

A detailed still life painting depicting a scholar's study. The scene is set against a dark, shadowy background. In the upper left, a hand is visible, pointing towards an open book with dense handwritten text. To the right, a human skull is placed on a surface, symbolizing mortality. Below the skull, a large, crumpled red cloth or garment is draped over a wooden structure. In the lower left, a globe is partially visible, resting on a stand. The foreground is filled with various objects: a stack of papers, a leather-bound book, and a small, ornate object that could be a pocket watch or a similar timepiece. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the paper, the smooth surface of the skull, and the folds of the red cloth.

*The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*















# WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE & MAGIC

*The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*



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25 OCTOBER 1996 - 13 APRIL 1997

AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

KINGSTON, CANADA



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## THE EXHIBITION WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF

Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Queen's University, Kingston

Royal Netherlands Embassy, Ottawa

Jack Kilgore and Co., Inc., New York

Otto Naumann, Ltd, New York

Ontario Arts Council

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Queen's University, Kingston

ISBN 0-88911-738-1

Graphic Design: Peter Dorn, RCA, FGDC

Typesetting: Queen's University Graphic Design Unit

Printing: Mutual Hadwen

Editor: Christine Hamelin

Cover illustration: Detail of *Allegory of Vanitas*

by Jacob van Spreeuwen, cat. no. 30



# CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 28 IV

FOREWORD 28 V

LEARNING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE VISUAL ARTS IN THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS 28 I

*Volker Manuth, Axel Rüger, Jonathan Bikker*

THE SCHOLARSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY OF SAINTS AND HERMITS 28 II

*David de Witt, Jane Russell-Corbett, Sandra Richards*

ALCHEMY IN DUTCH ART OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES 28 19

*VAN DE CONSTEN DER ALCHIMIE*

*Volker Manuth, Jillian Harrold, Dianna Beaufort*

COLOUR PLATES 28 27

CATALOGUE 28 31

BIBLIOGRAPHY 28 92

## ARTISTS REPRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Jacob Adriaensz. Backer cat. no. 20               | Jan Lutma the Younger cat. no. 10                              |
| Cornelis Bisschop cat. no. 13                     | Isaac Luttichuys cat. no. 1                                    |
| Abraham Bloemaert cat. no. 24                     | Pieter Nason cat. no. 6  |
| Pieter Bruegel the Elder (after) cat. nos. 19, 34 | Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn cat. nos. 2, 3, II, 14,<br>25, 36 |
| Johan de Cordua cat. no. 31                       | Constantijn Daniël van Renesse cat. no. 8                      |
| Heijmen Dullaert cat. no. 12                      | David Rijckaert III cat. no. 35                                |
| Govert Flinck cat. no. 22                         | Franciscus van Schooten cat. no. 7                             |
| Lucas Franchoys the Younger cat. no. 5            | Jacob van Spreeuwen cat. no. 30                                |
| Hendrick Goltzius cat. no. 18                     | Wallerant Vaillant cat. no. 32                                 |
| Hendrik Heerschop cat. no. 38                     | Johannes Gillisz. van Vliet cat. no. 26                        |
| Sir Godfrey Kneller cat. nos. 9, 29               | Thomas Wijck cat. no. 37                                       |
| Gérard de Lairese (after) cat. no. 33             | Anonymous painters cat. nos. 4, 15, 16, 21, 27, 28             |
| Paulus de Lesire cat. no. 17                      |  |
| Jan Lievens cat. no. 23                           |  |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**W**ISDOM, KNOWLEDGE & MAGIC: *The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* is a subject entirely suited to examination in a university setting. As an exhibition organized principally by students, it is unique in its ambitiousness in this country. The exhibition itself allows the Agnes Etherington Art Centre to display important paintings and prints from other public institutions and private collections over an extended period of time, and thereby to enrich significantly the cultural life of the community at large. The catalogue is a substantial investigation into the arts and sciences at a pivotal time and place – the seventeenth century in the Netherlands and Flanders – when intellectual endeavours of various sorts were beginning to shape the outlines of our modern world. Both exhibition and catalogue involved productive collaborations: staff of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and the Department of Art at Queen's on one hand, and faculty and students on the other.

We owe a large debt of gratitude to Dr Volker Manuth, Bader Chair of Northern Baroque Art, who conceived the exhibition and has been involved in every aspect of its realization. He selected the works of art included and supervised the graduate students who have taken part. Dr Manuth has asked me to acknowledge in particular the hard work and dedication of the students who, at various stages in their academic careers and from various backgrounds, worked closely together to produce a notably informative catalogue. Among them, Axel Rüger deserves special credit for conscientiously coordinating the project as a whole and for designing an imaginative installation for the exhibition. At the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Dorothy Farr has expertly overseen all aspects of the exhibition, while the rest of the staff have willingly assisted in various capacities. Thanks are also due to Steve Anderson and Christine Hamelin for editing the catalogue, assisted by one of the students Jonathan Bikker.

The authors of the catalogue have naturally sought advice and information from many sources, and for their help, wish me to thank the staff of the Art Library in Ontario Hall, Barbara Keyser of the Art Conservation program in the Department of Art at Queen's University, and Linda Graham, formerly in the departmental general office. Further afield, the authors received valuable assistance from Mimi Cazort and Richard Hemphill at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Katharine Lochnan at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Iva Lisikewycz of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Nadine Orenstein at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Peter Sutton in New York, Arwed Arnulf in Berlin, John H. Schlichte Bergen, Marieke de Winkel and Jaap van der Veen in Amsterdam.

From the outset, encouragement has come from the Dutch community in Canada, including Hans Westenberg, the Vice-Consul of the Netherlands in Kingston, Paul W.A. Schellekens, the Consul General of the Netherlands, Toronto, Mieke Bos, Attaché for Press and Cultural Affairs of the Royal Dutch Embassy, and His Excellency the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Canada, Mr J.H.W. Fietelaars, Ottawa, who also graciously consented to provide the Foreword for this publication.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the generous loan of works of art from public and private collections in Canada and the United States, especially that of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader of Milwaukee. No less significant has been the crucial financial support offered by the Offices of the Principal, Vice-Principal (Academic), and Research Services, the Faculty of Arts and Science, and the School of Graduate Studies at Queen's University, Jack Kilgore & Co., Inc. and Otto Naumann Ltd, New York, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Ottawa, and Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader.

It is a pleasure to extend heartfelt thanks to all these generous benefactors.

*David McTavish*

Director, Agnes Etherington Art Centre



# FOREWORD



**T**HE SEVENTEENTH century is known as the Golden Age of the young Republic of the “United Seven Provinces” of the Netherlands. The Union of Utrecht of 1579 concluded by these northern “rebellious” provinces had laid the foundation of the Republic. The fall of the port of Antwerp to Spanish occupying forces contributed to the rise of Amsterdam and the Republic, which rapidly grew into a seafaring world power. The United East India Company (VOC), established in 1602, drove Spanish and Portuguese merchants out of Asian waters and by the end of the seventeenth century owned trading stations from the Middle East to Japan.

The seventeenth century is known as the Golden Age because it is a period not only of unprecedented economic growth but also of great cultural and intellectual progress in the Netherlands. Changes in the spiritual climate contributed to these developments. The Republic was characterized by fairly generous freedom of religion and thought and concomitant favouring of the sciences, an environment which attracted foreign scholars who found themselves persecuted for their ideals or religious beliefs in their native lands. To mention just a few: John Locke and René Descartes lived for some time in the Republic, Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius) lies buried in the town of Naarden, and the Amsterdam-born philosopher Baruch Spinoza, of Spanish Jewish origin, also lived and worked in the Netherlands.

The Dutch sciences also flourished. World-renowned scholars such as Herman Boerhaave, Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek, and Christaan Huygens made invaluable contributions to scientific development. The sciences were further stimulated by the founding of universities and colleges. The country’s first university was founded in the city of Leiden in 1575, followed a few years later by Franeker (Friesland) and Utrecht. This great freedom of thought produced a mass of scientific work which in turn encouraged printing and publishing.

The Republic’s economic, cultural, and intellectual prosperity is amply reflected in the visual arts, particularly in painting. Seventeenth-century Dutch masters such as Rembrandt van Rijn and Johannes Vermeer barely require introduction. Intellectual freedom, the arts, and economic wealth together form the inextricably linked elements of what we have come to know as the Golden Age of the Republic of the Netherlands. I wish to applaud Queen’s University’s Art Department and Art Centre for having brought together seventeenth-century Netherlands arts and sciences in order to shed further light on this very special and proud period of our national history.

I sincerely hope that the Embassy’s contribution to *Wisdom, Knowledge and Magic: The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* will enhance this celebration of our heritage. This exhibition offers new insights to a wider audience across Canada, and we all hope that these time-honoured works will be appreciated and enjoyed.

*J.H.W. Fietelaars*

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Canada







# LEARNING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE VISUAL ARTS IN THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS



*Volker Manuth, Axel Rüger, Jonathan Bikker<sup>1</sup>*

## EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF REMBRANDT – *NAAR YDERS STAAT ENDE GELEGENTHEYT*

**H**OW IS LITERACY measured? The problems connected with this question are too extensive and multi-faceted for a brief analysis. Moreover, the primary sources available remain sparse. I will only sketch the basic characteristics of the educational system in the United Provinces. By their very nature, the biographical sources consulted here allow for very limited, general conclusions which will provide some interesting insights and a schematic backdrop for the topic of this exhibition.

It is well known that the United Provinces, as they emerged from the war of independence against Spain, developed into one of the leading economic centres of the world. At the same time, science and scientific research gained in importance. The newly founded universities and the country's scholars enjoyed an excellent reputation and attracted innumerable students from all parts of Europe. It is surprising, then, that the history of education and the sciences has been neglected in favour of art and literature in most of the recent survey texts on Dutch culture of the seventeenth century. The complex reasons for this phenomenon have recently been analyzed by Van Berkel, who rightfully points out that modern cultural history still treats the natural sciences in particular as "Clio's stepchild."<sup>2</sup> Thus, as representatives of Dutch culture, Rembrandt and Vermeer are far better known than the scientists Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695) and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1728). Nonetheless, artists and scholars were inextricably linked; their status and their activities were based on a complex system of historical and social conditions. The availability and the quality

of education played an important role in the environments of both artists and scholars.

The Italian historian Lodovico Guicciardini (1521–1589) paid the following compliment to his Dutch contemporaries in his *Descrittione de tutti i Paesi Bassi* (*Description of all the Netherlands*), which appeared in Dutch in 1612:

"Here [in the Netherlands] there were, and still are, many learned men in all the arts and sciences. The common people usually have some basic notions of grammar and nearly everyone, even the peasants and country folk, can at least read and write. Moreover, the art and science of common speech is wondrously generalized. For there are many who ... can speak foreign languages ... particularly French, which is very common among them: many speak German, English, Italian and other foreign languages."<sup>3</sup>

At least to some extent, this statement is an exaggeration. The same can be said – although in a reverse sense – about the assertions of two English travellers who visited the Netherlands towards the end of the seventeenth century. Ellis Veryard (1657–1714) emphasized with dismissive undertones the preference of Netherlanders for the mechanical arts over the liberal arts, because the former were essential for their strongly developed interest in economics. Joseph Shaw (1671–1733) was even more unmistakable in his negative judgement of the educational interests in a country "where profit is much more in request than honour."<sup>4</sup> The negative remarks of both English tourists should be viewed in the context of the Dutch-English Wars. At any rate, the truth concerning the general level of education in the United Provinces is likely to be found somewhere between these two extremes.

