only used broad brush strokes and laid his colors on very thickly. He was obviously thinking about the painter's late works: *grand coups de pinceau* can hardly be used to describe Rembrandt's highly finished paintings executed in the late twenties or during the thirties.

Félibien also recognized that Rembrandt's paintings were unusual when he wrote: "Nevertheless, since tastes differ, several people have made a case for his work." As far as we know, none of the people to whom Félibien referred wrote up their defense of his works. Félibien may have had in mind conversations which he had with French collectors of Rembrandt's paintings.¹

Rembrandt is artistic, according to Félibien, and he has made beautiful portraits which are powerful but without the *graces du pinceau*. When one looks at them from the proper distance they give a very good effect and are very plastic.

It is true, says Pymandre, who faithfully echoes Félibien's ideas and who answers and poses the loaded questions which run through the *Entretiens*, that Rembrandt's portraits are quite different from Van Dyck's; and that the qualities which are needed to make a beautiful portrait which you mentioned, are never found, in my opinion, in Rembrandt's heads. Pymandre referred to a sensitive monologue which Félibien delivered in his biography of Van Dyck, who he considered the greatest portrait painter after Titian,² on the talents which a painter of faces must have

... si une Peintre qui veut bien faire un portrait, n'est pas obligé; non seulement de sçavoir dessiner fort correctement; mais de placer avec justesse toutes les parties d'une tête... d'observer mille differences de contours dans leur forme, dans leurs couleurs, dans les ombres et dans les jours; et cependant si bien joindre toutes ces diverses parties les unes avec les autres, qu'il semble que ce ne soit qu'une seule masse et une même couleur... represente avec une infinité de teintes differentes, et plusieurs coups de pinceau, parroisse une seule couleur, et comme si l'ouvrage étoit, s'il faut ainsi dire, soufflé et fait tout d'un coup, et toutes les couleurs fondues ensemble.³

1 Cf. p. 142f. below.

2 Félibien, *op. cit.*, IV, 139: "On peut dire qu'hors le Titien, on n'a point vu de Peintres qui été plus loin dans ce genre (portraiture) de peindre."

3 *Ibid.*, 143.

The demands upon a painter working in a secondary genre were considerable.

Pymandre stated that he recently saw a Rembrandt portrait in which all the colors were broken and which was painted with such an extraordinary impasto that the face seemed to have something hideous about it when one looked at it closely. And since one does not like to study a mere portrait from a great distance, he did not see how one could be satisfied with paintings which have so little finish.

Félibien, a good pedagogue, drops the hint that it is dangerous to generalize about an artist's work on the basis of a single painting when he stated that all of Rembrandt's pictures are not broadly handled and executed with a thick impasto. In some he has, indeed, placed tones and half tones next to each other, and placed his lights and shadows in such a crude fashion that his work takes on the quality of a sketch and does not come off if you are too close to it. But at the proper distance the strong brush strokes and the impasto vanish, the whole blends and one gets the effect one would desire to have.

This is the first defense of the free brush work and heavy impasto of Rembrandt's late canvases. Félibien does not, to be sure, sing of the brush strokes having a life of their own, nor of the manner in which they reflect the personality of the artist. Although Félibien definitely believed that paintings which were highly finished were preferable to those which were not, he was willing to concede a point which must be reasserted almost every time a new school of painting makes its appearance: there is more than one way of laying paint on a canvas.

Félibien continues with a discussion of the importance of paintings having a union of color, and how this goal can be achieved. *Union de couleurs* is defined by Félibien in his *Des Principes de l'Architecture, de la Sculpture, de la Peinture... avec un dictionnaire des termes propres à chacun de ces Arts*, published in Paris in 1676, as:

On dit qu'un tableau est peint avec une belle union de couleurs, quand elles s'accordent bien toutes ensemble, et à la lumière qui les éclaire; qu'il n'y en a point de trop fortes qui détruisent les autres, et que toutes les parties sont si bien traitées, que chaque chose fait son effet.¹

He points out to Pymandre that the colors of a picture appear to blend when one stands off from it. One does not stand away from a picture merely

¹ A. Félibien, *Des Principes de l'Architecture, de la Sculpture, de la Peinture... avec un dictionnaire des termes propres à chacun de ces Arts*, (Paris: 1676), 772.

to see the whole, but also to put air between the eye and the painting. You mean to say, interrupts the pupil, that a density of air will make the colors blend with each other? Félibien answers with good French logic that no matter with what care one paints a picture, the entire work is made up of an infinite number of tones which always must remain in some fashion distinct and separate. Colors do not have to be blended together as they are on the human body. Félibien allows us to learn that he considers highly finished paintings superior to those which are not, when he states that a picture which is perfectly painted ("quand un tableau est peint dans la dernière perfection") can be seen close up. Pictures such as those by Correggio have the advantage of appearing stronger and more plastic. That is why a great union of colors gives a painting strength and truth. A greater or less distance from a picture contributes infinitely to this union.

Because of this, writes Félibien, excellent old oil paintings seem to have so much strength and beauty. All the colors with which they have been painted have had time to blend with each other to the degree that the aqueous part of the oil has dried. Félibien's remark is one of the many possible proofs which have been offered to explain what can be considered an anomaly; namely, that an old picture can be superior to a new one.

The colors of a painting can also be unified by covering the picture with varnish. Félibien considered this method especially suitable for works which have just been finished; it gives new works strength and smoothness. Varnish also makes the colors fuse and this gives a painting the relief and plasticity that it must have if it is to resemble what it is supposed to imitate.¹

Félibien argued that the unpleasantness of broken colors in the work of a painter such as Rembrandt can be ameliorated by looking at the work from the proper distance or by the employment of varnish. The latter method was adopted by more than a century of amateurs, curators, restorers and dealers when they covered Rembrandt's canvases and panels with layers of varnish; however, it would be unjust to place the responsibility upon Félibien for the gallons of Golden Glow and Toner which eventually gave Rembrandt's works their famous Rembrandt brown.

It is as difficult to handle color, continued Félibien, as it is to master good proportion or drawing; and one must have all three in order to achieve perfect

¹ Félibien also gives advice for the treatment of miniatures and pastels. Enamels do not have to be treated in any way because their colors are fused in fire and thus acquire the perfect union which an artist who works in oil must achieve by careful handling of the brush, varnish or by putting air between the spectator and the picture.

beauty for which excellent artists search. The means for achieving perfect beauty in painting, sculpture and architecture have not yet been discovered, confessed Félibien. These arts do not give the same satisfaction which music gives the ears. Pymandre did not disagree. He stated that the masters of music have discovered the tones and modulations which can perfect choral or instrumental music. Félibien attempted to explain why this was true. In the arts the eyes judge. This differentiates them from music. To be sure, there is a positive beauty which artists try to acquire; but either the sight is more difficult to satisfy than the other senses, or it is more difficult to organize the number of objects which one can either discover in an instant or which can be examined at leisure. In any event, efforts made up to now have not succeeded. And he concluded that some artists have approached beauty by methods which they themselves do not well understand, and which they have been unable to teach to others.

These remarks prove that all academicians did not have a blind faith that the rules devised in the *Académie* for students would produce great artists. Félibien admitted that the *Académie* had not yet worked out an infallible recipe for beauty. He also acknowledged that the *Académie* did not have a monopoly on beauty and implied that there was more than one road by which one could approach the longed-for goal. The rule of the *Académie* was never as absolute as the art dictatorships set up by 20th century totalitarian states. Admission that some approached beauty by means which they did not understand or could not teach, when Rembrandt is discussed, is appropriate; his mature style defies categorization, and it cannot be reduced to a set of rules.

Pymandre believed that the tangent which the discussion of Rembrandt's works sent them off on made him understand many things about different manners of painting which he had not thought about until now. He also permits us to see that he learned his lesson: "In the future I will look at pictures from different distances and in considering the works I will know the reasons for the different effects of plasticity and delicacy." Rembrandt helped Félibien teach Pymandre how to use tolerance in looking at paintings.

The next French writer to mention Rembrandt was Roger de Piles; he was also closely connected with the *Académie*.

De Piles' life was a colorful one. He was a painter and engraver who was also entrusted with diplomatic missions for Louis XIV, usually under the pretense of working as an artist or art expert.¹

¹ For example, De Piles was sent to Portugal in 1685 as Ambassador Michel Amelot's

Because of his talent as diplomat he was entrusted with an important mission to the Netherlands in 1693 while France was at war with Holland, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and England. He traveled on a forged passport, ostensibly to speak to an agent of the King of Poland about some pictures. It was probably during this visit that De Piles acquired the Rembrandt paintings, etchings and drawings which will be mentioned below. His presence as an agent of an enemy country was detected by the Dutch government and he was arrested and imprisoned in the Castle of Lovenstein on July 31, 1693. His confinement as a prisoner of state was not too rigorous; he was allowed to correspond with friends — he even wrote a certificate authenticating a Rubens sketch when he was in Lovenstein,¹ and while he was a prisoner he may have written *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres, Avec des reflexions sur leurs Ouvrages*, which contained his biography of Rembrandt.² De Piles was freed after the Treaty of Rijswick, which brought peace between France and the League of Augsburg, and which was signed in 1697; the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres* was published in 1699.³

De Piles' claim to fame, however, does not rest upon his merits as an artist or a diplomat; but as an art theorist. The first of his many books on art was

secretary. The Ambassador was charged with working on the marriage desired by France between François-Louis de Bourbon, Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, and the daughter of Peter III of Portugal, the heir to the throne. Louis XIV wanted a Bourbon on the throne of Portugal and De Piles was charged with making France's intentions known to the Princess while he painted her portrait. The portrait was made; the marriage was not. Cf. Léon Mirot, *Roger de Piles, Peintre, Amateur, Critique, Membre de l'Académie de Peinture, 1635—1709*, Paris: Schemit, 1924, 50; also cf. the biography of De Piles (the pages of this biography are not numbered) in Roger de Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages revue et corrigée par l'auteur, avec un abregé de sa Vie, et plusieurs autres additions* (Paris: 1715). The first edition of this work, which was published in 1699, does not contain the life of De Piles. For the source of this biography cf. p. 124, note 4 below.

1 Mirot, *op. cit.*, 55 and note 1: "...il donna le 18 avril 1695 une attestation d'authenticité au sujet d'une esquisse de Rubens pour son tableau de *Thomyris*, appartenant à Mariette le père"; cf. Archives de la Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie, No. 2245, Catalogue of B. Filion. The sketch may have been a study for one of Rubens' two paintings of *Thomyris and Cyrus*; cf. R. Oldenburg, *P. P. Rubens, Klassiker der Kunst, op. cit.*, No. 175 and No. 237.

2 Mirot asserts that the *Abregé* was written while De Piles was in Lovenstein (*Ibid.*), but the author has been unable to confirm this statement.

3 *Ibid.*, 49-56, contains a documented account of De Piles' activities in the diplomatic service of France in Italy, Germany, Vienna, Spain, Switzerland as well as Portugal; also cf. the biography of De Piles in the 1715 edition of the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres, op. cit.*

published in 1668: *Abregé d'Anatomie*.¹ His French translation, with notes, of Charles Dufresnoy's Latin poem *De Arte Graphica* appeared in the same year.² Dufresnoy's work remained a source-book of academic art theory from the time of its publication until the beginning of the 19th century. It contained precepts which its translator and the *Académie* accepted: painting like poetry must teach and therefore the painter must be learned; the ancients must be followed, that is a rule of beauty; nature should also be studied, but it must be improved; the artist must have knowledge of anatomy, proportion, perspective, drapery and expression.

Soon after these two works were published the question of whether color was as important as drawing in painting became a major subject of discussion in the *Académie*.³ The champions of color were called *rubénistes* and the followers of line were termed *poussinistes*. The opening salvo of their quarrel is considered Gabriel Blanchard's defense of Titian in reply to the discourse which Philippe de Champaigne delivered in favor of drawing. Blanchard stated on November 7, 1671

... il est certain qu'un tableau d'un dessin médiocre où les couleurs seront dans tout leur éclat et dans toute l'harmonie possible fera plus d'effet et trompera davantage nos yeux qu'un où le dessin, d'une dernière justesse, refermera des couleurs médiocres.⁴

Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne, the nephew of Philippe, rose to the defense of drawing December 27, 1671 and the battle began. De Piles entered into the *Querelle des poussinistes et des rubénistes* during the same year when he

¹ *Abregé d'Anatomie, accomodé aux arts de la peinture et sculpture... par François Tortebat* (Paris: 1667), "achevé d'imprimer pour la première fois le douzième Janvier, 1668." De Piles' name is not mentioned on any page of this work. Tortebat made the plates (after those in Vesalius) for this work and De Piles wrote the three folio page introduction. In his *Cours de Peinture, op. cit.*, 153, he wrote: "J'ai écrit autrefois sous un nom emprunté un abrégé d'anatomie accomodé aux arts de Peinture et de Sculpture...", and in a note, *Ibid.*, he adds that this work is called "*Abregé d'Anatomie* par Tortebat."

² *De Arte Graphica* was written over a period of 20 years while Dufresnoy, a painter and theorist, was in Rome. The first editions were published shortly after his death in 1668; a Latin edition, *Caroli Alfonsi Du Fresnoy De Arte Graphica Liber* (Paris: 1668) and De Piles French translation with notes, *L'Art de Peinture de Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy* (Paris: 1668). Other editions of De Piles' translation followed rapidly. It was translated into English, with the notes, by Dryden in 1695; and into German by S. T. Gerike (1699) and Dutch by J. Verhoek (1722).

³ Cf. André Fontaine, *Conférences Inédites de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture... Le Querelle du Dessin et de la Couleur Discours de Le Brun, De Philippe et de Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne, l'année 1672* (Paris: Fontemoing, n.d.).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

wrote a defense of color in his *Dialogue sur le coloris*.¹ This work was published anonymously in 1673. Further publications upon the subject and his protagonist Rubens followed.² De Piles' election to the *Académie* on April 25, 1699 as an honorary member can be considered a victory for the *rubénistes*.³

In the biography of De Piles in the *Cours de Peintres* the anonymous author noted that in the theorist's writings one sees his admiration for Rubens' work, and he adds that De Piles not only has *un rapport de Goût* with Rubens, but he also resembled the great Flemish painter in spirit. Both were capable men of affairs.⁴ One wonders if De Piles ever dared to think of the parallels in their lives when he wrote about Rubens.

It would be erroneous to consider De Piles as a revolutionary critic who wanted to destroy the very foundations of the *Académie* because he insisted

¹ *Dialogue sur le coloris* (Paris: 1673). The royal privilege is dated October 26, 1672.

² *Le Cabinet de Monseigneur le duc de Richelieu* appeared without a date and was published anonymously; according to Miro, *op. cit.*, 41, it was "parue sans doute au début de 1676... toutes ces notices sont une apologie de Rubens, et si l'opuscule parut sans nom d'auteur, nul n'hésita cependant à reconnaître en lui Roger de Piles à qui pour remerciement, le duc de Richelieu fit don du tableau représentant *David et Abigail*." Other works which fall in this category are: *Conversations sur la connaissance de la peinture, et sur le jugement qu'on doit faire des tableaux* (Paris: 1677); *Dissertation sur les ouvrages des plus fameux peintres* (Paris: 1681), which is followed by a 39 page life of Rubens; the *Abregé de la vie des Peintres*, which has already been mentioned; and *Cours de Peinture* (Paris: 1708). De Piles also mentioned in his life of Rubens in the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres, op. cit.*, 403, that he owned a manuscript Rubens wrote during his years in Italy: "qu'il ait examiné, connu et loué la beauté de l'Antique, comme on le peut voir dans un manuscrit de ce Peintre, dont l'Original est entre mes mains." Unfortunately this manuscript was destroyed in 1720 when a fire occurred in Boullé's apartment in the Louvre; cf. Chennevières-Pointel, *Recherches sur la vie et les ouvrages de quelques provinciaux de l'ancienne France*, III, 223, note 1.

³ Anatole de Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture 1648-1793*, Publiés d'après les registres originaux conservés à l'École des Beaux-Arts (Paris: 1880), III, 259, report of the meeting of April 25, 1699: "La Compagnie ayant aussi esté informée qu'Elle feroit plaisir à Mr. de Pilles (sic) de luy donner entrée dans ses Assemblées... dans le rang de Mrs. les Conseillers honoraires."

⁴ *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres, 1715, op. cit.*: "Dans les differens ouvrages que M. de Piles donne au public sur la peinture, il a fait voir une grande admiration pour les Tableaux de Rubens, avec lequel il avoit non seulement un rapport de Goût, mais encore quelque ressemblance du côté de l'esprit: car ils l'ont eû tous deux capable d'affaires." The same author refused to side with either the *poussinistes* or *rubénistes*: "Nous n'entreprendrons pas de décider cette question qui a été agitée par de grands maîtres, dont les uns soutenoient le Coloris, les autres le dessin"; *Ibid.* He does, however, let us know that his sympathies are with the subject of his biography. His refusal to take a stand on the question indicates that in some circles in France the question of the superiority of color

upon the importance of color in painting or because he dared take issue with Poussin, one of the major gods of the *Académie*, or with Le Brun who was *Premier Peintre du Roi* and Chancellor of the *Académie*. De Piles' life of Rembrandt proves that he was not an uncompromising iconoclast.¹

De Piles agrees with Sandrart that correct drawing and *le Goût de l'Antique* are not found in Rembrandt's works. The agreement between the French and German academician extends beyond coincidence; more than one idea in De Piles' biography was taken from Sandrart. De Piles quotes Rembrandt, as if he heard him say that his goal was only to imitate living nature as he sees her; Sandrart wrote that Rembrandt was guided by nature and no other rules. De Piles paraphrases Sandrart's catalogue of the type of items which were found in Rembrandt's collection: old armour, old instruments, old head gear and other old used things. He used to say, according to De Piles, that these were his antiques. "Ainsi on ne vera point dans Rembrant, ni le Goût de Raphaël, ni celuy de l'Antique, ni pensées Poëtiques, ni elegance de Dessen," recalls Sandrart's list of Rembrandt's deficiencies.

Rembrandt's case is also used by De Piles to moralize upon the importance of a proper education for potential artists. He implies that it was unfortunate that Rembrandt did not have training in the *Académie*, or at least the good fortune of having been born in France instead of Holland:

The talents of nature reap their greatest harvest from the way in which they are cultivated, and Rembrandt is an obvious example of the power of habit and education on the qualities with which men are born. This painter was born with a great genius and strong spirit; his vein was fertile, his thoughts fine and singular, his compositions expressive and his imagination very lively; but because, with his milk he sucked in the taste of his country, and because he was brought up in constant sight of sluggish nature, and only knew too late of a more perfect truth than that which he always practiced, his productions followed his habit, in spite of the good seed in his spirit.

or drawing was still a very serious matter during the last decade of Watteau's life. Mirot, *op. cit.*, 28, note 1, attributes the biography of De Piles in the *Abregé* to J. B. Fraguier and adds that "cette attribution ce trouve dans Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse français*, 613. C'est de cette biographie qu'est inspiré l'article sur R. de Piles, dans le Dictionnaire Moreri."

¹ De Piles' biography of Rembrandt and his *Reflexions sur les Ouvrages de Rembrant* are transcribed in Appendix G. De Piles' biography gained greater currency when it was reprinted in *Supplement aux anciens éditions du grand Dictionnaire Historique de Mre. Louis Moreri...* (Amsterdam: 1716) and in some of the subsequent editions of *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique*.

A variation upon the same theme of Rembrandt's unfortunate character which Sandrart introduced, is also found in De Piles: Rembrandt had a good spirit and a good income, yet he liked to keep company with people of low birth. Rembrandt's 17th and 18th century critics always found his artistic reputation inextricably linked with his social reputation. In this connection De Piles again offers us a direct quotation which gives his account a sense of accuracy and which emphasizes the points which he wished to make. When people who were interested in Rembrandt's reputation spoke of his habit of associating with people of an inferior station he replied: "When I want to relax I do not seek honor, but *la liberté*." The quotation is apocryphal; but perhaps De Piles wanted to imply that although the artist did not follow the ways of the *Académie*, and did not receive any of its honors, he had his freedom.

The antithesis which Sandrart set up between a dyer and a painter when he wrote of the artist who is more a *Färber* than a *Mahler* because he places raw colors next to each other is also used by De Piles. Sandrart wrote that such painters had their eyes opened to the true harmonies of nature by Rembrandt. The French theorist changed the context of the passage; he wrote that when Rembrandt was reproached one day for using colors which made his paintings rough, he replied that he was a *Peintre* not a *Teinturier*. Under De Piles' pen the opposition between the two kinds of users of color lost some of its force. De Piles' use of this passage also gives additional support to the contention that he used Sandrart's biography of the artist. It could be argued that parallels between phrases used by Sandrart and De Piles were the result of judging works of art by the same criteria; the parallel use of dyers and painters is hardly accidental.¹

De Piles did not neglect to mention Rembrandt's collection:

In spite of Rembrandt's manner, he was nevertheless interested in beautiful Italian drawings, of which he had a great number, as well as fine prints, but from which he did not profit, for it is true that education and habit have great power over our spirits.

The adverse criticism of Rembrandt by De Piles was serious. His art theory led him to believe that the artist only copied nature and that his drawing was

¹ De Piles certainly knew Sandrart's works as well as other sources. In the preface of the *Abregé* he wrote: "Plusieurs Auteurs ont écrit amplement les vies des Peintres, Vasari, Ridolfi, Carlo Dati, Baglioni, Soprani, le Comte Malvasie, Pietro Bellori, Van-Mandre, et Corneille de Bie en ont fait quatorze gros volumes, et depuis peu Félibien nous en a donné cinq, et Sandrart un grand in folio..."

poor. Modern scholars have shown that De Piles erred when he asserted that Rembrandt had no knowledge of the ancients or Raphael, and contemporary critics would insist that he profited from the works by Mantegna, Tempesta and the other Italians he collected. De Piles, however, seemed to charge Rembrandt with breaking every precept in the academic rule book. He even associated with the wrong people. What then could any student of the academy or a subscriber to its dogma find in Rembrandt's work to admire?

First of all there were Rembrandt's etchings; these were not subjected to the criteria of the academy. De Piles praised them in his *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres*. He also collected them; at the time of his death his estate included forty Rembrandt prints.¹ The etchings were done in very much the same manner as the paintings, wrote De Piles: they are expressive and spiritual, particularly the portraits, in which the touches are so perfect that they suggest flesh and life. He recognized that the different states of Rembrandt's etchings were not all merely impressions of prints in a more or less finished state, but that he retouched several of his prints up to four or five times in order to change the chiaroscuro and to obtain a good effect. Houbraken, about twenty years later, wrote that Rembrandt made different states of his etchings for mercenary reasons.²

Rembrandt's prints have a rare chiaroscuro and expression, wrote De Piles, but they are not as good as his drawings. De Piles and his contemporaries made a careful distinction between *drawing* and *drawings*. The former referred to the outlines in painting which were considered by De Piles, as late as 1708, after the *rubénistes* had apparently defeated the *poussinistes*, as

... la clef des beaux-arts; c'est lui qui donne entrée aux autres parties de la Peinture, l'instrument de nos démonstrations, et la lumière de notre entendement. . . Le dessein étant donc le fondement de la Peinture. . .³

The *rubénistes* insisted only that color was as important as drawing; they did not claim it was more important. In De Piles' notorious *Balance de la Peinture*,⁴ in which he graded painters according to their ability in compo-

¹ The inventory made after De Piles' death listed: "Dans la Grand armoire étant dans 1 antichambre: 40 estampes de Rembrand, Mirot," *op. cit.*, 65. Mirot reprints the entire inventory, 63-67.

² Cf. p. 190 below.

³ De Piles, *Cours*, *op. cit.*, 127-128.

⁴ Cf. p. 132 f. below and Appendix H.

sition, drawing, color and expression, the perfect score for each subject was 20; he weighed color and drawing equally. Félibien was of the same mind when he wrote that it is as difficult to handle color as it is to master good proportion or drawing.¹

De Piles did not consider Rembrandt's *drawing* correct, ("Il ne faut néanmoins chercher dans ses Ouvrages, ni la correction du Dessin... on ne verra point des Rembrant... ni élégance de Dessin..."); but De Piles did not allow the rules to put him into an intellectual straight-jacket. When he wrote: "Si ses contours ne son pas correct," he added

... les traits de son Dessein sont pleins d'esprit, et l'on voit dans les Portraits qu'il a gravez que chaque trait de pointe comme dans sa Peinture, chaque coup de Pinceau donnent aux parties du visage un caractère de vie et de vérité, qui fait admirer celuy de son Génie.

Of Rembrandt's numerous *drawings* De Piles wrote that he drew an infinite number of *pensées* which are not less pungent or pointed than those of the best painters, and added that he owns a great number of these sketches which can prove conclusively that this assertion is impartial.² A *pensée* was defined by Félibien in 1676, in his *Dictionnaire des termes* as:

Pensée, esquisse. On dit d'un dessein qui n'est pas fini, c'est une première pensée, ou ce n'est que la pensée d'un ouvrage.³

De Piles defined "sketch" in his 1673 edition of Dufresnoy's poem as:

Esquisse est un premier crayon ou une legere ébauche d'un Ouvrage que l'on medite. Les Italiens disent, Schizzo. L'on dit esquisser une pensée, son opposé est arrester, terminer.⁴

1 Cf. p. 120 above.

2 The inventory of De Piles' collection does not list any Rembrandt drawings. They were probably among the portfolios and boxes of drawings which were itemized without mentioning what they contained; Mirot, *op. cit.*, 63-67. Lugt, *Marques, op. cit.*, 548, suggests that most of Pierre Crozat's fabulous collection of 351 Rembrandt drawings came from De Piles' cabinet.

3 Félibien, *Des principes de l'Architecture... avec un dictionnaire, op. cit.*, 686. The same definition is offered verbatim in the "Termes propres au dessein et à la peinture" in the 1767 edition of De Piles' translation of Dufresnoy's poem published in *Oeuvres Diverses De M. De Piles* (Amsterdam: 1767), V, 358.

4 *L'Art de Peinture de C. A. Du Fresnoy, traduit en François...* (Paris: 1673), "Explication des termes de peinture," pages not numbered.

Although we cannot credit De Piles with inventing the beautiful term *pensée*, which characterizes Rembrandt's drawings so well, there can be no doubt that he was well aware of the unique freedom, spontaneity and suggestiveness of the artist's *pensées*. De Piles believed he owned a great number of the very finest rapid sketches of thoughts, not incomplete drawings.

Rembrandt's paintings were by no means completely condemned by De Piles, and it is interesting to find what the academician found praiseworthy after the lengthy list of deficiencies he itemized. He did not know how to choose the most beautiful, but he had a marvelous talent for imitating the visible world; this one can judge, De Piles wrote, from the portraits he made. They are

... d'une force, d'une suavité et d'une vérité surprenantes. (And)... qui bien loin de craindre la comparaison d'aucun Peintre, mettent souvent à bas, par leur présence, ceux des plus grands Maîtres.¹

De Piles owned one of Rembrandt's portraits which showed he had "un artifice merveilleux pour l'imitation des objets présents." He wrote about what attracted him to this painting in the Preface to *Cours de Peinture*

... Rembrandt diverted himself one day by making a portrait of his servant in order to exhibit it at his window and deceive the eyes of the pedestrians. He succeeded, because the deception was only noticed a few days later. It was not beautiful drawing, nor a noble expression which produced this effect. One does not look for these qualities in his work. While in Holland I was curious to see the portrait. I found it painted well and with great strength. I bought it and still exhibit it in an important position in my cabinet.²

1 De Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres*, *op. cit.*, 433; 437.

2 De Piles, *Cours de Peinture*, *op. cit.*, 10-11: "Rembrant, par exemple, se divertit un jour à faire le portrait de sa servante, pour l'exposer à une fenêtre et tromper les yeux des passans. Cela luy réussit; car on ne s'apperçût que quelques jours après de la tromperie. Ce n'étoit, comme on peut bien se l'imaginer de Rembrant, ny la beauté du dessin, ny la noblesse des expressions qui avoient produit cet effet. Etant en Hollande j'eus la curiosité de voir ce portrait que je trouvay d'un beau pinceau et d'une grande force; je l'achetay, et il tient aujourd'hui une place considérable dans mon cabinet." De Piles introduced his picture into the discussion of Rembrandt in the 2nd edition of the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres*... revue et corrigée par l'auteur (Paris: 1715), 423: "Il scavoit fort bien qu'en Peinture on pouvoit, sans beaucoup de peine, tromper la vûë en representant des corps immobiles et inanimes; et non content de cet artifice assez commun, il chercha avec une extrême application cely d'imposer aux jeux par des figures vivantes. Il en fit entr'autres une épreuve par le portrait de sa servante

This portrait was catalogued as *La Servante* in the 1709 inventory made of De Piles' effects.¹ The picture has been identified as the *Young Girl at a Window* (fig. 29), signed and dated 1651, now in the National Gallery in Stockholm, (HdG 330; Bred. 377).²

De Piles' possession of this painting is superb proof that works of art which were done by artists who did not have all the virtues which were theoretically demanded by the *Académie* were not sent to a pictorial Siberia. Moreover, De Piles, like his fellow academicians, did not despise deceptions of the hand which deceived the eye. Rembrandt's *Girl at the Window* was enjoyed because it created an illusion of reality. In 1668 De Piles wrote as a comment to Dufresnoy statement:

"The principal and most important part of painting is to know how to recognize that which nature has made most beautiful and most suitable for this art,' that this is where almost all Netherlandish painters fail; most of them can imitate nature at least as well as the painters of other nations; but they make a bad choice, either because they have not seen the ancients, or because natural beauty is not ordinarily found in their country."³

qu'il exposa à sa fenêtre, dont toute l'ouverture étoit occupée par la toile du tableau. Tous ceux qui le virent y furent trompez, jusque a ce que le Tableau ayant été exposé durant plusieurs jours, et l'attitude de sa servante étant toujours la même, chacun vint enfin à s'appercevoir qu'il étoit trompé. Je conserve aujourd'huy cet ouvrage dans mon cabinet." For the only other addition to the 1715 edition of the *Abregé*, cf. p. 131, note 3 below.

1 Miro, *op. cit.*, 64: "Dans une anti chambre, à côté de là salle ayant venue sur la rue... 5 tableau de toile, 1 representant Van Dick, l'autre la Servante de Rembrandt, 1 une Sainte Famille, les 2 autres deux Paysages flamands, dans leur bordure de bois doré."

2 The identification rests upon a note Gersaint made in his sales catalogue of the collection of Angran de Fonspertuis, 1747, No. 435. Gersaint identified the picture as De Piles' and quoted the passage in the *Abregé* which referred to it. He added: "Ce Tableau, depuis la mort de M. de Piles, a passé successivement dans les Cabinets le plus fameux, où rien n'entroit qui ne fût décidé assez parfait, pour mériter d'y trouver place. Il y a tout lieu de penser qu'il aura encore aujourd'hui le même avantage. C'est M. Duvivier, Officier dans les Gardes Françaises, et Oncle de M. de Fonspertuis, qui l'a possédé après M. de Piles. Delà il passa à M. le Comte d'Hoym, après le décès duquel M. de Morville en fit l'acquisition; et enfin M. de Fonspertuis s'en rendit l'Acquéreur à la vente que l'on fit après la mort de ce Ministre." For other Rembrandt's owned by Du Vivier, cf. p. 144 f below.

3 "La principale et la plus importante partie de la Peinture, est de sçavoir connoistre ce que la Nature a fait de plus beau et de plus convenable à cet Art.' Voicy où échoüent presque tous les Peintres Flamans: et la pluspart sçavent imiter la Nature pour le moins aussi bien que les Peintres des autres Nations; mais ils en font un mauvais choix, soit parce qu'ils n'ont pas vue l'Antique, ou que le beau Naturel ne se trouve pas ordinaire-

He supported this view in his writings all his life; his biography of Rembrandt is a reassertion of it. But he also believed that even if a painter had no knowledge of *l'Antique* or *le beau naturel* his paintings were worth an important position in his cabinet if they were executed with *un beau pinceau et d'une grande force*. Although it would be erroneous to consider that the subject of a painting was of no importance to De Piles, we do him injustice if we fail to realize that what a painting depicted was not his sole index to a painting's worth.

Furthermore, De Piles did not think of Rembrandt as merely a Dutch master of portraits. He also owned a painting of the *Nativity* by the artist which is described in De Piles' inventory as having a *bordure de bois doré*.¹ This picture may have been the *Holy Family* in Cassel dated 1646 (fig. 30), painted to create the illusion that it is in a gold frame and that a curtain, which so frequently hung in front of 17th century Dutch pictures, has just been thrown aside revealing the intimate scene.² The painted gold frame and red curtain are the same *trompe l'oeil* effects which De Piles admired in his *Girl at a Window*.

De Piles also considered Rembrandt's color and treatment of light and shadow particularly praiseworthy. He wrote that Rembrandt had supreme knowledge of *chiaroscuro* and that his local colors were harmonious. In the 1715 edition he expanded his discussion of Rembrandt's *chiaroscuro* by noting that Rembrandt had a preference for "spotlight" effects ("il semble néanmoins qu'il ait affecté d'exposer ses models sous une lumiere haut et resserrée") in his paintings and that he grouped his lights and shadows so that what he represented appeared life-like: his portraits were done this way and he chose subjects which lent themselves to such treatment.³ His flesh colors received the

ment dans leur país." Cited from the second edition, *L'art de Peinture de C. A. Du Fresnoy, traduit en Francois*, (Paris: 1673), 104.

1 Mirot, *op. cit.*, 67: "Dans le cabinet a coté de la chambre: 1 tableau de toile representant Nativité de Rembrandt avec bordure de bois doré."

2 Although the provenance of the Cassel picture is ambiguous (cf. HdG 90) and in spite of the fact that it is on panel and not canvas the description of a *Nativité de Rembrandt avec bordure de bois doré* strongly suggests that it was De Piles' other Rembrandt painting.