The Reformation represented a decisive turning point in the history and development of the educational system in the Northern Netherlands. A basic



principle of the rapidly spreading new doctrine was individual knowledge of the Bible and Catechism, which demanded that large segments of the population could read. The typical monastic schools in the period before the Reformation, which focused on the knowledge of the Catholic liturgy, were replaced by so-called *stadsscholen* (town schools), under the supervision of municipal magistrates.<sup>5</sup> Principals and *schoolmeesters* (teachers) were now required to be members of the Reformed Church and were appointed by the magistrate upon passing an examination. The teachers received a salary and were also allowed to keep the tuition fees paid by the pupils. Compulsory education did not exist, however. School attendance was left to the discretion of parents. Many chose apprenticeships in the crafts for their children, which in most cases did not require schooling. Child labour was not subject to moral reservations, as long as it formed part of the child's training and led to financial independence.<sup>6</sup> Children of poorer parents who could not afford the tuition fees were still granted education *pro deo* (according to the will of God). In some cases the costs were assumed by the Reformed Church.

Apparently, the quality of elementary teachers varied considerably, because no special training existed. Few *schoolmeesters* would have come close to the level of David Beck (1594–1634), who taught first in The Hague, and from 1625 onwards in Arnhem. From his diary of 1624 it appears that he was an educated man, despite having not attended university. Although he knew neither Greek nor Latin, he wrote not only in Dutch but also in German, French, and Italian. The authors and titles he cites in his diary suggest that he was well read.<sup>7</sup>

The larger towns had three types of schools. At the lowest level were the *Nederduitse scholen* (Dutch schools) for basic schooling in reading, writing, religious instruction, and some arithmetic. The *Franse scholen* (French schools) were very popular private schools (*bijsscholen*) which, for higher tuition fees, offered an education more particularly aimed at careers in commerce, teaching arithmetic, accounting, geography, and French. Finally, there were the *Latijnse scholen* (Latin schools), offering more advanced instruction for boys only. They taught Latin, Greek, occasionally Hebrew, and the classical authors as preparation for university studies. Generally, Latin schools consisted of six classes. The school regulations of the province of Holland, which came into effect in 1625, specified the required subject material for each age group. The main focus was on acquiring Latin grammar and syntax. The same applied to Greek, although to a lesser

degree. The curriculum also included style exercises in both languages, handwriting, arithmetic, voluntary music lessons, and Catechism study. Among the numerous classical authors to be studied were Caesar, Cicero, Terence, Virgil, Aesop, Hesiod, Sallust, Horace, and Euripides.<sup>8</sup> Students could also receive paid private tutoring if they so desired.

Pupils were also taught the principles and content of the Reformed faith. This included Sunday church attendance followed by Catechism instruction in school. Usually schools were open seven days a week, but in many places Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were free. The corresponding mornings were devoted to the teaching of the Catechism. Classes – as a matter of course held in Latin at the higher levels in the Latin schools – began and ended with a prayer. The principal of the school was expected to exert a positive influence on his pupils' moral conduct. It was his prerogative to take boarding pupils into his house for a fee.

The Latin school saw itself as a *seminarium ecclesiae et rei publicae* – that is, a preparatory school for studies in theology and jurisprudence.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the graduates went on to study one of the two disciplines. Even though Latin schools were in principle open to all social levels, primarily the sons of the wealthy regent families attended these schools, in order to prepare for academic studies and subsequent positions of office in government and administration. However, exceptions to this rule were not rare. Children from the middle class were also to be found among the pupils. We know, for example, that Rembrandt, the son of an ordinary miller, attended Latin school in his native Leiden. His parents had intended for him to study, and registered him at Leiden University on 20 May 1620. Whatever discipline they had envisioned for him, Rembrandt decided against university and chose painting instead.

Girls were not permitted to attend Latin school. After they had received their basic education along with the boys, they could move on to either the *brei-en-naaischooltjes* (needle-work schools) or the French schools, which apparently placed much value on etiquette. Early in the seventeenth century the Leiden poet and municipal secretary Jan van Hout sent his daughter to a French school, not, as he wrote, “*cour-tisaensche manieren te leeren of 't joffertgen te spelen*” (“to learn the manners of courtesans or to play the young lady”), but instead to receive a good education.<sup>10</sup> In the more cultivated families private tutors conducted lessons in speaking, drawing, and dancing in order to prepare the young women for a marriage in accordance with their social rank.



In the country there were simple village schools in which boys and girls were taught little more than the basics of reading and writing. Regular participation would have been the exception because even young children had to help with the daily work on the farms. Statistics on the degree of literacy are rare, but it seems that modest reading and writing skills were more common than has been generally assumed. In the second half of the seventeenth century, approximately 82 percent of the male population of the North Holland village of Graft were able to sign documents with their own names. In Amsterdam it was only 70 percent, but this included foreigners who had not received education in the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup> The ownership of books among the rural population was mostly limited to Bibles and song books. An interesting exception is the Frisian farmer Dirck Jansz. (1578/79–1636). The *aan-tekeningenboek* (journal) he kept from 1604 until his death indicates that he owned more than 40 books, including many vernacular texts such as *Floris ende Blancefloer*, *Reinard de Vos*, and *Uilenspiegel*, historical works, and Aesop's fables.<sup>12</sup> His collection of books was clearly larger than that of the average city dweller.

Private libraries, whose size depended on the financial means of their owners, were to be found mostly in academic circles. The affluent Utrecht physician Cornelis Booth (1605–1678), while he was still a student, at the age of 22 owned a library of more than 500 books, including not only medical textbooks, but theological, philosophical, and historical works. His biography reveals that the pursuit of a particular academic discipline did not preclude a career in an entirely different field. After completing Latin school in Utrecht, he studied medicine in Leiden and received his doctorate at Caen in France. Upon his return to Utrecht he practised as a physician, but only briefly. An autodidact, he acquainted himself with law and subsequently joined the municipal government, crowning this career in 1656 by assuming the office of mayor.<sup>13</sup>

The Dutch universities, above all Leiden (est. 1575), Franeker (est. 1614), and Utrecht (est. 1634), and the so-called *illustre scholen* (which could not confer doctoral degrees), were among the leading academic institutions in Europe. The Netherlands was second to none in the number of educational institutions relative to the size of the country. It is believed that towards the end of the seventeenth century, around 2.5 percent of the male population of a given age group were students, that is, among eighteen-year-old males, one in forty.<sup>14</sup> In the beginning the *bonae litterae* dom-

inated the academic curriculum – in the time of Lipsius, Scaliger, and Heinsius, Leiden was the centre of classical and oriental philology – but soon, more practically oriented subjects were added. Aspiring engineers, land surveyors, and fortification specialists were drawn from all parts of Europe to the Leiden engineering school associated with the university. One is reminded of the words of the Englishman Veryard, cited above.

Towards the second half of the century, scholarly pursuits were no longer limited to the universities. For various reasons, famous scientists such as Christiaan Huygens, Jan Swammerdam, and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek conducted their activities outside of universities. Huygens was the son of the renowned Constantijn Huygens, who was educated in many areas and who served three stadtholders from the House of Orange between 1625 and 1687. Christiaan maintained only loose ties to universities after finishing his studies. Instead, as an internationally recognized scientist, he moved in the circles of the newly established scientific academies. He was a member of the English Royal Society and the French *Académie des Sciences*. Through his father and private tutors he had already received a comprehensive education, which was a tradition in the Huygens household. As had his grandfather Christiaan, his father Constantijn arranged for a suitable upbringing for his children which is described in detail in his journal. His notes are among the most informative sources concerning the education of young aristocrats in the Dutch Republic.<sup>15</sup> An appointment as a university professor was not considered appropriate in this family. Even at this social level the example of the Huygens family is unique.

It was different with Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, whose refinement of the microscope revolutionized modern science. He lacked an academic education, and not having studied at university, he was never able to become a professor, even though he was recognized and supported by the Royal Academy.<sup>16</sup> His situation epitomizes the intellectual development of scholars in the second half of the seventeenth century, who were marked by a strong independence from the educational establishments of the country. It was particularly the natural sciences, which were developing towards Positivism, that expanded their interests and reputation beyond the universities. Indeed this development fuelled a growing interest in the activities and lives of scholars, which is reflected by the popularity of this theme in the pictorial arts.



## THE LEARNED ARTIST IN THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS

THE HUMANIST concept of the “learned artist” or *pictor doctus* originated in Italian art theory of the Renaissance. Theorists such as Leon Battista Alberti, Lodovico Dolce, and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo propagated the notion of the ideal artist,<sup>17</sup> based on the ancient ideal of the learned poet (*doctus poeta*) described by Cicero and Quintilian. Artists were to be educated not only in the scientific fields of perspective and anatomy, but also in the humanist disciplines of history, literature, and theology. They would thus be able to improve their works, and their profession would be elevated from a craft to a liberal art.<sup>18</sup> Theorists justified deriving the notion of the ideal artist from that of the poet by referring to the ancient poet Horace’s phrase *ut pictura poesis* (“poetry is like painting”).<sup>19</sup> In Italy, the ideal of the learned artist became closely linked to the institution of the art academy, which provided young pupils with classes not taught in the master’s workshop, such as life-drawing and lessons in technical and humanist subjects.<sup>20</sup>

The situation was different, however, in the Northern Netherlands. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries painting was considered a craft, and the painter’s profession was tightly regulated by the craft guilds. Young painters were trained exclusively in artists’ workshops for which they had to pay.<sup>21</sup> It appears that Dutch artists largely identified with the craft aspects of their profession rather than with the intellectual aspirations of the Italian theorists and educated elites.<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that the artistic world of the Netherlands remained untouched by Italian ideals. Theorists such as Karel van Mander in his *Schilderboeck* of 1603–04 and Samuel van Hoogstraeten in his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst* of 1678 were interested in broadening the artist’s education and in raising the status of the visual arts.<sup>23</sup> In his *The Painting of the Ancients*, the famous scholar Franciscus Junius (1589–1677) also advocated a higher degree of erudition for the artist with the aim of elevating him from the status of the *pictor vulgaris*.<sup>24</sup> Yet Junius’s book, very difficult to understand, was probably not widely read by Dutch artists.<sup>25</sup>

Towards the second half of the seventeenth century one can detect a movement towards establishing regulations and institutions aimed at bettering the education of the artist in the Netherlands. The natural talent (*ingenium*) of the young artist and its development in the workshop were no longer regarded as sufficient.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, for example, in 1631 the Guild of St Luke in Haarlem introduced rules devised by the painter Pieter de Grebber which were based on humanist ideas. These rules do not represent a theory of painting, but were a series of practical hints, mainly for young history painters. Nonetheless, they gave the Guild a more academic nature.<sup>27</sup> Inspired by Italian models, other artists founded so-called “academies,” such as the one in Haarlem, established in 1583 by Karel van Mander (which was apparently more an intellectual circle for those with literary tastes);<sup>28</sup> a school in Utrecht that may have developed on the initiative of painters out of the local Guild of St Luke around 1610;<sup>29</sup> and the academy in The Hague, founded in 1656, which was not very well attended and only offered irregular classes.<sup>30</sup> These institutions must not be confused with the traditional Italian academies or the French academy established in 1648, which provided theoretical lessons in addition to life-drawing classes. In contrast, the Dutch academies taught life-drawing classes exclusively.<sup>31</sup>

The emphasis on drawing is obvious in painted representations of studio interiors. Normally, these depictions show pupils drawing after prints, plaster casts, or the life model while the master paints. If books are shown, they are mostly drawing books and model books, not textbooks which might indicate theoretical instruction. One exception is a painting of a studio interior by the Fleming Michael Sweerts (1624–1664), now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. Besides the traditional depiction of an artist with an assistant surrounded by the paraphernalia of the profession in the foreground, a doorway in the background opens towards a library, where a person is reading. It seems that Sweerts, influenced by Italian ideals, wanted to emphasize that the knowledge of theory is as important as the mastery of the tools. Whether Sweerts practised this ideal in his own studio after his return from Italy cannot be determined for lack of documentation.<sup>32</sup> Books often symbolized the ideals of a humanist education, but it was unusual for an artist to portray himself with identifiable scholarly books in order to emphasize his erudition.<sup>33</sup>

To determine the level of an artist’s education, one might consider what kind of books artists in the seventeenth century read or owned. Judging from a number of surviving inventories, one may cautiously conclude that artists did not normally possess extensive libraries.<sup>34</sup> In Abraham Bredius’s *Kunstlerinventare*, eighteen artists with significant book collections can be identified, but most of these, such as Coenraet Adriansz. van Schilperoort, are little known. The most prominent artists mentioned are Cornelis Dusart



(1660–1704), who had a very large library, Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613–1670), and Adrian van Nieulandt (1587–1658).<sup>35</sup> These inventories suggest that artists relied mainly on models, prints, drawings, emblematic imagery, and mythological handbooks for their pictorial inventions.<sup>36</sup> Karel van Mander's *Schilderboeck* was probably one such handbook. The author devotes a large section to the description and interpretation of stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which formed the source for most of the mythological subjects in Dutch painting.<sup>37</sup> Like the later *Teutsche Academie* by Joachim von Sandrart, Van Mander's book was helpful for artists in summarizing important aspects of theory, history, iconology, and symbolism.<sup>38</sup>

Few Dutch painters, it thus seems, were able to live up to the humanist ideal of the learned artist, and the *pictor doctus* was a rather unusual phenomenon in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>39</sup> Artists normally had basic schooling and were able to read and write,<sup>40</sup> but before they went on to Latin school, they became pupils in a workshop, usually between the ages of twelve and fourteen.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, a number of Dutch artists did receive a substantial education, either in a Latin school or even at university. The following artists serve as examples: Karel van Mander (1548–1606) went to Latin school and was later apprenticed to a French schoolmaster in Ghent;<sup>42</sup> Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606–1669) attended Latin school and, in 1620, his name appeared in the register of the University of Leiden. Whether he ever pursued any serious studies in the university cannot be determined, but it seems unlikely.<sup>43</sup> Constantijn van Renesse (1626–1680) (see cat. no. 8), an artist who worked in Rembrandt's workshop, was the son of an important theologian and scholar and studied languages and mathematics at the University of Leiden. Later, he worked as the secretary of the city of Eindhoven.<sup>44</sup> The most famous Dutch landscape painter, Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682), was listed in Amsterdam in 1676 as a medical doctor.<sup>45</sup> Van Ruisdael must have had a solid knowledge of human anatomy, but ironically he did not apply that knowledge in his paintings. Finally, the Amsterdam artist Jan de Bisschop (1628–1671) was trained and worked as a lawyer.<sup>46</sup>

Although the majority of artists did not have a substantial formal education, a number of them maintained friendships with scholars and humanists. Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) seems to have had close ties to Hadrianus Junius, an eminent classical philologist, historian, poet, and physician who provided most of Heemskerck's prints with Latin verses.<sup>47</sup> The engraver Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629) lived in

Leiden and had a number of friends among the scholars at the university there. His closest friend was the famous legal scholar, statesman, historian, and theologian Hugo Grotius, and other acquaintances included the medical Professor Reynier Pauw and the mathematician Ludolf van Collen.<sup>48</sup> According to Van Mander, the Amsterdam painter Dirck Barentsz. was well educated and maintained strong ties with important scholars and merchants, the influence of his seven-year stay in Italy. The most important of these contacts was probably Domenicus Lampsonius, secretary to the Bishop of Liège and a friend of Titian.<sup>49</sup>

Many artists were also closely involved with the rhetoricians' chambers (*rederijkers*) and with the Dutch theatre. The *rederijker* chambers were composed of artistically minded crafts- and tradesmen from various guilds who were interested in writing and performing, but who were not *litterati*. The chambers performed at public and private celebrations, festivals, carnivals, and on official occasions.<sup>50</sup> Many Dutch artists were members of these guilds: for example, Salomon de Bray, Adriaen Brouwer, Heijmen Dullaert (see cat. no. 12), Jacques de Gheyn II, Frans and Dirck Hals, and Esaias van de Velde. Others, including Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, Karel van Mander, and Adrian van de Venne, contributed as poets.<sup>51</sup> Through these chambers, artists had close contacts with the most important Dutch poets and playwrights of their time, including Gerbrand Adriansz. Bredero (who started out as a painter), Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, Roemer Visscher, and Joost van den Vondel.<sup>52</sup> Some painters also drew inspiration from the *rederijkers*' performances. P.C. Hooft's *tableaux vivants*, for example, inspired two paintings by Pieter Quast that represent Brutus playing the fool in front of King Tarquin (Amsterdam, Theatre Museum). The artist would have known Hooft's stage sets through Claes Jansz. Visscher's engravings.<sup>53</sup> The theatre was a source of mutual inspiration for artists and writers. Joost van den Vondel reported that his play *Joseph in Egypt* was inspired by a painting by Jan Pynas,<sup>54</sup> while a painting by Pieter de Codde was the source for E.L. Herckman's play *Tyrus*. Claes Cornelisz. Moyaert's painting *Mooy-aal and her Suitors* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) was based on a 1615 play by Bredero called *Moortje*.<sup>55</sup>

This is not to say that there were no artists who resembled the ideal of the *pictor doctus*. Some had enjoyed a thorough education at Latin school and university or had broadened their horizons through travel and contact with important humanists and other scholars. However, local contacts with poets and writers, which offered the opportunity for exchange and



mutual inspiration, were more common. It was these associations that brought the traditionally trained Dutch artists closest to Lodovico Dolce's characterization of the ideal artist: "The painter may not be in fact a man of letters; but let him at least, as I say, be versed in historical narrative and poetry, and keep in close touch with poets and men of learning."<sup>56</sup>

## NEO-STOICISM: A LEARNED THEME IN DUTCH ART

**T**HE TREATMENT of learned themes can also serve as an indication of an artist's level of education. No doubt the most outstanding seventeenth-century representatives of the *pictor doctus* were the Fleming Peter Paul Rubens and the Frenchman Nicolas Poussin. Both painters – it is well known – depicted historical and allegorical subjects exemplifying the doctrines of Neo-Stoicism.<sup>58</sup> The tenets of this most practical philosophy also informed the subject matter of a number of seventeenth-century Dutch history paintings, including some of the most publicly accessible works in the country.<sup>59</sup> In considering these paintings as indicators of an artist's degree of learning, it is necessary to establish how pervasive Neo-Stoicism was in the general culture, what the artists' role was in dictating the iconography of their paintings, and the form and function of individual works of art.

Stoicism, a school of thought that first flourished in Antiquity, presented an *ars vitae* and was therefore a practical philosophy. Man should seek to be virtuous, argued the Stoics, because the virtuous life accords to his nature.<sup>60</sup> Virtue is to be achieved by allowing reason supreme power over all other aspects of the human personality. The body and its passions are to be distrusted and ultimately to be controlled by the cultivation of a disciplined *apatheia*, an indifference to physical needs and impulses as well as to outward or fortuitous circumstances.<sup>61</sup> According to the principal sixteenth-century disseminator of Stoicism, Justus Lipsius, the most important quality for dealing with life is constancy, the immutable firmness of mind that is neither excited nor depressed by conditions imposed by external forces.<sup>62</sup>

Stoicism enjoyed a significant renaissance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and exerted a considerable influence on many facets of Dutch culture. Two of the prime sixteenth-century shapers of the later Golden Age in the Northern Netherlands, Erasmus and John Calvin, absorbed Stoicism and were instru-

mental in its dispersal. Erasmus's 1515 and 1529 editions of Seneca's works launched the rebirth of the ancient philosophy and provided students with the complete texts, unencumbered by interpretive commentaries, of the major Roman Stoic.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Erasmus included maxims excerpted from Seneca's philosophical works in his *Adagia* and *Apophthegmata*.<sup>64</sup> And although he dismissed the concept of *apatheia* in his *Praise of Folly*, the affinity between Erasmian humanism and Stoicism is evident throughout this book.<sup>65</sup>

Calvin, too, held Seneca in high esteem. Although many positions of Stoicism were unreconcilable with his brand of Protestantism, Calvin regarded Seneca as *the* authority in the field of ethics.<sup>66</sup> Adam, in Calvin's view, was the prototypical Stoic before the Fall, when "all ... [his] senses were prepared and moulded for due obedience to reason; and in the body there was a suitable correspondence with this internal order."<sup>67</sup> Calvin's engagement with Stoicism is also evidenced by his 1532 commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*, and the more than forty citations of the Roman author in his essay on the moral dangers of luxury and wealth, *De Luxu* (unpublished).<sup>68</sup> Seneca figures prominently in the Genevan's sermons as well.<sup>69</sup> The Stoic element in Calvinism and Erasmian humanism contributed to the secularized morality propounded by, among others, Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert in his influential *Zedekunst dat is Wellevenskunst (The Art of Morals, and the Art of Right Living)* of 1587.<sup>70</sup> It is especially in the Reformed Church's ambivalent attitude towards riches and luxury during the Golden Age that the influence of Stoicism, filtered through Calvin, Erasmus and others, is most apparent.<sup>71</sup>

By far the most influential proponent of Stoicism in the Netherlands was the Flemish philologist and philosopher, Justus Lipsius. A renowned scholar at the recently founded University of Leiden, Lipsius later published two systematic treatises on Stoicism (1604) as well as a critical edition of Seneca's *Omnia Opera* (1605). But it was through *De Constantia*, published in 1584, that Lipsius reached his largest audience.<sup>72</sup> The book was immediately translated into Dutch,<sup>73</sup> and more than eighty editions of the original Latin text and translations into various European languages were produced between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>74</sup>

Like Coornhert's *Zedekunst*, Lipsius's tiny volume on constancy presented a secularized morality that was attractive to both Catholics and Calvinists. The great appeal of the book may be attributed to the recipe it provides for living in trying times. Lipsius himself states that his intention was to offer support during



the sufferings brought on by the religious wars raging in Europe.<sup>75</sup> Because wars are external phenomena, circumstances outside of one's control, Lipsius recommends that one should endure rather than flee.<sup>76</sup> The individual should concentrate on that which is within his control and should seek to lead the virtuous life by making reason the ruler of his mind. And because earthly possessions are ephemeral, they should be treated with indifference. It is God, according to Lipsius's world-view, who sends hardships, and the endurance of them makes the individual stronger. God also corrects the injustices and atrocities that reside outside the scope of the individual's control. Tyrants, for example, are always visited by divine retribution.

The earthly ruler's reversal of fortune became a dominant theme in seventeenth-century Dutch theatre.<sup>77</sup> Samuel Coster's tragedies, such as *Iphigenia* and *Polyxena*, illustrated the theme with classical subject matter.<sup>78</sup> The patrician-author Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, on the other hand, sought out Dutch historical subjects to exemplify the theme and thus, to bring it closer to home. His first such play, *Geeraerd van Velsen* (1613), deals with tyranny and the rebellion against tyranny.<sup>79</sup> Like Lipsius, whose legacy he inherited, Hooft desired stability and order. His historical dramas, especially *Baeto* (written in 1617 when the conflict between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants was reaching a most explosive level), can be seen as appeals to his countrymen not to get involved in events beyond their direct control – that is, to act as Neo-Stoics.