3 De Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres* (2nd., Paris: 1715), 426: "Quoique Rembrandt ait traité des sujets sous l'apparence de toutes sortes de lumieres; il semble néanmoins qu'il ait affecté d'exposer ses modeles sous une lumiere haut et resserrée, et ou sous une lumiere d'accident; afin que les ombres étant plus fortes et les parties éclairées plus ramassées, les objets en parussent plus vrai et plus sensibles. C'est dans cette intention qu'il a peint la plupart de ses Portraits, et qu'il a choisi plus volontiers des sujets susceptibles de ces sortes de lumieres." For the other addition to the *Abregé* in the 1715 edition cf. p. 129 note 2 above.

highest praise when they were called not less true, less fresh nor less exquisite than Titian's. Both Titian and Rembrandt knew that some colors should not be mixed to excess, he continued, and that they should be agitated as little as possible by the brush. They made the first colors which they laid upon their pictures harmonize and as near to life as possible; while these colors were still fresh, they added light strokes of pure color and got the life and freshness of their models.

The differences between Titian and Rembrandt listed by De Piles brings to mind Félibien's discussion of Rembrandt's method of using color. He wrote that Titian's brush strokes are imperceptible, while if you look closely at Rembrandt's paintings you can see how they were done. But at a distance all unites because of Rembrandt's exact strokes and harmonious colors. He could have cited the picture in his collection of the *Girl at the Window* as an example of this type of painting. De Piles concluded that Rembrandt's way of using color is unique and is convincing proof that the ability of the painter is not a result of accident, for he was a master of his colors and possessed the highest art.

De Piles, like Félibien, did not analyze Rembrandt's early works. Dou, whose highly finished works were close to Rembrandt's early pictures, was carefully distinguished in the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres* as a painter whose work was different from that of his master:

Girard Dau De Leyde, a été disciple de Rembrant et quoy que sa manière d'opérer soit fort éloigné de celle de son Maître...¹

This characterization is similar to Sandrart's:

Gerhard Dou von Leyden wurde zwar von Renbrand in unserm Kunstgarten gesäet, aber es wurde eine ganz andere Blume, als der Gärtner sich eingebildet.²

It is further proof that De Piles used Sandrart's *Academie*.

The positive judgement of Rembrandt's work made by De Piles in 1699 was confirmed in 1708 in his "Balance de la Peinture," printed at the end of *Cours de Peinture*.³ In the *Balance* he divided painting into four parts — composition, drawing, color and expression — and he gave 57 *des Peintres les plus*

¹ De Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres*, *op. cit.*, 438.

² Cf. p. 86, note 3, above.

³ The "Balance de la Peinture" is reprinted in Appendix H. Also cf. *Cours de Peinture*, *op. cit.*, 489-493.

connus a grade, from 0 to a perfect score of 20, in each category. No painter received an 80. Rubens and Raphael achieved the highest grades; both were awarded 65 points. Rembrandt was awarded the tenth highest score. He received 17 in color, the same grade which Rubens, Van Dyck, Pordenone and Bassano were given. Titian and Giorgione tied for first place in color with 18, Raphael got a passing grade of 12, Poussin 6, and Michelangelo and Leonardo failed miserably with 4 points.

It is easy sport for an age which accepts relativism to belittle De Piles' attempt to appraise artists of different stylistic epochs on an absolute scale. However, the *Balance* is worth examining since it is an excellent index of its author's judgement.

The grade of 15 which Rembrandt was given in composition demonstrates that De Piles thought of him as an artist who ranked with the most important: Le Brun was only given 16 points in this branch of painting. Composition according to De Piles

... contenoit deux choses l'invention et la disposition. En traitant de l'invention, j'ai fait voir qu'elle consistoit a trouver les objets convenables au sujet que le Peintre veut représenter... la disposition contient six parties: 1. La distribution des objets en general; 2. Les groupes; 3. Le choix des attitudes; 4. Le contraste; 5. Le jet des draperies; 6. Et l'effet du toutensemble; où par occasion il est parlé de l'harmonie et de l'enthousiasme. ¹

Knowledge of composition raised an artist above the mere naturalists. Caravaggio only earned 6 in composition, and under De Piles' system of analysis the Italian painter only earned a total of 28 points. He was given a zero in expression; Rembrandt earned 12 in this subject. The Dutch artist's only serious shortcoming was his drawing, for which he warranted a 6; in spite of this disgraceful grade, his total score placed him with the greatest artists. He was given an honor which was not accorded to Hals, Vermeer, Ruisdael, Steen, Van Goyen, not to mention a number of other possible candidates. De Piles recognized what later generations affirmed: Rembrandt, as a mature artist, had little in common with his Dutch contemporaries. Other ages will adopt criteria which will allow them to increase the number of Netherlandish artists permitted to enter their pantheon of painters; but as far as De Piles was concerned, Rembrandt was the only 17th century Dutch painter worthy of this privilege.

¹ De Piles, *Cours de Peinture, op. cit.*, 73-4.

CHAPTER IX

THE APPRECIATION OF REMBRANDT IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND: 1700—1730

Almost as soon as Roger de Piles' biography of Rembrandt in the *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres* was printed in 1699, writers began to borrow his material. This is seen most clearly in the life of the artist written by Florent le Comte for his *Cabinet des Singularitez d'architecture, peinture, sculpture et graveure* which was published only a few months after De Piles' work appeared.¹

De Piles wrote that Rembrandt was a miller's son who received his surname from the place of his birth which is a villiage on a branch on the Rhine which runs through Leiden. Le Comte accepted De Piles' removal of Rembrandt's birthplace to a place outside of Leiden.² On the basis of the date on some of his prints De Piles assumed that the artist was born *avec le siècle*; he correctly gave Amsterdam as the city where he died, and the year incorrectly as 1668. The latter date was the one used by Félibien. Le Comte also accepted this death date, but knew that Rembrandt was born in 1606.³ De Piles wrote that

1 "Achevé d'imprimer pour la 1re fois, le 11 avril 1699," is printed on the last page of *Abregé de la vie des Peintres*, Paris: François Muguët, 1699. Florent le Comte, *Cabinet des Singularitez d'architecture, peinture, sculpture et graveure*, I, Paris: N. Le Clerc, 1699; II, Paris: E. Picart et N. Le Clerc, 1699; III, Paris: E. Picart et N. Le Clerc, 1700; on the last page of volume III is printed: "Achevé d'imprimer pour la premiere fois le 29 Decembre 1699." The third volume of Le Comte's work contains the life of Rembrandt. On the basis of these dates it can be assumed that the priority of De Piles' biography of Rembrandt has been established; however, it must be pointed out that the relationship between the two writers is not clear. Did they know each other? Did they exchange notes? Although De Piles' work was published first, some of the material he presents in the kind of data one would think that Le Comte gathered; cf. p. 135 f below. J. Schlosser, *Die Kunstliteratur*, *op. cit.*, 442, incorrectly notes that Le Comte's work is in two volumes. Also see *Urk.*, 373—380. Additional proof that the third volume of the *Cabinet* was printed after De Piles' *Abregé* was "achevé d'imprimer" is the fact that it contains a "Description des peintures, sculptures, et estampes exposez dans le grande Gallerie du Louvre dans le mois de Septembre 1699"; Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 241.

2 Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 125 "Rembrand van Rhein... Ce surnom marque le lieu de sa naissance, situé sur le bras de Rhin, qui passe à Leyde."

3 *Ibid.*, 127: "...il mourut a Amsterdam en 1668, âgé de 62 ans."

“Lesman” was Rembrandt’s teacher, “but he only owned the knowledge which he acquired in his profession to the quality of his spirit and thought”; according to Le Comte, Rembrandt did not remain with “Lesmans” long enough for him to make the pupil into *un homme universel*.¹

De Piles estimated that Rembrandt made about 280 etchings; this number was accepted by Le Comte,² and most modern scholars set their figure in the same neighborhood.³ We have been unable to discover how De Piles arrived at his estimate; perhaps he studied a Rembrandt collection while he was in Holland, or possibly he received this information from Le Comte who was a tireless compiler. The *Cabinet des Singularitez* is a three-volume miscellany which is principally composed of incomplete lists of the works of artists and catalogues of collections. It is not a model of perfect organization; at the end of his catalogue of the portraits of the Sadeliers he threw in *par curiosité* a list of 13 etched portraits which he assumed were by Rembrandt.⁴ Le Comte, one feels, would have enjoyed knowing and passing on the information that Rembrandt made about 280 prints. Another possible source could have been Bernard Picart, (1673—1733), the French graphic artist, who was in Holland in 1697 and who returned to Paris in 1698.⁵ Picart was definitely interested in Rembrandt’s work. Four years after he died, his wife died; her paintings were auctioned in Amsterdam on May 15, 1737. Among them were three Rembrandts:

No. 38 Het Hoofd van Lucianus door Rembrandt 4—0

¹ *Ibid.*, 125: “...à la vérité Lesmans (sic) lui montra les principes de l’Art de peindre; mais il ne tarda guère à se faire remarquer pour un homme universel.”

² *Ibid.*, 126: “Le nombre des Estampes dont il a gravé les planches, va bien à 280...” He added that: “...il y en a d’un même sujet jusqu’à quatre ou cinq épreuves, plus ou moins finies...” He was not as sensitive to the states of Rembrandt’s etchings as De Piles.

³ Arthur M. Hind, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt’s Etchings* (2nd ed.; London: Methuen and Co., 1923) is the last catalogue raisonné compiled. Hind writes: “...I must confess that there is always a certain class of work neither inspiring confidence nor demanding unqualified rejection, about whose merits my personal opinion inclines to fluctuate... Altogether I would at present accept rather less than 300 plates as authentic...”; *Ibid.*, 18. Also cf. p. 56, note 2 above.

⁴ Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 283. Cf. *Urk.*, 380.

⁵ Bernard Picart, *Impostures innocentes ou Recueil d’estampes d’après divers peintres illustres, tel que Rafael, Le Guide, Carlo Maratti, Le Poussin, Rembrandt, &c...avec son (B. Picart) éloge historique et la catalogue des ouvrages* (Amsterdam: B. Picart, 1734). In the biography written by his wife we read that he was in Holland during the spring of 1697 and that he returned to Paris in December, 1698; *Ibid.*, 2-3.

No. 39 Het Hoofd van den Philoof Zeno van dito 8—0
No. 40 Een Oudmans Tronie, van dito 15—0¹

Picart published mezzotints after the first two in 1699; they are inscribed "Zenon Philosophe. Rimbrante pinxit, Bernard Picart sculp, Picart excudit, 1699 (fig. 31) and "Lucien Auteur grec Rinbrande pinxit. Bernard Picart fecit et excud 1699"² (fig. 32). The tradition which Ciartres started in the early thirties of converting Rembrandt portraits into famous men was a hardy one. We also know that Picart had contacts with De Piles. He etched the theorist's self-portrait in 1704.³ There is also evidence that he discussed Rembrandt with De Piles. In the introduction to his *Impostures innocentes ou Recueil d'estampes*, which contained among other etched reproductions, some of Rembrandt's prints and drawings, Picart wrote:

Pour ce qui est des Pièces d'après Rembrand, il n'y en a que trois où j'ai cherché d'imiter sa Gravure, c'est à dire, entant qu'elle approche de la Manière noire. Ce sont ceux marquez L. K. H. parce qu'il me souvient d'avoir entendu dire a Mr. de Piles, qu'il ne croyoit pas quel'on pût imiter cette Manière, qui ressemble à la Manière noire, quoi qu'elle ne la soit pas...⁴

It is also worth noting that Picard's father was the publisher of the second and third volume of Le Comte's work.⁵

¹ Gerard Hoet, *Catalogus of Naamlyst van Schilderyen met derzelver pryzen* (The Hague: 1752), I, 476.

² Picart, *op. cit.*, 1: "Catalogue des Pieces qui composent l'oeuvre de Bernard Picart... 2 Têtes, Lucien et Zenon, d'après Rembrand, en manière noire, 1699." (The manuscript of this catalogue is in the Prentencabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). These mezzotints are catalogued in John Charrington, *A Catalogue of the Mezzotints after or said to be after Rembrandt* (Cambridge: 1923), No. 135 and No. 137; No. 136 may be another portrait of Lucian by Picart. The painting from which Picart's mezzotint of Zeno was made may have been the head of Christ reproduced in Bred. 623. The painting which the other mezzotint was based upon is unknown.

³ Picart, *op. cit.*, 1: "Catalogue des Pieces qui composent l'oeuvre de Bernard Picart... Le Portrait de Rogar de Pilles (sic), d'après le Tableau peint par lui même, 1704." This etching is reproduced in Fontaine, *Les Doctrines d'art en France, op. cit.*, facing p. 122.

⁴ B. Picart, *op. cit.*, 9; Picart also reproduced 11 Rembrandt drawings of lions in his *Recueil de lions, dessinés d'après nature par divers maîtres et gravés par B. Picart* (Amsterdam: 1729). In this book he wrote he collected drawings made "d'après Nature par les plus fameux Peintres, comme Albert Durer, Rembrand, Charles Le Brun, et autres"; *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ Cf. p. 134, note 1 above.

At the end of the century French connoisseurs had a very good idea of Rembrandt's etched oeuvre. De Piles and Le Comte wrote that all his etchings were made between 1628 and 1659¹; they doubtless based these years upon Rembrandt's dated etchings. None of Rembrandt's prints are dated earlier than 1628 and only the *Woman with an Arrow*, 1661, (B. 202), is dated later. Refined techniques of stylistic analysis have only brought to light a few earlier and later etchings. Both experts wrote of the Chinese paper he used — Le Comte also mentioned that he used silk — which gave his graphic works a special quality.²

De Piles must be held responsible for establishing the legend that Rembrandt was in Italy. He wrote that on the basis of four or five of the etchings one knows that he was in Venice in 1635 or 1636. Le Comte repeats this error.³ De Piles doubtless referred to Rembrandt's etchings of the *First Oriental Head*, signed and dated "Rembrandt geretuc, 1635," (B. 286) and the *Third Oriental Head*, signed and dated, "Rembrandt geretuck, 1635," (B. 288).⁴ He probably read the word *geretuck* as *Venetiss*; this mistake was repeated in the first printed catalogue made of Rembrandt's etchings, published in 1751 by Gersaint, who argued that Rembrandt was only in Venice in 1635 because none of the *Venetiss* etchings are dated 1636.⁵

Thus Constantin Huygens' wish for the artist to go to Italy was finally fulfilled thirty years after Rembrandt's death. This imagined journey was an

¹ Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 126: "Le nombre des Estampes dont il a gravé les planches, va bien à 280... il les a toutes faites entre 1628 et 59." De Piles: "Et de toutes ces dates que l'on voit sur ses Estampes, il n'y en a point au de là de 1628 ni après 1659."

² Rembrandt etchings on silk are rare. One exists in the Prentenkabinet of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam of *Jan Uytenbogaert (The Gold-Weigher)*, (B. 281) second state, signed and dated 1639. Le Comte's statement, *Ibid.*, "Il a fait tirer nombre d'épreuves sur du papier de la Chine, ou de Soie, qui porte en soi une espèce de demi teinte, qui y donne de l'agrément," only proves that impressions on silk were known in France around the end of the 17th century. It is difficult to determine whether Rembrandt actually pulled impressions on silk or if such prints were made after his death by dealers who had his plates. De Piles does not mention silk. From the number of Rembrandt etchings on China paper one is inclined to agree that De Piles was correct when he wrote that the master etcher was not always happy with white paper; however, it does not follow that an etching on silk would have pleased him.

³ *Ibid.*, "L'on presume par 4. ou 5. qu'il residoit a Venise en 1635. et 36."

⁴ It is generally accepted that these etchings were made by a Rembrandt pupil after Lievens' etchings, and then retouched by the master.

⁵ Gersaint, *op. cit.*, xxx: "Il est vrai qu'on n'en voit point qui soit marquée de l'année 1636, ainsi il pouvoit tout au plus être probable qu'il n'étoit à Venise que dans l'année 1635."

unfortunate one for the artist's reputation; he could be accused by unsympathetic and misinformed critics of going to Italy, as well as collecting Italian works of art, without profiting from either. The legend of a trip to Venice was accepted during the entire 18th century. It was first doubted when Adam Bartsch reëxamined Rembrandt's prints carefully for his catalogue and wrote:

Des (sic) Piles a rapporté, et d'autres écrivains après lui, que Rembrandt avoit été a Venice vers l'an 1635. Il fonde son opinion sur un mot qui se trouve griffonné sur trois estampes de Rembrandt (savoit les numéros 286, 287, et 288), où l'on avoit cru déchiffrer Venetiis; mais les yeux les plus exercés ayant été consultés sur ces caracteres, et n'ayant pu tirer de leur difformité aucune signification distincte, il en est résulté, que ce signe douteux et denué de tout autre indice, ne sauroit prouver, que Rembrandt ait travaillé en Italie.¹

Around the end of the 17th century Rembrandt's etchings were believed to have much in common with mezzotints which, according to Le Comte, in 1699, were *assez du goût d'aujourd'huy*.² De Piles noted in the conversation reported by Picart and in his biography of the artist that Rembrandt's inimitable prints were like mezzotints. He also stated that mezzotints were only invented after Rembrandt's time,³ and thus credited the master etcher with merits which he believed belonged to a later generation. In a very modest way, De Piles subjected Rembrandt to the test of greatness which consists in determining whether an artist is bound to the conventions of his time or if he works unshackled in a region distinguished because it is timeless. De Piles erred when he wrote that Rembrandt's etchings prefigured mezzotints, for Ludwig von Siegen made them as early as 1642 in Amsterdam.⁴ It is even

1 Adam Bartsch, *Catalogue Raisonné de toutes les estampes qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt... composé par les sieurs Gersaint, Helle, Glomy et P. Yver* (Vienna: 1797), p. xx.

2 Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 283: "J'ajoutenai ici par curiosité quelques Portraits de Rhimbrand qui precéderont quelques autres que Smith a gravé dans une manière noire qui est assez du goût d'aujourd'huy."

3 De Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des peintres* (Paris: 1699): "Il y a dans sa graveure une façon de faire qui n'a point encore été connuë que je sache. Elle a quelque chose de la manière noire; mais celle-cy n'est venuë qu'après." Cf. Appendix G.

4 Siegen's first mezzotint, *Portrait of Landgräfin Amalie Elizabeth* was made with the aid of a roulette, but without the use of a scraper: cf. Paul Kristeller, *Kupferstich und Holzschnitt in Vier Jahrhunderten* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1921), 460-461; Arthur M. Hind, *A History of Engraving and Etching* (3rd ed., London: Constable and Co., 1923) 258-262; C. E. Russell, Some Problems of the Early History of Mezzotinting, *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, XVI (1929), 56-75.

quite probable that Rembrandt's chiaroscuro effects induced engravers to find new means for reproducing light and shade and one wonders if Rembrandt himself did not experiment with the roulette or rocker.¹

Le Comte considered Rembrandt an etcher who primarily made night and dark scenes. The first chapter of the *Cabinet des Singularitez d'architecture, peinture, sculpture et graveure* is devoted to an "Idée d'un belle Bibliotheque d'Estampes," which Le Comte suggests be divided into three parts: 87 volumes containing historical subjects; 5 volumes with moral subjects; 9 miscellaneous; and 50 volumes showing the progress of painting, sculpture and the graphic arts. Le Comte would devote the 22nd volume of the last group to:

Le 22me volume je voudrois le remplir de representations de nuits et pièces noires de differens Maîtres de toutes nations comme de L. Gouth (Hendrik Goudt), J. Velde, Uyttenbrouck, Renbrant, Van Vliet et autres.²

Le Comte also recognized that Rembrandt's etchings have something in common with mezzotints in the life of Rembrandt included in the section devoted to "tout ce qui se peut dire en general des Graveurs de toutes les Nations, de la graveure et des differentes suites d'Esampes." The taste for mezzotints apparently permitted amateurs to discover new qualities in Rembrandt's dark prints:

Il fut fort curieux de desseins et d'Estampes; et la belle maniere qu'il s'est donné, lui a dans la suite attiré la même recherche pour ce qu'il a fait. Sa maniere de graver à l'eau forte, a grandement d'expression et d'esprit; elle tient beaucoup de la maniere noire; mais c'est une maniere qui lui est toute particuliere... On voit de lui quantité d'Estampes curieuses, entr'autres dix paysages qu'il a gravé en 1645, plusieurs histoires, beaucoup de nudités, et de tres beaux portraits sans aucune inscription, entre lesquels l'on remarque le sien et celui de sa femme.³

J. G. van Vliet is remembered as having "beaucoup travaille dans le goût de Rimbrant."⁴

¹ Interesting letters written by Constantin Huygens II and his brother Christiaan in 1662 and 1663 show their desire to learn the secret of the new technique; cf. *Oeuvres Complètes de Christiaan Huygens* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1891), IV, Nos. 1046, 1188, 1189.

² Le Comte, *op. cit.*, I, 21. He could have cited among the others Pieter Molyn, W. O. Akersloot and Magdalena van de Passe.

³ Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 126. Ten landscape etchings dated 1645 are not known today.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

Le Comte informs us that Rembrandt's life proves that genius is not always formed by education, although education helps. Huygens spoke of Rembrandt's genius as proof that extraordinary ability in an individual is not a condition of the status of one's parents. Le Comte characterized Rembrandt's paintings by quoting almost word for word a phrase which Félibien used in his discussion, and he tagged on to this an idea which Sandrart first put into print and which was also used by De Piles. Seventeenth century authors culled what they thought was the best from ancient and modern writers for their works, just as many 17th century artists selected what they considered superior from nature or antiquity. Le Comte wrote:

Ses tableaux sont peints d'une manière particulière car souvent il ne faisoit que donner de grands coups de Pinceau, et coucher ses couleurs fort épaisses, les unes auprès des autres, sans les noyer et adoucir ensemble, se disant Peintre, et non Teinturier, pour les unir, comme une eau...¹

In Félibien's account we read:

Tous ses tableaux sont peints d'une manière très particulière... Car souvent il ne faisoit que donner de grands coups de pinceau, et coucher ses couleurs fort épaisses, les unes auprès des autres, sans les noyer et les adoucir ensemble.²

The contrast between *teinturier* and *peintre* is by now a familiar one. Le Comte concluded that, in spite of his way of using paint, he made *vrais* portraits.³ Rembrandt was also included in his list of outstanding portraitists of the graphic arts.⁴ The stock phrase that "Gerard Daw de Leyde, fut disciple de Rembrand, mais il eut une maniere differente" is also used by the compiler.⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

² Cf. page 118 above.

³ Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 125-6: Ses Tableaux sont peints d'une manière particulière... les portraits qu'il a fait sont néanmoins de vrais portraits.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 127: "Changeons notre discours, et voyons un peu les principales Estampes à considerer pour les portraits. Ce sont celles que les Peintres mêmes ont gravé en differens tems, ou qui sont faites d'après Raphaël, le Titien, les Caraches, Rubens, Van Dyck, ou d'Albert Durer, de Lucas de Leyde, gravées par Gilles Sadeler, Henry Goltzius, Michel Mirevelt, Stuyderhoef, Visscher, Rhimbrant, Lucas Kilian, Chrispin de Pass, et plusieurs autres qui ont gravé d'après Rubens et Van Dyck: de Robert Nanteüil, Claude Mellan, et de quantité d'autres..."

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 324. Rembrandt was also cited in other sections of the *Cabinet*. His monogram and that of J. G. van Vliet who "gravé dans le goût du Rimbrant" are reproduced,

Le Comte did not fail to present material upon Rembrandt's character. He wrote that after he returned from Venice he married a woman who was not of higher birth than he was.¹ This is the introduction of Rembrandt's wife into the Rembrandt story. (De Piles only mentioned that Rembrandt was married in Holland and etched portraits of his wife and her family.) Le Comte's conception of Rembrandt's wife is also one which is in keeping with Sandrart's "er doch seinen Stand gar nich wiszen zu beachten, und sich jederzeit nur zu niedrigen Lauten gesellet." During the 18th century Rembrandt's wife becomes a curious combination of Saskia and Hendrikje, and is furnished with an interesting, but purely imaginary, personality.² We are also told by Le Comte that one could see by the artist's manner of living that he was not interested in hiding his origins; he only took pleasure in associating with people of his station, with whom he lived *en liberté*. De Piles wrote that Rembrandt justified his association with people of the lower classes by saying: "When I want to rest my spirit, it is not honor for which I search, but *la liberté*." Le Comte concluded this section of his appraisal with the statement that Rembrandt preferred to associate with people of his own class, (this was one step higher than Sandrart suggested) than the honor of associating with those whose quality would serve to constrain his actions. And again with Sandrart he agreed that Rembrandt was assiduous.³

Le Comte had no difficulty accepting Rembrandt's merits as an artist after they had been itemized by previous writers; however, he did not have the talents or interests of a critic and connoisseur which permitted Félibien and particularly De Piles to discover and defend the artist's unique qualities in spite of his heresies against the doctrinal standards of the *Académie*.

(*Ibid.*, II, 353); the monograms of Jan Lievens — "il fait plusieurs pieces dans le goût de Reimbran" — and of A. v. Ostade, who made "grotesques et autres obscuritiés dans le goût de Reimbran" are described, (*Ibid.*, 355); J. Suyderhoef (*Ibid.*, III, 50) and N. Cochin, (*Ibid.*, III, 97-8) are listed as having worked after Rembrandt; and Le Comte also noted that Marolles had some of his etchings, (*Ibid.*, III, 65).

1 *Ibid.*, III, 37: "Il revint s'établir en Hollande où il prit une femme qui n'étoit pas d'une plus grande naissance que lui..."

2 See Carl Neumann, "Rembrandt-Legende," *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1927), 161-167, and Klaus Graf von Baudissin, "Rembrandts Tod als Fabel," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, IX (1936), 223-227.

3 Le Comte, *op. cit.*, III, 126: "Il... fit bien voir par sa manière de vivre, qu'il ne vouloit pas déguiser la sienne, puisqu'il ne prit plaisir qu'à frequenter des gens de sa sorte, avec lesquels il vivoit en liberté, et qu'il preferoit a l'honneur d'hunter des personnes, dont la qualité l'auroit mis dans une espèce de contrainte... Enfin après avoir beaucoup travaillé, il mourut..."

De Piles and Bernard Picart were by no means the only Frenchmen who collected Rembrandt's work around 1700. Hyacinthe Rigaud, the born painter of kings, listed seven Rembrandts in his collection, and two of his own copies of the artist's pictures, in an inventory he made of his effects for a marriage contract in 1703.¹ Rembrandt's work was not without influence upon the great portraitist. In a catalogue which Henri van Hulst, (1684—1754), an amateur and archivist who was an honorary member of the *Académie*,² compiled of the prints made after Rigaud's paintings he listed:

Buste avec un bout de main tenant une palette. La tête coiffée d'un bonnet de velours. Clair obscur à la Rembrandt. Renfermé dans une espèce de fenêtre carrée... Peint en 1698 gravé en 1700 par P. Drevet.³

Rigaud's interest in the Dutch painter had a long life; in 1743, the year he died, the eighty-four year old artist painted a *Presentation in the Temple* which is a Rococo conception of elements in Rembrandt's early works.⁴ Jacques-Louis, Marquis de Beringhen, (1651—1723), *premier écuyer du roi*, whose collection was second only to Marolles', owned rare states of Rembrandt etchings.⁵ The royal garden architect André Le Nôtre had a Rembrandt in

1 Vicomte de Grouchy and Jules Guifferey, "Contrat de Mariage et Testament du Peintre Hyacinthe Rigaud," *Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français*, 3/VII (1891), 61, 62, 64; *Urk.*, 387, (the reference in *Urk.*, 387 to De Grouchy and Guifferey is incorrect). According to Hofstede de Groot the *Self-portrait* of Rembrandt in a beret and a gold chain signed and dated 1633 (Bred. 19), now in the Louvre, was in Rigaud's collection after it belonged to Charles I and James II. Rigaud catalogued this painting as *Le portrait en buste de Reimbrant*. The painting was auctioned at the sale of the collection of the Comte de Vence, Paris, 9 February 1761; cf. HdG 567.

2 L. Dussieux et. al., *Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l'Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture*, (Paris: J. B. Dumoulin, 1854), II, xxxiii—xxxiv.

3 *Ibid.*, II, 180.

4 Rigaud's *Presentation in the Temple*, (Louvre, No. 780), was bequeathed by the painter to Louis XV; J. Roman, *Le Livre de raison du peintre Rigaud* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1919), 221: "En cette même année (1743) Mr. Rigaud mit la dernière main à son tableau représentant la presentation de la Ste Vierge et lequel il légua par son testament au roi." Compare this painting, reproduced in Louis Gillet, *La Peinture au Musée du Louvre, Ecole Française, XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: L'illustration, N.D.), 1, with the *Presentation* by Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis dated 1631.

5 "Afin de la rendre plus complet, nous avons visités avec soin les oeuvres qui sont connus dans Paris, principalement ceux de Marolles et de Beringhen qui sont à la Bibliothèque du Roi. Nous avons trouvé dans ce dernier beaucoup de morceaux rares qui n'avoient point été vus par M. Gersaint dans l'oeuvre de M. Houbraken, ainsi que plusieurs différences notables"; M. Gersaint, *Catalogue Raisonné de toutes les pièces qui*

his collection at the time of his death in 1700.¹ And even Louis XIV, who reported to have said “ôtez-moi ces magots-là”² when he saw Teniers, and who certainly preferred Italian to Netherlandish painting, had a Rembrandt in his collection when it was catalogued by Le Brun in 1683. The same picture was seen in Paris around 1690; it was back in Versailles in 1706 and was catalogued by Nicholas Bailly in 1709/10.³ This Rembrandt was worthy of the royal collection; it was the late *Self-portrait* before an easel which is now in the Louvre⁴ (frontispiece).

Dr. Martin Lister, an English naturalist and physicist, testifies in his *Journey to Paris in the Year 1698*⁵ that amateurs as well as the king, his court painter,

forment l'Oeuvre de Rembrandt... avec les augmentations nécessaires par Sieurs Helle et Glomy, (Paris: 1751) p. xv. Lugt mentions that “Le grand Coppenol au fond blanc de la Bibliothèque Nationale provient de Beringhen”; *Marques, op. cit.*, 64.

1 Jules Guifferey, “Testament et Inventaire après décès de André le Notre,” *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1911, 249: “No. 268. Item, un tableau représentant le Portrait d'une jeune fille, peint sur bois de Reinbran, avec sa bordure, prisé 25.” Also cf. Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, “Les Collections de le Nôtre,” *Revue de l'art*, XXXIV (1913) 351-364.

2 *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, “Fragments sur l'histoire, article XXII, Anecdotes sur Louis XIV,” (Paris: 1869), V, 276: “...il n'aimait que les sujets nobles. Les Teniers et les autres petits peintres flamands ne trouvaient point grâce devant ses yeux: Otez-moi ces magots-là, dit il un jour qu'on avait mis un Teniers dans un de ses appartements.”

3 Nicolas Bailly, *Inventaire des Tableaux du Roy rédigé en 1709 et 1710*, publié pour la première fois avec des additions et des notes par Fernand Engerand (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), 267: “Rembrandt. Un tableau représentant son portrait ayant une manière de toile blanche sur la tête qui lui sert de bonnet; figure comme nature, ayant de hauteur 3 pieds 5 pounces sur 2 pieds 9 pounces de large; dans sa bordure dorée. Versailles, Cabinet des tableaux.” Engerand notes, *Ibid.*, 268, that this picture was “No. 318 d'inventaire Le Brun avec cette mention: ‘Son portrait tenant une palette de la main gauche et son appuymain de la droite avec une coiffe sur la teste,’ et cette note ajoutée: ‘veu à Paris le 8 aouste 1690’; (Inventaire des tableaux du Cabinet du Roy, *Archives Nationales*, O1 1964-signé de Le Brun et daté du 18 octobre 1683). Mentionné à Paris en 1691; (Inventaire des tableaux et dessins du Roy étant à la garde du sieur Houasse, 1691, *Archives Nationales*, O1 1694). Replacé à Versailles en 1706; (Inventaire général des tableaux originaux qui appartiennent au Roy, fait en 1706 et certifié par Mansart, *Archives Nationales*, O1 1790, fait par Nic. Bailly).”

4 Louvre cat. 122, Nr. 2555, (HdG 569; Bred. 53), dated around 1660.

5 Dr. Martin Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698* (London: 1699); *Reise nach Paris*, trans. Johann Georg Meintel (Schwabach: 1753); another English edition was published in 1823 and a French translation was issued in 1873. The wit as well as the information in this travel book would make it worth printing another edition. An example of the former is found in his discussion of Mazarin's collection of classical statues: “*Nudae*, are miserably disguised by the fond humour of the Duke de Mazarin, who in a hot fit of devotion caused them to be castrated and mangled, and then frocked

the *designateur des jardins de Sa Majesté* and the *premier écuyer du Roi* collected the artist's work. Lister found himself

... better disposed, and more apt to learn the names and physiognomy of a hundred plants, than of 5 or 6 princes. After all, I had much rather have walked a 100 paces under the meanest hedge in Languedoc, than any the finest alley at Versailles or St. Clou.¹

But he also was disposed to visit collections. He saw the collection of M. du Vivier² in the Arsenal

... it consists in 7 or 8 ground rooms looking into the great garden; these rooms are small, but most curiously furnisht, and have in them the greatest variety, and best sort Chinaware I ever saw, besides Pagods and China pictures. Also elegant and rich bureaux, bookcases, and some paintings of the best masters.³

That which pleased me most, amongst the paintings, were the pieces of Rembrandts, that incomparable Dutch painter.

A Girl with a Cage in one Hand, and looking up after the bird that had got out, and was flying away over her head: she had fright, amazement, and sorrow in her looks. The other is an unlucky *Lad Leaning on a table*, and looking with mischief in his eyes, or that he watcht to do some unhappy turn. The 3d is a *Young Gentleman in a*

them by a sad hand with I know not what plaster of paris, which makes them very ridiculous... 'Tis certain upon our subject, the Duke should not have furnisht his cabinet and gallery with naked pictures, but with the togatae only; or if it had once pleased him to do otherwise, he should not have clothed them; which was at best but a vain ostentation of his chastity, and betrayed his ignorance and dislike of good things..."; *Ibid.*, 29-30.

1 *Ibid.*, 3.

2 Lister spells the name Viviers, *Ibid.*, 35. Germain Brice, *Description de la ville de Paris et de tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable* (7th ed; Amsterdam: 1718), II, 113 spells the name Du Vivier, and Edmond Bonnaffé, *Dictionnaire des Amateurs français au XVII Siecle* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1884), 97, also spells the name Du Vivier.