In contrast to the cautionary employment of Neo-Stoicism in the Dutch theatre, the pictorial arts tended to glorify Dutch public figures by bestowing Neo-Stoic virtues upon them. An example is Gerrit van Honthorst's *Allegory of the Constancy of Frederik Hendrik*, part of the decorations of the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch, outside of The Hague. The final scheme for the decorations, attributed to the Stadtholder's secretary, Constantijn Huygens, was completed in 1649 and served as an elaborate memorial to the recently deceased Prince.<sup>80</sup> An earlier program for the decorations also exists, and both this and the final version identify the subject of Honthorst's painting as the *volstandicheit* (steadfastness or constancy) of Frederik Hendrik in trying circumstances.<sup>81</sup> In the painting, the Prince is depicted in full armour, holding a shield in one hand and a sword in the other, as he stands with assurance in a rather turbulent sea. Death, Envy, War, and Jupiter hurling a thunderbolt, among others, menacingly surround Frederik Hendrik.<sup>82</sup> Constancy, here credited to the Stadtholder, is the very title of Lipsius's

popular book and is the lynchpin of Neo-Stoicism.<sup>83</sup>

The decorations for the Oranjezaal perhaps constituted the most important painting commission of the Golden Age. The second most important painting commission was for the new Amsterdam town hall, officially opened in 1655. The two chimneypieces in the Burgomasters' council-room, painted in 1656 by Rembrandt's pupils Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol, represent episodes from Roman Republican history.<sup>84</sup> In Flinck's painting the Roman consul Marcus Curius Dentatus, preparing a humble meal of turnips, is surprised by a delegation of Samnites, with whom the Romans were engaged in battle. The Samnites attempt to bribe Dentatus with costly gifts of gold and silver, but he refuses them, preferring to keep his honour intact. Bol's painting represents another consul, Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, in the enemy camp of King Pyrrhus, negotiating a peace settlement. Pyrrhus attempts to frighten Fabricius into submission by bringing forth an elephant, but the Roman consul stands firm.

Previous to the town hall commissions, the subjects of Bol's and Flinck's paintings had never been represented by a Dutch artist.<sup>85</sup> Sixteenth-century European examples have been found in which the two consuls are illustrated side by side, but these do not include the exact two episodes of the Burgomasters' council-room chimneypieces.<sup>86</sup> The earliest combination of Fabricius and Dentatus as a pair was made by Seneca in his moral essay *De Providentia*.<sup>87</sup> Seneca argues that Fortune tries only the bravest men. Among his examples is Fabricius, whom he confuses with Dentatus in praising him for his endurance of poverty.<sup>88</sup> While Seneca does not combine the two stories represented by Bol and Flinck, and most likely did not even inspire the combination, his confused inclusion of the two Roman consuls underlines the Stoic message related by the paintings. The average citizen would have understood Fabricius's steadfastness and Dentatus's virtuous eschewal of riches without recourse to Seneca or Lipsius. The intelligentsia in the Northern Netherlands, on the other hand, surely would have recognized that these virtues, bestowed upon Amsterdam's burgo-masters by analogy, were Stoic in essence.

Because Flinck and Bol were not responsible for the iconography of their paintings, these works do nothing to suggest the artists' degree of learning. Honthorst's role in the conception of the *Allegory of the Constancy of Frederik Hendrik*, too, is believed to be limited to its execution.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that Honthorst was a *pictor doctus*, had first-hand knowledge of Stoic texts, and would have had an insider's



understanding of the subject matter of his painting for the Oranjezaal. A *Death of Seneca* in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht is thought to be a studio copy after a lost original by Honthorst.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Honthorst depicted the story of the prostitute Phryne's attempt to seduce the well-disciplined philosopher Xenocrates (the signed and dated painting of 1623 is on loan from a private collection to the Centraal Museum in Utrecht).<sup>91</sup> The source for the ancient story is found in a chapter entitled *Abstinentia et Continentia* by the historian Valerius Maximus,<sup>92</sup> and the wise man's control over lust is the *non plus ultra* of Stoic themes. Honthorst's comical representation of the couple suggests an intimate knowledge of the source.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, his selection of this and other equally obscure classical subjects has led to the suspicion that Honthorst, raised in a well-to-do family, was educated at Utrecht's renowned St Jerome Latin School.<sup>94</sup>

Honthorst's interest in Stoicism might, in part, have

arisen from his emulation of Rubens, the beloved artist of the courtly circles for which Honthorst also worked. Honthorst met the famous Flemish artist in 1627.<sup>95</sup> That the two artists would have discussed Stoic themes seems likely because, according to Honthorst's pupil and biographer Joachim von Sandrart, Rubens praised the painting of Diogenes that Honthorst was working on at the time of their meeting. The Cynic philosopher Diogenes, who gave up all his earthly possessions and, like Dentatus, preferred humble meals of turnips, was a hero to the Stoics.<sup>96</sup>

To determine whether or not an artist might be labelled a *pictor doctus* is to determine, in some measure, the artist's influence in shaping societal beliefs. The example of Honthorst suggests that the transmission of Stoicism was accomplished not only by the *literati* of the Northern Netherlands, but by the country's artists as well.

- 1 The order of the authors' names corresponds to the order of the sections of each essay.
- 2 Clio is the muse of history. The term "Clio's stepchild" originated from the Dutch book by the science historian E.J. Dijksterhuis, *Clio's stiefkind*, Groningen, 1952. For a discussion of the history of science in recent publications on Dutch cultural history, see K. van Berkel, "From Simon Stevin to Robert Boyle: Reflections on the Place of Science in Dutch Culture in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Exchange of Ideas: Religion, Scholarship and Art in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, eds. S. Groeneweld, M. Wintle, Zutphen, 1991, pp. 100–14.
- 3 Ludovico Guicciardini, *Beschrijvinghe van alle de Nederlanden, overgheset in de Nederduytsche spraecke door Cornelium Kilianum*, Amsterdam, 1612, p. 12, qtd. in H. de Ridder-Symoens, "Education and Literacy in the Burgundian-Hapsburg Netherlands," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies/Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises* 16, 1995 (spring), p. 6.
- 4 For Veryard and Shaw, see C.D. van Strien, *British Travellers in Holland During the Stuart Period*, diss. Amsterdam (Vrije Universiteit), 1989, pp. 144–45.
- 5 For further discussion of the school system of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, see P.Th.F.M. Boekholt, E.P. de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School in Nederland vanaf de middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd*, Assen, Maastricht, 1987, pp. 23–79; E.P. de Booy, *Kweekhoven de wijsheid. Basis – en vervolgonderwijs in de steden van de provincie Utrecht van 1580 tot het begin de 19e eeuw*, Zutphen, 1980. With regard to the situation in Amsterdam, see Marieke van Doorninck, Erika Kuijpers, *De geschoolde stad. Onderwijs in Amsterdam in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1993.
- 6 For more information about the schooling and professional training of children, especially those from the lower social levels, see Arie Theo van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen. Het kopergeld van de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1991, pp. 137–51.
- 7 See Beck 1624/1993. For a list of books and authors mentioned by Beck, see pp. 288–93.
- 8 The complete text of the school regulations with an extensive discussion of the curriculum of Latin schools can be

found in E.J. Kuiper, *De Hollands 'Schoolordre' van 1625*, Groningen, 1958; see also H.W. Fortgens, *Schola Latina*, Zwolle, 1958.

- 9 For an account of the Dutch Latin schools, see Fortgens as in note 8, pp. 53–61.
- 10 Cited according to Herman Roodenburg, "De 'hand van vriendschap' – Over het handen schudden en andere gebaren in de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën," in *Gebaren en lichaamshouding van de oudheid tot heden*, eds. J. Bremmer, H. Roodenburg, Nijmegen, 1993, p. 205, note 23 (initially published as *A Cultural History of Gestures from Antiquity to the Present Day*, Cambridge, 1991).
- 11 These statistics are according to Arie Theo van Deursen, *Een dorp in de Polder – Grafi in de zeventiende eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 132–34.
- 12 See *Het aantekeningenboek van Dirck Jansz.*, introduction by J.A. Faber, et al., ed. P. Gerbenzon, Hilversum, 1993; regarding the books he owned, see esp. pp. 126–28.
- 13 Regarding the biography, see A. Pietersma, "Cornelis Booth (1605–1678) geneesheer, oudheidminnaar en burgemeester," in *Utrechtse biografieën. Levensbeschrijvingen van bekende en onbekende Utrechtse*, Amsterdam, Utrecht, n.d., pp. 26–30.
- 14 For statistics, see W.Th.M. Frijhoff, "De arbeidsmarkt voor academici tijdens de Republiek," *Spiegel Historiaal* 17, 1982, pp. 501–10, esp. p. 502.
- 15 See J.H.W. Unger, "Dagboek van Constantijn Huygens. Voor de eerste maal naar het afschrift van diens kleinzoon uitgegeven," *Oud Holland* 3, 1885, pp. 1–87; I. van de Velde, "Constantijn Huygens als opvoetling en als opvoeder," *Pedagogische studiën* 37, 1960, pp. 223–38; and recently, R. Dekker, "Een opvoeding van stand: Constantijn Huygens," in R. Dekker, *Uit de schaduw in't grote licht. Kinderen in egodocumenten van de Gouden Eeuw tot de Romantiek*, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 35–46.
- 16 Regarding the status of Leeuwenhoek in particular, and of scholars in general, in seventeenth-century Dutch society, see K. van Berkel, "De Geleerde," in *Gestalten van de Gouden Eeuw*, eds. H.M. Beliën, Arie Theo van Deursen, et al., Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 185–217, esp. pp. 212–15.
- 17 See Leon Battista Alberti, *De Pictura*, Florence, 1435, esp. book III; Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della Pittura di Lodovico*