3 Brice, *op. cit.*, II, 113-114, confirms this description of the collection: "...un des plus curieux hommes du tempts, et qui se connoît le mieux en choses de consequence. Il a disposé d'une manière très-ingenieuse l'interieur de ce Bâtiment, autrefois inhabité; en sorte qu'on y trouve à present, non seulement toutes les commoditez imaginables, mais aussi tout ce qui peut satisfaire le goût le plus difficile et le plus délicat. Les meubles en sont très propres et tous les endroits de cet appartement sont embellis par quelque chose de choisi soit en tableaux, en Porcelaines, en bronzes des meilleurs Maîtres, en Pagodes des plus bizarres et des plus Monstrueuses, en Pendules travaillées avec art et placées à propos; enfin en mille autres choses qui engagent tous les jours les personnes curieuses et d'un goût délicat, à aller voir cet arrangement sage et ingénieux, de mille raretez differentes." Brice, however, does not mention the Rembrandts.

Fur Cap en dishabille, after his wonted manner. The first two are the most natural thoughts and dress that can be; but nothing certainly ever came near his colouring for flesh and garments: this part he studied passionately all his life, and was ever trying experiments about it; and with what success, these and many other pieces shew.

These three pictures of Rembrant are all of young people, and are finisht with all the art and perfection of colouring, as smoth as any limning; which makes the judgement of Philbien of him appear not just, for he fitted his paint according to the age and nature of the subjects he wrought. I had the pleasure of seeing them again and again.¹

The Rembrandt paintings which Du Vivier owned in 1698 are difficult to identify upon the basis of Lister's account. The subject and sentiment of the *Girl with a Bird Cage* who has fright, amazement and sorrow in her looks, reads like a description of a painting by a Leiden painter such as Dou or Mieris, rather than one by Rembrandt. Titus comes to mind in reference to the portrait of the lad; but extant portraits of Titus would not fit Lister's description of "finisht." The third painting of the young man *en dishabille*² is also unknown.

Like all his contemporaries, Lister praised the color of "that incomparable

¹ Lister, *op. cit.*, 35-36. Meintel, in his German translation of Lister published in 1753, *op. cit.*, 41, noted that Philbien was Lister's original way of spelling Félibien: "Damit man sich an diesem Mann nicht irre, so dienet zu wissen dass er sonst Felibien geschrieben wird, und den Vornamen Andreas geführt."

² Lister added an interesting comment on portraits *en dishabille* in a passage on the paintings Van Dyck made in England of women. The female sex seem in Van Dyck's time "to have been mighty fond of being painted in *dishabille*." 'Twas this that cut out of business the best English painter of his time, Cornelius Johnson, and shortened his life by grief. It is certain with a little patience all Dress becomes *dishabille*; but I appeal, whether it is not better and much more pleasing to see the old fashion of a dead friend, or relation, or of a man of distinction, painted as he was, than a foppish nightgown, and odd quoifure, which never belonged to the person painted"; *Ibid.*, 39-40. It is difficult to determine precisely what Lister meant by *dishabille*. He may have referred to the fashion of men's clothing in the Netherlands which F. van Thienen, *Das Kostüm der Blütezeit Hollands: 1600—1660* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1930), 84-85 described: "Erst gegen 1660 wird das Wams so sehr verkürzt, dass darunter ringsum das Hemd sichtbar wird. Die Aermel und deren Oeffnung werden weiter und der Hemdärmel ist sehr bauschig. Gegen 1660, also zugleich mit der starken Abkürzung des Wamses, kommt die Neigung auf, auch den Oberärmel abzukürzen, so dass über die ganze Gestalt immer mehr vom Hemde sichtbar wird." Or Lister may have had in mind a painting representing a man dressed in a Japanese kimono. These robes enjoyed a vogue after 1680; cf. A. M. Lubberhuizen-van Gelder, "Japonsche Rocken," *Oud Holland*, LXII (1947), 137-152; *Ibid.*, LXIV (1949), 25-38. Another possibility is that Lister referred to the open collars and unbuttoned bodices often seen in portraits painted by Peter Lely.

Dutch painter.” He also takes interesting issue with Félibien’s characterization of Rembrandt’s works because he did not read Félibien’s account of the artist carefully enough to remember that the French theorist wrote that not all of Rembrandt’s works are broadly handled.¹ The error is not as significant as the evidence which it offers to establish that around the end of the century at least one English amateur was familiar enough with Félibien to disagree with him.

Critics since Aristotle have written that some painters depict men better or worse, or as they are;² Lister offers a greater refinement to the idea when he argues that Rembrandt adjusted his style to the age, as well as the nature, of his subject. Du Vivier did not always believe that a portrait of a young person had to be “finisht”; about a decade later he owned Rembrandt’s *Young Girl at a Window*, signed and dated 1651 and now in Stockholm, which was in De Piles’ collection.³ This picture cannot be described as smooth.

Lister also found Rembrandt painting to admire in

... the closet or cell of P. Hochereau;⁴ who had a very choice collection of original paintings, of very many of the best masters; amongst the rest, I took notice of the originals of Rambrant, excellent pieces, *St. Peter and the Cock*; the *Nativity of our Saviour*; and *The Massacre of the Innocents*. His colouring is not to be imitated: his invention great and natural, and the design most correct.⁵

Unfortunately we cannot identify these “excellent pieces” either. None of Rembrandt’s Nativities can be traced back to Hochereau; there is no extant *St. Peter and the Cock* or *Massacre of the Innocents*. The citation of a *Massacre of the Innocents* is a strange reference; no trace of the subject exists in Rem-

1 Cf. p. 145 above.

2 Richard McKeon, (ed.), *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), *De Poetica*, Chapter II, 1456: “The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad — the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are: in the same way as, with the painters, the personages of Polygnotus are better than we are, those of Pauson worse, and those of Dionysius just like ourselves.”

3 Cf. p. 130, note 2 above (fig. 29).

4 Bonnaffè, *op. cit.*, 10, spells the name Auchereau.

5 Lister, *op. cit.*, 131.

brandt's oeuvre, and the theme was hardly ever treated in 17th century Dutch art.

A few years after Lister admired Rembrandt's paintings in France, John Elsum, another Englishman, called attention to the artist's pictures in his *Epigrams upon the Paintings of the Most Eminent Masters, Antient and Modern*, published in 1700.¹ He versified approval of Rembrandt's coarse, rough brush strokes in a poem dedicated to "An Old Man's Head, by Rembrant."

What a coarse rugged Way of Painting's here,
Stroaks upon Stroaks, Dabbs upon Dabbs appear.
The Work you'd think was huddled up in haste,
But mark how truly ev'ry Colour's plac'd,
Dith such Oeconomy in such a sort,
That they each mutually support.
Rembrant! thy Pencil plays a subtil Part
This Roughness is contriv'd to hide thy Art.²

Another poem in the same anthology is entitled "Aristotle's Effigies by Rembrant":

No Monster come from Africk in this Piece,
But a profound Philosopher from Greece:
A Sage who no occasion had to roam,
He found a World within himself at home;
And Alexander, justly call'd the Great,
Made him his Master, as the most compleat.
They both were great, both at the Helm did fit,
One rul'd the World by Force, t'other by Wit.³

Although these lines say nothing at all about Rembrandt's painting, it is tempting to conclude that when Elsum wrote them he was thinking about

¹ *Epigrams upon the Paintings of the Most Eminent Masters, Antient and Modern, With Reflexions upon the several Schools of Painting* (London: 1700) is signed J. E. and has therefore, been ascribed erroneously to John Evelyn. *A Description of the Most Celebrated Pieces of Paintings of the Most Antient Masters in Verse* (London: 1704), also signed J. E., seems to be another edition of the same work; U. Middeldorf, who owns a copy of this rare book, pointed out to the author that the epigrams dedicated to Rembrandt in the 1700 edition are also found under the same numbers in the 1704 volume. Unfortunately the author has been unable to collate the two editions. Elsum also wrote *The Art of Painting after the Italian Manner* (London: 1703); there is a copy of this book in the British Museum with the title page dated 1704.

² Elsum, *Epigrams upon the Paintings*, *op. cit.*, 92, No. 119.

³ *Ibid.*, 37, No. 49.

the portrait of Aristotle made for Don Antonio Ruffo. A closer examination of the epigram punctures this hypothesis. Elsum noted that all the epigrams in his volume marked with an asterisk were taken from *Michael Silos de Romana Pictura et Sculptura*.¹ The Aristotle epigram is marked with an asterisk, and it is an abbreviated translation of Silos' *Aristotelis Statua*.² However, Elsum made one significant addition. He added Rembrandt's name. The Latin epigram mentions no artist.

A third poem in the book is called "An Old Hermit in His Cell by ——." Elsum did not invent an artist for this picture. Here he could have cited Rembrandt, or one of his early followers, for the epigram describes the reaction which many observers, around 1700, must have had to Rembrandtesque pictures of old men seated in interiors:

Conscience has made the Hoary Father nice,
He quits the World to fly from Noise and Vice;
Renounces all its Honours, Pleasures, Riches,
And every Vanity that Man bewitches.
His Garments coarse, his Diet very slender,
His Body worn with age, and very tender.
He no Estate has, that is independent;
And save a Dog or Cat, has no Attendant,
No Wife, No Child, No Friends, No Visitants,
No Chirping Cups, yet no Comfort wants:
For placing his delight in Contemplation,
He in a Cell enjoys the whole Creation.³

References to Rembrandt are also found in the writings of the English painter, critic and collector Jonathan Richardson. His first book, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, published in 1715, contains a critique of De Piles' "Balance":

The thing is Curious, and Useful; but some considerable Parts of Painting being omitted it gives not a just Idea of the Masters. For example, according to this scale Rembrandt seems to be equal to Giulio Romano, and Superior to Michelangelo, and Parmeggiano. Whereas had he brought Invention, Greatness, Grace, etc. into the Account, it would have set the Matter right, supposing he had allotted

¹ Joannes Michael Silos, *Pinacotheca sive Romana Pictura et Sculptura, libri duo in quibus excellentes quaedam...* (Rome: P. M. Mancini, 1673).

² *Ibid.*, 271, No. 226.

³ Elsum, *Epigrams upon the Painting, op. cit.*, 97-8, No. 126.

the Just Degrees; which neither He nor anyone else can do so as to please universally. ¹

Richardson, who stood well within the 18th century — he died in 1745 — was more sceptical of the universal applicability of academic doctrine than his predecessors were; and, without denying the validity of the tenets of the academy, he was willing to examine, applaud and, what is more important, even own works which did not follow the canons. His son, Jonathan Richardson, Junior, followed in his traces. When he went to Italy he took copious notes on what he saw. These were published by his father in 1722 as *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, etc.*, and they show that young Jonathan had eyes for more than Italian works when he was on his Grand Tour. In France, in Crozat's collection he noted a fine portrait by Rembrandt, ² and about a Rembrandt in the Cabinet of the Yellow Bed of the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, he wrote:

A Woman reading to her Mother, while the Old Woman nods in rocking the Cradle where her Grandchild sleeps: The same Size as the finish'd Drawing my Father has, and exactly the same, as far as a Drawing and Picture can be. All the good properties of a Picture (of this subject) are here in a very high Degree, and some as high as one can conceive 'tis possible to raise them. They are plain People, and in a Cottage; and Nature, and Humour must be instead of Grace, and Greatness; the Expression is exquisite; the Colouring warm, and transparent; a vast number of Parts put together with the utmost Harmony; and for the Clair-Obscure it may stand in Competition with the *Notte* of Correggio, or any other picture. ³

The picture with so many merits was the *Holy Family* (fig. 33), now in Downton Castle, A. R. Boughton Knight, (HdG 91; Bred. 568); the drawing is lost. ⁴ In Italy, Jonathan was impressed by the *Portrait of an Old Man*, ⁵ (HdG

¹ Mr. Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (London: 1715), 230-1.

² Mr. Richardson, Sen. and Jun. *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, etc.* (London: 1722), 14.

³ *Ibid.*, 21. For Richardson on Correggio's *Notte* see *The Essay on the Theory of Painting, op. cit.*, 117-8.

⁴ The drawing is listed in *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of... Drawings, Prints, Models and Casts... of Jonathan Richardson...* (London: 1746-47), 40, No. 68: "One Rembrandt, an old woman rocking a cradle etc."

⁵ Richardson, *An Account of Some of the Statues...*, *op. cit.*, 73: "An excellent Half-length of a Man, his Hands folded, extremely Natural: This Picture hangs on the Right, that of Leo X of Raphaele on the Left of a Door, (as you stand to look on the Van Dyck, which is over the Door)."

380; Bred. 285), and in the Doria he believed the Rembrandt *Portrait* was similar to Velasquez' portrait of Innocent X in its

... Distinct manner of Colouring, and Bold Pencil; but Excels it even in Force, and incomparably in Harmony, and the Beauty of the several Tincts.¹

Many more references to Rembrandt are found in the second edition of *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, published in 1725, and "Enlarg'd, and Corrected" by the author. The *Hundred Guilder Print* is cited as a master work because it achieves variety in its invention

... there must be as much Variety in the Picture as the Subject will admit of. In Some, 'tis absolutely necessary; as in a Sermon, or other Address, to a Multitude, a Saint distributing Alms, Healing, etc. the Passions, the Attitudes, the Conditions, and other Circumstances of the People should be vary'd as is possible; but Naturally, and without Affection. Rembrandt has succeeded admirably in This, as in several of the Other parts of Painting in many of his Works; particularly in that of our Lord Healing the Sick. The Work is not crowded, but there is seen People of Both Sexes, and of all Ages, and Conditions; Rich, and Poor, Fat, and Lean, in all the Variety of Circumstances proper to the Subject. And here are not only Those that come for Cure, some are Observing what passes, and, of These, there are Friends, Enemies, Enquirers, Scorners, and Disputers. But this Great Genius has not contented himself with all this; among those that come to be Heal'd, there is an Aethiopian of Quality, that is diseas'd in his Eyes, as appears by a Bandage over them, and, in a great measure even by the Attitude of his Head, and the Set of his Mouth; he is attended by Servants, and Beasts of Voiture, which add much to the Variety I am remarking upon (fig. 35); and all this moreover raises the Subject, by shewing how far the Fame of Jesus, and the Wonders he did was spread; and what Credit was given to those relations in Countries far distant.²

This passage, which explains in part why collectors were fascinated with in the *Hundred Guilder Print*, concludes with a plea that the qualities of the Great Genius should not be overlooked:

I might have given examples to my Purpose from the Works of

¹ Richardson, *An Account of Some of the Statues...*, *op. cit.*, 300. Richardson erroneously calls the Velasquez *Innocent II* instead of *Innocent X*. Cf. p. 106, note 5 above.

² J. Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (2d ed., London: 1725), 66-67.

several other Masters, but I made choice of This, not only as being at least Equally remarkable with the Best I could have found, but to do Justice to One, who tho' he has Excell'd most Others in some of the parts of the Art not the least Considerable, yet having wanted (Generally, not Always) Grace and Greatness, and adhering to Common Nature, Common to Him, who convers'd not with the Best, his surprising Beauties are Overlook'd in a great measure, and Lost with Most, even Lovers of Painting and Connoisseurs.¹

In the chapter on composition he wrote: "The Masters to be studied for Composition are Rafaëlle, Rubens, and Rembrandt most especially, tho many others are worthy of notice and to be carefully considered. . ." ² When he wrote on the sublime he took the position that the modern masters do not equal the older ones, and to support his point he stated that "the Best (modern) Masters have Rarely Thought like Rafaëlle, or Compos'd like Rembrandt."³ In the same section of his book he argued that painting can show that which defies description. Who can describe with words, he asks, what Raphael, Guido Reni or Van Dyck has done with their brushes. To demonstrate what he means he cites a drawing by Rembrandt which he owned

... he has given Us such an Idea of a Death-Bed in one Quarter of a Sheet of Paper in two Figures with few Accompagnements, and in Clair-Obscure only, that the most Eloquent Preacher cannot paint it so strongly by the most Elaborate Discourse; I do not pretend to Describe it, it must be Seen: I will however tell what the Figures, and the rest are. An Old Man is lying on his Bed, just ready to Expire; this Bed has a plain Curtain, and a Lamp hanging over it, for 'tis Bright Day in the next Room, and which is nearest the Eye, There the Son of this Dying Old Man is at Prayers. O God! What is this World! Life passes away like a Tale that is Old. All is over with this Man, and there is such an Expression in this Dull Lamp-Light at Noon Day, such a Touching Solemnity, and Repose that these Equal anything in the Airs, and Attitudes of the Figures, which have the Utmost Excellency that I think I ever saw, or can conceive is possible to be Imagined.

¹ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

² *Ibid.*, 141-2. The rest of the quotation is worth citing because it shows that Richardson was not blind to the merits of other Dutch masters: "...amongst which V. Velde ought not to be forgotten, who tho his Subjects were Ships, which consisting of so many little parts, are very difficult to fling into great Masses, has done it, by the help of spread Sails, Smoak, and the Bodies of the Vessels, and a judicious Management of Lights and Shadows. So that His Compositions are many times as good as those of any Master."

³ *Ibid.*, 260.

'Tis a Drawing, I have it. And there is an Instance of an Important Subject, Impress'd upon our Minds by such Expedients, and Incidents as display an Elevation of Thought, and fine Invention; and all this with the Utmost Art, and with the greatest Simplicity; that being more Apt, at least in his Case, than any Embellishment whatsoever. ¹

The drawing which inspired this enthusiastic passage was Rembrandt's *St. Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha* in the Bayonne Musée, Collection Bonnat, dated around 1655 ² (fig. 36).

It seems that as Richardson became older he thought more highly of Rembrandt. *Traité de la Peinture et de la Sculpture*, a three-volume French translation of his works made by H. L. ten Kate and published in 1728, contains additional laudatory statements about the artist. To the note on the *Portrait of the Old Man* in the Pitti Palace, which hung next to a Raphael and a Van Dyck, Richardson added: "Ce portrait, fait par Rembrandt, est d'un tel mérite, qu'on peut dire, qu'ils s'accompagnent tous trois parfaitement bien." ³ In a section written to prove that some Northern artists are not inferior to the best Italians, he discussed Jan van Eyck and four 17th century masters: Poussin, Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt. He wrote that although Rembrandt did not embellish nature or imitate the ancients or understand the nude figure, he was a true genius (*vrai génie*) if there ever was one:

Il pouvoit cependent, dessiner avec exactitude et élégance: il avoit une intelligence de la Composition et du Clair-Obscur, si non supérieure, du moins égale à celle de qui que ce fût, et il peignoit avec beaucoup

¹ *Ibid.*, 252-253.

² Arthur Pond made an etching of this sheet which is dated 1736 and inscribed "E Museo Dni Jonathanis Richardson"; the etching is in reverse and a very poor copy with numerous changes. Cf. Henry M. Hake, "Pond's and Knapton's Imitations of Drawings," *Print Collector's Quarterly*, IX (1922), 325-349, for a discussion of Pond's reproductions of drawings. E. Croft-Murray has pointed out to the author that copies were made of Rembrandt's works by Edward Lutterell around the turn of the century. Two pastel studies of Rembrandt's parents are in the Landesmuseum, Cassel, monogrammed and dated 1706. In the British Museum there is a pastel of Rembrandt's Mother, after B. 349, and another of Jan Lutma, after B. 276; these studies are greatly enlarged and contain considerable modifications.

³ Mrs. Richardson, Père et Fils, *Description de Divers Fameux Tableaux, Dessains, Statues, Bustes, Bas-reliefs... en Italie... Revue, Corrigée, et considérablement augmentée, dans cette Traduction, par les Auteurs* (Amsterdam: 1728), 134. The French edition also includes translations of Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting*; his *Two Discourses: An Essay on the whole Art of Criticism as it relates to Painting...*; *An argument in behalf of the science of a connoisseur*, first published in London in 1719; and an essay by H. L. ten Kate which is discussed page 169 f. below.

de force et de vigueur. Il suivoit la Nature, ou, s'il étoit possible, il la surpassoit dans l'Expression; nonseulement dans les Sujets ordinaires, mais même dans les plus relevés et les plus sublimes qu'il traitoit quelquefois, par raport aux Habits, et à tous les autres égards, avec une certaine Grace, dont Raphael, le Correege, ou le Guide n'auroit pas eu honte; et cela par quelque traits de plume; car je parle ici de ses Desseins, dont j'ai un nombre sufisant, pour pouvoir bien prouver ce que j'avance.¹

Richardson was indeed prepared to prove his point. The connoisseur and theorist who could appreciate the achievement of Poussin as well as Rubens² owned, at the time of his death, over 100 Rembrandt drawings.³ Knowledge of his tremendous collection of Rembrandt drawings does not come as a shock when we recall that he wrote that one of his Rembrandt sheets, *St. Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha*, has "the Utmost Excellency that I think I ever saw, or can conceive is possible to be imagined."

Antoine Coppel, director of the *Académie*, gave eloquent testimony of Rembrandt's popularity in France in a volume of his discourses published in 1721

... one has seen all that is not Poussin dispised, so to speak. Albani has had his turn. The Rubens, the Van Dycks, and the Bassanos were outlawed. Then, in spite of all the rare beauties which are found in them, the Rubens have banished the Poussins. The Rembrandts have been the only models which one has endeavored to imitate. Everything has been reversed, and the elogies which have been given successively

¹ Richardson, *Description de Divers Fameux Tableau*, *op. cit.*, 21-22.

² In the final analysis he believed Rubens was the greatest 17th century master. *Ibid.*, 32-33: "Pour rassembler ce que je viens de dire, le Génie de Van Dyck est monté sur un Coursier Anglois, celui de Rubens sur un Etalon Flamand, les Anciens sur Pegase, qui porte en croupe Raphael, et encore le Poussin derrière lui; pour celui de Rembrandt, c'est un véritable Coureur (Valet de pié en equipage bizarre, et qui accompagne les Carrosses de personnes de Qualité)... Rembrandt, et Van Dyck ont copié la Nature simple ou commune, de plus près, que n'a jamais fait aucun autre Peintre: Le Poussin a suivi l'Antique, dans la route de Raphael, mieux qu'aucun autre Maître n'a fait depuis le tems de ce Prince de l'Art; et Rubens a fait comme les Chimistes qui ne pouvant parvenir au grand Elixir, ne laissent pas de produire en sa place quelque chose de très-excellent: il n'a ni copié fidèlement, ni embelli la Nature; mais il péchoit si glorieusement, que j'aimerois mieux être Rubens, que Rembrandt, le Poussin, ou Van Dyck: à la vérité, il y a quelque chose de défectueux dans ses Ouvrages; mais en même tems, tout y est magnifique et éclatant."

³ See *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of... Drawings, Prints, Models and Casts... of Jonathan Richardson...* (London: 1746-47); among his Rembrandt drawings, which are found today in many of the important cabinets of the world, were 25 of Rembrandt's copies after Indian miniatures (cf. Val. 636-640, 642-649, 651-655).

to all those revered masters have always been without reservation, and at the expense of those who are no longer in favor. However, it would be more useful to esteem all that is beautiful, without being blind to that which is imperfect; for, in order to prove my contention, is it not true that a picture painted by Poussin in a simple way, and like Rembrandt, would be a rather bad work; and that another painted by Rembrandt with exact drawing and the knowledge of Poussin, would be an admirable picture, above all, if in painting it, he employed the artifice of his chiaroscuro? ¹

It would be dangerous to interpret literally Coppel's statement that the Rembrandts have been the only models which one has endeavored to imitate. French artists of the period showed their respect for Rembrandt when they occasionally adopted aspects of his style or copied his work: Jean Baptiste Jouvenet (1644—1717) here and there shows the influence of Rembrandt; ² Bon de Boullonge (1649—1717) exhibited "une teste dans le goût de Rembrandt" in 1699; ³ "les morceaux de reception" which Michel Serre (1658—1733) offered to the *Académie* on November 25, 1704 included "une tête de Bacchante dans le goût de Rembrandt"; ⁴ copies of Rembrandt's painting were

1 (A.) Coppel, *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (Paris: 1721), 19-20: "...l'on a vû mépriser, pour ainsi dire, tout ce qui n'étoit point Poussin: l'Albane a eu son tour: les Rubens, les Wandecis, les Bassans étoient proscrits: ensuite malgré toutes les rares beautez qui s'y trouvent, les Rubens ont chassé les Poussins: les Rimbrants ont été les seuls modèles que l'on a tâché d'imiter: tout a changé de face, et les loüanges que l'on a donné successivement à tous ces Maîtres respectables, ont toujours été sans reserve, et aux dépens de ceux qui ne se trouvoient plus en grace. Il seroit cependant plus raisonnable et plus utile d'estimer tout ce qui est beau, sans aveuglement pour ce qui est défectueux; car, pour prouver ce que j'avance, n'est-il pas vray qu'un tableau peint par le Poussin sur un trait simple et fidèle du Rimbrant, seroit un assez mauvais ouvrage; et qu'un autre peint par le Rimbrant sur le dessein exact et sçavant du Poussin, seroit un tableau admirable, sur tout di en le peignant, il y avoit employé l'artifice de son clair-obscur?" According to Paul Cornu's article on Coppel in Thieme-Becker, VIII, 25-26, he became director of the Academy in 1714; in 1708 "begann er hier (*Académie*) seine ästhetischen Vorlesungen, die er bis 1714 fortführte (im Druck erschienen 1721)." Antoine Coppel's *Discours* published in 1721 is frequently and erroneously cited as written by Charles Coppel who was Antoine's son. This error is found in Schlosser, *op. cit.*, 581. The author of the *Discours* in the 1721 edition is given only as "Coppel". For evidence that Antoine, not Charles, was definitely the author of this work, cf. page 155, note 5, below.

2 Gerson, *op. cit.*, 89: "...Anlehnung an Rembrandt kann man bereits im 17. Jahrhundert beobachten... Bei Jean. Bapt. Jouvenet kann man hin und wieder solche Bilder finden... Vastg. Paris 6.5.1925, Nor. 87. Rembrandtisch im Sinne von B. G. Cuyp."

3 *Le Cabinet de l'amateur et de l'antiquaire*, "Catalogue général des ouvrages exposés au salon du Louvre depuis 1699 jusqu'en 1789," III (1844), 103.

4 Dussieux *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, II, 247, biography of Michel Serre by M. de Mouligneuf.

made by Louis Galloche (1670—1761),¹ J. B. Santerre (1651—1717)² and Jean Raoux (1677—1734);³ and Alexis Grimou (1678—1733)⁴ was known as “le Rembrandt français.” However, the few works of these artists which show Rembrandtesque features cannot be accepted as evidence that Rembrandt was the only model used by French painters. The painting of the period confirms this point.

Coytel merely wanted to emphasize the fact that the painters of the time created new heroes. They had also created a French painting quite different from the one visualized by Le Brun; Watteau died the year Coypel's book was published. Coypel asked for a balanced judgement of a painter's work and not for blind worship or absolute condemnation. It would be more useful to esteem all that is beautiful. The passage cited above in which Coypel postulates about what would happen if Rembrandt painted like Poussin proves that he did not approve of Rembrandt's drawing, nor did he consider him a learned painter. This is admission that Rembrandt broke important rules of the *Académie*; but this failure did not blind Coypel, any more than it did his friend De Piles,⁵ to

1 *Ibid.*, II, 305 states in a note to a catalogue of Galloche's paintings made by Louis Gougenot that two of them “sont chez le fils de M. Galloche, avec plusieurs belle copies d'après le Titien, le Guide et le Rembrandt que son père a faites.”

2 A copy in the Orléans museum of a *Young Girl at a Window* is mentioned by Louis Reau in his life of Grimou in *Les Peintres Français du XVIIIe Siècle*, edited by Louis Dimier, (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1930), II, 206 and in his article in *Revue Belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, “Les influences flamandes et hollandaises dans l'oeuvre de Fragonard,” II (1932), 100.

3 Georges Bataille, biography of Raoux in Dimier, *op. cit.*, II, 272: “...le Rabbin méditant la Bible qui saisait partie de le vente M. B. du 10 avril 1786. Le catalogue dit que le faire et la couleur présentant toute la manière de Rembrandt. Cela semble indiquer cette fois que c'est d'une copie qu'il s'agissait.” Voltaire, in his “Siècle de Louis XIV,” *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: 1867), IV, 62, characterized Raoux as “peintre inégal; mais quand il a réussi, il a égalé le Rembrandt.” The compliment was not the highest which Voltaire could pay; he did not, for example, admit Rembrandt into his “Temple de Goût.”

4 This title was not completely undeserved, for he copied Rembrandt paintings. Gerson, *op. cit.*, 91, lists the following: *Saskia*, Rothschild Collection, Paris, (HdG 613; Bred. 104) in Paris auction 31.5.1929, listed as Réau, Nr. 94; *Rembrandt's Sister*, Cook Collection, Richmond, (HdG 697; Bred. 84) in Le Mans Museum, cat. 1932, Nr. 411; the attribution of another copy in Nantes, Cat. 1913, Nr. 546, after *Eleazar Swalmius*, Antwerp, (HdG 722; Bred. 213), has been questioned. Gerson, *Ibid.*, 92, has called attention to works by Grimou such as the *Spaniard* in Karlsruhe (reproduced C. Gabillot, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, “Alexis Grimou,” LII (1911), 421) which are indebted to Rembrandt portraits. Also cf. Louise Réau's essay on Grimou in Dimier, *op. cit.*, II, 195 f.

5 Coypel, *op. cit.*, Preface, pages not numbered: “De Piles revint en France, après les longs voyages où il avoit été engagé pour le service du Roy. L'extrême passion que

the Dutch artist's qualities. In the new polarization which Coytel constructed between Poussin and Rembrandt, he acknowledged the supremacy of the latter's chiaroscuro. Even the *simple* quality of Rembrandt's work was not offensive to Coytel, who was

... sometimes angry that they (the small pictures of the Flemish and Dutch) have been banished completely from the cabinets where the old Italian masters are hung. I know that the former are defective in distinction, nobility and loftiness which are found in the latter; but in the subjects which they use, they are sometimes perfect precisely because of the naivete of their expression. ¹

Coytel wrote that it is sometimes necessary to achieve effects in a painting which appear accidental and that it is often necessary to neglect certain passages in order to give value to others. But an effect of hastiness and negligence must come from art. Since one cannot paint mellow enough, it is necessary to avoid hard, clipped strokes. He uses Rembrandt to illustrate his point:

The works of Rembrandt which seem to show the most brush strokes, or even the greatest haste, are of an infinite refinement and are painted with as much suaveness and plasticity as those of Correggio, in whose work the brush strokes do not appear. ²

Félibien also wrote about Correggio in connection with Rembrandt, but he

nous avons tous deux pour la Peinture, et la joye de nous revoir après une tres-longue absence, redouble et resserra les noeuds de notre amitié; nous nous voyions régulièrement tous les jours; il me communique le Manuscrit de son Ouvrage sur la vie des Peintres." This is conclusive proof that Antoine, not Charles, wrote the *Discours*. When De Piles returned from Holland with his manuscript of the lives of the painters, Charles Coytel was three years old.

1 *Ibid.*, 22: "...je suis quelquefois fâché que l'on les (the small pictures of the Flemish and Dutch) bannisse entièrement des cabinets où l'on rassemble les tableaux des anciens maîtres d'Italie; je sais qu'il manque aux premiers le choix, la noblesse et l'élévation qui se trouve dans les derniers; mais dans les sujets qui leur conviennent, ils sont quelquefois parfaits, même par la naïveté des expressions."

2 *Ibid.*, Index, pages not numbered: "Rimbrant, pourquoy ses ouvrages sont d'une richesse infinie, et peuvent égaler ceux du Corrége." *Ibid.*, 41-42: "Il faut quelquefois que les choses paroissent comme fait au hazard... Il faut souvent negliger de certains endroits pour en faire valoir d'autres; mais dans cet air de brusquerie et de negligence qui doit venir de l'Art; je le repete encore, il faut éviter les traits durs et coupez. Car on ne sçauroit peindre trop moëusement. Les Ouvrages de Rimbrant qui paroissent les plus touchez, et même les plus brusquez, sont d'une recherche infinie, et sont peints avec autant de suavité et de rondeur que ceux du Corège, où l'on n'appërçoit aucune touche."

used the Italian to illustrate that in the final analysis, highly finished pictures are superior to those which are not, because they can be examined at close range.¹ Coypel did not place such a high premium upon high finish. He agreed with John Elsum that the effects achieved in Rembrandt's paintings which appear to have been executed hastily were a result of art, not accident. It is difficult to determine which paintings Coypel would have called *les plus brusques*; but since he certainly knew the *Girl at the Window*, dated 1651, which his friend De Piles owned,² and the *Self-portrait* of the artist at his easel, dated around 1660, which was in the possession of his royal patron,³ it is reasonable to assume that Coypel was willing to call the attention of the members and students of the *Académie* to these works as pictures which could be studied with profit.

Rembrandt's French critics were well aware of his *manière très-particulière* and his work was never confused with the *Feinmalerei* of a Dou, Netscher, Schalcken or A. van der Werff. However, it would never have occurred to any of them to suggest that Rembrandt be accepted as one of the deities of the *Académie*. This was an honor he never received. As late as 1851 Delacroix still believed it was heretical to write that perhaps it will be discovered one day that Rembrandt is a greater painter than Raphael.⁴

Although Rembrandt's works were discussed, studied, copied, collected and reproduced in prints, his status in France should not be overestimated. For every Rembrandt which was cited in a French collection there were thousands of pictures *dans le grand goût*. Even Lister, who was very impressed by the Rembrandts in the Du Vivier and Hochereau collections, does not mention Le Nôtre's Rembrandt when he wrote up his visit to the royal gardener's cabinet.⁵ Perhaps Le Nôtre did not have the painting in his collection at the time; but it is also probable that his single Rembrandt was overlooked because of his other pictures, porcelain, classical statues, prints and medals. Rembrandt's position in France during this period is similar to his place in Le

1 Cf. p. 120 above.

2 Cf. p. 129 f above.

3 Cf. p. 143 above.

4 *Journal de Eugène Delacroix...* introduction et des notes par André Joubin (Paris: Plon, 1932), I, 439: "Juin 6, 1851. Peut-être découvrira-t-on que Rembrandt est un beaucoup plus grand peintre que Raphaël. J'écris ce blasphème propre à faire dresser les cheveux de tous les hommes d'école, sans prendre décidément parti..." This statement was not as unorthodox as Delacroix thought it was; Géricault had already made a number of copies after Rembrandt. Also cf. S. Slive, "Rembrandt and His Critics," *Art News Annual*, XXII (1953), 185.

5 Lister, *op. cit.*, 36-7.

Nôtre's collection. Félibien's defense in the *Entretiens*, De Piles' estimation in his *Abregé* and the "Balance," and Coypel's citation of the late brush work as worthy of study were exceptional judgements of Rembrandt during the reign of Louis XIV. But they also show that academicians looked at paintings as well as composed canons, and they would rather weaken their dogma than conclude that Rembrandt was not worthy of attention.

CHAPTER X

EARLY 18th CENTURY DUTCH CRITICISM

Gérard de Lairese, who was born in Liège in 1640, is the best representative of the dominant taste in Dutch art and art theory around the end of the 17th century. His early biographers emphasized his precocity and that he received excellent training from his father, Renier, and the painter Bertholet Flémal, who had worked in Italy and France. He was instructed in the beauty of the ancients and the Italian masters, and was taught languages to enable him to read the sources for the subjects of his paintings. In 1665 the south Netherlander arrived in Amsterdam where he remained until his death in 1711.¹ He had tremendous success there as a painter of the walls and ceilings in patrician homes, as well as an etcher of mythological, religious and historical themes. In 1667 he was given the rights of citizenship in Amsterdam; in 1668 he was in contact with Andries Pels, and in the following year, with Pels and Lodewijk Meyer he founded the literary society *Nil volentibus arduum*. His contemporaries believed he had every virtue of a learned painter — Sandrart reports that he spent one day a week at his music. His 18th century critics gave him the highest praise: Descamps writes of him as the *Poussin Hollandais*² and Winckelmann called his *Stratonice* “ein Werk welches unter die ersten in der Welt kann gesetzt werden.”³

¹ The main sources for Lairese's life are: Sandrart's biography in the *Teutsche Academie* published in 1679 and the more extensive one in the Latin edition of the *Academie* of 1683; Louis Abry, *Les Hommes Illustres de la Nation Liégeoise*, ed. H. Helbig and S. Bormans, (Liège: 1867) — Abry was a Liège painter who lived with Lairese in Amsterdam. Although Houbraken repeats much of what Sandrart wrote he adds some new material: cf. C. Hofstede de Groot, *Arnold Houbraken und seine Grootte Schouburg*, (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1893), 303-306. Detailed biographies of the artist are found in M. D. Henkel's article on the artist in *Thieme-Becker* and in Jan Joseph Marie Timmers, *Gérard Lairese*, (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1942), 1-17.

² J. B. Descamps, *Vie des Peintres Flamands et Hollandais*, (Paris: 1760), III, 101: “Lairese mérita d'être assez généralement nommé le Poussin de sa Nation.”

³ J. Winckelmann, *Sendschreiben über die Gedanken von der Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst* (1756), 80. Winckelmann may have had in mind the version of this picture which is in Schwerin; cf. Schwerin Catalogue, 1882, No. 586.

Lairesse's career as an artist ended around 1690 when he became totally blind. However, he continued to be active. He gave lectures in the practice of art and art theory at the society called *Ingenio et Labore* and his lectures were compiled into two books before his death: *Grondlegginge der Teekentkunst*, 1701¹ and *Het Groot Schilderboek*, 1707.² Both of these books were frequently reprinted. The statement which Robert Browning wrote in 1874 on the fly-leaf of his 1738 English translation of *Het Groot Schilderboek* is testimony of the extent and duration of Lairesse's influence:

I read this book more often and with greater delight when I was a child than any other; and still remember the main of it most gratefully for the good I seem to have got from the prints and wonderful text.³

The portrait of Lairesse by Rembrandt, signed and dated 1665,⁴ proves that he sat for the artist the year he arrived in Amsterdam (fig. 37). We have no record of what Lairesse, who was not a handsome man, thought of this portrait, but we do know he regarded Rembrandt very favorably until he learned the infallible rules of art.⁵ The rules which made him change his mind are those with which we are familiar; they were those established by the *Académie*.

1 Gérard Lairesse, *Grondlegginge ter Teekenkonst* (Amsterdam: 1701), 1713, 1766; German: 1705, 1727, 1745; French: 1719, 1746; English: 1777.

2 Gérard Lairesse, *Het Groot Schilderboek* (Amsterdam: 1707, 1712, 1714, 1716, 1740, 1836; German: 1729-30, 1819; English: 1738, 1778, 1817; French: 1787; T. Querfurt, *Handbuch für die Mahler oder auszüge aus G. de Lairesse Groszem Mahlerbuche...* (Prague: 1776). Bibliographical material on both of Lairesse's books is found in Bruno Urban, *Das Groot Schilderboek des Gerard de Lairesse* (Berlin: Schade, 1914), 12-17 and Timmers, *op. cit.*, 80-83.

3 *The Works of Robert Browning*, with an introduction by F. G. Kenyon, (London: Smith, Elder and Co 1912), X, xix.

4 This portrait (HdG 658; Bred. 321) is now in the Robert Lehman collection, New York. The identification of the portrait was made by F. Schmidt-Degener, "Rembrandt's Portret van Gerard de Lairesse," *Onze Kunst*, XXIII-XXIV (1913), 117-119; reprinted F. Schmidt-Degener, *Rembrandt*, edited by A. van Schendel (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1950), 103-113. Lairesse may have met Rembrandt while he was working for Gerrit Uylenburg in 1665; cf. Houbraken, *op. cit.*, III, 109. According to Houbraken, Gerrit Uylenburg was an important dealer in Italian pictures in Holland, and he also had artists working for him; cf. *Ibid.*, II, 293 f. Rembrandt was an old friend of the Uylenburg family and was also related to it; he married Saskia Uylenburg who was Gerrit's cousin. Rembrandt also lived in Gerrit's father's house when he arrived in Amsterdam from Leiden in 1631. Wurzbach, *op. cit.*, II, 729, writes that Gerrit was Rembrandt's pupil around 1650. The inventory made of the dealer's pictures in 1675, after a scandal which caused his bankruptcy, lists three Rembrandt pictures; *Urk.*, 331.

5 Cf. p. 164 f below.

Lairesse accepted them and he was capable of being *plus royaliste que le roi*. With his French colleagues he believed that great painting must handle noble and edifying subjects, particularly fine histories, and moral and spiritual emblems, which at once instruct and delight.¹ This axiom automatically excluded the great Dutch still-life and landscape painters who worked from 1620 until 1660 from the ranks of serious painters. Of genre pictures he wrote

... we hardly see a beautiful hall or fine apartment of any cost, that is not decorated with pictures of beggars, bordellos, taverns, tobacco smokers, musicians, dirty children on their pots, and other things more filthy and worse. Who can entertain his friend or a person of repute in an apartment which is in such a mess...²

And of Rembrandt's subjects, he wrote in a passage in which he maintained that artists reflect their daily life in their work:

Thus one sees that Rubens and Van Dyck, who were daily at court and who spent their time with nobles, established their thoughts on the heights of art; Jordaens and Rembrandt, on the other hand, are bourgeois, and Bamboccio and Brouwer the lowest; each go to their preference...³

1 Lairesse, *Groot Schilderboek*, 1707, Book II, Chap. 13, 106: "Haar (painting) recht gebruik moet bepaald worden in het verbeelden van deftige en stichtelyke zaaken, als fraaije Geschiedenissen en Zinnebeelden, Geestelyk en Moraal, dewelke op een deugdzaame en betaamelyke wyze, ieder een tot vermaak en nuttigheid strekkende, moeten werden uitgedrukt."

2 *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. 1, 171: "...want men beschouwt naauwelyks een schoone Zaal of een heerlyk Vertrek, hoe kostelyk die ook mogen weezen of zy zyn nu met Bedelaars, Bordeelen, Kroegen, Tabakrookers, Speelmans, besmeurde Kinders in de kakstoel, en wat noch vuiler en erger is, voorzien. Wie zou zijne vrienden, of iemand van achting, in een zaal durven ontfangen, daar het aldus over hoop legt..."

3 *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. 3, 185: "Maar gemakkelyker valt het voor een Burger, een burgerlyke rol dan een andere te spelen; also ook voor een Schilder, te blyven by het verbeelden van het geen hem dagelyks voorkomt; dewyl onze herstenen zyn als een glaze bol, in 't midden van een kamer opgehangen, welke door alle voorwerpen, die zich vertoonen, aangedaan word, en een indruk daar van behoud. Zo zag men *Rubbens* en *van Dyk*, mannen die dagelyks te Hoof en by de Grooten verkeerden, hunne gedachten op het verheevene der Konst vesten; *Jordaans* en *Rembrandt* weder op het burgerlyke; *Bamboots* en *Brouwer* op het allergeeringste; en dus ieder na de maat hunner neigingen, voor zo veel dezelve tot den ommegang met menschen van hunne soorte strekten." Cf. *Urk.*, 396. Hofstede de Groot apparently did not know the 1707 edition of the *Groot Schilderboek*; all his references to this work in *Die Urkunden* are dated 1714.

Lairesse accepts the ancient tripartite division of artists according to the subject which they used; however, he saw a correlation between the theme an artist used and his way of life. He also cautioned painters not to follow nature slavishly without ennobling it. The citation of the painter who uses his rude and ill-mannered servant as a model and represents her as lady in a drawing-room, or of the one who dresses a school boy, or even his own son, in a nobleman's clothes could be a reference to Rembrandt.¹

Rembrandt is called upon by Lairesse to point out to the young painter what he definitely should not do. Lairesse also practiced what he preached: it is hardly possible to speak of a Rembrandt influence in his painting, and his etchings, which sometimes have the freedom and lightness which is associated with 18th century prints, are much closer to the Italian tradition of etching linked with Pietro Testa, than with Rembrandt's style.

One of Lairesse's cardinal principles was that painting should be light:

Just as bright light causes all colored objects to appear beautiful and clean to our eyes, so it is uncontradictable that the more it is daubed and broken with shadow, the darker and less beautiful the objects appear.

Unfortunately many famous masters have misunderstood this: among the Brabanters, Rubens; in Holland, Rembrandt, Lievens and many others who worked in their manner; the former, who wanted to show life much too beautiful, arrived at raw gaudy colors; the latter two, who sought a mellowness, decayed into the ripe and rotten...²

Lairesse held that ordinary light was the best for painting; it was more natural than strong sunlight which created sharp contrasts. He who pretends to understand the *buono gusto* must paint flat, but not always and everywhere. On the other hand, one should not paint without contrasts. A mean should be

1 *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. 1, 173: "Den ander verkiest zynen plompe en ongemanierde Dienstmeid, en maakt 'er een Juffer in 't salet van. Weêr een ander zal een Schooljongen, of zyn eigen... een heerenkleed aantrekken..." Timmers, *op. cit.*, 77, first noted that this passage may refer to Rembrandt.

2 *Ibid.*, Book I, Chap. 12, 41-42: "Gelyk het helder licht de oorzaak is, waar door al de koleurige voorwerpen, zich suiver en schoon voor onze oogen opdoen; zo is ook onwederspreekelyk, dat hoe meêr hetzelfde door duisterheid besmet en verbroomden zy, hoe gezegde voorwerpen zich ook duysterder en minder schoon zullen vertoonen. Veele doorluchtige meesters, hebben zich jammerlyk hierin vergreepen: onder de Brabanders, *Rubbens*; in Holland, *Rembrant*, *Lievens* en veele anderen, die hun trant hebben nagevolgd: de eene willende het leeven al te schoon hebben is tot een raauwe bontigheid, een ander om de murwheid te bekomen, tot de ryp en rottigheid vervallen..." Cf. *Urk.*, 395.

achieved. Shadows which model figures should be softened and they should melt. They must

... not be black like Ribera's; nor grey, yellow or ruddy as in Rembrandt, Jan Lievens and many others amongst the Italians, Dutch, Brabanters have done, merely for the sake of force, without making a differentiation of the glow, as they call it, in the shadows, as if there was a fire in the picture. I advise everybody to think this over well, so that the color of natural and complete life will not be neglected.¹

He would have all objects keep their local color in shadows.² Lairesse's basic objection to Rembrandt's unique chiaroscuro was that it was not natural.

Rembrandt's impasto, as well as the glowing golden and brown colors of his shadows was pointed to by Lairesse as a thing to be avoided. Use black and white in painting, he writes, although many say that white should not be used. Do not become attached to any special method, for nature should be the only guide. Lairesse, of course, meant nature corrected by the rules and reason. Away with procrastination, subtilizing and piddling, he advises; attack your work with spirit, but not like Rembrandt or Lievens whose colors run down like slime over their works.³ What Dutch painter can Lairesse recommend as a model for students to follow? Frans Mieris the Elder, because his paintings are

¹ *Ibid.*, Book V, Chap. 22, 323-4: "Wat het licht aangaat, ik oordeel het gemeene het beste, en veel eigender dan 't zonnelicht; also ik hetzelfde heel oneigen houde: en schoon zommige, die de *buono gusto* meenen te verstaan, geduurig roepen dat men vlak moet schilderen, is 't nochtans grootelyks gedwaald, gelyk wy meermalen gezegt hebben, die manier overal en zonder onderscheid te gebruiken; want het is een gemeen kamerlicht niet eigen... dezelve met vlakke schaduwen te daagen, maar twyffelachtig en smeltende, dat zy ronden: niet zwart gelyk *Spangnolet*, noch graauw, geel of ros, als *Rembrand, Jan Lievensz.*, en meêr anderen onder de Italiaanen, Hollanders en Brabanders gedaan hebben, welke zonder verschillendheid de gloed, zo als zy die noemen, zodanig in de schaduwe brengen of 'er de brand in was, alleenlyk maar om geweld te doen. Hierom raad ik ieder een deze zaak wel te overwegen, op dat de coloriet van het natuurlyke en volmaakte leeven niet verwaarloosd werd." Cf. *Urk.*, 398.

² *Ibid.*, Book V, Chap. 22, 324: "Wat mijn gevoelen aangaat, ik oordeel het waarschynlykste te zyn, dat men de schaduwe van dezelve natuur maake als de stoffe is: vertoonende in alle voorwerpen 't zy naakten, kleedingen, hout of steen, rood, geel, blaauw of groen, op den dag de eigenste koleur, als in de schaduwe."

³ *Ibid.*, Book V, Chap. 22, 324: "Wat de kracht belangt, ik zou wit noch zwart spaaren, alschoon veele waanwyzen voorgegeeven hebben, dat men geen wit gebruiken moet; een braaf schilder doet alles. Men moet zich niet laten misleiden door deze of geene manier: volgt alleenlyk de Natuur, zoo gy de konst wil voldoen. Weg met futselen, vroeten en morsten: tast uw werk met een kloeke hand aan. Evenwel niet op zyn *Rembrands of Lievensz.*, dat het sap gelyk drek langs het Stuk neêr loope..." Cf. *Urk.*, 399.

always tidy and he differentiated textures well.¹ Work evenly and smoothly, he admonished, and make your subjects appear round and raised by art, not daubing.²

One cannot help noticing how frequently Lairesse summons Lievens' name when he mentions Rembrandt. Lairesse certainly knew the style Lievens employed for the portraits and historical machines he made after he no longer associated with Rembrandt; therefore, we can assume that the paintings Lievens made when he was influenced by Van Dyck did not please Lairesse any more than the paintings he made while working with Rembrandt. Lairesse may have found Lievens' work done in the Flemish mode too dark. The possibility that they quarreled over commissions — they had the same clientele — should not be overlooked.

Lairesse noted the truism that it is not only today that one finds those who try to win respect by innovations. There have been people of this sort in other days, and he continues, he will only name two

... Rembrandt and Jan Lievens, whose manner, particularly that of the first, whose observation of naturalness, as well as his unusual strength, is not to be completely rejected. Nevertheless he had few followers, and those who did follow him came to as bad an end as their model did. In spite of this some asserted, and still assert, that everything that art and the brush can achieve was possible for him, and that he was the greatest painter of his time and is still unsurpassed. For, they say, was there ever a painter who by means of color ever came as close to nature by his beautiful light, lovely harmony and unique, unusual thoughts, and so forth? With so many outstanding gifts what can he lack? And is not that enough to charm the whole world, if it was not pleased with a style which had existed in the world for many years?

But it should be known that my opinion is quite different. However, I do not want to deny that I once had a special preference for his manner; but at that time I had hardly begun to understand the infallible rules of art. I found it necessary to recant my error and to repudiate his; since his was based upon nothing but light and fantastic conceits, without models, and which had no firm foundation upon which to stand.³

1 *Ibid.*, Book IV, Chap. 2, 216, marginal reads "Goed voorbeeld van *Mieris*" and in the text "...gelyk *Mieris* en anderen zeer fraay en konstig gedaan en waargenomen hebben, zo dat men zelfs in mindere dingen 't zilver, tin, blik en yzer kennelyk kan onderscheiden."

2 *Ibid.*, Book V, Chap. 22, 324: "...maar gelyk en mals, dat uwe voorwerpen alleen door de konst rond en verheeven schynen, en niet door klodderly." Cf. *Urk.*, 399.

3 *Ibid.*, Book V, Chap. 22, 325: "Maar het is niet van heden dat men zulke schrandere

The interesting observation that Rembrandt had few followers can be accepted or rejected, depending upon the definition of follower which one approves. The extraordinary confession that the rules of the *Académie* made Lairese admire Rembrandt less, leaves little to debate. Only once did his admiration for Rembrandt make him forget the rules in *Het Groot Schilderboek*. He asserted that Rembrandt's and Van Dyck's color does not have to give ground to Titian's when, in a moment of national pride, he wanted to prove that the excellence of a picture does not depend upon whether it was painted in Italy.¹ Nevertheless, Lairese would have agreed wholeheartedly with his friend Pels that Rembrandt can be called one of the foremost heretics of art. In spite of this, he admits that even at the beginning of the 18th century there were some who "still assert that everything that art and the brush can achieve was possible for Rembrandt and that he was the greatest of his time and is still unsurpassed." This indicates that the judgements which the academic critics pronounced were not universally accepted in the Netherlands around 1700. However, the academic critics at the end of the 17th century were the

Geesten vind, die door nieuwigheden eenig aanzien onder de doorluchtige Verstanden zoeken te verkrygen. Men heeft 'er verscheidene van dien aart sedert eenigen tyd gezien: doch ik zal 'er maar alleenlyk twee noemen, als *Rembrand* en *Jan Lievensz*, welker manier wel niet geheel te verwerpen is, voornaamentlyk die van den eersten, zo ten opzichte van zyne natuurlykheid, als ook zyne uitsteekende kragt. Evenwel bespeurd men, dat hy niet nagevolgd word dan van weinige, welke noch eindelyk met hunnen Voorganger te gronde zyn gegaen; niettegenstaande dat men 'er vond, en noch vind, welke vast stellen dat het in zyn vermogen was alles 't welk de konst en 't penceel kon uitvoeren, hebbende hy alle de beroemdsten van zynen tyd tot heden toe overtroffen: want, zeggen zy, was 'er ooit een Schilder die de natuur in kracht van coloriet zo na kwam, door zyne schoone lichten, lieffelyke overeenstemming, zyne zeldsaame en boven gemeene gedachten, enz. Wat kon hem ontbreken, na zo veele uitsteekende begaafdheden? En is zulks niet genoeg om de geheele waereld te verlokken, indien hy niet ingenomen was geweest door een manier die al lange jaaren in de waerld stand gegreepen had? Maar dezen gelieven te weeten, dat ik met hen in myne gevoelens hier omtrent zeer verschillende ben; hoewel ik niet wil ontkennen, dat ik voor dezen een byzondere neiginge tot zyne manier gehad heb; maar ik had zo haast niet begonnen te bezeffen de onfeilbaare regelen dezer Konst, of ik vond my genoodzaakt myne dwaalinge te herroepen, en de zyne te verwerpen; als zynde niet anders gegrondvest dan op losse en spookachtige inbeeldingen, welke zonder voorbeelden weezende, geen wisse gronden hadden, daar zy op steunden." Cf. *Urk.*, 400.

¹ *Ibid.*, Book VII, Chap. 3, 18: "Doch dat *van Dyk* en *Titiaan* in koleur veel verschillen dat staa ik hun toe; maar dat men in dit geval by de Italiaanen niet behoef te loopen, om zulks te bewyzen, is ook zeker; want voor zo veel de krachtige Coloriet, indien het daar in bestond, belangt, zo zeg ik dat *Rembrandt* voor *Titian* niet heeft te wyken. Maar wat is 't! de meeste menschen volgen gemeenlyk de dwaaze oordeelaars, welke geen dingen goed keuren, die niet op zyn Italiaansch geschilderd zyn, heet zy Historien, Landschappen of Pourtraiten."

only articulate ones. None of the painters, amateurs or collectors to whom Lairesse, their antagonist, refers have left us explicit statements of their admiration. Lairesse gives us a rare opportunity to detect the ever present, mute observer of works of art who is found in every age and who probably smiles condescendingly, but fortunately still silently, at histories of art criticism.

Wybrant de Geest II, also testified to Rembrandt's popularity in the Netherlands around 1700. This Dutch theorist included Rembrandt in his list of outstanding Netherlandish painters in his *Kabinet der Statuten*, published in 1702,¹ De Geest had only the greatest admiration for the Italian masters, but he was willing to concede that some Netherlandish painters had done well too. He writes that he will name only one, who also was not degenerate, namely the audacious painter Rembrandt. All who know anything about art know that Rembrandt painted powerfully and magnificently. Nevertheless, we have seen how the ignorant handled his praiseworthy pieces shortly after his death, when one of his portraits was sold for six stuivers. Worthy connoisseurs, or as they are called on the streets, dealers, can testify that this happened. But shortly after, the same portrait was sold for eleven guilders, and now one would pay some hundreds for the sketch. Thus this famous man was handled after his death.²

De Geest's account of the high prices which Dutch collectors were willing

1 Wybrand de Geest, *Het Kabinet der Statuen* (Amsterdam: 1702), 111-2: "...en wie zal onze Nederlandsche Konst-helden vergeten, als eene Rubbens, van Dyk, Bloemmaart, Mytens, Spranger, Frans Floris, Holbeen (!), Jordaans, Hans de Vries, Goltzius, Breugel, Lucas van Leyden, Rembrands en den wyd beroemden man Michel de Coxie." W. de Geest's uncle was Wybrand de Geest, I, whose wife Hendrickje van Uylenburg, was the sister of Rembrandt's wife; cf. article in *Thieme-Becker* on Wybrand de Geest, I, by Hofstede de Groot.

2 *Ibid.*, 81-2: "Maar heel anders hebben de groote bazen gedaan, die niet voor stik-siende, maar alleen voor held're oogen in de konst kwamen te schilderen: tracht gy te weten wie dese geweest zyn, het zyn de nooit volpreesen Italianen. Buiten die soo zyn het onse voorvaderen, die hier in onse Nederlanden geblonken hebben, te veel om te verhaalen; want die onse konst bemind, is dit kenbar: alleen soo sal ik een noemen, die hier mede niet van ontaard was, den stouten Schilder Rembrand, hoe krachtig en heerlyk desen trotschen Schilder geschilderd heeft, is zigbaar voor alle konst-verstandige oogen; nogtans soo hebben wy naa weinige tijd verleden, gesien hoe de onwetenheid dese konststukken mishandeld heeben, als men voor een zes stuivers een Conterfeitsel van Rembrand verkofte, gelyk men door geloofbare ooggetuigen soude kunnen goed maken; en dese waren de beroemde konstkennaars, of om beter te seggen, konsthandelaars, gelyk zij in de wandeling genoemt worden: maar weinige tijd hier naa is het selfde voor elf gulden verkofte, en nu soo veer gekoomen, dat men 'er eenige honderden voor neer leidt, voor die ruwe Schildery. Zoo is deze beroemde man naa zyn dood onthaalt." Cf. *Urk.*, 385. Also cf. p. 180, note 6 below.

to pay for Rembrandt's work during these years is confirmed by Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, a German traveler, who was in Holland in 1711. Uffenbach makes the earliest extant reference to Rembrandt's etching of *Christ with the Sick Around Him, Receiving Little Children*, (B. 74) as *The Hundred Guilder Print* in his *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland*; he writes that he visited the cabinet of David Bremer of Amsterdam on March 1, 1711 in order to see his prints:

He has a considerable number and among the most outstanding a great number of Rembrandts; surely he had the best, but not the so-called *Hundred Guilder Print*, which is called thus because it once brought that high price at an auction. It represents the miracle of Christ where he heals a blind and deaf man. But Mr. Bremer had the *Thirty Guilder* and *Twenty Guilder Prints*: my brother also bought them in Holland. The former is the *Ecce Homo*, (B. 77), the latter, the *Descent from the Cross*, (B. 81).¹

Uffenbach's interpretation of the *Hundred Guilder Print* is incorrect. The other two prints he cited are dated 1635—6 and 1633 respectively; most Rembrandt students agree that both of these large prints are not completely the work of the master. Uffenbach also records that a Mr. de Roede showed him his Rembrandt prints. De Rode did not appreciate their value; therefore Uffenbach's brother was able to buy the so-called *Hundred Guilder Print* from him for one guilder.²

Rembrandt's paintings were praised in Uffenbach's travel book. In Bremen,

¹ Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland* (Ulm: 1753), III, 581: "Den 1 Martii (1711), waren wir bey David Bramen um seine Kupferstiche zu sehen, weil er in der Wochen keine Zeit hat, selbige zu zeigen. Er hat deren eine ziemliche Anzahl, darunter das vornehmste eine grosse Menge von Rembrandt, doch hatte er die besten, und sogenannte Hundert-Gulden-Prent nicht. Selbige wird also gennennet, weil sie einsmals in einer Auction so hoch bezahlt worden. Sie stellet das Wunderwerk Christi vor, wie er einen blinden und tauben gesund macht. Die dreyszig Gulden und zwanzig Gulden Prent aber hatte Herr Bramen, wiewohl selbige mein Bruder in Holland gleichfalls erkaufft. Jene ist das ecce homo! diese aber die Abnehmung vom Creuze." (Hofstede de Groot, *Urk.*, 390 states that the correct spelling of the collector's name is Bremer). The author has been unable to learn which collector or dealer paid 100 guilders for the etching of *Christ with the Sick Around Him* and at what sale this bid was made.

² Uffenbach, *op. cit.*, III, 595: "Den 7. Martii (1711)... giengen wir noch zu unserem Nachbar de Roede... er zeigte uns noch ferner... etliche Kupferstiche von Rembrandt, so Herr de Roede nicht kennete, noch verstunde, wie dann mein Bruder die sogenannte Hundert-Gulden-Prent vor einen Gulden von ihm bekam"; *Urk.*, 392.

in 1710, he saw a beautiful piece by Rembrandt representing a *Hermit in a Cave*.¹ A year later in Amsterdam he wrote that in the Anatomy Theatre the guide particularly praised among the pictures there, the painting on the doors where the corpse is foreshortened so that the soles of his feet are seen. It is to be sure a good painting, he adds, but not the best. The painting to which Uffenbach refers is doubtless the *Anatomy Lesson of Doctor Deyman*, now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Uffenbach preferred the incomparable piece to the right of the fire-place which represents the famous surgeon Tulp performing a section. A burgomaster who is still living is supposed to have offered 1000 Thaler for it, for it is absolutely beautiful.² About twenty years earlier, Caspar Commelin in the *Beschryving der Stadt Amsterdam* mentioned the paintings in the Anatomy Theatre and stated that the two done by Rembrandt were the most outstanding.³ Commelin failed, however, to refer to Rembrandt's *Night Watch* in his description of the Kloveniersdoelen, although he mentioned Sandrart's and Flinck's pictures; and he did not list Rembrandt among his pages devoted to Amsterdam artists. The German visitor, on the other hand, seems to have noted every Rembrandt reference he came across. At the house of a sculptor in Amsterdam he saw a *Portrait of a Negro* which

1 *Ibid.*, II (210-2: "26 Marz 1710 Nachmittags giengen wir eindlich zu dem alten D. und Prof. Theologiae, Herrn Bothe... (among his paintings was)... ein schön Stück von Rembrandt, einen Eremiten in der Höhle vorstellend"; *Urk.*, 388. This picture has not been identified; but, he may have had in mind Rembrandt's studies of philosophers in dimly lit interiors such as the paintings in Stockholm (HdG 186) and in the Louvre (HdG 233).

2 *Ibid.*, III, 545-6: "Den 20 Febr. (1711) Morgens waren wir op de Schneykamer oder Theatro anatomico... Der Junge, so uns herumführte, rühmte die Schilderey an der Thüre insonderheit, allwo der Todte in der Verkürzung liegt, so dass man ihm unter die Fussohle siehet. Es ist zwar ein gutes Stück, doch nicht das beste. Eines rechter Hand des Camins ist demselben weit vorzuziehen und war unvergleichlich. Auf diesem Stück verrichtet der berühmte Anatomicus Tulpius die Section. Hiervor soll ein noch lebender Burgemeister allhier tausend Thaler geboten haben, wie es dann gewiss gar schön." Cf. *Urk.*, 389. Also see J. Q. van Regteren Altena, "Retouches aan ons Rembrandt-beeld," *Oud Holland*, LXV (1950), 171—178 for a proposed reconstruction of the position of the *Anatomy Lesson of Doctor Deyman*.

3 Caspar Commelin, *Beschryving der Stadt Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: 1693), 651: "D'Anatomie of Suyburg, en het Collegium Chirurgicum... Dese Kamer is niet alleen verciert met eenige menschen en beesten Geraamts, maar ook van verscheyde Schilderyen, gedaan door bysondere konstige Schilders, daar onder twee door den vermaarden Rembrandt gedaan, welke boven al uyt munten; deselve verbeelden in 't midden een subject van een Mensch dat ontleed word door de in der tijd zijnde Professor Anatomiae, daar by en om geplaatst, de in dienst zijnde Overluyden." Also cf. *Ibid.*, 664 f., 867 f., and *Urk.*, 369.

Rembrandt made from life and which the owner esteemed highly.¹ In Sibert van der Schelling's cabinet of excellent paintings and drawings Uffenbach found most outstanding a Liss, a Holbein and an incomparable *Self-portrait* by Rembrandt which cannot be looked at enough.²

Uffenbach also visited the collection owned by Lambert ten Kate; he saw none of Rembrandt's work there, but he recorded part of the conversation which he had with the interesting collector, grain merchant, grammarian and theorist, who told him that Italian artists were superior to Dutch; and not without reason, added Uffenbach, because they make everything ideal or according to their own invention and unite together the most beautiful in nature; whereas the Dutch and others who consider objects all too closely, and represent nature as they find her are defective. For this reason the Dutch are called *naturalisten* by the Italians.³ Uffenbach did not go through all of Ten Kate's portfolios of drawings; if he did perhaps he would have noted some Rembrandt sheets: twelve of the artist's drawings were listed in the sale of the collection made in 1732 after Ten Kate's death.⁴

¹ Uffenbach, *op. cit.*, III, 582: "Den 2 Martii (1711) fuhren wir auf den Brettermarkt zu einem Bildhauer, bey welchem wir allerhand Bilder gesehen, davond wir (war?) aber die meisten im Laden (Leiden) und in dem Haag gekauft. Er hatte einen Mohrenkopf, den Rembrandt nach dem Leben abgeformet haben soll, den aber gar hoch hielte." Cf. *Urk.*, 391.

² *Ibid.*, III, 646-7: "Den 18 Mart. (1711) Morgen fuhren wir zu Herrn Sibert van der Schelling, um seine vortrefflichen Schildereyen und Handrisse zu sehen... Die vornehmsten unter allen waren folgende: Eine Magdalena, in Lebens-Grösse von Joh. Liss, davor Tausend Ducatons geboten worden. Das Porträt das D. Luther im Brustbild durch Holbein, davor ihm fünfhundert Gulden offerirt worden, und ein unvergleichlich Porträt ganz gross von Rembrandt durch ihn selbst gemahlt, welches gewiss bewunderns werth ist, und nicht genug kan betrachtet werden."

³ *Ibid.*, III, 651-3: "Den 19 Mart. (1711) Morgen fuhren wir zu Herrn Lambert Tenkatten... Er handelt zwar eignetlich mit Korn, ist aber ein sehr höflicher, curioser und dabey gelehrter Mann... (the drawings examined were) meist von Italiänischen, doch auch einige von holländischen Meistern. Er hiel'te nicht ohne Grund auf die Italiäner am meisten'weil sie, wie er gar artig sagte, alles ideal, oder nach'eigener Erfindung machten, und das schönste in der Natur zusammen vereinigen, da hingegen die Holländer und andere Meister sich allzu vest an ein Object hielten, und die Natur vorstellen, wie sie selbige funden, sie seye nun mangelhaft oder schön. Desswegen nenneten auch die Italiäner dieselben Spottweise Naturalisten." A biography of Ten Kate is found in A. van der Hoeven, *Lambert ten Kate (De "Gemeenschap tussen de Gottische Spraake en de Nederduytsche" en zijne onuitgegeven geschriften over klankkunde en versbouw)*, (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1896), 3—14. Also cf. Marie Madeleine Prinsen, *De Idylle in de Achttiende Eeuw in het Licht der Aesthetische Theorieën* (Amsterdam: De Spiegel, 1934), 26—28, and J. G. van Gelder, "Dilettanti" en *Kunstwetenschap*, delivered as a public lecture May 13, 1936, (Wormerveer: Meijer, 1936), 11—16, for a discussion of Ten Kate's art theory and his relation to J. C. le Blon and Hendrick van Limborch.