- Dolce intitolato L'Areino*, Venice, 1557; Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea del Tempio della pittura*, Milan, 1590, esp. ch. 8 ("delle scienze necessarij al pittore").
- 18 Lee 1967, p. 40; Emmens 1968, p. 30; Evonne Levy in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 20; Białostocki 1988, p. 150.
- 19 Lee 1967, p. 41; Levy in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 20; Peter Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. XXII.
- 20 Laura Olmstead Torelli in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 96. See also Nicolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art Past and Present*, Cambridge, 1940, and Boschloo 1989.
- 21 Price 1974, pp. 119–21; Hessel Miedema in Boschloo 1989, p. 277.
- 22 Alpers 1983, pp. 73ff. and 112. See also Miedema in Boschloo 1989, p. 277.
- 23 Van Mander/Miedema 1973, 5.7, p. 129; Van Hoogstraeten 1678, p. 88: he urges artists to have knowledge in other sciences: "*natuurkunde, historien, poetische verdichtseln, meetkunde en andere*" ("natural sciences, histories, poetry, geometry, and others"). Van Gelder 1961, p. 441; De Klerk in Boschloo 1989, p. 287.
- 24 Junius 1638, p. 235 (book III, ch. 9): "Yet shall he for all this, as his leisure serveth him, take in hand the writings of morall and naturall Philosophers, of Poets, of Historians, of Mathematicians: for although morall and naturall Philosophie, Poesie, Historie, Geometrie, cannot make him a Painter, yet will these Sciences make him a more absolute Painter." See also the discussion of the *pictor vulgaris* in relation to Junius in Emmens 1968, pp. 31, 195–201 (Emmens states that Rembrandt was considered to be a *pictor vulgaris* by classicist critics. See p. 31) and Raupp 1984, p. 140.
- 25 Białostocki 1988, p. 176.
- 26 Raupp 1984, p. 176.
- 27 Van Thiel 1965, pp. 126–31. The new regulations were published in 1649 under the title *Regulen, Welcke by een goet Schilder en Teyckenaar geobservedt en achtervolgvt moeten werden, Tesamen ghestelt tot lust van de leergierighe Discipelen, Door Mr. Pieter Fransz. de Grebber*. Rule II of these regulations stipulates (as quoted by Van Thiel): "*Is van noode datmen de Historien wel doorleest (bysonder als het schriftuerlijcke ofte waarachtighe Historien zyn) om den sin soo nae als't moeglijck iswel uyt te beelden.*" ("One is required to read the literary sources well (especially if it be from Scripture or a true account) in order to depict it as accurately as possible." [Translation provided by Van Thiel]); Taverne 1972–73, p. 54 and Olmstead Torelli in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 105.
- 28 De Klerk in Boschloo 1989, p. 283.
- 29 De Klerk in Boschloo 1989, p. 285.
- 30 De Klerk in Boschloo 1989, p. 284.
- 31 De Klerk in Boschloo 1989, p. 286; Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. XVIII; Miedema in Boschloo 1989, p. 277. Miedema states that proper academies of art did not come into existence in the Netherlands until the nineteenth century. According to Olmstead Torelli, the first proper academy in northern Europe was the one in Berlin, founded in 1697. See Olmstead Torelli in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 104.
- 32 Kultzen 1982, p. 118. See also Julius Held's entry on the painting in Julius S. Held, *Flemish and German Paintings of the 17th Century*, Detroit (The Detroit Institute of Arts), 1982, pp. 133–35 (col. ill. on cover).
- 33 Białostocki 1988, pp. 151–52.
- 34 Białostocki 1988, p. 152.
- 35 Białostocki 1988, p. 157 and note 50. Some of the more prominent books to be found in these inventories are theoretical works by Cornelis de Bie, René Descartes, Albrecht Dürer, Willem Goeree, Samuel van Hoogstraeten, Franciscus Junius, Gérard de Lairese, Karel van Mander, and Joachim von Sandrart; Italian architectural books by Palladio, Scamozzi, and Serlio; classical works by Tacitus, Pliny, Plutarch, Aesop, Homer, Ovid, by Italian authors such as Boccaccio and Petrarch, and by Dutch contemporaries such as Bredero, Hooft, and Vondel; and religious books, books on rhetoric, plants and animals, and travel reports. For the complete inventories, see Bredius 1915.
- 36 Berry in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 73.
- 37 Eric Jan Sluijter in ex. cat. Washington/Detroit/Amsterdam 1980–81, p. 55. Ovid's book was immensely popular in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. It became available in the vernacular in 1538 in a translation by Ioannes Florianus and was soon regarded as "the painter's bible."
- 38 Białostocki 1988, p. 159.
- 39 Levy in ex. cat. Providence 1984, p. 22; Miedema 1988, p. 75.
- 40 Montias 1982, pp. 114–15.
- 41 Levy in ex. cat. Providence 1984, pp. 23–24.
- 42 Van Mander/Miedema 1994, p. 14 (reprint of Van Mander's biography from the second edition of the *Schilderboeck*, Haarlem, 1618).
- 43 Van Deursen in ex. cat. Amsterdam/Berlin/London 1991–92, pp. 41–42.
- 44 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 4, p. 2469.
- 45 Houbraken 1718–21, book III, pp. 51 and 349.
- 46 Houbraken 1718–21, book III, pp. 167 and 328. For a further discussion of Ruidael's medical training, see ex. cat. *Jacob van Ruisdael*, ed. Seymour Slive, The Hague (Mauritshuis), Cambridge, Mass. (Fogg Art Museum), 1982, pp. 18–19.
- 47 Veldman 1974a, pp. 35–36 and 54: "[Their] relationship was that of equals rather than an unread gifted artist who depended on an educated man for the selection and elaboration of his themes."
- 48 Van Regteren Altena 1983, vol. 1, pp. 42–46.
- 49 Van Mander/Miedema 1994, fol. 259r, 17–45, p. 294. Van Mander reports that Lampsonius and Barentsz. frequently exchanged letters in Latin.
- 50 Heppner 1939–40, p. 22; Gibson 1981, p. 427; Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. LXXVII.
- 51 See Heppner 1939–40, pp. 22–23; Gibson 1981, p. 432; Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. LXXVIII.
- 52 Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. LXXVIII.
- 53 Heppner 1939–40, p. 38.
- 54 Heppner 1939–40, p. 23 note 5; Bauch 1960, pp. 71–72.
- 55 Van Thiel 1972–73, pp. 36–49.
- 56 Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura di Lodovico Dolce intitolato L'Areino*, Venice 1557, as quoted in translation by Białostocki 1988, p. 151.
- 57 The author of this section of the essay is greatly indebted to Dr J. Douglas Stewart for generously sharing his knowledge of Stoicism, for his critical reading of this manuscript, and for bibliographic references.
- 58 The most recent treatment of Rubens and Stoicism is Morford 1991. For Poussin and Stoicism, see Blunt 1967, pp. 157–76.
- 59 For Stoicism and the Dutch *vanitas* still life, see Heezen-Stoll 1979.
- 60 Heezen-Stoll 1979, p. 221.
- 61 Bouwsma 1975, p. 10.
- 62 Oestreich 1982, p. 19.
- 63 Todd 1983, pp. 183–84.
- 64 Todd 1983, p. 184.
- 65 See Bouwsma 1975, p. 39 and Todd 1983, p. 189.
- 66 Todd 1983, p. 185.
- 67 Quoted in Bouwsma 1975, p. 19.
- 68 Todd 1983, p. 185.
- 69 Bouwsma 1975, p. 60.



- 70 Bouwsma 1975, p. 60. For a discussion of the various works concerning morality published in the late sixteenth century in the Northern Netherlands and their relationship to one another, see Israel 1995, pp. 372–73.
- 71 For a discussion of the Dutch *mentalité* regarding wealth during the seventeenth century, see Schama 1987, pp. 289–371.
- 72 Oestreich 1982, p. 13.
- 73 Israel 1995, p. 567.
- 74 Oestreich 1982, p. 13.
- 75 Saunders 1955, p. 22.
- 76 An extensive and cogent analysis of Lipsius's *De Constantia* is given in Oestreich 1982, pp. 13–25.
- 77 Schenkeveld 1991, p. 64. For the influence of Seneca's dramas and of Stoic philosophy on the Dutch theatre, see also Worp 1904, vol. 1, pp. 247ff.
- 78 Schenkeveld 1991, p. 64.
- 79 For a discussion of the influence of Neo-Stoicism on Hooff's historical writings, see Israel 1995, pp. 568–69.
- 80 For a detailed discussion of the Oranjezaal decorations, see Van Gelder 1948–49 and Peter-Raupp 1980.
- 81 Brenninkmeyer-De Rooij 1982, p. 136.
- 82 This identification of the figures is given by Peter-Raupp 1980, pp. 132–34.
- 83 Neo-Stoic ideas are also represented on the inside doors of the Oranjezaal, executed by the Dutch Rubenesque painter Christiaan van Couwenbergh. Here, the figures of Minerva and Hercules open illusionistic doors for a personification of Victory. Minerva, as Wisdom, and Hercules, representing fortitude and patience, were common exempla of Stoic virtue and as such also figure prominently on Rubens's Whitehall ceiling. The somewhat problematic identification of Victory on the Oranjezaal doors is made by Peter-Raupp 1980, p. 109. For the Neo-Stoic themes represented by Rubens on the Whitehall ceiling, see Morford 1991, pp. 208–09.
- 84 The subject of Bol's painting is derived from Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, XX, 26, and that of Flinck's painting is from Plutarch, *Marcus Cato*, I, 6.II.
- 85 Blankert 1975, p. 17.
- 86 For these examples, see Blankert 1975, pp. 16–18.
- 87 Blankert 1982, p. 112.
- 88 Seneca, *De Providentia*, III.6. The error is pointed out in Blankert 1982, p. 112.
- 89 See, for example, Brenninkmeyer-De Rooij 1982, p. 135.
- 90 For this painting and Van Honthorst's extant drawing, also in the Centraal Museum, see Judson 1959, pp. 103, 104, note 2, p. 260, no. 228, and Braun 1966, p. 215, no. 91.
- 91 This painting is reproduced in colour in ex. cat. Utrecht/Braunschweig 1986–87, p. 295, no. 65.
- 92 Judson 1956, p. 94, note 2. The exact identification of the subject of Honthorst's painting has been controversial. Most recently, E.K.J. Reznicek has convincingly identified the philosopher as Xenocrates. See E.K.J. Reznicek, "The significance of a table leg: some remarks on Gerard van Honthorst's Steadfast Philosophy," *Hoogsteder Mercury*, no. 11, 1990, p. 22–27.
- 93 Honthorst's intimate knowledge of the source of the story is further exemplified by his inclusion of the wooden table leg fashioned in the shape of an old man who grimaces at Phryne. This seemingly insignificant detail refers to the frustrated prostitute's comparison of the steadfast philosopher to a statue. See Reznicek (as in note 92), pp. 24–25.
- 94 Judson 1956, p. 95.
- 95 Braun 1966, p. 41.
- 96 Blunt 1967, p. 165. Seneca relates with praise the story of Diogenes's emulation of a boy who drank water from a stream with cupped hands. Upon seeing this act, Diogenes threw away his drinking cup, seeing it as unnecessary baggage. Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic, Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, trans. Robin Campbell, London, 1969, p. 166. The Stoics frequently attributed their own ideas to Diogenes.

# THE SCHOLARSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY OF SAINTS AND HERMITS



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## THE SCHOLARLY AFTERLIFE OF THE SAINT IN DUTCH ART

**T**HE PROTESTANT Reformation in the Netherlands brought about a profound reassessment of the purpose of religious art. In the mid-sixteenth century, there arose a strong opposition to the traditional statues and paintings found in churches, voiced primarily by the followers of the Genevan reformer John Calvin. What the Calvinists found offensive was the laity's veneration of such images, a practice they viewed as idolatrous and in violation of the Second Commandment of the decalogue.<sup>1</sup> On this basis, Calvin himself had interdicted images in churches.<sup>2</sup>

The Protestant Reformed Church came to dominate in the Northern Netherlands after the withdrawal of the Spaniards in 1573. This denomination was strongly, but not completely, Calvinist in character. Dutch artists continued, nevertheless, to depict saints and to explore related themes. The *St Paul* by Jan Lievens (1607–1675) in this exhibition is a fine example (cat. no. 23). The existence of such paintings reveals that the Calvinist view of religious imagery was not the only one present in the north.