⁴ *Catalogus van het vermaarde Cabinet... Teekeningen... prenten... schilderyen en*

Ten Kate expanded the ideas which he discussed with Uffenbach into an esthetic discourse entitled *Verhandeling over het Denkbeeldige Schoon der Schilders, Beeldhouwers en Dichters*; a manuscript of this essay, which is not autograph, dated 1720, is in the Amsterdam University Library.¹ The work received wider circulation when it was translated into French by the author as *Discours préliminaire sur le beau idéal* in the three-volume French translation which Ten Kate made of J. Richardson, father and son, *Traité de la peinture, et de la sculpture*, published in Amsterdam in 1728. Ten Kate used the commonplace that one can divide the most celebrated masters into three classes: those who are merely interested in portraying common subjects, those who have added something of the spirit, and finally, the painters who work purely upon the basis of the Idea and only use the model to enrich their thoughts. In the first category Ten Kate placed Dou and Metsu — Bamboccio and Brouwer were apparently too low even to be considered; in the second, Rembrandt who

... seemed to have borrowed his ideas from people completely base and low for his drapery, as well as for the faces and the shapes of

minaturen... beeldwerk... Lambert ten Kate, Hermansz... 16 Juny Ao. 1732 (Amsterdam), 61—62, Portfolio Q. Nos. 13—17 are landscape drawings; Nos. 35—41 are studies of Jews, old men, beggars and other figures. The catalogue also lists among the paintings, page 76, No. 1, "Een schildery van Rembrandt... de Verbeelding is een schoon en deftig oud Man van voren, in gepeins, met de regterhand een Pen houdende als gereet om iets te schryven, en met de regter Elleboog rustende op een open boek van witte bladen, leggende op een Tafel; zyn linkerhand rust op zyn linker knie, en houdt een Winkelhaek ten teeken dat hy een architect, of eenig Mathematicus geweest zy." This painting is probably the *Portrait of an Architect* or of *Apostle Bartholomew*, reproduced *Klassiker der Kunst, Rembrandts Gemälde, op. cit.*, 385, which has been attributed to Drost and to B. Fabritius; the portrait is now in Cassel, Cat. 1929, No. 246. A mss. in the Amsterdam University Library, H. S. 1436, IC 24, *Uitbreiding en Beschreyving van het vermaarde Kabinet van wylen den Heere Lambert ten Kate Hermansz. Verkogt den 16 den Juny, 1732. Zie gedrukte Cataloge by Isaac Tirion met geschreeven Naamen. Deeze Uitbreiding is verrykt met eene Voorreden den 21sten Maart, 1779, door Cornelis Ploos van Amstel Jac. Cornsz.* lists in Portfolio Q. "No. 13, 14, 15, 16 en 17, Vastheid van gronden, vaardige pen en meesterlyke toetsing in all deze Teekeningen van Rembrandt" and "No. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 en 41, Om gemeene voorwerpen van laag character te verbeelden, met weërگاâlooze meesterlykheid en naiviteit, en dat onder een' vaardigen schetstrant, is 't opperste fort geweest van Rembrandt: hiervan konnen ook deze schetzen een proeve verstrecken: zo men iets schooner van hem vindt dat eenig fraai idé vertoont van een statelyk character, gelyk in myne schildery, 't is zeer schaars, en by een gelukkig toeval van zyn voorwerp daar hy naar geschilderd heeft." This catalogue, which is bound with the essay cited in the note below, was in the library of Ploos van Amstel.

¹ H.S. 1436, IC 24, *Verhandeling over het Denkbeeldige Schoon der Schilders, Beeldhouwers en Dichters* door L. H. ten Kate, Amsterdam, 1720.

his figures; nevertheless, by means of an ingenious distribution of light, in order to make it appear better, he gives to his naive people, expressive humours and passions, accompanied by an easy attitude and without affectation, but all of this almost never has anything of the noble. ¹

Rubens, Van Dyck and the Italians were ranked progressively higher than Rembrandt. Ten Kate also made a distinction between simple and ideal imitation in portraits. The former is defined as an exact imitation of the model which every artist must know how to do; Rembrandt's portraits "in zyn' besten tyd" are cited as an example. However, there are greater masters, who without deviating from the resemblance and without altering the true character of the sitter add something of the spirit, and thus achieve ideal imitation. Van Dyck, Titian, Caracci, Raphael and other Italians made such portraits. ²

Jan Baptist Wellekens was another Dutch writer who made brief reference

¹ Ten Kate, *Verhandeling over het Denkbeeldige Schoon*, *op. cit.*, 7—8: "Wat aanbelangt de Persoonadien welke tot eenig Gezelschap, of tot de Geschiedenissen, verlichtselen of eenig Zinnebeeld, behooren, kan men de vermaardste Meesters in drie klassen verdeelen. In de eerste kan men de schilders, die zich alleen bepaald hebben om dagelijksche modellen afgeschetsen, plaatsen; In de tweede de geenen welke daarby iets geestigs uitgedacht hebben; en eindelyk in de derde de geenen die zich overal aan het Denkbeeldige gehouden hebben; 't zy dezelve alleen naar hunne denkbeelden, geheugnis, of somtyds naar voorbeelden, om hunne studie behulpzaam te zyn en hunne gedachten te verryken... G. Douw, Metz u en eenige anderen, behooren tot de eerste Klasse. Schoon zy zich alleen met laage onderwerpen bezighielden, is zulks op eene wonderbaare wyze ter uitvoer gebragt... Schoon Rembrandt zyne denkbeelden van laage en gemeene beelden, zo ten aanzien der kleedinge, gelaat als gestalte, ontleend schyn te hebben; egter geeft hy, door een kunstige verdeeling van licht, om dezelve beter te doen uitblinken, gewoonlyk aan zyne eenvoudige beelden spreekende vrolykheden en gemoedsbeweegingen, verzeld van eene gemaklyke en ongemaakte houding; doch dit alles heeft zelden iets deftigs. De Schilderyen van Rubens vertoon ons beelden van eenen verhevener en meer dan gemeenen smaak, dan die van Rembrandt." Also in Ten Kate, *Discours Préliminaire*, *op. cit.*, xvii—xx.

² Ten Kate, *Verhandeling over het denkbeeldige schoon*, *op. cit.*, 5—6: "Ten aanzien der Portraits schynt het daadelyk dat al het geene men daarin verëischen kan, zich bepaalt tot eene nette naarvolging van het model, in alle zyne byzonderheden; en dat een Schilder, wanneer hy dit meesterlyk weet uit te voeren, voor een groot kunstenaar moet gehouden worden; waarvan men eenige voorbeelden vindt in de Portraits van Rembrandt, in zyn'besten tyd geschilderd, die niet anders dan een eenvoudige naarbootsing en tevens natuurlyk zyn. Echter zyn'er grooter Meesters geweest, welke, zonder van de gelykenis te wyken, of het waare kenteken dat den eenen mensch van den anderen onderscheidt, te veranderen, 'er iets geestigs hebben weeten by te voegen, en welgelykende Portraits van eene Denkbeeldige Naarbootsing in het licht te brengen. Dus ziet men gemeenlyk in de Portraits van Van Dyck..." Also in Ten Kate, *Discours Préliminaire*, *op. cit.*, xiv—xv.

to Rembrandt around 1720. Wellekens was born in Aelst in 1658 and studied painting in Amsterdam with Anthony de Grebber who worked for a time with Lairese.¹ At the age of eighteen Wellekens' biographer reports that he went to Italy and Rome, *de Hooge School der Schilders*, but because of poor eyesight he turned from painting to poetry. He remained in Italy for eleven years, and although he left before the *Accademia degli Arcadi* was founded in 1690, his *Verhandling van het Herderdicht*² testifies that he brought much of Gravina's word and spirit back to Holland. His sixty-six page poem "Op de Uitmuntende Kunstverzamelinge van den Edelen Heere Valerius Röver,"³ written in 1723 acknowledges the greatness of the ancients and accepts the dictum that Cimabue renewed painting in the 13th century and Michelangelo and Raphael brought it to perfection;⁴ nevertheless, he can find words of praise for such masters in the collection as Cornelis de Wael, Thomas Wyck, Johannes Lingelbach, Teniers, Steen, Ostade and Wouwermans.⁵ Of Rembrandt he writes that his paintings and prints are incomparable;⁶ portrait painting was his forte and one of his *Self-portraits* is mentioned; money cannot buy his daring brush or lively spirit; paintings placed next to his must give way to his works because of the manner in which he stressed the power of colors by heightening them or toning them down. His *Crucifixion*, in which the Virgin faints and each person plays his role well, is wonderfully done. If he had only properly followed the beauty of nature, Wellekens adds, equitable connoisseurs would think more of his work and he even would be considered with the best.⁷

1 The main source for information about Wellekens is "Het leven van den Dichter in 't kort beschreven door wylen den Heere Pieter Vlaming," pages not numbered, in *Zedelyke en Ernstige Gedichten van Jan Baptista Wellekens* (Utrecht: 1737). Houbraeken, *op. cit.*, III, 109, states that Lairese met Jan van Peé and Grebber when he was in Uylenburg's workshop.

2 J. B. Wellekens, *Amintas Herderspel van Torquatus Tasso; met eenige verklarungen Beneven eene Verhandeling van het Herdergedicht* (Amsterdam: 1715). Also cf. Prinsen, *op. cit.*, 77—85; 152.

3 J. B. Wellekens, *Verscheiden Gedichten* (Amsterdam: 1729), 1—66. The poem is dated 1723; *Ibid.*, 66. Wellekens died in 1726; his daughter Magdalena Barbara saw the volume through the press.

4 *Ibid.*, 4: "Dus eeren wy't vernuft en regels der aalouden... de Schilderkunst in Italië, door Cimabue, in de 13de eeu, weder begin nam: zo is zy door M. A. Buonaroti en Rafaël van Urbyn tot haar hoogste volmaaktheid gebracht."

5 *Ibid.*, 7—8; for Röver's collection cf. p. 173 f below.

6 *Ibid.*, 31: "Maar, Rembrant, 'k acht uw prent, gelyk uw schildery Onvergelykelyk, en wonder om t'aanschouwen."

7 *Ibid.*, 5—6:

...O Rembrant, die de krachten
Der verven hebt getoont door 't hoger en verzachten,

Wellekens joins the ranks of the critics who praise Rembrandt extravagantly and then disqualify him from the ranks of first magnitude artists because he did not follow *de schoonheid der Natuur*.

Valerius Röver, whose collection served as the pivot for Wellekens' remarks on art in his long poem, was a famous Dutch amateur who kept an inventory of his collection which gives us a good idea of what he thought of Rembrandt.¹ At the time of his death in 1739 he owned eight Rembrandt paintings — he sold one the year before he died² — which were purchased from his widow, with 54 others which were in his collection, by Wilhelm VIII for the Gallery in Cassel.³ The *Crucifixion* mentioned by Wellekens was the prize of Röver's collection: it is the *Descent from the Cross* (fig. 38), signed and dated 1634, now in Leningrad, (HdG 135; Bred. 551). Röver catalogued it as Rembrandt's best known picture.⁴ The *Self-portrait* (fig. 39) which the poet referred to is the 1655 one in Cassel, (HdG 536; Bred. 43); it is listed in the inventory as:

Daar 't alles schrikt en wykt wat aan uw zy moet staan,
Hadt gy de schoonheid der natuur recht nagegaan,
Uw roem zou groter zyn in rechte kenners oogen;
Ja by de grootste wier uw naam en kunst gewogen;
Daar wy uw Kruisberg zien zo wonderbaar verbeelt:
De droeve Moeder zwymt, en elk zyn treurrol speelt.
Doch 't zy gy, wetende of onwetende, woudt dwalen,
Geen gout kan 't stout penseel en wakkren geest betalen.
'k Zie daar den Kunstenaar gemaalt door eige hant.
('t Afbeelden was zyn kracht) dus bloeit natuur in stant,
Ten voorbeeld hoe de kunst geen verf beoogt: maar 't leven.

A note to the reference to the *Crucifixion* reads "Of afdoening van 't kruis, zynde een der allerbest stukken die van Rembrant bekant zyn." Wellekens' lines on Rembrandt present some problems: there is a line missing after "Doch 't zy gy, wetende of onwetende, woudt dwalen," and the phrase "dus bloeit natuur in stant" offers even greater difficulties.

¹ Manuscript in Amsterdam University Library, H. S. 1446 II A18 *Catalogus van boeken, schilderijen, teekeningen, printen, beelden rareiteiten. Geschreven door V. Röver*. The list of the paintings was published by E. W. Moes, "Het Kunstkabinet van Valerius Röver te Delft," *Oud Holland*, XXXI (1913), 4—24.

² The painting which was sold in 1738 was the *Portrait of the Poet Jan Hermansz. Krul*, signed and dated 1633, now in Cassel. Röver sold it to Anthony Rutgers who in turn sold it to the Landgraf of Hessen; therefore, it too went to the Cassel Gallery. It is listed in the Cassel inventory of 1749; cf. HdG 657.

³ Letters concerning this sale written by Cornelia van der Dussen (Röver's widow), G. Hoet (the agent) and others are in the Amsterdam University Library, H. S. 1466 P 22 No. 1—24. Cf. Oscar Eisenmann, *Katalog der Königlichen Gemälde-Galerie zu Cassel* (Cassel: L. Doll, 1888), xl f.

⁴ H. S. 1446 II A18, page 1; Moes, *op. cit.*, 16: "Catalogus van mijne Schilderijen, met de prijzen, so als deselve mij, en mijn Broeder Zalr. Mr. Mathhijns Röver by scheidinge zijn aanbedeelt, volgens taxatie van de Makelaar Jan Pietersz. Zomer in 't jaar

Het portret van Rembrandt van voren, met een mütse door hem zelfs in zyn beste tyt geschildert Ao. 1655.¹

Thus this early 18th century collector considered the fifties Rembrandt's best period. In 1728 Röver was given a great picture executed in the fifties: the *Portrait of Nicolaes Bruynningh*, signed and dated 1652, now in Cassel, (HdG 628; Bred. 268).² Röver's other Rembrandt paintings make an impressive list: *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene as a Gardener*, 1638, Buckingham Palace; ³ *The Profile Portrait of Saskia*, Cassel; ⁴ *Portrait of Koppinol*, Cassel; ⁵ *Self-portrait with a Helmet*, 1634, Cassel; ⁶ *Old Man with a Beard*,

1709. N. 1. een zeer capitaal en konstig stuk van Rembrandt van Rhijn, het allerbeste dat van hem is bekend, verbeeldende de afneming van het kruijs, getaxeerd op f 800:— hoog 5 voeten, breed 3 voet 8 duim. N. B. voor dit stuk is mij Ao. 1710 door de Churfurst van de Phaltz geboden duizent goude ducaten: als mede door de prince Eügenius, naderhand door de Grave van Morville Ambassadeur van Vrankryk, etc. Ao. 1730. een nieuwe vergulde lijst en gordijnen voor laten maken f 47.—.”

1 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 8; Moes, *op. cit.*, 20: “1721.69. het Portrait van Rembrandt van voren, met een mutse, door hem zelfs in zyn beste tyt geschildert, Ao. 1665. f 100:— gekogt van de Raadsheer, Mr. Franco van der Goes, en is mij Ao. 1724. f 200: voor geboden.”

2 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 9; Moes, *op. cit.*, 21: “1728.82. het portret van Nicolaas Bruining in een stoel zittende, Ao. 1652 door Rembrandt geschildert. Dit stuk is mijn gegeven door nigte de Wed: Jan Graswinkel, en daar voor een present gegeven, bedragende f. 100:—.”

3 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 8; Moes, *op. cit.*, 20: “1721. 68. Christus in de gedaante van een hovenier by het graf aan Maria Magdalena zig vertonende, door Rembrandt, gloeyend en konstig geschildert, Ao. 1638. hoog 23 duim, breed 19 duim. f 213. 10. gekogt van de Hr. Willem van der Goes, tegenwoordig ontfanger te Leiden.” (HdG. 142; Bred. 559).

4 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 14; Moes, *op. cit.*, 23—24: “1734. 112. de Vrouw van Rembrand van Rhijn, door hem zelfs zeer uitvoerig en konstig Ao. 1642 geschildert, tot de knien toe, levensgrootte, met 2 handen, de tronie in profiel, met een rode fluwle hoed en pluimen op 't hooft, hoog 3 voet 11 duim, breed 3 voet 3 duim, boven rond f 270:— gekogt op de Auctie van de Hr. Burgemr. Willem Six. 12 Majj.” (HdG 607; Bred. 101). The date of this picture is usually given as 1634. None of the catalogues have referred to Röver's statement that the picture has a round top. An examination should be made of the painting to determine if it was made rectangular after Röver made this entry in his catalogue. Carel Vosmaer, *Rembrandt, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Hague: 1877), 134, mentions an etching made of this picture by Hendrik Dethier who made reproductions of Rembrandt's works around 1633. I have been unable to find an impression of this print; it would help to confirm or contradict Röver's description of the shape of the picture.

5 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 14; Moes, *op. cit.*, 23: “1734. 111. het portret van den vermaarden Schrijver Lieve van Coppenol, voor een tafel zittende een pen te verschnijden, tot de knien toe, levensgrootte, kragtig en konstig geschildert van Rembrandt van Rhijn, breed 2 voet 9 duim, hoog 3 voet 6 duim. f. 120:—. N. B. Vondel en Jan Vos hebbe

1632, Cassel.¹ Röver also had what he considered a complete set of Rembrandt's etchings, including all their states and prints, after his paintings and drawings. In his catalogue of the collection he listed as one item the complete etchings of Rembrandt. He numbered these at 308; this number was increased to 435 when he added the different states.² Around 1731 he prepared a systematic register of all his Rembrandt prints which is the earliest oeuvre catalogue of the master's etchings.³ Röver rounded out his Rembrandt collection with two portfolios of drawings by Rembrandt and his school.⁴ Two of his drawings have been identified: the *Portrait of Anslo* (fig. 40), dated 1640, in the British Museum and the *Self-portrait* (fig. 41), Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, Alverthorpe Gallery, Lessing J. Rosenwald.⁵ A note written by Röver about some of his Rembrandt sheets in his catalogue of drawings states:

These 8 landscape drawings by Rembrandt, as well as the 19 somewhat smaller ones in the following portfolio are all drawn after nature around Amsterdam and elsewhere, where the perspective of

verzen op dit portret gemaakt." (HdG 635; Bred. 164). The identification of the sitter has been questioned; cf. Bred. 164.

6 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 10; Moes, *op. cit.*, 21: "1728: 83. het portret van Rembrandt zelfs met een stormhoed op, Ao. 1634 geschildert, toen hij 28 jaaren oud was f 90:— gekogt van Gerard Goree te Delft." (HdG 534; Bred. 22).

1 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 3; Moes, *op. cit.*, 17: "1730. 39. een oude mans tronie van voren, met grys hayr en baart extra konstig, van Rembrandt, getaxeert op f 30:— N. B. Ao. 1724 is mij door de schilder van Dijk f 200:— voor deze tronie geboden." (HdG 373; Bred. 152).

2 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 59: "Prenten. No. 1. het gansche werk van Rembrand, (met alle de Verandering) bestande in 308 (425) prenten, leggende in een groot konstboek."

3 Manuscript in the Amsterdam University Library, H. S. 1446 II A17 No. 6: "Memorie van het Werk van Rembrandt van Rhijn bestaande in 456 printen, door hem zelfs geëtt met alle de veranderingen, zonder eenige bijprinten van andere (na zijne tekeningen of schilderijen gemaakt) in meer als 30 jaaren by een vergadert, en kosten mij f 450:—." The manuscript was published by J. G. van Gelder and N. F. van Gelder-Schrijver, "De 'Memorie' van Rembrandt's prenten in het bezit van Valerius Röver," *Oud Holland*, LV (1938), 1—16. Also cf. I. de Bruyn, "De Namen van Rembrandt's Etsen" *Oud Holland*, LVI (1939), 15 and J. G. van Gelder and N. F. van Gelder-Schrijver, "De Namen van Rembrandt's Etsen," *Oud Holland*, LVI (1939), 87—8.

4 H. S. 1446 II A18, pages 91—96: "Catalogus van mijne verzameling van Tekeningen... Portefeuille in Folio No. 8 uijts de School van Rembrandt; Portefeuille in Quatro No. 9 vervolg van de school van Rembrandt." Another manuscript catalogue of Röver's drawings is in the Amsterdam University Library, H. S. 1446 II A17 No. 4: "Catalogus van het Cabineth Tekeningen van wijlen de Heer Valerius Röver. Alle op Cartons geret en gelet in 42. Portefeuelles;" it also lists the Rembrandt and his school drawings in portfolios No. 8 and 9.

5 The identifications were made by J. G. van Gelder in his review of Otto Benesch's *Rembrandt Drawings*, *op. cit.*, in the *Burlington Magazine*, XCI (1949), 206—7. The

this flat land is observed very naturally; and the nobility of his pen and brush is so great in many of these, and the light and shadow so well observed that many great connoisseurs have judged that he has surpassed Titian in these landscapes.¹

This comment as well as the extraordinary collection of Rembrandt's paintings, etchings and drawings made by Röver should caution us not to give too literal an interpretation to Wellekens' lines that connoisseurs would have thought more highly of the artist if he followed *de schoonheit der Natuur*.

In light of Röver's impressive collection one may very well ask if he could have thought more highly of Rembrandt. Is it not possible that he did not accept the reservations which Wellekens and other theorists made when they judged Rembrandt? We can turn to Röver's collection for an answer to this question: it, and the oeuvre catalogue which he made of the etchings, are an eloquent tribute to the master, and both suggest that Röver was a member of the anonymous group mentioned by Lairese who asserted that Rembrandt was the greatest artist of his time and is still unsurpassed.

British Museum drawing is described in Röver's catalogue, H. S. 1446 II A 18, page 93: "t portret van de poëet Anslo, met root krijt, en gehoogt op geel pap. Ao. 1640." The other is described, *Ibid.*: "t portret van Rembrandt met een mutz op 't hoofd van hem zelfs met root krijt getekene." The Rosenwald *Self-portrait* is the only extant one which fits this description.

1 H. S. 1446 II A18, page 93, Portfolio in folio No. 8: "ujt de school van Rembrandt... Lantschappen van Rembrandt... N. B. dese 8 lantschappen van Rembrandt, als mede de 19 wat klyndes, in de volgende portefeuille zyn alle getekent na 't leven, omtrent Amst. en elders, waar in de perspective van dit vlakke lant, zeer natuurlijk is waargenomen en de edelheit van zijn pen en penceel is in veele van deze zo groot en dag en schaduwe zo wel waargenomen, dat veele groote kenners hebben geoordeelt dat hij Titiaan in dese lantschappen heeft te boven gegaan." J. G. van Gelder, who is preparing a catalogue of Röver's drawings, kindly called the author's attention to this note.

CHAPTER XI

ARNOLD HOUBRAKEN

De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen by Arnold Houbraken was the first extensive study made of the lives and works of 17th century Netherlandish painters. As soon as this three-volume work was published it became a major source book for every student of Dutch art and in spite of its errors and lacunae it is still indispensable. Houbraken included a lengthy biography of Rembrandt in the first volume of the *Grootte Schouburgh*, published in 1718, which crystallized Rembrandt criticism for many later 18th and 19th century authors who wrote about the artist on the basis of facts, ideas and anecdotes which they read in Houbraken, instead of upon a study of the artist's oeuvre.¹

Houbraken was generous with his praise of Rembrandt. The *Self-portrait* which was in the collection of Jan van Beuningen was singled out from among his great number of excellent portraits as one which was so artistic and vigorous that the most brilliant pictures by Rubens or Van Dyck could not rival it. His appreciation for the portrait was similar to that which De Piles had for his painting of a *Young Girl at the Window*. He wrote that the head seemed to issue forth and speak to the observer.² He also believed that no less praise was due to the *Self-portrait* in Leopold de Medici's collection of portraits of

¹ Arnold Houbraken, *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (Amsterdam), volume I, 1718; volume II, 1719; volume III, 1721. Second edition: The Hague, 1753. The first and second volumes, edited by P. T. A. Swillens, were reprinted in 1943 and 1944 respectively, (Maastricht: Leiter-Nypels). A German translation was made by Alfred von Wurzbach, (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1880), volume XIV of *Quellenschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, edited by R. Eitelberger v. Edelberg; unfortunately Wurzbach did not translate or print passages which he considered unimportant. An English translation of Houbraken's biography of Rembrandt, which has a few omissions, is in Borenius, *op. cit.*, 23—28. C. Hofstede de Groot, *Arnold Houbraken und seine "Grootte Schouburgh"* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1893), is still basic for the study of this work. Also cf. *Urk.*, 410—431.

² Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 269: "Onder een menigte van roemwaardige poutretten die hy gemaakt heeft, is'er een geweest by den Heere Jan van Beuningen, dat hy naar zyn eigen wezen had geschildert, 't geen zoo konstig en krafftig uitgewerkt was, dat het kragtigste penceelwerk van van Dyk, en Rubbens daar by niet kon halen, ja het hoofd scheen uit het stuk te steken, en de aanschouwers aan te spreken."

artists.¹ But Houbraken considered Rembrandt as much more than a mere portrait painter, and although other late 17th and early 18th century critics implied that Rembrandt may have some merit in the higher genres, none of them were as explicit as Houbraken.

The author of the *Groote Schouburgh* marveled at Rembrandt's power of invention in the numerous sketches which he made of the same subjects and he considered him inexhaustible in the creation of facial expressions, attitudes and costumes. What greater praise could one give a history painter? All of Rembrandt's figures do not wear the same costumes and faces as if they were twins:

Indeed in this respect he surpassed all others, and I know nobody who has varied his sketches of one and the same subject in so manifold a fashion. This is a result of close observation of various emotions. . .²

Houbraken's reference to Rembrandt's many sketches, as well as the two prints of Christ breaking the bread at Emmaus and of His disappearance before the disciples shows his great familiarity with the artist's work.³ Houbraken included an etching (fig. 42) in the *Groote Schouburgh* which is a reproduction of a Rembrandt study of the disappearance of Christ at Emmaus (fig. 43). It is humbly offered by the author to young students — not because it was made after

1 *Ibid.*, I, 269—270: "Niet min word ook, 't geen in de Galery van den Groothartoog van Florence nevens de pourtretten, van F. Koning, F. Mieris, G. Dou, B. van der Helst, Ferdinand Voet van Antwerpen, M. Musscher, G. Schalken, G. Laires, A. van der Werf, K. de Moor, en van der Neer, hangt..." Cf. p. 65 above.

2 *Ibid.*, 257—8: "Hy was in opzicht van de konst ryk van gedachten, waar om men van hem niet zelden een menigte van verschelinge schetzen over een zelve voorwerp ziet verbeelt, ook vol van veranderingen zoo ten opzigt van de wezens, en wyze van staan, als in den toestel der kleedingen; waar in hy boven anderen (inzonderheit zulken, die dezelve wezens en kleedingen, even of het al tweelingen waren, in hunne werken te pas brengen) is te pryzen. Ja hy munte daar in boven allen uit; en niemant weet ik dat zoo menige verandering in afschetzungen van een en't zelve voorwerp gemaakt heeft..."

3 *Ibid.*, "Omm een voorbeeld te stellen (which shows emotion through facial expression or the movement of the body): daar Kristus zig door de brekinge des broods aan zyne Discipelen die met hem naar Emaus gegaan waren, doet kennen, zyn'er verscheiden schetzen (behalven de twee die 'er in druk uitgaan) by de beminnaars van de teekenkonst bekent. En geen minder getal afschetzungen zyn'er van de gestalte der twee Discipelen als Kristus uit hunne oogen verdwenen was, waar door zy verzet, verbaast enverwondert stonden." The prints referred to are B. 88 and B. 87; Valentiner, *Rembrandts Handzeichnungen*, II, reproduces five drawings for this scene: No. 525, 526, 527, 528, 529. Wolfgang Stechow, "Rembrandts Darstellungen des Emmausmahles," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, III (1934), 329 f. and J. Q. van Regteren Altena, "Rembrandt's way to Emmaus," *Kunstmuseets Arsskrift*, XXXV—XXXVI (1949), 1 f. discuss Rembrandt's treatment of the Emmaus theme.

Rembrandt, but because Houbraken etched it — as a piece which should be studied because of its excellent expression of astonishment in one disciple and of speechless staring in the other.¹

After this commendation Houbraken offers his “but”. Yes, Rembrandt’s fertile invention of expressions, attitudes and costumes is unsurpassed, but it is unfortunate that he did not finish many of his pictures and even more of his etchings. Only his finished works show what beauty he would have given the world if he had finished everything the way he had begun it. This is seen particularly in the *Hundred Guilder Print*, which amazes Houbraken because he cannot understand how Rembrandt was able to work out this etching on the basis of a rough sketch. The *Portrait of Luna* (B. 276) poses the same problem to Houbraken; states of it exist, he writes, as a rough sketch, then with a background and then completed.² Rembrandt’s method of etching was a complete mystery to Houbraken, who was apparently astonished that Rembrandt did not make squared drawings before he started to work his plate. Houbraken also found some of Rembrandt’s paintings disturbing because they contained carefully finished details and the rest was “smeared as with a rough painter’s brush” without any consideration for the drawing.³

However, he wrote, there are many Rembrandt pictures which are “carefully carried out and completed” and that there are many such paintings in the

1 Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 258: “Wy hebben een der zelve die ons best beviel, om den Hartstocht van verwonderinge die daar in waar genomen is, en het verbaast staaren met het gezicht op den ledigen stoel, waar in Kristus een oogenblik te voren gezeeten, nu daar uit verdwenen was, tot leidinge voor de noch onbedreve schilderjeugt in plaat gebragt, en hier nevens vertoont.” Houbraken’s etching faces page 258; it was probably made after the drawing which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and which was formerly in the Ricketts and Shannon Collection, Valentiner, *Rembrandts Handzeichnungen, op. cit.*, II, No. 528, or after a similar original.

2 *Ibid.*, 258—9: “Maar een ding is te beklagen dat hy zoo schigtig tot veranderingen, of tot wat anders gedreven, vele dingen maar ten halven op gemaakt heeft, zoo in zyne schilderyen, als nog meer in zyn geëtste printkonst, daar het opgemaakte ons een denkbeeld geeft van al ’t fraajs dat wy van zyne hand gehad zouden hebben, ingevallen hy yder ding naar mate van het beginsel voltooit hadde, als inzonderheit aan de zoo genaamde hondert guldens print en andere te zien is, waar omtrent wy over de wyze van behandelinge moeten verbaast staan; om dat wy niet kunnen begrypen hoe hy het dus heeft weten uit te voeren op een eerst gemaakte ruwe schets, gelyk blykt dat hy gedaan heeft aan het pourtretje van Lutma dat men eerst in ruwe schets, daar na met een agtergrond en eindelyk uitvoerig in print ziet.” Cf. p. 189 below for Houbraken’s other reference to the Lutma portrait.

3 *Ibid.*, 259: “En dus ging het ook met zyne schilderyen, waar van ik’er gezien heb, daar dingen ten uitersten in uitgevoerd waren, en de rest als met een ruwe teerkwast zonder agt op teekenen te geven was aangesmeert.”

principal Dutch cabinets, although many were bought up at large prices and exported to Italy and France.¹ Houbraken was never in these lands, but the reports which he heard about Rembrandt's work in Italy and France were true. He could have added that there were some pictures in these countries which did not fit his definition of carefully carried out and completed works.

Houbraken maintained that Rembrandt had more patience to finish his works in his youth than later.² This assertion, when taken with the premium which he placed upon high finish, allows us to conclude that the author of the *Groote Schouburgh* believed that Rembrandt's early works were superior to the late ones. A painting he thought particularly laudable because of its careful finish was *St. Peter's Boat*, in the collection of the late alderman and burgomaster Jan Jakobsz. Hinloopen of Amsterdam.³ This early painting was also commended for exactly what Constantin Huygens found noteworthy in the Judas picture of 1629: the attitudes and expressions of the figures conformed to the event depicted. Jan Vos' poem on Rembrandt's *Haman, Esther and Ahasuerus*,⁴ which was also in Hinloopen's collection, was quoted; it praised the figures because they expressed their emotions well. Willem Six's *Woman Taken in Adultery*,⁵ signed and dated 1644, (HdG 104; Bred. 566), was said to have been similarly treated; thus it was not only the works of the early thirties which were acceptable to Houbraken. Jan Six's grisaille of the *Sermon of St. John the Baptist*,⁶ (HdG 97; Bred.

1 *Ibid.*, 260: "Egter zyn'er nog vele van zyne kontstukken, welke in 't geheel doorschildert en uitgevoert zyn, in de voornaamste Konstkabinetten te zien, alshoon'er eenige jaren verleden velen tot hoogen prys opgekogt naar Italien en Vrankryk zyn gevoert."

2 *Ibid.*, "En ik heb opgemerkt dat hy in zyn vroegen tyd wel meer gedult gehad heeft om zyne konststukken uitvoerig te bewerken dan daarna."

3 *Ibid.*, "Onder verscheide bewys-stalen is dit inzonderheit aan dat stuk te zien dat by den naam van St. Pieters sloopje bekend is, 't geen veel jaren in 't kabinet van den Heere Jan Jakobzen Hinloopen, voorheen Schout en Borgermeester tot Amsterdam, gehangen heeft. Want de werking der beelden, en wezens trekken zyn daar zoo natuurlyk naar de gesteltheit van het geval uitgedrukt als te bedenken is, daar benevens veel uitvoeriger geschildert als men gewoon is van hem te zien." The reference is to *Christ in a Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, signed and dated 1633, (HdG 103; Bred. 547), in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

4 Cf. p. 52, note 2 above for references to the painting referred to by Vos' lines.

5 *Ibid.*, 261. When this painting, which is now in the National Gallery, in London, was appraised in 1657 it was valued at 1500 guilders; cf. *Urk.*, 177.

6 In the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin. The picture was auctioned in 1702 at the sale of Jan Six and purchased by his son Jan at the high price of 710 guilders; *Urk.*, 386. This price gives additional weight to De Geest's statement, p. 166, above, that Rembrandt's paintings fetched high prices around the turn of the century.

555), was cited as another example. Samuel van Hoogstraten, who was one of Houbraken's teachers, wrote that the St. John picture showed an unpardonable lapse of taste because it represented dogs copulating.¹ This detail was not commented upon by Houbraken. No complaint is registered in the biography about Rembrandt's choice of subjects; but in the second volume of the *Groote Schouburgh* when Houbraken writes that a painter must know ancient history in order to represent historical subjects, Rembrandt's *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* is cited as a picture which shows what errors painters can make. Houbraken describes an unknown painting which represents Martha cooking at a fireplace with an iron Liege pan, just as one does in Holland.² He supports his opinion that an artist must be well read and have a knowledge of history which would prevent him from making such blunders with a quotation from Philips Angel's *Lof der Schilderkunst*, published in 1642,³ Angel indeed believed that a painter of histories must be learned, but when he wanted to cite a work which showed great familiarity with important texts he chose Rembrandt's *Wedding Feast of Samson*.⁴ Houbraken makes no reference to this choice. The natural rendering of the faces and costumes of the listeners in the painting of the *Sermon of St. John* amazed Houbraken; but he added that Rembrandt did not trouble much with the rest of the picture. He was sure of this because many of his pupils told him that at times Rembrandt sketched a face in ten different ways before he painted it, and he was even able to spend a day or two placing a turban according to his taste.⁵

1 Cf. p. 98 f above.

2 *Ibid.*, II, 246—7: "My gedenkt ook een stuk van den grooten Rembrant gezien te hebben, verbeeldende daar Martha aan Kristus klachtig valt, dat Maria zig der huiszorge ontrekt en die alleen op haar laat aankomen. Hier zat Martha afgebeeld, koecken te bakken onder den schoorsteen, op de wyze als men hier te land gewoon is, in een Luikse yzere pan, in een tyd eer Luik eens Luik genaamt was. Al zulke misslagen ontspruiten uit gebrek van History- en outheytkunde." The pen drawing in Munich, dated around 1645, Valentiner, *Rembrandt Handzeichnungen*, *op. cit.*, No. 398, may have been a study for the lost painting.

3 Houbraken, *op. cit.*, II, 245.

4 Cf. p. 38 f above.

5 *Ibid.*, I, 261: "...het stukje de prediking van Johannes den Dooper, in 't graauw geschildert; verwonderlyk om de natuurlyke verbeeldingen der toelusterende wezens-trekken, en veranderlyke bekleedingen by den Heere Postmeester Johan Six mede tot Amsterdam te zien. Waaron ik ook vast moet besluiten dat hy daar inzonderheit zyn werk van gemaakt, en op de rest zoo veel agt niet gegeven heeft. Hier in word ik te meer verzekert, om dat verscheiden van zyne leerlingen my hebben verklaart, dat hy zomtyts een wezen wel op tienderhande wyzen afschetste eer hy 't zelve op paneel bragt;

Houbraken gave four reasons to explain Rembrandt's incompleted works: during his youth he had more patience to execute his pictures than later on in life; ¹ he had a predilection for alteration; he easily left a task with which he was occupied; and his character was whimsical and capricious. Houbraken wrote that Rembrandt once painted over a beautiful Cleopatra in order to give full effect to a single pearl. ² Another time he showed his whimsicalness when he was working on a group portrait of a man, his wife and children. While employed upon this commission his monkey died; since he had no other canvas available at the moment, he portrayed the dead monkey in the half-finished group portrait. His clients, of course, would not tolerate a revolting dead monkey in their picture. Rembrandt refused to paint it out; he would rather keep the unfinished commission than please his patron. ³ This story has a faint echo of some of the elements of the myth of the refusal of the *Night Watch*. Although none of Rembrandt's extant pictures can be used to support these stories, they should not be summarily dismissed. Other sources hint at similar personality traits. Baldinucci may have heard similar tales and therefore concluded that Rembrandt was an *umorista*. More tangible evidence of Rembrandt's single-mindedness is found in the document concerning the dispute between the artist and Señor Diego Andrada. ⁴ Such reports probably account for Houbraken's statement that Rembrandt justified his practice of finishing parts of a painting and daubing the rest, with the remark that a picture is completed when the master has achieved his intention by it. ⁵

In the long biography there is not a hint of the sensitivity which Coypel showed when he wrote of the art in Rembrandt's canvases which appear negligent and hurried; Houbraken could only explain Rembrandt's "pictures

ook wel een dag of twee konde doorbrengen om een Tulleband naar zyn zinlikheit op te tuigen."

¹ Cf. p. 180, note 2 above.

² *Ibid.*, 259. J. G. van Gelder has pointed out to the author that X-ray examination of the early *Portrait of Rembrandt's Mother*, Windsor Castle, (HdG 511; Bred. 70) and *Tobit and His Wife*, dated 1659, (HdG 65; Bred. 520) are both painted over other subjects. The former is painted over the head of an old man; the latter over a still-life. The date on the Tobit picture was read as 1650 until a recent cleaning; cf. D. Hannema, *Catalogue of the Pictures in the Collection of Willem van der Vorm* (Rotterdam: A. D. Donker, 1950), No. 78.

³ Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 259—260.

⁴ Cf. p. 112 f above.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 259: "En in zulk doen was hy niet te verzetten, nemende tot verantwoording dat een stuk voldaan is als de meester zyn voornemen daar in bereikt heeft..."

which were not completely carried out” by weaknesses and peculiarities in the artist’s character.

Houbraken was well aware of the change in the style of portrait painting around 1650 in Holland. In his biography of Jan de Baen he wrote that this painter had to choose which style of painting he would adopt:

Antonio van Dyck’s painting was greatly admired, and that of Rembrandt also had many admirers. He (De Baen) stood at this cross-road for a long time, not knowing which road was the best to travel, and he finally chose the former one as the one which was of more permanent value. ¹

Houbraken believed that Van Dyck’s way of painting was superior to Rembrandt’s. Novelty accounted for the popularity of Rembrandt’s style during his life time, he wrote; therefore if artists wanted their works to be sought after they had to adopt his manner, even if they themselves had a better style. Thus Govert Flinck, Aert de Gelder and others went to Rembrandt’s school, but all of them, except De Gelder, eventually changed their manner. ² Houbraken did not condemn the painter who adjusted his style to what was *à la mode*. Nicolas Maes, he wrote, learned drawing from an ordinary master, but painting from Rembrandt. Nevertheless, early in his career he gave up Rembrandt’s way as he turned more to portrait painting and saw that young ladies particularly preferred light colors to shadows. ³ Hoogstraten was also mentioned as having worked in Rembrandt’s style and then as having changed to a “com-

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 305: “Nu moest hy (De Baen) zig een wyze van schilderen voorstellen die prystelyk was om zig daar aan te houden. De penceelkonst van Ant. van Dyk was in groote agting, en die van Rembrant vond ook veel aanhangers. Op dezen tweesprong stont hy lang te dutton, niet wetende wat weg best in te slaan, doch verkoos de handeling van den eersten als van een duurzamer aart, tot zyn voorwerp.”

² *Ibid.*, III, 206—207: “De Konst van Rembrant had als wat nieuw in haar tyd een algemeene goedkeuring; zoo dat de konstoeffenaren (wilden zy hunne werken gangbaar doen zyn) genootzaakt waren zich aan die wyze van schilderen te gewennen; al hadden zy zelf eene veel prysselyker behandelinge. Waarom ook Govert Flinck (gelyk wy in zyne levensbeschryving hebben aangemerkt) en anderen meer, zich tot de school van Rembrant begaven. Onder deze was ook myn Stadtgenoot Arent de Gelder... En is boven dit opmerkelyk dat hy alleen onder zoo een menigvuldig getal, welke naderhand die wyze van schilderen agterlieten, daar in is staande gebleven.”

³ *Ibid.*, II, 273—4: “Nicolaas Maas... had de teekenkonst in zyn jeugt by een gemeen Meester, de Schilderkonst by Rembrant geleert, maar verliet vroege die wyze van schilderen, te meer toen hy zig tot het schilderen van poutretten begaf, en wel zag dat inzonderheit de jonge Juffrouwen meer behagen namen in het wit dan in ’t bruin.”

pletely different style.”¹ In the biography of Govert Flinck it is affirmed that this Rembrandt pupil once worked in a style which was so close to that of his master that his works were sold as genuine Rembrandts. But later, after much trouble and work, Flinck changed his way of painting, for the introduction of Italian works into Holland opened the eyes of genuine connoisseurs even before the death of Rembrandt. The light way of painting made this art noble again.² Houbraken believed that in the final analysis darkness and great painting were mutually exclusive. He reprinted Vondel’s poem which praised Koninck’s *Sleeping Venus* and complained about art’s sons of darkness who liked to live in shadow like an owl.³ However, Houbraken did not have any reason to believe that Rembrandt lost his popularity or was without commissions because he did not change his manner during the last years of his life. On the contrary, he reports that his works were so highly valued that you had to beg him as well as pay him.⁴

Houbraken did not find this inconceivable, which indicates that Rembrandt’s prestige was high in Holland during the second decade of the 18th century. Moreover, Houbraken makes no mention of the bankruptcy of 1656. Houbraken’s Rembrandt was not the kind of painter who went bankrupt; he writes that for years Rembrandt was so overwhelmed with commissions that people had to wait a long time for their pictures. Nevertheless, particularly during the last years of his life, he worked so fast that when you examined his pictures closely they looked as if they had been smeared with a brick layer’s trowel.⁵ It is said, he added, that Rembrandt once painted a

1 *Ibid.*, II, 155—6: “Samuel van Hoogstraten... de Konst by Rembrant van Ryn... geleert heeft, wiens wyze van schilderen hy noch eenigen tyd aan de hand hield, en allenskens, zig daar van weer ontwende, en eindelyk een geheele andere wyze van schilderen aannam...”

2 *Ibid.*, II, 20—21: “Maar alzoo te dier tyd de handeling van Rembrant in ’t algemeen geprezen wierd, zoo dat alles op die leest moest geschoeit wezen, zouw het de Waerlt behagen; vond hy zig geraden een Jaar by Rembrant te gaan leeren; ten einde hy zig die behandeling der verwen en wyze van schilderen gewendde, welke hy in dien korten tyd zoodanig heeft weten na te bootzen dat verscheiden van zyne stukken voor echte penceelwerken van Rembrant wierden aangezien en verkocht. Doch hy heeft die wyze van schilderen naderhand met veele moeite en arbeid weer afgewent; naardien de Waerlt voor ’t overlyden van Rembrant, de oogen al geopent wierden, op ’t invoeren der Itali-aansche penceelkonst, door ware Konstkenners, wanneer het helder schilderen weer op de baan kwam.”

3 *Ibid.*, II, 53; cf. p. 70 f above.

4 *Ibid.*, I, 269: “Doch dit alles overgeslagen; zyn konstwerd zoodanig in zyn tyd geacht en gezogt, datmen hem (als het spreekwoord zegt) moest bidden en gelt toegeven.”

5 *Ibid.*, “Vele jaren agter den anderen heeft hy met schilderen zoo drok gehad dat de

picture in which the paint was so thick that you could lift it up from the floor by its nose.¹

Baldinucci also commented upon Rembrandt's impasto. But he raised the thickness of Rembrandt's pigment only to half of a finger, and he attributed his incredible slowness to his method of laying paint instead of accounting for the impasto by his speed.

Houbraken believed that Rembrandt did not want his pictures examined closely because when seen at close range they showed his bad technique. He frightened people away, when they came too close, by saying: "The smell of colors will bother you."² Although Houbraken would never have been ecstatic about *The Jewish Bride* or the *Brunswick Family-portrait*, he did not have Lairese's objections to impasto. He conceded that the way Rembrandt depicted stones, pearls in necklaces and turbans as if they were chiseled made a powerful effect, even when seen from a great distance.³

According to Houbraken, one seldom sees a good hand painted by him because he hid the hands of his figures, particularly those of his portraits, in shadow; or he painted the hand of any old wrinkled woman.⁴ But even worse was his treatment of nude women, "the most wonderful subject of the brush." For these he took only figures for which one feels repugnance, so that one can only wonder how a man of such talent and spirit was so self-willed in his choice of models.⁵ He follows this comment with a lengthy discourse on the importance of rules in art. Van Mander wrote that Caravaggio used to say that all painting which is not done after life is a childish affair. Caravaggio

menschen lang naar hunne stukken moesten wagten, niettegenstande dat hy met zyn werk vaardig voortging, inzonderheit in zyn laatsten tyd, toen het 'er, van na by bezien, uitzag of het met een Metzelaars truffel was aangesmeert."

1 *Ibid.*, "Ook wort'er getuigt dat hy eens een poutret geschildert heeft daar de verw zoodanig dik op lag, datmen de schildery by de neus van de grondt konde opligten."

2 *Ibid.*, "Waarom hy de menschen, als zy op zyn schilderkamer kwamen, en zyn werk van dichteby wilden bekyken, te rug trok, zeggende: de reuk van de verf zou u verveelen."

3 *Ibid.*, "Dus zietmen ook gesteente en paerlen, op Borstcieraden en Tulbanden door hem zoo verheven geschildert al even of ze gebootzeerd waren, door welke wyze van behandelen zyne stukken, zelf in wyden afdant, kragtig uitkomen."

4 *Ibid.*, 261: "Zietmen een goede hand van hem 't is zeltzaam, wyl hy dezelve, inzonderheit by zyn portretten, in de schaduw wegdommelt of het mogt een hant zyn van een oude berimpelde Bes."

5 *Ibid.*, 261—2: "En wat zyn naakte vrouwtjes aanbelangt, de heerlykste voorwerpen voor't konstpenceel, en daar alle berugte meesters van ouds af, al hun vlyt op hebben gelegd... Want het doorgaans vertoonzelen zyn daar men van walgen moet, en zig verwonderen dat een man van zoo veel vernuft en geest zoo eigenzinnig in zyne verkiezingen geweest is."

never painted a stroke without living nature in front of him. Rembrandt was of the same opinion. He laid down the principle that one should follow nature; everything else was worthless to him.¹ Houbraken concedes that it is necessary and good to paint from nature, but this practice cannot be accepted as a general principle; he accepted the theory that one must choose the most beautiful out of the beauties of nature.² Moreover, there are a number of things which cannot be done from life, such as representations of flying, falling, springing or running.³ Further, the representation of the expression of emotions cannot be done from a model; if they are copied from a model they are not natural. Some states of the mind are momentary and one does not have time to sketch them, not to speak of painting them. The only way in which they can be represented is if the artist has a definite conception of them, or one must use the books published for those hungry for theory and which serve as a guide for depicting each emotion according to strict rules. For this study the praiseworthy book *Discours Académiques*, dedicated by the masters of the *Académie* to Colbert, which could also serve as a model for the Dutch, and the second volume of Philaléthes' letters are recommended.⁴

Somebody will say that Rembrandt had a good conception of the particular

1 *Ibid.*, 262: According to Van Mander, Caravaggio said, "Dat alle schilderwerk, 't zy wat, of van wien gemaakt, maar kinder- en beuzelwerk is, zoo niet alles naar 't leven geschildert is, en datter niet goet of beter kan wezen, dan de natuur te volgen; over zulks hy niet eenen enkelen streek deed, of hy zette het leven zig &c. Van deze meening was ook onze groote meester Rembrant, stellende zig ten grondwet, enkele naarvolging van de natuur, en alles wat daar buiten gedaan werd was by hem verdacht."

2 *Ibid.*, 263: "Hier leit de knoop: Het schoonste uit het schoone te konnen verkiezen... Wy willen graag toestemmen dat naar 't leven te schilderen nootzakelyk en goet is, maar dat dit niet tot zoo een algemeenen grondregel kan gebragt worden..."

3 *Ibid.*, 263: "Daar benessens is 'er een onnoemelyk getal van dingen, en voorwerpen, die yder op hun beurt in het schilderen te pas gebragt worden, daar 'het leven niet toe gebruikt kan worden; als by voorbeeld vliegende, buitelende, springende, of loopende beelden, welker beweging en werking alle oogenblikken veranderen..."

4 *Ibid.*, 264—5: "Stel eens, men moet vreugd, blydschap, droefheit, schrik, toorn, verwondering, veragting enz. dat is, de menigerhande lydingen van de ziel, door vaste en kennelyke wezenstrekken vertoonen. Hoe zal men 't daar mee maken?... (one must have) vast denkbeelt; of men moet zig bedienen van het vernuft van zulken, welke door vaste regelen en konsttrekken elke byzondere gemoetsdrift tot leiding voor de leerbegerigen in plaatdruk de waerlt hebben meegedeelt. Gelyk daar is dat pryslyk Boek: *Discours Académiques*, 't geen door de meesters der Koninklijke Academie te Parys aan Monsr. de Colbert opgedragen is, naar welks voorbeelt wy ook een proefje van dien aart, door andere ontleende voorwerpen hebben opgesteld, en in het tweede Deel van Philaléthes Brieven te pas gebragt." Philaléthes is a pseudonym which Houbraken used when he published *Philaléthes Brieven* (Amsterdam: P. Boeteman, 1712); cf. Hofstede de Groot, *Arnold Houbraken, op. cit.*, 10; 458.

emotions and is praised for just that. Did he do this upon a firm foundation? Houbraken answers yes, but upon a foundation which he cannot put forward for general guidance. Rembrandt had a wonderful idea of the emotions at the precise moment when they show their essence, and this is a rare quality, but it is not necessary for our lessons. We want to lead those who do not have Rembrandt's good fortune, by means of tested methods so that they will become competent artists. Rembrandt cannot be taken as an example for imitation.¹ Houbraken offers the following advice: have a firm conception of what you want to do and draw from life; then he states that in general Dutch students do not draw enough after Italian and other prints and drawings, nor do they study plaster casts and anatomy as much as they should. In short, the program and rules brought into use by the Director of the French *Académie* should be followed. This method has produced famous artists; it is the tested method which is superior to attempting to follow Rembrandt.²

Rembrandt (to bring this case to an end) would bind himself to no rules made by others, nor the example set by others. He was also content to imitate nature, as it appeared to him without being fastidious.³ Houbraken quoted

1 *Ibid.*, 265: "Ymant zal licht zeggen, Rembrant heeft zig op het verbeelden der byzondere wezenstrekken wel verstaan, en wort daar in geprezen; heeft hy dit niet op vasten gront gedaan? Ik antwoord ja; maar op een gront welken ik niet tot een algemeene leiding kan stellen; naardien hy door een wonderbaar vast denkbeeld, de gemoetsdriften in dien oogenblik, wanneer dezelve zig in het wezen der voorwerpen vertoonden, heeft weten in te drukken, en zig daar van te bedienen: 't welk alleen een zeldzame natuurlyke hoedanigheid is; waar voor onze leiding alleen om zulken die dat geluk niet bezitten, door beproefde weegen op te leiden: om daar toe bekwaam te worden."

2 *Ibid.*, 265—267: "Om deze zaak aangaande 't gebruik van 't leven, nu noch wat klaarder aan te duiden, zoo zeg ik I. Daar moet voorafgaan een vast denkbeeld over het gansche bewerp van 't geen van maken wil... 'T is nootzakelyk dat men in de Accademie naar 't leven tykent... de meeste van jeugt die hier in Hollant naar 't naakte leven teekenen, teekenen zonder dat het hun nut doet: om dat zy een zeker oordeel en kundigheid missen, dat voor af moet gaan, zoo zy de vrugt van het naar't leven teekenen willen genieten: Hier in bestaande, I. Dat zy zich niet genoeg gewinnen het naateekenen van fraje Italiaansche en andere Printen en teekeningen. II. Dat zy zich niet genoeg bevytigen in het naateekenen van pleister, gevormt naar de faaiste antique... III. Dat zy de Menskunde in den gront niet verstaan... Dusdanige leidingen tot de konst heeft C. le Brun, opziender van de Academie des Konings van Vrankryk, in gebruik gebragt, en veel fraje geesten en berugte schilders daar uit voorgeteelt."

3 *Ibid.*, 267—8: "Rembrant (om een einde van dit pleit te maken) wilde zig aan geene regelen van anderen binden, en noch min de doorluchtigste voorbeelden volgen van die, welke met het schoone te verkiezen zich zelven eenen eeuwigem roem gemaakt hebben; maar vernoege zig met het leven te volgen, zoo als het hem voorkwam, zonder eenige keur daar omtrent te maken." The assertion that it is well known that Rembrandt refused to adhere to any rules of art, but his own, is repeated *Ibid.*, II, 255: "...Rembrant, van

Pels' lines which describe the physical characteristics of Rembrandt's female nudes which were always rendered, according to the poet, without attention to the rules of taste or the principles of proportion. Houbraken praises Pels' outspokenness, and asks the reader also to give the best possible interpretation to his frank judgement, for it is not expressed because of hatred for Rembrandt's work, but only because he wants to help students achieve what is most worthy.¹ He very fairly adds Pels' concluding lines on Rembrandt which lament art's loss because Rembrandt did not use his talent for a better purpose, for "Who surpassed him in painting?"²

Rembrandt did not follow the rules of art endorsed by the French academicians, Jan de Bisschop, Hoogstraten, Pels, Lairese, Ten Kate, Wellekens and Houbraken; nevertheless, Rembrandt's power, in spite of his unorthodox methods, was recognized and even praised by these critics. However, Houbraken seems to have been more aware of the singular character of Rembrandt's work than any of his contemporaries. He wrote that in his opinion Rembrandt's singular way of working was intentional and that he cannot determine the merits of the artist's work because it cannot be compared with that of the famous Italians or other *hoogvliegers*. Apparently Houbraken would not have approved of De Piles' analysis of Rembrandt in the "Balance de Peintres." He admitted that his standards could not be used to appraise the artist — an extraordinary avowal from a critic of any age. Houbraken did not infer that Rembrandt was to be congratulated upon having created a new visual world for which criteria were still unknown; he censures Rembrandt by implying that he worked out a personal style because he was afraid of comparison, as the Emperor Tiberius was afraid of comparison with Augustus.³

wien bekend is, dat hy zig naar geen regelen van de Konst (hoe algemeen goed bekeurt) verbond, maar eigen zinlykheit voor zyn regel hield..”

¹ *Ibid.*, I, 268: "Ik prys deze vryborstigheit in Pels, en verzoek dat de lezer myn openhartig oordeel ook zal ten besten duiden, als niet geschiet uit haat tegen des mans werk, maar om de verschelige begrypen, en onderscheiden behandelingen der konst met elkander te vergelyken, en den leerbegerigen tot naavorvolging van het prysselykste aan te sporen." Cf. page 102 f above for a discussion of Pels.

² *Ibid.*, These lines are repeated *Ibid.*, II, 255—6.

³ *Ibid.*, 273: "Zyne wyze van doen omtrent de konst (schoon in vele deelen te mispryzen) doet my besluiten dat hy zulks voordachtig gedaan heeft; want indien hy zig een wyze van schilderen, die naar die van anderen geleeke, had aangewent, of zyn penceel op den voet van eenige berugte Italianen, of andere hoogvliegers geschoeit, zoo zouw de waerlt, uit vergelyking van 't een met het ander, zyne verdienste hebben kunnen opmaken, darr hy nu, met het tegendeel te doen, die proefneming heeft vooruit geloopen, en gedaan als Tacitus van Keizer Tiberius zeit: Dat hy alles vermydde waar uit het volk gelegenheit konde nemen van vergelyking tusschen hem en Augustus te maken, wiens gedachtenis hy zag dat hy yder aangenaam was."

Houbraken mentions Rembrandt's inimitable etchings which follow nature and by themselves would have sufficed to preserve his fame. Amateurs know some hundreds of them and also a number of not inferior drawings in which, as in the paintings, the emotions brought forth by various events are expressed so skillfully and clearly that it is amazing. Anger, hatred, sorrow, joy and so on are represented so naturally that one can read from the pen strokes what each signifies.¹ One of the most excellent, he wrote, is his drawing of the *Last Supper*, which he saw in the possession of Van der Schelling and now belongs to Willem Six; it is valued at more than twenty ducats although it is only a pen sketch on paper. This drawing shows that in observing the emotions Rembrandt was able to achieve a permanent conception of them; thus Houbraken admits that Rembrandt did more than slavishly imitate nature.²

Houbraken, who was an etcher himself, considered the master printmaker's technique a complete mystery. He wrote that Rembrandt did not teach his method of reworking and finishing a plate to his pupils and it cannot be ascertained; his invention, like the method of staining glass used by Dirk and Wouter Crabet of Gouda, died with the inventor.³ The three states of the *Portrait of Lutma* etching are again cited to illustrate Rembrandt's way of working.⁴ Houbraken points out that the same method was used to make the

1 *Ibid.*, I, 270: "T lust ons (schoon zyn levensrol zig al vry wyd en breed heeft uitgestrekt) noch van zyn natuurlyke en onnavolgelyke etskonst wat te zeggen, 't geen alleen genoeg zoude geweest hebben om zyn roem op te houden. Van deze zynere ettelyke honderden onder de printkonstlievenden bekend, gelyk ook geen minder getal van schetzen met de pen op papier, waar in de driften van 't gemoet ontrent allerhande voorvallen zoo konstig en duidelyk zig in de wezenstrekken vertoonen dat het te verwonderen is. Toren, haat, droefheit, blytschap, en zoo voort, alles staat zoo natuurlyk afgebeeld datmen uit de pentrekken lezen kan wat elk zeggen wil."

2 *Ibid.*; "Onder vele die onder die menigte uitsteken is de verbeelding van Christus laatste Avondmaal 't geen ik by de konstminnenden van der Schelling heb gezien, thans in handen van meergemelden Heere Will. Six, het geen meer als twintig Ducatons waard geschat word, schoon het maar een enkele schets met de pen op papier is. Waar uit men besluiten moet: dat hy magtig is geweest op de beschouwing der menigerhande gemoetsdriften, zig een vast denkbeeld in te drukken." The only extant pen and ink drawing by Rembrandt of this subject is the study in Berlin, dated around 1635, Valentiner, *Rembrandt Handzeichnungen, op. cit.*, No. 625.

3 Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 271: "Hy had ook een eigen wyze van zyne geestste platen naderhand te bewerken en op te maken: 't geen hy zyne leerlingen nooit liet zien; 't is ook niet te bedenken op wat wyze 't zelve gedaan is; dus is die vinding (even als de wetenschap van het Glas te koleuren, gelyk het Dirk en Wouter Crabet van Gouda hebben gedaan) met den uitvinder ten grave gedaalt."

4 *Ibid.*; "Men ziet van het Portretje van Lutma (om een voor alle ten voorbeeld te stellen) drie onderscheiden drukken: eene die ruuw geschetst is, een wat meer opgemaakt, met byvoeging van een glasraam, en eindelyk een uitvoerig en kragtig uitgevoert." Cf.

Portrait of Sylvius which was first etched roughly, and the tender sparkling shadows and strong touches were made later — and are as well and delicately handled as the work which is found in a mezzotint.¹ The idea that Rembrandt's etchings were similar to mezzotints was noted earlier by Roger de Piles and Florent le Comte.²

Houbraken wrote that Rembrandt's etchings brought him fame and wealth, and although he realized that the etcher's unique way of finishing his plates explains the presence of different states of the portraits of Lutma or Sylvius, he accused Rembrandt of making small and unimportant additions on his prints so that they could be sold as new ones.³ His familiarity with the minutiae of the differences in the states of Rembrandt prints indicates how carefully the etchings were studied at the beginning of the 18th century. He wrote that during Rembrandt's life time nobody could call himself a true amateur if he did not possess the *Juno with and without the Crown*, and the *Joseph with the Light and Dark Head*, and so on.⁴ Yes, even the *Woman by the Stove*, one of his least important etchings, was sought after, with and without the white cap and stove key, in spite of the fact that it was sold through his son Titus, as if it were too unimportant for himself.⁵ Houbraken's parenthetical evaluation of his etching of 1658 reveals his bias; a print of an ordinary, half-dressed

p. 179, note 2 above for Houbraken's other reference to this print. On the basis of these two references to the three states we can conclude that Houbraken knew a state of the etching which has never been mentioned in the *catalogues raisonnées* of Rembrandt's prints.

1 *Ibid.*, "Men ontdekt ook aan het portretje van Silvius, dat het op gelyke wyze eerst ruuw geest is, de teedere tintelschaduwe en kragt daar naderhand is ingebracht, en zoo eel en zagt gehandelt, als door de schraapkonst kan gedaan worden." The reference could be to Bartsch 266, dated 1634 (or 1633), or to Bartsch 280, dated 1646; Arthur M. Hind, "Rembrandt's Earlier Etching of Jan Cornelis Sylvius," *Burlington Magazine*, XXIII (1913), 22—25, offers proof for the identification of Bartsch 266 as Sylvius.

2 Cf. p. 139 f above.

3 *Ibid.*, 271: "Dit doen bragt hem grooten roem en niet min voordeel by: inzonderheit ook het kunsje van lichte verandering, of kleine en geringe byvoegzelen, die hy aan zyne printjes maakte, waar door dezelve andermaal op nieu verkogt werden."

4 *Ibid.*; "Ja de drift was in dien tyd zoo groot dat zulke luiden voor geen rechte liefhebbers gehouden wierden, die het Junootje met en zonder 't kroontje, 't Josephje met het wit en bruine troonitje en diergelyke meer, niet hadden." The former refers to *Medea*, or the *Marriage of Jason and Creusa*, signed and dated 1648, (B. 112); it was made to illustrate the tragedy of *Medea* written by Jan Six, published in 1648. The latter is a reference to *Joseph Telling His Dreams*, signed and dated 1638, (B. 37).

5 *Ibid.*; "Ja het Vrutje by de kachel, schoon van zyn geringste, moest elk met, en zonder 't witte mutsje, met, en zonder het sleutelkachelte hebben, 't geen hy door zyn zoon Titus (kwamsuis te gering voor hem) liet uitventen;" (B. 197).

woman seated beside a stove could not be important. If the etching was sold through Titus, it was because of the business arrangement which Rembrandt, Saskia and Titus worked out after the artist's bankruptcy in 1656. We have already noted that Houbraken knew nothing of this tragedy, and he, like so many of Rembrandt's early biographers gave an account of his wealth. His pupils as well as his prints brought him money. Each student paid him 100 guilders annually, and Houbraken reported that Sandrart, who had personal contact with him, says that his scholars gave him an annual income of more than 2500 guilders.¹ Houbraken was a little careless with his sources; Sandrart wrote that his pupils brought Rembrandt from 2000 to 2500 guilders annually. And in spite of this tremendous income, Houbraken continues, he still had a love for money. His students noticed this and often painted coins on the floor or elsewhere which deceived the master, and he frequently stretched out his hand, in vain, for these pieces.² Houbraken insisted upon the mercenary streak in Rembrandt. According to him, Rembrandt had his first success when he was advised, before 1630, to take one of his pictures from Leiden to The Hague to show to a collector. The collector bought the picture for 100 guilders. Houbraken does not name the collector. It is quite possible that this part of the story is not spurious; the Stadholder Prince Frederick Henry of Orange may have paid the young painter this high price for one of the Rembrandt paintings catalogued in his collection in 1632.³ Houbraken tells us that Rembrandt was pleased with his good fortune and because he was not used to having so much money he wanted to get home as quickly as possible to share the news with his parents. To go to Leiden on foot was undignified; to travel by barge too common. Rembrandt took the open cart. When horses were changed at Huis ten Deil (it is difficult to understand why horses had to be changed on a 10 mile run), all the passengers except Rembrandt left the cart in order to take refreshments. The young painter wanted to stay with his treasure. The horses bolted, and ran on with him to the inn in Leiden, and Rembrandt ran to his parents to tell them how he was taken

¹ *Ibid.*, 271—272: "Daar benevens had hy zoo groot een menigte van Leerlingen die hem yder jaarlyks 100 Gulden opbragten: dat Sandrart die omgang met hem gehad heeft, getuigt dat hy konde berekenen dat Rembrant, jaarlyks van zyne leerlingen meer dan 2500 Gulden inkomen had."

² *Ibid.*, 272: "En nochtans was hy (geltgierig luid niet wel) zoo geltliefdig dat zyne leerlingen dit bemerkende, by wylen uit potzery op den vloer of elders, daar 't hem in 't oog moest komen, stuivers, dubbeltjes, schellingen enz. schilderden, daar hy dikwerf de hand vergeefs naar uitstak, dog verlegen zynde, daar van nooit iets deed merken."

³ Cf. p. 20 f above.

to Leiden for nothing. "This brilliant beginning showed him the possibility of earning money and his enthusiasm was spurred. . ." ¹

After this first success, wrote Houbraken, Rembrandt had his hands full of work and frequently had to go to Amsterdam in order to paint portraits and other pictures; he therefore found it advisable to settle in Amsterdam around 1630. There he received many commissions and also a great number of pupils, for whom he rented a warehouse on the Bloemgracht in which he gave each student a room for himself, often divided from the others only by paper or canvas, so that each could draw from life without disturbing the others. ² Houbraken was quite well informed about Rembrandt's pupils; in the *Groote Schouburgh* he mentions the following: Ferdinand Bol, Gerard Dou, Govert Flinck, Christoph Paudiss, Frans Wulfhagen, Jurriaen Ovens, Adriaen Verdoel, Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, Jacob Levecq, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Nicolaes Maes, Willem Drost, Heyman Dullaert, Godfried Kneller, Jan Griffier, Cornelius Brouwer and Aert de Gelder. ³ He knew some of the pupils personally; Hoogstraten was his teacher from about 1675 until 1678 ⁴ and he mentions that he once called upon a painter in the company of Aert de Gelder, the artist "who came closest to Rembrandt's way of painting." Houbraken was apparently a friend of the painter who was considered Rembrandt's most faithful follower during the beginning of the 18th century and who certainly must be numbered among those who still thought Rembrandt's brush was unsurpassed. ⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, 255—256.

² *Ibid.*, 256: "Thans deed hem dit blinkend beginsel de hoop van geltwinning vooruit zien, en zijn konstdrift op die wyze gespoort nam zoodanig toe in de konst dat hy aan alle konstkenneren genoegen gaf. Dus kreeg hy (als het spreekwoordt zegt) de handen vol werk. En dewyl hy naderhand, zoo om 't schilderen van pourtretten als andere stukken, dikwils genootzaakt was tot Amsterdam te komen, vond hy goed... zig met 'er woon daar na toe te begeven, 't geen was ontrent den jare 1630. Daar zynde vloeyde hem het werk van alle kanten toe; gelyk ook menigte van Leerlingen, tot welken einde hy een Pakhuis huurde op de Bloemgracht, daar zyne leerlingen elk voor zig een vertrek (of van papier of zeildoek afschoten) om zonder elkander te storen naar 't leven te kunnen schilderen. En gelyk'er onder de Jeugt, inzonderheit als'er veel by een zyn, wel zomtyts iets klugtig voorvalt; zoo gebeurde 't hier ook."