The Reformed Church could not impose its infelicitous view on Dutch society as a whole, because it did not become the official church of the United Provinces.<sup>3</sup> Dutch Catholics, for example, continued to commission traditional ecclesiastical images for use in their clandestine worship.<sup>4</sup> The power of the Reformed Church was partly compromised by the division of its membership between strict Calvinists and those who adhered to more liberal ideas. The latter distinguished themselves by emphasizing inner conviction, morality of conscience, and the related principle of tolerance of different viewpoints. These notions

also claimed a wide following outside the Reformed Church, among Catholics, Lutherans, Mennonites, and those who did not subscribe to any organized form of religion.<sup>5</sup>

The liberal movement within the Reformed Church expressed its chief concerns in the *Remonstrance*, a declaration penned in 1611 by Johannes Wtenbogaert, the preacher whose portrait etching by Rembrandt appears in this exhibition (cat. no. 3). The Remonstrants promoted the Erasmian concept of free will, and denied the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination (God's foreknowledge of both the damned and the saved), and so entered into open conflict with the Precisians (so-called because of their concern for doctrine), who were also known as the Counter-Remonstrants.<sup>6</sup> The controversy, which mobilized Dutch society, escalated until there was violence in the streets. The Stadtholder Prince Maurits intervened on behalf of the Precisians and put the Remonstrants down by force. The Remonstrant defeat was sealed at the Reformed Church Synod of Dort in 1618–19.<sup>7</sup> The Remonstrants were not crushed, however, and were quickly able to regain status and influence, even politically, through their traditional allies among the powerful regent classes of larger cities such as Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup>

Artistic expressions of this liberal Christian humanism can already be found in the sixteenth century. The biblical, allegorical, and moralizing subjects in the work of the Haarlem printmaker and painter Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) delineate an intense concern for Christian self-control and resistance to temptation.<sup>9</sup> These themes were closely linked to the prints of his friend and sometime collaborator, fellow Haarlem humanist Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert (1522–1590),<sup>10</sup> who treated a great number of Christian subjects in his prints, but became far better known for his expression of a humanist vision of the Christian



life in his writings, which affirm the necessity for tolerance of individual opinion.<sup>11</sup>

As far as we can determine, Dutch artists of the seventeenth century did not include in their number any scholarly humanist theologians such as Coornhert. Yet the Erasmian view continued to find expression in art. An important instance is the pictorial revision of the traditional image of the saint, which resulted in depictions of the “scholarly saint.” These figures would have had a clear resonance for humanists, largely because of their studious activity. Scholarly saints often appear either reading or writing. Their identity is important because they are typically Bible writers, mainly the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They appear as a group of four, in series of individual portraits or in pairs of double portraits. Along with the Gospel writers is the apostle Paul, who usually appears with his sword, the instrument of his martyrdom.<sup>12</sup> Volumes are often included in these paintings to remind the viewer of the saints’ contributions to the Bible.

These books evoked the authentic text of the Bible at the moment of its conception, a chief interest of Christian humanist philology.<sup>13</sup> The humanists strongly recommended the study of biblical texts, and were supported in this endeavour by Luther’s and Calvin’s insistence that their followers study the Bible for themselves.<sup>14</sup> The Reformers, not untouched by humanism, claimed *sola scriptura* (“Scripture alone”) as the basis for their respective theologies.

After the Synod of Dort in 1618–19, orthodox Calvinists came to dominate the Reformed Church and the Northern Netherlands as a whole. In subsequent years depictions of scholarly saints flourished in Dutch art, even though Calvinism allowed no place for this kind of image. Depictions of saints were as much the target of Calvin’s ban as images of God or angels.<sup>15</sup> Calvin attacked the notion that God could be depicted in man-made images, but this argument was less applicable to the depiction of saints.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, he condemned the veneration of saints and their images, arguing that saints were powerless as intercessors, and that appeals to them were offensive to God since saint worship was simply a modified form of idolatry.<sup>17</sup> In practice, however, Dutch Calvinists were concerned with religious imagery, and with veneration.<sup>18</sup> Rarely did their interference with religious art extend to paintings or sculpture destined for private ownership.<sup>19</sup>

Lievens’s depiction of *St Paul* (cat. no. 23) was part of a short-lived fashion for scholarly apostles and evangelists in the Northern Netherlands. The surviving paintings suggest that the interest in this genre peaked in the years 1620–35. Further examples by Lievens include a

series of four evangelists in Bamberg (c.1626–27, Residenzgalerie), a *St Paul* of c.1627 in the collection of the Count Wachtmeister in Wanås, and a *St Paul Writing the Letter to the Thessalonians* (c.1628, Bremen, Kunsthalle).<sup>20</sup> Rembrandt also treated the subject of the scholarly saint when he and Lievens were in close contact and collaboration in Leiden during the 1620s. Three well-known examples by Rembrandt are *St Paul in Prison* (Bredius 423, 1627, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie), *St Paul Disputing with St Peter* (Bredius 601, c.1628, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria), and *St Paul at his Desk* (Bredius 602, c.1629–30, Nuremberg, Nationalmuseum). The special popularity of Paul was likely due to the Remonstrant debates over grace and predestination, which drew heavily on his writings.<sup>21</sup>

The same humanist interest in scholarly New Testament figures engaged the creative powers of contemporary Roman Catholic artists in the Northern Netherlands. A painting in this exhibition of the *Four Evangelists* was likely done by a Catholic artist in Haarlem (cat. no. 21). Catholic artists in Utrecht, such as Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588–1629), Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651), Jan van Bijlert (1603–1671), and Matthias Stom (1600–after 1649)<sup>22</sup> also produced single images and series of scholarly saints. In depicting various saints, these artists focused on study and reflection, an emphasis quite removed from the Counter-Reformation concern with martyrdom, seen, for example, in the print series by their fellow Catholic Maerten de Vos (1532–1603) in Antwerp.<sup>23</sup>

The humanist element common to the various manifestations of Dutch Christianity makes it impossible to connect the scholarly saint to any particular denomination. Indeed, as Volker Manuth has demonstrated, the religious content of seventeenth-century Dutch pictures could often be quite unrelated to the denomination of their original patrons, or artists.<sup>24</sup> This conclusion is further supported by the evidence of the various depictions of scholarly saints by Lievens and Rembrandt from the 1620s and the disparate religious views of their owners.<sup>25</sup> The style in which the “scholarly saint” was depicted proved to be flexible. Rembrandt could return to this pictorial tradition even much later, in his famous *Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul*, with a much more reflective approach (Bredius 59, 1661, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). It is possible that thirty years earlier, in the wake of the Synod of Dort, this kind of image had functioned as a humanist defiance of strict Calvinism’s rejection of saints and the admirable moral examples they presented. By the time of Rembrandt’s late painting, the scholarly saint had largely been abandoned, having lost its relevance to an increasingly secular Dutch humanism.



## THE PICTORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ST JEROME C.1500–1700

**J**EROME (c. AD 345–420) was the quintessential scholarly saint. Born to Christian parents in Dalmatia, he was sent to Rome at the age of twelve to receive an education in the liberal arts. While studying the classical writers he also developed a keen interest in religion. During a pilgrimage to Jerusalem around 374, Jerome underwent a spiritual crisis. Christ, as Supreme Judge, appeared to him in a dream and condemned his love of pagan literature. In response, Jerome swore an oath to do penance and retreated into the Syrian desert where he lived as an ascetic hermit for two years (374–376).

During his time in the desert, and for several years thereafter in Antioch and Constantinople, Jerome improved his knowledge of Greek and slowly learned Hebrew. In 382, back in Rome, he found favour with Pope Damasus, who commissioned him to revise the various Old Latin translations of the Gospels according to the Greek original. Resentment over these revisions forced Jerome to leave Rome in 384. He then went to Bethlehem, where he founded a monastery and devoted the remainder of his life to study and writing. In addition to his translation of the Bible, the standard Catholic text known as the *Vulgate*, he produced biblical commentaries and polemics against heresy; his output was prolific.<sup>26</sup>

The life and writings of St Jerome provide a rich and varied iconography for visual representations of the saint. Depictions of this church father date from the medieval period, but they take on increased importance with the emergence of humanism in the Renaissance.<sup>27</sup> Two pictorial traditions relating to aspects of Jerome's life emerged in Italy during the early Renaissance: Jerome in his study and Jerome in the wilderness. The former refers to Jerome's scholarly work, while the latter refers to the time he spent as a penitent hermit in the Syrian desert. In both versions, a lion and a cardinal's hat are often included as identifying attributes.

Tomaso da Modena's *St Jerome in his Study* of 1352 is probably the earliest extant large-scale portrayal of the scholarly saint. The earliest well-known portrayal of Jerome in his study is that attributed to Jan van Eyck of 1442 (Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts). While Italian artists were the first to depict St Jerome in the wilderness, this theme had spread to the Netherlands by the latter part of the fifteenth century. Northern examples of this subject can be found in the work of

Hieronymous Bosch, Aelbert Bouts, Jan Gossaert, and Lucas van Leyden. Hans Memling's *Penitent St Jerome in the Wilderness* (c.1485–90, Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Kunstmuseum) presents a younger Jerome than the white-haired man usually portrayed, but since the saint was about thirty years old when he isolated himself in the desert, it is a more historically accurate representation. Jerome was also depicted in the wilderness not so much as a penitent, but as a scholar. In such cases the theme of Jerome in his study is conflated with that of Jerome in the wilderness.

In the sixteenth century, Jerome was increasingly portrayed meditating rather than being actively engaged in reading or writing. The theme of St Jerome in contemplation was given even more expressive value when a lit candle was added, indicating that the saint was secluded in a nightwatch.<sup>28</sup> Paintings of St Jerome meditating at night were produced, for example, by Jan Massys (1537, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Aertgen van Leyden (c.1550, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).<sup>29</sup> In both pictures a skull is prominent.<sup>30</sup> Two depictions of St Jerome in his study by Albrecht Dürer were of particular importance for the development of images of Jerome in the Netherlands: an engraving of 1514 and a painting produced seven years later (Lisbon, National Museum). In the engraving, Jerome is shown writing in a room, surrounded by objects signifying transience – a partially burned candle, an hourglass, and a skull. The first two of these objects are found in previous depictions of Jerome in his study, but this is the first time a skull is included in such a setting.<sup>31</sup> By introducing the skull into the saint's study, Dürer subtly expanded the meaning of his subject. His painting of 1521 (Lisbon), produced while he was in Antwerp and presented to Rodrigo Fernandes d'Almada, the Portuguese consul, also contains an important shift in the representation of the theme. Jerome is shown half-length, seated at a table, very close to the picture plane; looking out at the viewer, he rests his head on his right hand as he points to a skull with his left hand.<sup>32</sup> This painting strongly influenced the way that Netherlandish artists such as Quentin Massys, Joos van Cleve, Lucas van Leyden, and Marinus van Roemerswaele, among others, were to depict St Jerome in his study.<sup>33</sup> Van Roemerswaele's *St Jerome* (Madrid, Museo del Prado) shows the saint without his traditional attributes. Seated at a table, he points to a skull and looks out at the viewer almost menacingly. He is surrounded by a still-life arrangement that includes manuscripts, a crucifix, and a burnt-out candle. In the open book on a lectern beside him one can see an illustration of the Last Judge-



ment.<sup>34</sup> The crucifix is a message of hope, referring to the redemption of humankind.<sup>35</sup>

Due to the demands of the Council of Trent (1545-63) for accuracy and historical truth in art, by the end of the sixteenth century artists had virtually ceased depicting Jerome's alleged miraculous deeds (such as the removal of the thorn from the lion's paw), even though they continued to include the lion as an identifying attribute.<sup>36</sup> Because Calvin had asserted in the first version of the *Institutio Christiana* (Basel, 1536) that penitence was not a sacrament, it is not surprising that portrayals of penitent saints were used as pictorial propaganda in Netherlandish cities that had resisted Calvinism. Utrecht was such a city, and the Utrecht School of painters produced many pictures conforming to Catholic iconography.

By the seventeenth century the impact of Caravaggism is evident in Dutch representations of Jerome. The fact that a tradition of painting night scenes already existed, as is exemplified by Aertgen van Leyden's *St Jerome in His Study* (c.1550), no doubt partially explains why Caravaggism was readily accepted in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>37</sup> Abraham Bloemaert, a Catholic artist active in Utrecht, learned Caravaggesque techniques from his students, Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-1629) and Gerrit van Honthorst (1590-1656), who had gone to Rome to study. Some of the dramatic light effects associated with Caravaggio's technique are thus to be found in Bloemaert's depiction of St Jerome reading the Bible from the first half of the 1620s (cat. no. 24).<sup>38</sup>

Jerome continued to be depicted in a landscape setting with northern imagery. The Calvinist Rembrandt demonstrated an interest in St Jerome over a considerable period of time. Johannes van Vliet's etching *St Jerome in Prayer* (cat. no. 26), after a lost painting by Rembrandt, dates to 1631, making Rembrandt's painting one of his earliest efforts on the theme. Rembrandt went on to produce several etchings of Jerome (see cat. no. 25) and in almost all of them the saint is situated in a landscape. The nature of these images suggests that it was the combined qualities of asceticism and scholarship that appealed to the artist.<sup>39</sup> *St Jerome in an Italianate Landscape* (1653), in which the saint is seated near a tree stump that sprouts a leafy branch, is one of Rembrandt's later etchings of the saint. Referring to this work, Susan Donahue Kuretsky writes: "the verdant remains of the old tree become, in a sense, a projection of both the mood and meaning of the aged saint – not only as a symbol of regenerative powers of Christian contemplation, but also as an expression of the mellow blossoming that age can bring, both to

man and to nature."<sup>40</sup> Many depictions of Jerome place him close to a dead tree; a crucifix is frequently nearby as well.<sup>41</sup> In the university town of Leiden, artists often portrayed scholarly hermits, and although these hermits were not always identified as Jerome, they too were often placed near a dead tree. Undoubtedly, Rembrandt's depiction of Jerome provided an influential model.

The presence of the university in Leiden no doubt explains the popularity of depictions of scholars and of *vanitas* still lifes among members of the circle of Gerrit Dou, a former pupil of Rembrandt. Many of these portrayals of scholars, saints, or church fathers at work have a strong contemplative quality and contain a still-life arrangement including a book and a skull, thereby linking scholarly life to *vanitas* themes. In the course of the seventeenth century, depictions of Jerome in Netherlandish art gradually disappeared.<sup>42</sup> *Vanitas* still lifes frequently look as if they could have been lifted out of a painting of St Jerome in his study, and indeed, they are closely related to this theme: pictorial elements such as books and symbols of transience, which figure prominently in depictions of Jerome, were important precursors to *vanitas* still lifes.<sup>43</sup> The still-life arrangement in Van Vliet's etching of St Jerome (cat. no. 26) and the pile of books occupying the foreground in Jan Lievens's *St Paul* (cat. no. 23) exemplify a stage in this iconographical development.<sup>44</sup>

There are two reasons why the figure of Jerome appealed to Protestant artists in the Netherlands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First, the strong pictorial tradition associated with St Jerome would have been very attractive to Dutch artists. Second, patterns of religious belief in the Northern Netherlands were complex and artists were not as bound by religious affiliations as has previously been thought.<sup>45</sup> Not only did Protestant artists produce images of Jerome, but depictions of the saint were also owned by Protestants. For example, the inventory of the Mennonite Christina van Steenkiste, the deceased wife of the merchant Lucas van Beeck, who died in December 1669 in Amsterdam, reveals a rich collection of paintings including an *h Jeronimus*.<sup>46</sup> As has been suggested above, it was Jerome's devotion to biblical scholarship and asceticism that would have been attractive to both Catholics and Protestants. While the popularity of St Jerome as a subject in northern European art reached its peak during the Renaissance, after which time it sharply declined, important aspects of the theme were transferred to other subjects such as *vanitas* still lifes and depictions of hermits.



## THE HERMIT AS MODEL OF THE *VITA CONTEMPLATIVA*

**I**N THE 1630s, the Leiden painter Gerrit Dou (1613–1675) developed the theme of an anonymous hermit from the pictorial tradition of St Jerome.<sup>47</sup> Popularized by Dou and his followers, this theme was much in vogue in seventeenth-century Holland.<sup>48</sup> Because Leiden, with its School of Theology, was one of the Calvinist centres of the United Provinces,<sup>49</sup> the Catholic iconography of hermit paintings raises questions regarding the denomination of their intended audience. Eremitism conflicted with the Reformed Church, which condemned the glorification of works and advocated the practice of Christian spirituality in social surroundings.<sup>50</sup>

The earliest portrayals of hermits were pictorially and iconographically indebted to Rembrandt's Leiden paintings of St Jerome.<sup>51</sup> Dou's prototypical *Hermit in Prayer* (c.1635, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), for example, is almost a reverse variant of Van Vliet's reproductive etching (cat. no. 26) after Rembrandt's lost *St Jerome in Prayer*. In each composition the figure is seen from behind kneeling in prayer; *vanitas* symbols are emphasized in a still-life arrangement, and a desiccated tree is prominently featured. Only the absence of the lion in Dou's painting distinguishes the unidentifiable recluse from the hermit saint. Furthermore, both images are dominated by a religious tenor. Each protagonist uses a crucifix and a rosary as aids to prayer, imbuing the paintings with an undeniably Catholic character.

As the theme of the anonymous hermit developed, Leiden artists, including Dou, de-emphasized the hermit's piety and thereby created more secular images. Explicit Christian attributes were frequently omitted, with props limited to references to the hermit's meditation and poverty, such as books, baskets, and plants. Often skulls and hourglasses were included, symbolizing the ephemerality of earthly life. In Jan van Staveren's *Praying Hermit* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), for example, all devotional props are absent. Consequently, the hermit's seclusion from society and his role as a scholar assume pre-eminence. The mood of the painting is markedly less religious; instead, an idyllic spirituality prevails. Dou and his circle thus transformed the iconography of hermit paintings from that of a devotional image to that of a contemplative genre scene.

The vast number of extant paintings of hermits clearly indicates that there was an eager domestic mar-

ket.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, in most cases, the religious denomination of the original owners is not known. No doubt hermit paintings, particularly those featuring rosaries and crucifixes, appealed to a Catholic audience.<sup>53</sup> The relation of the images to Protestant patrons, however, is more difficult to determine. Depictions featuring symbols of transience have been characterized as typical Leiden expressions of *vanitas*.<sup>54</sup> But while the moralizing interpretation denoted by a skull and hourglass is incontrovertible, not all hermit-pieces feature them. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the subject is a variant of St Jerome – stripped of his most conspicuously Catholic attributes – intended to appeal to the Protestant market.<sup>55</sup> The iconography of hermits is, by definition, inextricably linked to St Jerome, the most important early theorist of monasticism and the best known of the hermit saints. However, the widespread treatment of hermits in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature and graphic art suggests a meaning distinct from the interpretation of St Jerome described above. The secularized hermit images of the Leiden School also alluded to a general way of devotion focusing on the spiritual gratification of solitude and contemplation.

Interest in hermits was revived during the Counter-Reformation. In an age of religious turmoil, many Catholic theologians believed that a return to the devout asceticism of the early Christian Church, and of the desert fathers in particular, was needed.<sup>56</sup> In Antwerp, the Jesuit centre of the Spanish Netherlands, Father Heribert Roseweyde (1569–1629) published successful Latin and vernacular editions of his monumental *Vitae Patrum*, an anthology some 900 pages long chronicling the lives of the male and female hermit saints from the second to the sixth centuries.<sup>57</sup> Though Roseweyde's texts were intended to inspire Catholic readers, the popular Dutch translation of the *Vitae Patrum* no doubt helped to stimulate interest throughout the Netherlands in the contemplative practice of hermits. In both parts of the Netherlands, Protestants and Catholics "continued to follow cultural, religious and other vicissitudes with lively sympathy."<sup>58</sup>

During the Counter-Reformation, Catholic polemicists also commissioned propagandistic print series of hermits.<sup>59</sup> Among the hermit series were seven landscape prints with small hermits by Cornelis Cort after Girolamo Muziano (1573–74),<sup>60</sup> an extensive ensemble designed by Maerten de Vos and engraved by Johannes and Raphael Sadeler (1594–1600),<sup>61</sup> and Abraham Bloemaert's two series of anchorites and anchoresses: the *Sacra Eremus Ascetarum/Sacra Eremus Ascetiarum* (1612)<sup>62</sup> and the *Thebais Sacra* (c.1620).<sup>63</sup>



Although Maerten de Vos's designs have been credited with reviving artistic interest in hermits, Bloemaert's series provided pictorial and iconographic precedents influential for Leiden artists.<sup>64</sup> In terms of the saints' gestures, postures and attributes, the *Sacra Eremus Ascetarum* helped to establish the pictorial model of hermit images. More important for the secularization of the genre, however, were Bloemaert's generic portrayals of hermits; without the accompanying texts, they are virtually unidentifiable.<sup>65</sup> The anonymity of Bloemaert's hermits was not atypical. In the seventeenth century, artists began to conflate the saints' various attributes, an indication that the general practices of hermits – asceticism, seclusion, and meditation – were becoming more important than the lives of specific saints.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, by the end of the sixteenth century a cultish desire for solitude pervaded Europe, particularly in the Iberian and Spanish-ruled countries.<sup>67</sup> Christian authors of all denominations expressed a longing for penitential loneliness and extolled its spiritual benefits. Accordingly, hermits were fitting exemplars of isolated contemplation. For example, in *Sonnet of the Hermit*, the French poet Philippe Desportes writes: "I will become a Hermit and do penitence/ and build a hermitage in a lonely place,/ Which to no other will be known than to Love."<sup>68</sup> The exaltation of the *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) in such poems echoed a general Christian ethic and distanced eremitism from a specifically Catholic context.<sup>69</sup> The romantic sentiment of Desportes's poem reflects the increasingly secular

(and often inaccurate) conception of the ascetic life in the seventeenth century.<sup>70</sup>

In the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands, seclusion from society was fashionable among wealthier merchants as a spiritually rejuvenating escape, particularly in commerce-dominated Holland. Even though it was not always possible for Dutch burghers to retreat from the city, hermit paintings may have acted as a reminder that religious meditation was a necessary counterpart to worldly life.<sup>71</sup> While eremitism was a Catholic practice, the independent religiosity of hermits suggests the Protestant creed of *sola scriptura* – the direct contemplation of God through the study of Scripture without the intercession of the Church. Thus those paintings featuring hermits engaged in reading religious texts may have been particularly resonant for more learned patrons.

As with the representations of the evangelists, the apostles, and St Jerome, hermit images functioned privately as models of Christian spirituality for Protestants as well as Catholics. Unlike images of scholarly saints, however, the hermits depicted by the Leiden school were not intended to be recognized as specific personalities. In such paintings, the hermit's anonymity could have served to facilitate the patron's sympathy for the subject. In fact, in some instances *portraits historiés* were commissioned in which the sitter is depicted in the guise of a hermit (cat. nos. 28, 29). Indeed, the viewer's identification with the hermit could well have contributed most to the genre's remarkable popularity.

1 The Protestant Reformers adopted a new numbering of the Ten Commandments, dividing the traditional First Commandment into two separate ones, the first forbidding other gods and the second forbidding graven images. See David Freedberg *Iconoclasm and painting in the revolt of the Netherlands 1566–1609*, New York, 1988, pp. 33–34.

2 See Calvin 1559, book 1, ch. 11, all articles.

3 Manuth 1993–94, p. 235.

4 For an incisive analysis of the different attitudes towards images and the unexpected acceptance of non-Calvinist subjects among Dutch artists and patrons during the seventeenth century, see Manuth 1993–94. For a discussion of clandestine Catholic activity and patronage of religious imagery, see Xander van Eck, "From Doubt to Conviction: Clandestine Catholic Churches as Patrons of Dutch Caravaggesque Painting," *Simiolus* 22, 1993–94, pp. 217–34; Van Eck 1994; and Van Thiel 1990–91, pp. 52–60.

5 H.A. Enno van Gelder is credited with the initial scholarly recognition of such a humanist movement within Catholicism in the Netherlands; see *The Two Reformations in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of the Religious Aspects and Consequences of Renaissance and Humanism*, The Hague, 1961. Veldman 1987, p. 193.