³ Houbraken also noted that Koninck was a Rembrandt pupil. H. Gerson, *Philips Koninck, op. cit.*, 9, has pointed out that this is an error. There is no evidence that Koninck studied with Rembrandt.

⁴ Hofstede de Groot, *Arnold Houbraken, op. cit.*, 3.

⁵ Houbraken visited Augustinus Terwesten in the company of De Gelder and Hendrik Noteman: *Ibid.*, III, 269. In his biography of De Gelder, *Ibid.*, III, 206, Houbraken writes: "...Arent de Gelder, die, na dat hy door S. van Hoogstraten in de gronden van

Men who had studied with Rembrandt or who knew him could have given Houbraken information about the painter. In any event we can confirm the report that the master held life classes for his students from drawings which were made in his studio. Drawing from the nude was one aspect of academic training which Rembrandt accepted.¹ Documents concerning the sale of Rembrandt's house in 1658—1659 have also substantiated Houbraken's report of the partitions which were used to separate the students from each other.² And a person who knew Rembrandt may have told Houbraken the story which he printed in the biography of the pupil who took a female model into his room, and since it was hot he stripped too. The other pupils watched the two through a chink in the partition and listened to their comments. Rembrandt happened on the scene and also watched and listened. When he heard the words, "Now we are exactly as Adam and Eve in Paradise, for we are also naked," he knocked at the door with his mahlstick and cried, "Because you are naked you must get out of Paradise."³

People paid well for Rembrandt's painting, Houbraken writes, and he must have earned large sums of money, particularly since he spent little at taverns or parties, and even less at home, where he lived simply and was content to make a meal of a piece of bread and cheese or of a pickled herring. Houbraken rightly adds that in spite of all this one heard nothing about a large estate at the time of his death.⁴

The theme that he kept company with common people during the last

de Konst was onderwezen, mede naar Amsterdam vertrok om Rembrants wyze van schilderen te leeren, 't geen hem zoodanig toeviel en gelukte, dat ik tot zynen roem zeggen moet, dat geen van alle hem zoo na gekomen is in die wyze van schilderen." The biography of De Gelder hints at when the *Groote Schouburgh* was written, for we read that De Gelder is still healthy and unmarried in this year 1715; *Ibid.*, 208. The third volume of the *Groote Schouburgh* was published in 1721, two years after Houbraken's death.

¹ Hofstede de Groot, "Rembrandts onderwijs aan zijne leerlingen" in *Feest-Bundel Dr. Abraham Bredius* (Amsterdam: Binger, 1915) I, 79 f.

² *Urk.*, 186.

³ Houbraken, *op. cit.*, I, 256—257.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 272: "Doe hier by het geen hy met het penceel won, want hy zich voor zyn schilderen wel liet betalen. Zoo moest hy noodwendig een grote somme gelt opgeleit hebben; te meer noch dewyl hy geen man was die veel in de kroeg of gezelschappen verteerde, en noch min binnens huis, daar hy maar borgelyk leefde, en als hy aan zyn werk was, dikwils met een stuk kaas en broot, of met een pekelharing zyn maaltyd deed. Niettegenstaande dit alles, heeftmen van zyn groote nalatenschap niet hooren trompetten, na zyn dood..."

years of his life is not neglected.¹ He repeated the quotation which De Piles credited to Rembrandt: "If I want to give my mind diversion, then it is not honor which I seek, but liberty."² Houbraken justifies this point of view by writing that perhaps Rembrandt knew the laws of the art of living as set out by Gratian: "It is good to frequent distinguished persons in order to become one yourself, but once that is achieved you should mix with ordinary people."³

The portrait which Houbraken reproduced of Rembrandt in the *Groote Schouburgh*⁴ (fig. 44) also gives us some idea of what the biographer thought of the artist. The representation is based upon the etched *Self-portrait with Saskia* (fig. 45), signed and dated 1636, (B. 19), which shows Rembrandt etching or drawing (with his left hand) seated at a table, with Saskia seated behind him. Rembrandt depicted himself looking directly at the observer; the whites of his eyes seem to glow in the deep shadow cast by the brim of his hat. The contrasting diagonals of the hat and his left arm make a sharp contrast with his erect head seen *en face*.⁵ The 18th century etcher considerably changed the print which he used for his model. He deleted Saskia.⁶ He violated the directness and piercing presence of the study by tilting the head and shifting the glance to the corner of the artist's eye. The play of strong verticals and diagonals has vanished. The 18th century copyist also found it impossible to make his burin follow Rembrandt's irregular strokes and hat-

1 *Ibid.*: "Hy verkeerde in den herfst van zyn leven wel meest met gemeene luiden, en zulke die de konst hanteerden."

2 *Ibid.*, 273: "Als ik myn geest uitspanninge wil geven, dan is het niet eer die ik zoek, maar vryheit." De Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres*, *op. cit.*: "...ce n'est pas l'honneur que je cherche c'est la liberté."

3 Houbraken, *op. cit.*, 272—273: "Misschien dat hy de wellevens wetten, door Gratiaan beschreven, gekent heeft, want die zeit elders: Het is goet met uitstekende Persoonen te verkeeren, om zoodanig te worden, maar wanneer men dat is, moet men zig by middelmatige voegen."

4 Although it is generally agreed that Jacobus Houbraken, Arnold's son, engraved most of the portraits in the *Groote Schouburgh*, there is some question as to who made the unsigned etched portrait of Rembrandt. Hofstede de Groot, *Arnould Houbraken*, *op. cit.*, 451, writes that he recognizes the hand of Arnold Houbraken in the etched study of Rembrandt.

5 This interesting etching already shows features which are found in the *Self-portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill*, dated 1639, (B. 21).

6 *Ibid.*, 272: "Hy had ten Huisvrouw een Boerinnetje van Raarep, of Ransdorp in Waterlant, wat klein van persoon maar welgemaakt van wezen, en poezel van lichaam. Haar Poutret zietmen nevens het zyne in een van zyne printjes, daar wy ons van bedient hebben, en zyn Beeltenis doen zien in de plaats M..." Houbraken confused Saskia Uylenburg with Hendrickje Stoffels. The woman in the print is Saskia; Hendrickje came from Ransdorp. The quotation supports Hofstede de Groot's contention that Arnold Houbraken etched the portrait.

chings and he made less sharp contrasts between areas in light and shadow. Rembrandt was also presented with a smaller and less ostentatious hat and his collar was trimmed with lace. He was groomed a trifle better than he showed himself and he is depicted as a more fashionable man than the one Sandrart represented in the *Teutsche Academie* in 1673 (fig. 27). The owl at the right of the portrait is the emblem of a son of darkness who, in Vondel's words likes to live in shadow like an owl.

The biographical facts which Houbraken presents should be reviewed briefly because the *Groote Schouburg* was used as the main source for information on Rembrandt until the 19th century. Houbraken in turn leaned heavily on Orlers¹ for the date of Rembrandt's birth, the name of his parents, and for details such as that his parents sent him to Latin school but that his inclination for drawing caused them to alter their decision to make him a learned man. They sent him to "Jakob Izakzen van Zwanenburg" with whom he stayed for three years in order to learn the elements of art. He made great progress and showed promise. In order that he should lack nothing his father sent him to P. Lastman in Amsterdam, where he stayed for six months.² Houbraken can be given credit for suggesting that both Jan and Jakob Pinas were also Rembrandt's masters.³ He also knew Simon van Leeuwen's reference to Joris van Schooten.⁴

Eighteenth century writers on art who used the *Groote Schouburg* did not

1 Cf. p. 35 f above.

2 *Ibid.*, 254: "Dit jaar 1606 byzonder vruchtbaar in 't voortbrengen van brave Konstenaars deed ook op den 15 van Wiedemaand aan den Ryn buiten Leyden Rembrant te voorschyn komen. Zyn Vader werd door de wandeling Herman Gerritzen van Ryn geheeten, zynde een mulder op de Korenmolen tusschen Leyerdorp en Koukerk aan den Ryn, en zyn moeder was Neeltje Willems van Zuitbroek genaamt, welke door dat beroep eerlyk aan den kost konden geraken. Onze Rembrant van Ryn een eenige zoon zynde, wierden zyne Ouders voornemens van hem de Latynsche taal te laten leeren, en hem tot de geleertheit op te voeden, tot welken einde zy hem te Leyden ter schoole deden. Maar de byzondere drift, die hy tot de Teekenkonst hadde, deed hen van besluit veranderen, gelyk zy ook gevolglyk hem bestelden om de fondamenten dier konst te leren by Jakob Izakzen van Zwanenburg, by welken hy bleef omtrent den tyd van drie jaren, in welken tyd hy zodanig gevordert was, dat yder zig daar van verwondert hielt, en besluit maakte dat uit hem wat groots te verwagten stont, des besloot zyn Vader (om dat hem geen gelegenheit zoude ontbreken van een vasten grond, tot opbouw van de konst) hem by P. Lastman t'Amsterdam te brengen, by den welken hy zes Maanden bleef..."

3 *Ibid.*, 254—255: "...en na dien tyd (his six months with Lastman) nog eenige maanden by Jak. Pinas tot hy besluit nam van voortaan by zig zelve de konst te oeffenen... Anderen willen dat Pinas zyn eerste onderwyzer in de konst zou geweest zyn." In the biography of Jan Pynas, *Ibid.*, 214—215, Houbraken wrote: "Zyn penceelwerk helde naar den bruinen kant, waarom vele gelooven dat Rembrandt hem daar in na geaapt heeft."

4 *Ibid.*, 255: "En Simon van Leeuwen, in zyn korte beschryving van Leiden, zeit: dat

have ready access to material which would have enabled them to correct Houbraken's statements that Rembrandt was born outside of Leiden,¹ that he was an only child² and that he died in 1674;³ but perhaps no writer would have been less interested in verifying what he took from Houbraken than the still-life painter and professional man of letters, Jacob Campo Weyerman. Although authors of other centuries lifted passages from works written by their predecessors and colleagues without being accused of stealing, the way in which Weyerman used Houbraken's life of Rembrandt for his biography of the artist in *De Levensbeschryvingen der Nederlandsche Konst-schilders en Konst-schilderessen*, published in 1729,⁴ must be interpreted as plagiarism.

Weyerman wrote on the title page of his work that he used the portraits

Joris van Schoten de leermeester van Rembrant en Jan Lievensz. geweest is." Simon van Leeuwen stated in his *Korte Besgryving van het Lugdunum Batavorum Nu Leyden* (Leiden: 1672) 189—90, that Joris van Schooten was Rembrandt's teacher; this is the earliest reference to Van Schooten, who was a Leiden painter of histories, portraits and large still-lives, as a teacher of Rembrandt. Hofstede de Groot, *Arnold Houbraken, op. cit.*, 395 presented convincing evidence to prove that Van Leeuwen used the biographies of artists in Orlers' *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden*, 1641, as a source for his biographies. De Groot also suggested that when Van Leeuwen took notes from Orlers he probably wrote J. v. S. as an abbreviation for Jacob van Swanenburg, whom Orlers cites as Rembrandt's first teacher, and that when he used his notes to write his final manuscript he interpreted J. v. S. as Joris van Schooten; thus, he concluded, Van Schooten was undeservedly considered by many as Rembrandt's first teacher; *Ibid.*, 396. De Groot's interpretation of the appearance of Van Schooten as the painter who gave Rembrandt his first instruction is plausible; however, it does not account for the fact that Van Leeuwen also cited him as Lievens' teacher as well as Rembrandt's. Orlers, *op. cit.*, 376, wrote that Lievens was sent to study with Van Schooten at the age of eight. Thus the entire reference to Van Schooten as a pedagogue cannot be dismissed as function of Van Leeuwen's conjectured abbreviation. Van Leeuwen's reference to Van Schooten as a master of Rembrandt should not be categorically dismissed until more of the problems concerning the origin of Rembrandt's early style have been solved. Van Leeuwen's biography of Rembrandt is composed of thirteen words; *op. cit.*, 190. It reads: "Rembrand van Rijn, binnen Leyden geboren op den 15 Julij 1606. onlangs overleden." The date of birth was probably taken from Orlers; *onlangs overleden* (recently deceased), that is shortly before 1672, is Van Leeuwen's contribution. This minute addition proves that he did not merely paraphrase Orlers and gives further reason to examine possible connections between Van Schooten and Rembrandt.

1 *Ibid.*, 254: "Dit jaar 1606 byzonder vruchtbaar in 't voortbrengen van brave Konstenaars deed ook op den 15 van Wiedemaand aan den Ryn buiten Leyden Rembrant te voorschyn komen."

2 *Ibid.*: "Onze Rembrant van Ryn een eenige zoon zynde..."

3 *Ibid.*, 272: "...heeftmen van zyn groote nalatenschap niet hooren trompetten, na zyn dood, welke voorviel in 't jaar 1674."

4 Jacob Campo Weyerman, *De Levens-beschryving der Nederlandsche Konst-schilders en Konst-schilderessen, met een uytbreiding over de schilderkonst der ouden... Verrykt met de Konterfeysels der Voornaamste Konst-schilders en Konst-schilderessen, cierlyk in*

which were used to illustrate the *Groote Schouburgh*; he should have added that his work was another edition of Houbraken's in which the major change was the introduction of a facetious and flippant style. A comparison of Weyerman's life of Rembrandt with the one written by Houbraken demonstrates that the former followed the latter's work paragraph for paragraph. The same facts, errors, anecdotes and ideas are presented. The same paintings, etchings and drawings are cited in the same context. Even Houbraken's weak reproduction of Rembrandt's study of the *Disappearance of Christ at Emmaus* is used.¹ Only the story of Rembrandt discovering one of his students naked with a model is expanded.² There are a few omissions: Joris van Schooten is not mentioned as one of Rembrandt's teachers, and Houbraken's six-page theoretical discourse on the importance of learning how to choose the most beautiful aspects of nature, if one is to be a painter, is eliminated. Weyerman can be credited with one addition: he added the etching of the pony with and without the white tail to Houbraken's list of Rembrandt prints which connoisseurs were anxious to own.³ He also raised the sum which Sandrart reported that Rembrandt's students paid their master each year from 100 to 1000 guilders;⁴ this extravagant exaggeration, as well as Weyerman's brazen use of Houbraken's data, is an indication of what some of the later critics will do with the material compiled by writers during the first hundred years of Rembrandt criticism.

koper gesnede door J. Houbraken (The Hague), I—III published in 1729; volume IV published posthumously in 1769. The Rembrandt biography is in II, 28—42. For a bibliography of Weyerman's other works cf. D. J. H. ter Horst, "De geschriften van Jacob Campo Weyerman. Een bibliografisch Herziening." *Het Boek*, XXVIII (1944—1946), 227—240. Jacob Campo Weyerman is identical with the painter Jan Weyerman called Campovivo.

¹ Weyerman, *op. cit.*, II, facing page 34, Cf. fig. 42.

² *Ibid.*, 31—34.

³ *Ibid.*, 40—41: "Ook was de drift in die Eeuw zo hêvig voor de printkonst van Rembrandt van Ryn, dat die persoon voor geen rechtschappen printbeminnaar wiert gegroet, die het Junotje met en zonder Kroontje, het Josepje met het wit en met het bruyne tronietje, en het Paerdje met het weit en met het gebruynt staertje niet kon aantoonen." Weyerman referred to the first and second states of the *Good Samaritan* (B. 90). A comparison of the quotation from Weyerman with the Houbraken passage quoted page 190, note 4 above shows how closely Weyerman followed his source. This similarity can not be attributed to coincidence, for it runs through the fourteen pages of Weyerman's life of Rembrandt.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 41: "Die Weerlt ging vry wel met dien verdienstigen Man, en beloonde zyne konst niet stiefmoederlyk, dank zy ten deelen zyne ongemeene naarstigheyt, waar door hy, zegt Sandrart, alleenlyk duyzent guldens jaar voor jaar trok van zyne Leerlingen..." Cf. Houbraken's statement, page 191, note 1 above.

EPILOGUE

A review of the first hundred years of Rembrandt criticism has shown that the artist had an appreciative audience from the time Aernout van Buchell took brief notice of the young painter until Arnold Houbraken wrote his lengthy biography. Rembrandt's late as well as his early works met approval and with very few exceptions 17th and 18th century critics accepted him as a serious history painter and applauded his portraits, etchings and drawings.

The subjection of Rembrandt's work to academic criteria did not send him into an artistic limbo, and even those who believed his style made him a bad artist found aspects of his work worthy of commendation.

However, it must be admitted that the number of early appraisals of Rembrandt, particularly by his countrymen, is not overwhelming. Although we have clutched at every reference connected to Rembrandt by the barest thread, at the risk of mistaking a piece of rhetoric for a profound critical judgement, there are still significant gaps in our recital. Why is Rembrandt's name not mentioned once in Rubens' voluminous correspondence? No extant line gives us a definite idea of what the sensitive poet Heyman Dullaert, who was also Rembrandt's pupil, thought of the artist. And even more important, our failure to identify the group which asserted, according to Lairese, that Rembrandt was the greatest artist and is still unsurpassed is further proof that our history is incomplete. How large was the inarticulate audience which had an appreciation of Rembrandt's work? Did its critical estimation show more or less insight than the written critiques?

If our unanswered questions indicate that total reconstruction of the opinion which another epoch had about an artist is impossible, the attempt at piecing it together is rewarding. The conclusions of earlier critics throw light upon facets of an artist's work which we would tend to overlook. Even lacunae can be revealing. In Rembrandt's case they help explain the richness of the Rembrandt myth. The absence of a great biography of the artist written during his lifetime by one who knew him and his work — Orlers, after all, showed only a laudable interest in biographical data, but no artistic sensibility —

permitted later biographers to construct legends about the artist which suited their purpose without danger of contemporary contradiction.

During the period of which we have given an account the acceptance of an esthetic which placed a premium upon the subject of a picture prevented artists, collectors and critics outside of the Netherlands from ranking Dutch art with the very greatest. Rembrandt could only have been regarded as the most important figure in the peripheral phenomenon of Dutch painting by even the most sympathetic observer in France, Italy or England; with this in mind, it is astonishing that so many laudatory statements were written about Rembrandt by critics who were not Dutch.

The estimation of the worth of an artist is always in flux in the minds of men. Great artists allow each age arrogantly to assert that it has grasped the nature of their achievement. The conclusions of Rembrandt's early critics upon his accomplishments differ greatly from ours. Valerius Röver's reference to Rembrandt's *Self-portrait* (fig. 39) dated 1655, in Cassel, as a work of his best period, Johnathan Richardson's exposition on the sublimity of the drawing of *St. Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha* (fig. 36) made around the same time, Roger de Piles' appreciation of Rembrandt's *infinîte de pensées* and Antoine Coypel's sensitivity to the infinite refinement of the artist's hasty brush strokes are statements which appear to show a surprising modernity; however, the enormous difference between their final judgement and ours should not be minimized. None of the critics we have examined would have entertained the idea that Rembrandt's oeuvre includes some of the most profound expressions of the human spirit. What had to happen to man and his notions about art before he could come to this conclusion, which was first stated around the middle of the 19th century and is still held today, is the subject for another study.

Amsterdam
May, 1952

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Biography of Rembrandt in J. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden* (2d ed.; Leiden: 1641), 375.

Rembrandt van Riin,

Soon van Harmen Gerrits zoon van Rijn, ende Neeltgen Willems van Suydtbrouck, is binnen de Stad Leyden geboren opten 15. Julij inden Jaere 1606. Zijne Ouders hem ter Scholen bestedet hebbende omme metter tijdt te doen leeren de Latijnsche Tale ende daer naer te brengen tot de Leytsche Academie, op dat hy tot zijne Jaeren ghecomen wesende de Stadt ende gemeene besten met zijne wetenschap zoude mogen dienen ende helpen bevorderen, en heeft daer toe gants geen lust ofte genegentheyt gehad, dewijle zijne natuyrlieke beweginghen alleen streckten tot de Schilder ende Teycken Conste; waer omme zy luyden genootsaect geweest zijn, haren Soon uyt de Schole te nemen, ende volgende zijn begeeren te brengen ende te besteden, by een Schilder omme by de selve te leeren de eerste fundamenten ende beginselen van dien. Volgende dit besluit hebben zy hem gebracht by den welschilderende Mr. Jacob Isaacxsz van Swanenburch, omme vanden zelven geleert ende onder wesen te werden, by den welcken hy gebleven is ontrent de drie Jaeren, ende also hy gheduyrende den zelven tijt, zoo seer toegenomen hadde dat de Const Lief-hebbende daerinne ten hoogsten verwondert waeren, ende datmen genoehsaem konde sien, dat hy metter tijdt een uytnemende Schilder soude werden. So heeft zijn Vader goet ghevonden, hem te besteden ende te brengen by den Vermaerden Schilder P. Lasman, woonende tot Amsterdamme, op dat hy door den selven vorder ende beter mocht geleert ende onderwesen werden: by den selven ontrent ses maenden gheweest zijnde, soo heeft hy goet gevonden alleen ende op hem selven de Schilder Conste te oeffenen, ende te practiseeren: ende heeft daerinne soo geluckich gheweest dat hy geworden is, een vande tegenwoordighe vermaertste Schilders van onse eeuw. Dewijle dat zijne Konst ende arbeyt, de Borgeren ende Innewoonderen van Amsterdamme ten hoogsten behaechde ende aengenaem was, ende dat hy veeltijden versocht

werde omme 'tzy Conterfeytselen ofte ander stucken aldaer te maecken, zoo heeft hy goet ghevonden hem van Leyden te transporteren naer Amsterdamme, ende is dienvolghende van hier vertrocken omtrent den Jaere 1630, ende zijne woninghe aldaer ghenomen, ende is inden Jaere 1641. aldaer noch woonende.

APPENDIX B

Jeremias de Decker's poem dedicated to Rembrandt, first published in *Lof der Geldsuch ofte Vervolg der Rijmoeffeningen* (Amsterdam: 1667), II, 34—36:

Danck-Bewys
Aen den uitnemenden en wijt-beroemden
Rembrandt van Rijn.

*Quas dicere grates,
Quas dicere grates,*

Soo grootsch was voormaels 't hert des grooten Alexanders,
Dat niemand hem vermocht
Te malen als Apell; Apell en niemand anders
Heeft hij hier toe gezocht.
Sijn' trotsheyd liet niet toe, dat mindere pencelen
Sulcx gouden onderstaen.
'k En voel wel in mijn' borst soo trotsen geest niet spelen,
Soo grootsch een hert niet slaen:
En niettemin 't gevalt ('k en wilder niet om jocken)
't Vernoeft my wonder wel,
Op 't vlak penneel te sien mijn wesen nagedrooken
Van onzes tijds Apell:
En dat niet om wat loons daer uit te mogen spinnen,
Maer louterlijck uyt gunst,
Uyt eenen eed'len trek tot onse Zanggodinnen,
Uyt liefde tot de kunst.
O die nu met die kunst uw' kunste kon betalen
In plaetze van met goud,
En u soo meesterlijk op mijn' papieren malen,
Als ghy my trockt op hout!
'k En zou wel uw gelaet, Heer Rembrant, niet vertoogen,
Maer uwen ab'len geest

En aardige handeling afmalen voor elks oogen,
 Spijt nijt, dat booze beest.
 Maer boven mijnen leest soo hoog te willen sweven,
 Waer voor my vol gevaer:
 Dat werk vereyscht een' geest in Schilderkunst bedreven,
 Een' Mander of Vasaer.
 En uw' beroemden naem wat roems te gaen bejagen
 Door rijm of regeltrant,
 Waer water in de zee, waer hout in 't woud gedragen,
 En sand gevoert op strand.
 Gelyk voor puyk van Wijn geen' krans en hoef te hangen
 Van klim-op altijd groen;
 Soo heeft uw puyk-penceel geen' vreemde lofgezangen,
 Geen pen-getoy van doen.
 Dat braef penceel en hoeft na niemands lof te vragen;
 't Is door sich self vermaerd,
 En heeft zijns Meesters naem misschien soo wijd gedragen;
 Als 't vrye Neêrland vaert.
 Sijn' kunst-faem over 't spits der Alpen heen gevlogen
 Tot in 't roemruchtigh Room,
 Doet selfs Italiën staen sien als opgetoogen
 Aen zijnen Tyberstroom.
 Daer doet 'et duyzenden de vlagge voor hem strijken;
 Daer mag 't zijn streken vrij,
 By die van Raphaël en Angelo verlijken,
 Ja streeftse bei verby.
 Derhalven wer 't, van Rhyn, een al te kenlijk teeken
 Van roekloos beckeneel
 Door rijm-pen of gedicht den roem te willen queken
 Van u beroemd penceel.
 Sulcx dat ick voor althans niet anders weet te toonen
 Als slechts wat dank-bewijs,
 Voorwaer om uwe gunste en kunste te beloonen
 Een' al te slechten prijs.
 Wel, heb dan drymael dank voor uwe gifte en gunste,
 En neem dit kort gedicht
 Slechts voor een teken aen van dat ik aen uw' kunste
 My eeuwig acht verplicht.

APPENDIX C

Excerpt from a letter from Guercino to Don Antonio Ruffo dated June 13, 1660; cited from Vincenzo Ruffo "Galleria Ruffo nel Secolo XVII in Messina," *Bollettino d'arte*, X (1916), 100—1:

Circa il particolare della mezza figura del Reimbrant capitata alle mani della S. V. Ill.ma non può essere che di tutta perfetione, perchè io ho veduto diverse sue Opere in stampa comparse in queste nostre parti, li quali sono riuscite molto belle, intagliate di buon gusto e fatte di buona maniera, dove si può argomentare che il di lui colorire sia parimenti di tutta esquisitezza e perfetione, et io ingenuamente lo stimo per un gran virtuoso.

In quanto poi alla mezza figura che ella desiderava da me per accompagnamento di quella del Reimbrant, ma della mia prima maniera gagliarda, io sono prontissimo per corrispondere et eseguire li di lei ordini; resta che lei si compiacca d'inviarmi le misure, sì della lunghezza come della larghezza del quadro che dal mio canto non mancherò d'impiegare tutto me stesso, e quanto potrà e saprà fare la mia debolezza Lei medesima lo mirerà in detto quadro espresso.

Se poi ancora con l'occasione d'inviarmi la misura V. S. Ill.ma volesse onorami di un poco di schizzo del Quadro del Reimbrant fatto per mano di qualche Pittore acciò potessi vedere la dispositione della mezza figura, il favore mi sarebbe singolarissimo e potrei governarmi meglio per l'accompagnamento, sì come per pigliare il lume al suo luogo; starò similmente attendendo il soggetto che dovrò esprimere acciò maggiormente io possa confrontarmi col desiderio di V. S. Ill.ma a cui... mentre confermo la mia devotissima osservanza; qui resto, e riverentemente gliene bacio le mani. Bologna li 13 Giugno 1660

Di V. S. Ill.ma .

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo servo
GIOVANNI FRANCESCO BARBIERI

APPENDIX D

Biography of Rembrandt in Joachim von Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura Scultura et Pictura...* (Nürnberg: 1675), Part II, Book III, Chapter XXII, 326.

Es ist fast zu bewundern, dass da der fürtreffliche Rembrand von Ryn, nur aus dem platten Land und von einem Müller entsprossen, gleichwol ihm die Natur zu so edler Kunst dergestalt getrieben, dasz er durch groszen Fleisz, angeborne Inclination und Neigung auf einen so hohen Staffel in der Kunst gelanget. Er machte seinen Anfang zu Amsterdam bey dem berühmten Laszmann, und gieng ihme, wegen Gütigkeit der Natur, ungesparten Fleiszes und allstätiger Übung nichts ab, als das er Italien und andere Oerter, wo die Antichen und der Kunst Theorie zu erlernen nicht besucht, zumal da er auch nicht als nur schlecht Niederländisch lesen, und also sich durch die Bücher wenig helfen können: Demnach bliebe er beständig bey seinem angenommenen Brauch, und scheuete sich nicht, wider unsere Kunst-Reglen, als die Anatomia und Maas der menschlichen Gliedmaszen, wider die Perspectiva und den Nutzen der antichen Statuen, wider Raphaels Zeichenkunst und vernünftige Ausbildungen auch wider die unserer Profession höchst-nöhtigen Academien zu streiten, und denenselben zu widersprechen, vorgebend, dasz man sich einig und allein an die Natur und keine andere Reglen binden solle, wie er dann auch, nach Erforderung eines Werks, das Liecht oder Schatten, und die Umzüge aller Dingen, ob sie schon dem Horizont zuwider wann sie nur seiner Meinung nach wol und der Sachen geholffen, gut geheiszen; So dann, weil die saubere Umzüge sich an ihrem Ort correct solten erfinden, füllte er die Gefahr zu vermeiden denselben mit Finsterschwarz dergestalt aus, dasz er von solchen nichts anders als die Zusammenhaltung der universal-Harmonia verlanget, in welcher letzten er fürteflich gewesen, und der Natur Einfalt nicht allein stattlich auszubilden, sondern auch mit natürlichen Kräften in Colorten und starken Erheben, zu zieren gewust fürnemlich in halben Bildern, oder alten Köpfen, ja auch in kleinen Stucken, zierlichen Kleidungen und andern Artigkeiten.

Neben diesem hat er in Kupfer sehr viele und unterschiedliche Sachen

geätzt, die von seiner Hand im Druck ausgehen, aus welchem allem wol zu sehen dasz er ein sehr fleisziger unverdrosener Mann gewesen, dannenhero ihme das Glück grosze baare Mittel zugetheilt, und seine Behausung in Amsterdam mit fast unzählbaren fürnehmen Kindern zur Instruction und Lehre erfüllet, deren jeder ihme jährlich in die 100 Gulden bezahlt, ohne den Nutzen, welchen er aus dieser seiner Lehrlinge Mahlwerken und Kupferstucken erhalten, der sich auch in die 2 bis 2500 Gulden baares Gelds belauften, samt dem, was er durch seine eigne Hand-Arbeit erworben. Gewisz ists, dasz, wann er mit den Leuten sich hätte wiszen zu halten, und seine Sache vernünftig anzustellen, er seinen Reichtum noch merklich ergröszert haben würde; Dann ob er schon kein Verschwender gewesen, hat er doch seinen Stand gar nicht wiszen zu beobachten, und sich jederzeit nur zu niedrigen Leuten gesellet, dannenhero er auch in seiner Arbeit verhindert gewesen.

Dieses dienet zu seinen Lob, dasz er die Farben sehr vernünftig und künstlich von ihrer eigen Art zu brechen, und nachmalen darmit auf der Tafel, der Natur warhafte und lebhaftte Eingältigkeit, mit guter Harmonie des Lebens, auszubilden gewust, womit er dann allen denen die Augen eröffnet, welche, dem gemeinen Brauch nach, mehr Färber als Mahler sind, indem sie die Härtigkeit und rauhe Art der Farben ganz frech und hart neben einander legen, dasz sie mit der Natur ganz keine Gemeinschaft haben, sondern nur denen in den Kram-Läden gefüllten Farben Schachtlen, oder aus der Färberey gebrachten Tüchern ähnlich und gleich sehen. Sonsten war er auch ein groszer Liebhaber von allerley Kunststücken an Gemälden, Handriszen, Kupferstichen, und allerhand fremden Seltsamkeiten, dern er eine grosze Mänge gehabt und hierinnen sehr curios gewesen; deswegen er auch von vielen sehr hoch geschätzt und gepriesen worden.

In seinen Werken liesze unser Künstler wenig Liecht sehen, auszer an dem fürnehmsten Ort seines Intents, um welches er Liecht und Schatten künstlich beysammen hielte, samt einer wolgemeszenen reflexion, also dasz das Liecht in den Schatten mit groszem Urtheil wieche, die Colorit ware ganz glüend, und in allem eine hohe Vernunft. In Ausbildung alter Leute, und derselben Haut und Haar, zeigte er einen groszen Fleisz, Gedult und Erfahrungheit, so dasz sie dem einfältigen Leben ganz nahe kamen. Er hat aber wenig antiche Poetische Gedichte, alludien oder seltsame Historien, sondern meistens einfältige und nicht in sonderbares Nachsinnen lauffende, ihme wolgefällige und schilderachtige (wie sie die Niederländer nennen) Sachen gemahlet, die doch voller aus der Natur herausgesuchter Artlichkeiten waren: Ist gestorben in Amsterdam, und hat einen Sohn, der gleichfals die Kunst wol verstehen solle, hinterlaszen.

APPENDIX E

Andries Pels' lines on Rembrandt in *Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels* (Amsterdam: 1681), 35-37.

Gy mist zeer grof, wil gy 't gebaande pad verliezen,
Wilt ge, als wanhoopende, een gevaarelyker kiezen;
En met onduurzaam lof te vreden, doen, gelyk
De groote Rembrand, die 't by Titiaan, van Dyk,
Noch Michiel Angelo, noch Rafel zag te haalen,
En daarom liever koos doorluchtiglyk te dwaalen,
Om de eerste ketter in de Schilderkunst te zyn,
En menig nieuweling te lokken aan zyn' lyn;
Dan zich door 't volgen van erwaarene te scherpen,
En zyn vermaard penseel den réglen te onderwerpen,
Die, schoon hy voor niet één van all' die meesters week
In houding, noch in kracht van koloryt bezweek,
Als hy een' naakte vrouw, gelyk 't somtijds gebeurde,
Zou schild'ren tot model geen Grieksche Venus keurde;
Maar eer een' waschter, of turftreedster uit een' schuur,
Zyn' dwaaling noemende navolging van Natuur,
Al 't ander ydele verzieling. Slappe borsten,
Verwongen' handen, ja de neepen van de borsten
Des ryglijfs in de buik, des kousebands on 't been,
't Moest al gevolg zyn, of natuur was niet te vreên;
Ten minsten zyne, die geen regels, noch geen reden
Van evenmatigheid gedoogde in 's menschen leden;
En doorzigt alzo min, als tusschentydte, woog,
Noch wikte met de kunst, maar op de schyn van 't oog.
Die door de gansche Stad op bruggen, en op hoeken,
Op Nieuwe, en Noordermarkt zeer yv'rig op ging zoeken
Harnassen, Moriljons, Japonsche Ponjerts, bont,

En rafelkraagen, die hy schilderachtig vond,
En vaak een' Scipio aan 't Roomsche lichchaam paste,
Of de éd'le leden van een Cyrus meê vermaste.
En echter scheen hem, schoon hy tot zyn voordeel nam,
Wat ooit uit 's waerelds vier gedeelten herwaarts kwam,
Tot ongemeenheid van optooisel veel te ontbreken,
Als hy zyn beelden in de kleederen zou steeken.
Wat is 't een schade voor de kunst, dat zich zoo braaf
Een' hand niet beter van haare ingestorte gaaf
Gediend heeft! Wie had hem voorby gestreefd in 't schild'ren?
Maar och! hoe ed'ler geest, hoe meer zy zal verwild'ren,
Zo zy zich aan geen grond, en snoer van regels bindt,
Maar alles uit zich zelf te weeten onderwindt!

APPENDIX F

André Félibien's discussion of Rembrandt in *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes* (Paris: 1685), IV, 150—157:

Rimbrans vivoit encore alors (when Gaspard de Crayer died in 1666). C'estoit un Peintre assez universel, et qui a fait quantité de portraits. Tous ses tableaux sont peints d'une manière tres-particulière, et bien différente de celle qui paroist si lechée, dans laquelle tombent d'ordinaire les Peintres Flamans. Car souvent il ne faisoit que donner de grands coups de pinceau, et coucher ses couleurs fort épaisses, les unes auprès des autres, sans les noyer et les adoucir ensemble. Cependant, comme les gousts son différens, plusieurs personnes ont fait cas de ses ouvrages. Il est vray aussi qu'il y a beaucoup d'art, et qu'il a fait de fort belles testes. Quoy-que toutes n'ayent par les graces du pinceau, elles ont beaucoup de force; et lorsqu'on les regarde d'une distance proportionnée, elles font un tres-bon effet, et paroissent avec de beaucoup de rondeur.

Il est vray, dit Pymandre, que les portraits du Peintre dont vous me parlez, sont bien différens de ceux de Vandéik, et que les qualitez necessaires à faire une belle teste, et que vous remarquiez tantost, ne se trouvent point, à mon avis, dans celles de Rimbrans. Car il n'y a pas long-temps qu'on m'en fit voir une, où toutes les teintes sont séparées, et les coups de pinceau marquez d'une épaisseur de couleurs si extraordinaire, qu'un visage paroist avoir quelque chose d'affreux, lors qu'on le regarde un peu de près. Cependant, comme les yeux n'ont pas besoin d'une grande distance pour embrasser un simple portrait, je ne voy pas qu'ils pussent estre satisfaits en voyant des tableaux si peu finis.

Tous les ouvrages de ce Peintre, repartis-je, ne sont pas de la sorte. Il a si bien placé les teintes et les demi-teintes les unes auprès des autres, et si bien entendu les lumieres et les ombres, que ce qu'il a peint, d'une manière grossiere, et qui mesme ne semble souvent qu'ébauché, ne laisse pas de réüssir, lors, comme je vous ay dit, qu'on n'en est pas trop près. Car par l'éloignement, les coups de pinceau fortement donnez, et cette épaisseur de couleurs que vous

avez remarquée, diminuënt à la venûë, et se noyant et meslant ensemble, font l'effet qu'on souhaite.

La distance qu'on demande pour bien voir un tableau, n'est pas seulement afin que les yeux ayent plus d'espace et plus de commodité pour embrasser les objets, et pour les mieux voir ensemble: c'est encore afin qu'il se trouve davantage d'air entre l'oeil et l'objet.

Vous voulez dire, interrompit Pymandre, que par le moyen d'une plus grande densité d'air, toutes les couleurs d'un tableau paroissent noyées et comme fonduës, s'il faut me servir de vos termes, les unes avec les autres.

C'est, répondis-je, que quelque soin qu'on apporte à bien peindre un ouvrage, toutes ses parties étant composées d'une infinité de différentes teintes, qui demeurent toûjours en quelque façon distinctes et séparées, ces teintes n'ont garde d'être meslées ensemble, de la mesme sorte que sont celles des corps naturels. Il est bien vrai que quand un tableau est peint dans la dernière perfection, il peut estre considéré dans une moindre distance; et il a cét avantage de paroistre avec plus de force et de rondeur, comme font ceux du Corège. C'est pourquoi je vous ay fait remarquer que la grande union et le mélange des couleurs sert beaucoup à donner aux tableaux plus de force et de verité, et qu'aussi plus ou moins de distance, contribuë infiniment à cette union.

Je vous diray encore, que c'est par la mesme raison de cette grand union de couleurs, que les excellens tableaux peints à huile, et qui sont faits il y a long-temps, paroissent avec plus de force et de beauté, parce que toutes les couleurs dont ils ont esté peintes, ont eu plus de loisir de se mesler et se noyer ou sondre les unes avec les autres, à mesure que ce qu'il y avoit de plus aqueux et de plus humide dans l'huile, s'est seché. C'est ce qui fait que l'on couvre les tableaux avec un vernis qui émousse cette pointre brillante et cette vivacité, qui quelquefois éclate trop et inégalement dans des ouvrages fraîchement faits; et ce vernis leur donne et plus de force et plus de douceur. Comme les peintures en miniatures ou en pastel, ont toûjours plus de secheresse que celles à l'huile, on met ordinairement un talc ou une glace de crystal, afin d'en attendrir toutes les parties, et les voir mieux meslées ensemble. Vous pouvez remarquer, qu'un petit portrait peint en émail n'a pas besoin de ce secours, parce que les couleurs dont il est travaillé, étant parfonduës au feu, comme disent les ouvriers, elles acquièrent cette parfaite union et ce grand poliment que l'on tasche de donner aux autres peintures, soit par le travail, soit par le maniement du pinceau, soit par les vernis, ou par le secours du talc et du verre, et encore en s'aidant de l'air qu'on interpose entre l'oeil et l'objet, par le moyen des différentes distances.

Or l'on se sert de tous ces moyens, pour donner aux choses peintes, le relief et la rondeur qui leur est nécessaire pour paroître plus ressemblantes à ce qu'on imite. Je scay bien que c'est une chose qui n'est pas moins difficile dans cette partie de la Peinture qui regarde le coloris, que celle des proportions dans ce qui regarde le dessein. Et bien que dans l'une et dans l'autre l'on ait pour fin d'arriver à cette beauté parfaite que tous les excellens ouvriers ont toujours recherchée; la science toutefois en est si cachée, que jusques à present elle n'a point encore esté découverte, ou du moins l'étude qu'on en fait, n'a pû établir des regles pour la mettre en pratique, et parvenir avec certitude à représenter cette unique beauté dont on se forme l'idée. Ces difficultez ne se rencontrent pas seulement dans ce qui regarde les ouvrages de Peinture; mais encore dans ceux de Sculpture et d'Architecture, où les plus sçavans hommes sont tous leurs efforts, pour faire en sorte que toutes les parties d'un édifice, tous les membres d'une statuë, et tout ce qui entre dans l'ordonnance d'un tableau, reçoivent une symmetrie, une proportion, une grace et une harmonie si grande, que des unes et des autres il s'en fasse à la veuë une sensation qui la satisfasse, de mesme que les accords de Musique contentent les oreilles.

Il est vrai, interrompt Pymandre, que les Maistres en Musique ont l'avantage d'avoir découvert les divers tons, et les differentes modulations qui peuvent perfectionner un concert de voix ou une symphonie d'instrumens.

Dans les Arts dont les yeux sont les juges, luy repliquay-je, nous éprouvons qu'il n'en est pas de mesme. On connoist bien qu'il y a une beauté positive que l'on tasche d'acquérir: mais soit que la vûë soit plus difficile à satisfaire que les autres sens, ou qu'il soit plus mal-aisé de bien ordonner la quantité d'objets qu'elle peut découvrir en un instant, et qu'elle peut aussi examiner à loisir; on scait, comme je viens de dire, que quelques efforts qu'on ait faits jusques à maintenant, l'on n'a pû encore trouver les moyens pour y arriver. Que si quelques-uns ont esté assez heureux pour en approcher, ç'a esté par des voyes qu'ils n'ont pas eux-mesmes bien connuës, ou du moins qu'ils n'ont pû enseigner aux autres. Car nous voyons que les Architectes, les Sculpteurs et les Peintres, tiennent tous des chemins différens, quoy-qu'ils taschent d'arriver à un mesme but; et que les plus éclairés connoissent qu'il y a une raison de beauté positive. Cependant ils n'ont pû encore découvrir cette raison si cachée, et pourtant si vraie, par le moyen de laquelle ils pourroient établir des regles assurées et démonstratives, pour faire des ouvrages qui pussent aussi-bien satisfaire les yeux, comme avec le temps on a trouvé moyen de satisfaire l'ouïe par des proportions harmoniques.

Alors m'estant arrêté, Vous voyez, dis-je à Pymandre, comment insensible-

ment nous nous sommes éloignez de nos Peintres. Il est vrai, me repliqua-t-il, que pour peu que nous eussions avancé plus avant, nous serions passez de la Peinture à la Musique. Cependant, cette petite digression ne laisse pas de me faire comprendre beaucoup de choses dans les diverses manières de peindre, ausquelles je n'avois pas fait réflexion jusques à present. Cela me servira mesme à l'avenir, pour regarder les tableaux dans des distances proportionnées, et en considerant les ouvrages des Peintres, connoître la raison des différens effets de rondeur et de tendresse que j'y remarqueray. Mais retournez, je vous prie, à ce Peintre que vous venez de quitter, et dont la manière si éloignée de celle des autres, nous a aussi éloignez de luy.

Non seulement, repris-je, il a peint fort différemment des autres; mais il a gravé à l'eau-forte d'une façon toute singulière. L'on quantité d'estampes de luy, tres-curieuses, et entre autres, de fort beaux portraits, quoi-que très-différens, comme je vous ay dit, des gravûres ordinaires. Il mourut en 1668.

APPENDIX G

Biography of Rembrandt by Roger de Piles, *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres, Avec des reflexions sur leurs Ouvrages* (Paris: 1699), 433—438:

REMBRANT VAN REIN

Le surnom de Van Rein luy vient du lieu de sa naissance qui est un Village scitué sur le bras du Rein qui passe à Leyde, il étoit fils d'un Meusnier et Disciple d'un assez bon Peintre d'Amsterdam appelé Lesman; mais il ne devoit la connoissance qu'il a aqoise dans sa Profession qu'à la bonté de son Esprit et à ses Réflexions. Il ne faut néanmoins chercher dans ses Ouvrages, ni la correction du Dessen, ni le Goût de l'Antique. Il disoit luy-même, que son but n'étoit que l'imitation de la Nature vivante, ne faissant consister cette Nature que dans les choses créées, telles qu'elles se voyent, il avoit de vieilles armures, de vieux instrumens, de vieux ajustemens de tête, et quantité de vieilles étoffes ouvragées, et il disoit que c'étoit-là ses Antiques. Il ne laissoit pas, malgré sa manière, d'être curieux de beaux Dessesins d'Italie, dont il avoit un grand nombre aussi bien que de belles Estampes, dont il n'a pas profité: tant il est vray que l'éducation et l'habitude ont beaucoup de pouvoir sur nos esprits. Cependant il a fait quantité de Portraits, d'une force, d'une suavité et d'une verité surprenantes.

Sa graveure à l'Eau forte tient beaucoup de sa manière de peindre. Elle est expressive et spirituelle, principalement ses Portraits, dont les touches sont si à propos qu'elles expriment et la Chair et la Vie, le nombre des Estampes qui sont de sa main est d'environ deux cens quatre-vingt. On y voit son Portrait plusieurs fois, et l'on peut juger par l'année qui y est marquée qu'il est né avec le siècle. Et de toutes ces dates que l'on voit sur ses Estampes, il n'y en a point au de là de 1628; ni après 1659. Il y en a quatre ou cinq qui font voir qu'il étoit à Venise en 1635. et 1636. Il se maria en Hollande, et il a gravé le Portrait de sa Femme avec le sien, il a retouché plusieurs de ses Estampes jusqu'à quatre et cinq fois pour en changer le Clair-obscur et pour chercher un bon effet. Il paroît que le papier blanc n'étoit pas toujours de son Goût

pour les impressions: car il a fait tirer quantité de ses épreuves sur du papier de demie teinte principalement sur du papier de la Chine qui est d'une teinte Rousse et dont les épreuves sont recherchées des Curieux.

Il y a dans sa graveure une façon de faire qui n'a point encore été connuë que je sache. Elle a quelque chose de la manière noire; mais celle-cy n'est venuë qu'après. Quoy qu'il eut un bon Esprit et qu'il eût gagné beaucoup de bien, son penchant le portoit à converser avec des gens de basse naissance. Quelques personnes qui s'intéressoient à sa réputation luy en voulurent parler, quand je veux d'élasser mon Esprit, leur dit-il, ce n'est pas l'honneur que je cherche c'est la liberté. Et comme on luy reprochoit un jour la singularité de sa manière d'employer les Couleurs qui rendoient ses Tableaux raboteux, il répondit qu'il étoit Peintre, et non pas Teinturier. Il mourut à Amsterdam l'an 1668.

REFLEXIONS

Sur les Ouvrages de Rembrandt

Les talens de la Nature tirent leurs plus grand prix de la façon de les cultiver et l'exemple de Rembrandt est une preuve tres-sensible du pouvoir que l'habitude et l'éducation ont sur la naissance des hommes. Ce Peintre étoit né avec un beau Génie et un Esprit solide, sa veine étoit fertile, ses pensées fines et singulières, ses compositions expressives et les mouvemens de son Esprit fort vifs: mais parce qu'avec le lait il avoit sucé le Goût de son Païs, qu'il avoit été élevé dans une vüe continuelle d'un naturel pesant et qu'il avoit connu trop tard une vérité plus parfaite que celle qu'il avoit touÿjours pratiquée, ses productions se tournèrent de côté de son habitude, malgré les bonnes semences qui étoient dans son Esprit; ainsi on ne verra point dans Rembrandt, ni le Goût de Raphaël, ni celuy de l'Antique, ni pensées Poëtiques, ni élégance de Dessein; on y trouvera seulement, tout ce que le Naturel de son Païs, conçû par une vive imagination, est capable de produire. Il en a quelques fois relevé la bassesse par un bon mouvement de son Génie: mais comme il n'avoit aucune pratique de la belle proportion, il retomboit facilement dans le mauvais Goût auquel il étoit accoûtumé.

C'est la raison pour laquelle Rembrandt n'a pas beaucoup peint de sujets d'Histoires, quoy qu'il ait dessiné une infinité de pensées qui n'ont pas moins de sel et de piquant que les productions des meilleurs Peintres. Le grand nombre de ses Dessesins que j'ay entre mes mains en est une preuve convaincante à qui voudra leur rendre justice. Et bien que ses Estampes ne soient pas

inventées avec le même Esprit que les Desseins dont je parle, on y voit néanmoins un Clair-obscur et des expressions d'une beauté peu commune.

Il est vray que le talent de Rembrandt, ne s'est pas tourné à faire un beau choix du Naturel; mais il avoit un artifice merveilleux pour l'imitation des objets présens, l'on en peut juger par les différens Portraits qu'il a faits, et qui bien loin de craindre la comparaison d'aucun Peintre, mettent souvent à bas, par leur présence, ceux des plus grans Maîtres.

Si ses contours ne sont pas corrects, les traits de son Dessein sont pleins d'esprit, et l'on voit dans les Portraits qu'il a gravez que chaque trait de pointe comme dans sa Peinture, chaque coup de Pinceau donnent aux parties du visage un caractère de vie et de vérité, qui fait admirer celui de son Génie.

Il avoit une suprême intelligence du Clair-obscur, et ses Couleurs locales se prestant un mutuel secours l'une à l'autre et se font valloir par la Comparaison. Ses Carnations ne sont pas moins vrayes, moins fraîches, ni moins recherchées dans les sujets qu'il a représentez que celles du Titien. Ces deux Peintres étoient convaincus qu'il y avoit des Couleurs qui se détruisoient l'une l'autre par l'excès du mélange, qu'ainsi il ne falloit les agiter par le mouvement du Pinceau que le moins qu'on pouvoit. Ils préparoient par des Couleurs amies une première couche la plus aprochante du Naturel qu'il leur étoit possible. Ils donnoient sur cette pâte toute fraîche par des coups legers et par des teintes Vierges, la force et les fraîcheurs de la Nature et finissoient ainsi le travail qu'ils observoient dans leur modèle. La différence qui est entre ces deux Peintres sur ce sujet c'est que Titien, rendoit ses recherches plus imperceptibles et plus fonduës, et qu'elles sont dans Rembrandt très distinguées à les régarder de prés; mais dans une distance convenable elles paroissent tres unies par la justesse des coups et par l'accord des Couleurs. Cette pratique est singuliere à Rembrandt, elle est une preuve convaincante que la capacité de ce Peintre est à couvert du hazard, qu'il étoit Maître de ses Couleurs, et qu'il en possedoit l'Art en souverain.

APPENDIX H

Roger de Piles' "Balance de Peintres" in *Cours de Peinture par Principes* (Paris: 1708),

NOMS des Peintres les plus connus	Composition	Dessein	Coloris	Expression
A				
Albane.	14	14	10	6
Albert Dure.	8	10	10	8
Andre del Sarte.	12	16	9	8
B				
Baroche.	14	15	6	10
Bassan, Jacques.	6	8	17	0
Bastist. del Piombo.	8	13	16	7
Belin, Jean.	4	6	14	0
Bourdon.	10	8	8	4
Le Brun.	16	16	8	16
C				
Calliari P. Ver.	15	10	16	3
Les Caraches.	15	17	13	13
Correge.	13	13	15	12
D				
Dan. de Volter.	12	15	5	8
Diepembek.	11	10	14	6
Le Dominiquin.	15	17	9	17
G				
Giorgion.	8	9	18	4
Le Guerchin.	18	10	10	4
Le Guide.	—	13	9	12

NOMS des Peintres les plus connus	Composition	Dessein	Coloris	Expression
H				
Holben.	9	10	16	13
J				
Jean da Udiné.	10	8	16	3
Jaq. Jourdans.	10	8	16	6
Luc. Jourdans.	13	12	9	6
Josepin.	10	10	6	2
Jules Romain.	15	16	4	14
L				
Lanfranc.	14	13	10	5
Leonard de Vinci.	15	16	4	14
Lucas de Leide.	8	6	6	4
M				
Mich. Bonarotti.	8	17	4	8
Mich. de Caravage.	6	6	16	0
Muiten.	6	8	15	4
O				
Otho Venius.	13	14	10	10
P				
Palme le vieux.	5	6	16	0
Palme le jeune.	12	9	14	6
Le Parmesan.	10	15	6	6
Paul Veronese.	15	10	16	3
Fr. Penni il fattoré.	0	15	8	0
Perrin del Vague.	15	16	7	6
Pietre de Cortone.	16	14	12	6
Pietre Perugin.	4	12	10	4
Polid. de Caravage.	10	17	—	15
Pordenon.	8	14	17	5
Pourbus.	4	15	6	6
Poussin.	15	17	6	15
Primitice.	15	14	7	10

NOMS des Peintres les plus connus	Composition	Dessin	Coloris	Expression
R				
Raphaël Santio.	17	18	12	18
Rembrant.	15	6	17	12
Rubens.	18	13	17	17
S				
Fr. Salviati.	13	15	8	8
Le Sueur.	15	15	4	15
T				
Teniers.	15	12	13	6
Pietre Teste.	11	15	0	6
Tintoret.	15	14	16	4
Titien.	12	15	18	6
V				
Vendeik.	15	10	17	13
Vanius.	13	15	12	13
Z				
Tadée Zuccre	13	14	10	9
Frederic Zuccre.	10	13	8	8

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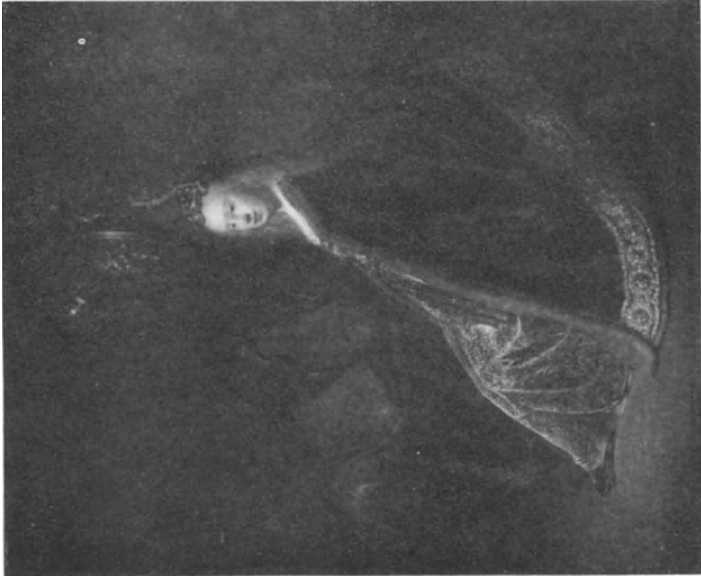
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7. TWO PEN STUDIES FOR A MATER DOLOROSA, AND CHALK STUDIES OF FIGURES.
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



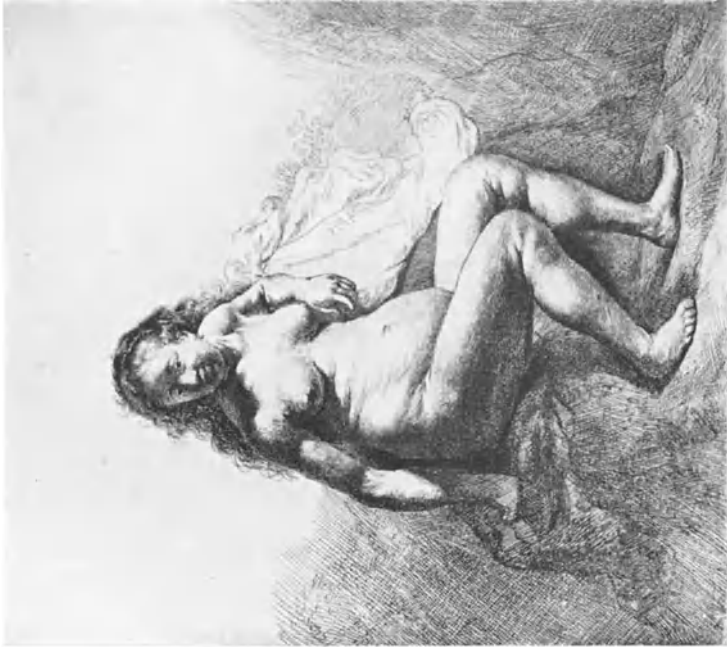
8. THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS. 1646. *Munich, Alte Pinakothek.*



9. REMBRANDT'S MOTHER. *Windsor Castle.*



10. SELF-PORTRAIT. *Formerly, Lord de L'Isle and Dudley Collection.*



11. NUDE WOMAN SEATED ON A MOUND. *Etching (B. 198).*



12. WENZEL HOLLAR. NUDE WOMAN SEATED ON A MOUND. *1635. Etching after Rembrandt.*



13. JAN JORIS VAN VLIET. AFFLICTED MAN. 1634.
Etching after Rembrandt; see figure 14.



14. JUDAS RETURNING THE PIECES OF SILVER. DETAIL.
1629. London, Lady Normanby Collection.



15. WENZEL HOLLAR. DEMOCRITUS AND HERACLITUS.
Etching after Van Vliet's reproductions of Rembrandt's LAUGHING MAN, The Hague, Mauritshuis, and JUDAS (see figures 13 and 14).



16. PHILO JUDAEUS. *Engraving published by Ciartres after Van Vliet's reproduction of Rembrandt's PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN, 1630, (Innsbruck).*



17. BALAAM'S ASS. 1626. Paris, Musée Cognacq-Jay.



18. SAMSON'S WEDDING FEAST. 1638. Dresden, Museum.



19. THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE. 1661. *The Hague, Royal Library.*
Drawing.



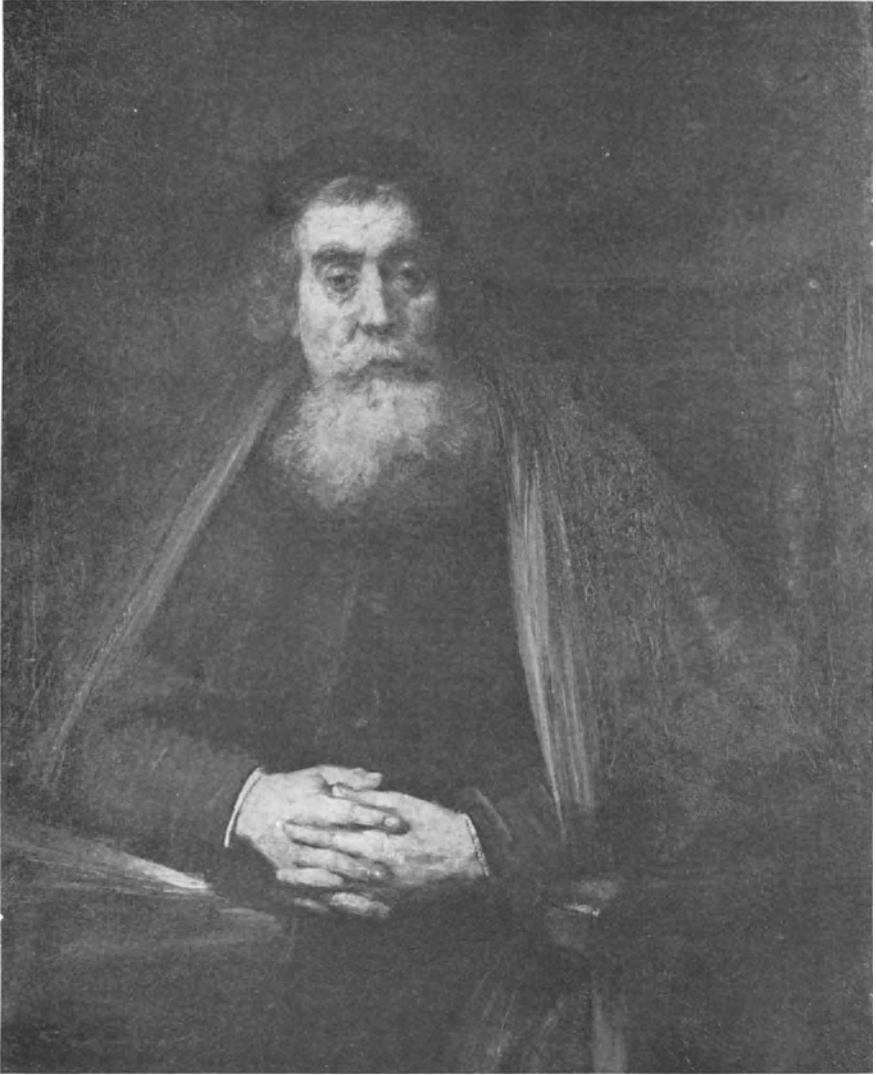
20. ARISTOTLE WITH THE BUST OF HOMER. 1653.
New York, Mrs. A. W. Erickson Collection.



21. HOMER. 1663. *The Hague, Mauritshuis.*



22. SELF-PORTRAIT. *Florence, Uffizi.*



23. PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN WITH FOLDED HANDS. *Florence, Uffizi.*



24. PIETER LASTMAN. SACRIFICIE AT LYSTRA. *Formerly in the Count Stetzki Collection, Romanow Castle, Wolhynia.*



25. JAN PYNAS. JOSEPH'S BLOODY COAT. 1618. *Formerly in the Schuwaloff Collection now at the Hermitage, Leningrad.*



26. THE CONSPIRACY OF JULIUS CIVILIS. Stockholm, National Museum.



27. JOACHIM VON SANDRART. PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT.
Published in Teutsche Academie in 1675.



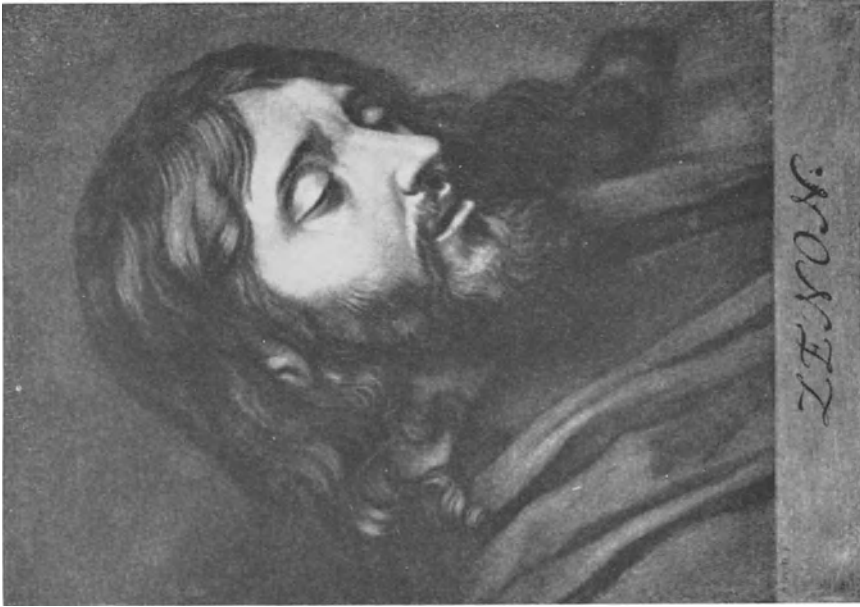
28. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHING. Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich Museum.



29. YOUNG GIRL AT A WINDOW. 1651. *Stockholm, National Museum*



30. THE HOLY FAMILY. 1646. Cassel, Museum.



31. BERNARD PICART. ZENO. 1699.
Mezzotint after a painting by Rembrandt.



32. BERNARD PICART. LUCIAN. 1699.
Mezzotint after a painting by Rembrandt.



33. THE HOLY FAMILY.
Downton Castle, A. R. Boughton Knight Collection.



34. Water colour drawing of the "NIGHT WATCH" by an anonymous artist. Before 1655. From the family album of Frans Banning Cocq. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



35. CHRIST HEALING THE SICK (THE "HUNDRED GUILDER PRINT").
Detail. Etching (B. 74).



36. ST. PETER'S PRAYER BEFORE THE RAISING OF TABITHA.
Bayonne, Musée, Bonnat Collection.



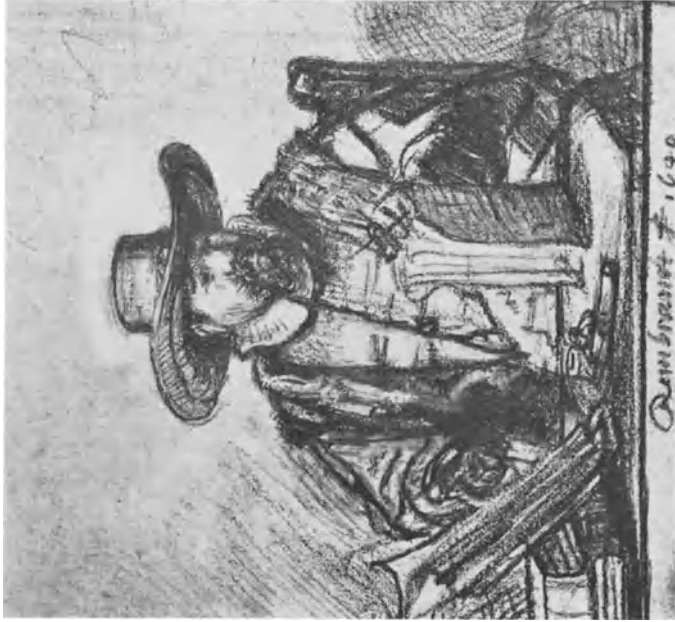
37. PORTRAIT OF GERARD DE LAIRESSE. 1655.
New York, Robert Lehman Collection.



38. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. 1634. *Leningrad, Hermitage.*



39. SELF-PORTRAIT. 1655. *Cassel, Museum.*



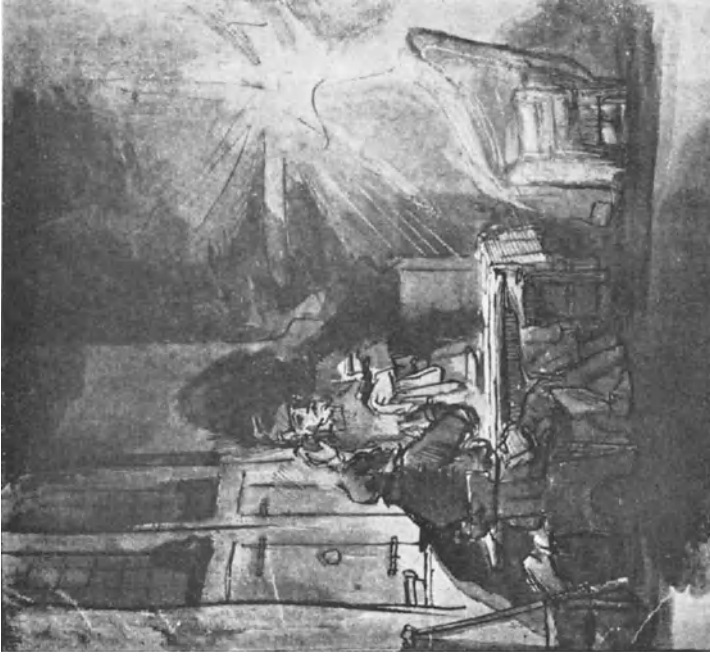
40. PORTRAIT OF ANSLO. 1640.
London, British Museum. Drawing.



41. SELF-PORTRAIT.
*Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, Alverthorpe Gallery,
Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection. Drawing.*



42. ARNOLD HOUBRAKEN. THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS.
Etching after Rembrandt, see figure 43.



43. THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. Drawing.



44. ARNOLD HOUBRAKEN. PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT
in *De Grootte Schouburg*. *Etching after*
Rembrandt (see figure 45)



45. REMBRANDT AND HIS WIFE SASKIA. 1636. *Etching* (B. 19).
(See figure 44; the other heads of fig. 44 are portraits of
Anna Maria Schurman and *Jacob Backer*)