6 Herbert Darling Foster, "Liberal Calvinism; The Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618," *Harvard Theological*

*Review* 16, no. 1 (January 1923), pp. 18–24. For further discussion of the terms of the Remonstrant controversy, see the entry by Volker Manuth for cat. no. 3.

7 Israel 1995, pp. 460–65.

8 In his discussion of Rembrandt's patronage, Gary Schwartz traces an expansive network of wealthy Remonstrant regent families who wielded considerable power in Amsterdam. Schwartz 1985.

9 For further discussion of Van Heemskerck's humanism and his relation to the Protestant and Catholic faiths, see Veldman 1987.

10 For an overview of Coornhert's *œuvre* as a printmaker, including a discussion of his expression of religious viewpoints, see Ilja M. Veldman, "Coornhert en de prentkunst," in *Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert; Dwars maar recht*, Zutphen, 1989, pp. 115–43.

11 Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, "Coornhert, een eigenzinnig theoloog," in *Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert; Dwars maar recht*, Zutphen, 1989, pp. 18–21.

12 For Paul's attribute, see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan, Princeton, 1993, pp. 353–54.

13 On the primacy of the original texts, see Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation*, Cambridge, Mass., 1995.



- 14 Luther himself was responsible for the German translation of the Bible. For Calvin's doctrine of the necessity for Bible study in the life of the Christian, see Calvin 1559, book I, ch. 6, art. 3.
- 15 Calvin dismissed the traditional distinction between *latría*, the worship given to God, and *dulia*, the honour paid to saints, which had cleared the veneration of saints imagery of the accusation of idolatry. Calvin 1559, book I, ch. 12, art. 2.
- 16 Calvin 1559, book I, ch. 11, art. 1.
- 17 Calvin 1559, book III, ch. 20, arts. 21–27. Their images were also attacked during the iconoclasm, which broke out in the Netherlands in 1566. There is evidence that during the outbreaks the Rhetoricians, by definition biased towards humanism, had specifically targeted representations of saints. See Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries*, London and Ronceverte, 1990, p. 107.
- 18 Calvin had no qualms about non-liturgical imagery and even went as far as to recommend depictions of history and descriptive works, including biblical histories, applying the Horatian theory that these give instruction and pleasure, respectively. Calvin 1559, book I, ch. 12, art. 2.
- 19 The outstanding exception is the case of Jan van der Beeck, known as Torrentius (1589–1644), the talented still-life painter admired by Constantijn Huygens. Torrentius was arrested, tortured, and exiled for the production of pornographic images. See Christopher White, "An Undescribed Lost Picture by Jan Torrentius," in *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Doornspijk, 1983, pp. 297–98.
- 20 See Sumowski 1983ff., pp. 1793–94, 1869–73 (ill., Bamberg series); pp. 1794, 1973 (ill., Wanås *St Paul*); pp. 1796, 1879 (ill., Bremen *St Paul Writing the Letter to the Thessalonians*).
- 21 The Canons of Dort were the published resolutions of the Synod of 1618–19. Chapter 1, arts. 1–7 deal with predestination, and refer to Ephesians 1:4–6, 11, Ephesians 2:8 and Romans 8:30. See *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, trans. Rev. Thomas Scott, Philadelphia, 1841, pp. 260–64.
- 22 For Ter Brugghen's series of the four evangelists, see ex. cat. Utrecht/Braunschweig 1986–87, p. 93–98, nos. 5–8, ill. All four evangelists appear in a painting at Princeton, which Roethlisberger attributed to Abraham Bloemaert (Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, pp. 190–93, no. 223, vol. 2, col. ill. XIII). Paul Huys Janssen briefly discusses Bloemaert's series in the context of the others mentioned here in *Jan van Bijlert (1597/98–1671), Schilder in Utrecht*, Utrecht, 1994, pp. 92–96, nos. 25–28. See Walsh 1976, pp. 504–08 for the series by Stom. Anne Lowenthal has identified several series by the Counter-Reonstrant Utrecht painter Joachim Wtewael, including a complete series in Stuttgart (Staatsgalerie): Lowenthal 1986, pp. 136–37, nos. 65–68, col. ill. XIX; another partial series, of which the *St Luke* and *St Mark* are in Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) and the *St John* is in New York (Leonard J. Slatkes collection): pp. 127–28, nos. 54–56, ills. 78–80; and another series, of which the *St Matthew* is in Baltimore (Walters Art Gallery).
- 23 Holl., XLVI (text) and XLVI (ill.), nos. 791–830.
- 24 The Amsterdam history painter Jan Victors was unusual in his adherence to the Calvinist ban on depictions of God. See Manuth 1993–94, pp. 245–52.
- 25 Lievens's *St Paul Writing the Epistle to the Thessalonians* (c.1628, Bremen, Kunsthalle) carried an explicitly Calvinist message, and given the artist's leanings in these years, probably reflected Counter-Reonstrant concerns. Another apostle by Lievens, a *St Peter in Prison* (now lost), was reportedly sent by Constantijn Huygens as part of a diplomatic mission in support of a Catholic friend and ally in West Flanders, for use as a moral reprimand. Rembrandt's patron for a "St Paul" was Jacques Specx, a wealthy regent with libertine leanings. Specx was not a particularly orthodox man, and he quite likely had a very personal interpretation of the apostle's teachings which explains his interest in Rembrandt's approach to depicting St Paul. See Schwartz 1985, pp. 99–105.
- 26 This overview of Jerome's life is derived primarily from Rice 1985, pp. 1–22.
- 27 In the fifteenth century Jerome became the patron saint of schools, teachers, and universities. See Miehe in *L.C.I.*, vol. 6, col. 519.
- 28 Justus Müller Hofstede in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 42.
- 29 See ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993 for a discussion of portrayals of saints and scholars meditating at night.
- 30 Symbols of *vanitas*, such as skulls and half-burned candles, appear in altarpieces dating from the Middle Ages. They can also be found in still lifes that were painted on the backs of portraits. Many pictures of St Jerome include symbols of transience which were significant in the development of *vanitas* still lifes.
- 31 Rice 1985, p. 111.
- 32 See Fedja Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer: Das Malerische Werk*, Berlin, 1971, p. 259, no. 162.
- 33 For a discussion of the portrayals of St Jerome by Joos van Cleve, see John Oliver Hand, "St. Jerome in His Study by Joos van Cleve," in Gregory T. Clark, et al., *A Tribute to Robert A. Koch: studies in the northern renaissance*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 53–68.
- 34 The Last Judgement is described in the Book of Revelation 14:13. For a discussion of depictions of St Jerome which include references to the Last Judgement, see Rice 1985, pp. 165–72.
- 35 Görel Cavalli-Björkman in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 49.
- 36 Rice 1985, p. 160.
- 37 Wouter Th. Kloek, "The *Caravaggisti* and the Netherlandish Tradition," in Klessman 1988, p. 51.
- 38 For a discussion of the importance of Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651), a Catholic painter instrumental in the formation of the Utrecht School, see Roethlisberger/Bok 1993.
- 39 It has recently been pointed out that Rembrandt's representations of St Jerome conform to Catholic depictions more often than is usually recognized. See Rudolf Velhagen in ex. cat. Basel 1993, p. 18.
- 40 Kuretsky 1974, p. 578.
- 41 Concerning the tradition of this motif in northern art, see Kuretsky 1974, p. 574.
- 42 Increasingly, there is also a suppression of explicit references to Catholicism in Jerome imagery (see cat. no. 24).
- 43 Moralizing *vanitas* still lifes flourished in Leiden between about 1620 and 1650. For a discussion of the development of the *vanitas* still life, see Bergström 1983, pp. 154–90.
- 44 Cavalli-Björkman in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 51.
- 45 For a discussion of the significance of artists' religious affiliations with regard to their choice of subject matter in Rembrandt's circle, see Manuth 1993–94, pp. 235–52.
- 46 Gemeente Archief Amsterdam, Not. Arch. no. 1997 (notary Jacob van Loosdrecht) fol. 122, no. 43. See also Baer 1995, p. 33, note 46 on the appeal of portrayals of Jerome to a wide audience.
- 47 Dou is known to have painted at least ten different compositions featuring hermits, some of which were repeated in different versions. See Martin 1913, pp. 5–11, 146.
- 48 Among Dou's followers, Jan van Staveren (1613/14–1669) and Quiringh van Brekelenkam (1620–1668), in particular, specialized in hermit paintings. See Lasius 1992, pp. 17–19, and Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 501.
- 49 In 1641, there were some 3500 Catholics in Leiden, constituting only 7 percent of the population of approximately 50,000; the regents of Holland and Utrecht, however, were



- generally more tolerant of Catholicism than those in other provinces. See Israel 1995, pp. 377ff.
- 50 For a discussion of Martin Luther's attack on eremitic and monastic vows, see Yule 1985, pp. 229ff.
- 51 Pieter Lastman's *Hermit Reading* of 1611 may have initially stimulated interest in the depiction of hermits in the circle of Rembrandt and Lievens. Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, p. 544.
- 52 Although Dou and Van Staveren also worked for the foreign market, most extant hermit paintings came from Netherlandish collections. Knipping 1974, vol. 2, p. 445.
- 53 For example, in 1667 Henric Bugge van Ring, a member of one of the most prominent Catholic families in Leiden, counted 3 or 4 hermit-pieces by Van Brekelenkam among his collection of paintings; E.A. Hoenig in ex. cat. Leiden 1989, pp. 86–87. Whether or not Protestants preferred paintings with no Catholic attributes remains unknown. However, as Pieter van Thiel has suggested, the treatment and iconography of the same biblical subject may have varied according to denomination; see Van Thiel 1990–91, pp. 53ff., esp. notes 74, 75.
- 54 See Kuretsky 1974, pp. 578–80; also Thomas Döring in ex. cat. Braunschweig 1993–94, p. 156.
- 55 Ronni Baer, for example, writes that “because Jerome was so clearly identified with everything Protestants rejected, Dou realized it was necessary to downplay – even eradicate – all reference to the specific saint in order for his hermit paintings to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.” Baer 1995, p. 29.
- 56 A Latin poem stresses that through hermits, an old ideal form of piety would be revived: “early piety is coming back full of light – it's getting back into our chests.” Quoted in ex. cat. Basel 1993, p. 17. For more information on the Counter-Reformation in the Spanish Netherlands, see David Freedberg in ex. cat. Boston/Toledo 1993–94, pp. 131–45.
- 57 The first edition of the *Vitae Patrum* in 1615 was so successful as to demand a second edition in 1628. Roseweyde's texts became the authoritative source for the lives of hermits and were also published in a more popular Dutch version (*'t Vaders Boeck*, Antwerp, 1617) as well as in a condensed volume (*'t Bosch der Eremyten ende Eremytinnen*, Antwerp, 1619).
- 58 Knipping 1974, vol. 1, p. 10.
- 59 *L.C.I.*, vol. 6, col. 161.
- 60 According to Manfred Sellink, however, the subject of Muziano's series of seven engravings of hermit saints in the wilderness was partly motivated by practical reasons: “it enabled him to combine his love of landscapes with a suitable religious subject.” See ex. cat. Rotterdam 1994, p. 181.
- 61 Holl. XXI, pp. 147–55, nos. 377–450 (Johannes Sadeler I), pp. 240–45, nos. 118–57 (Raphael Sadeler I). See also Holl., XLIV (text), pp. 203–14, nos. 964–1075, XLVI (plates), pp. 68–87.
- 62 *Sacred Hermitage of Anchorites/Sacred Hermitage of Anchoresses*. This series of 52 engravings was published independently by Boëtius Adams Bolswert, although initially it was probably intended to illustrate Roseweyde's *Vitae Patrum*. The set consisted of 25 anchorites, 25 anchoresses, and a title page for each group. Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, pp. 171–84, nos. 163–214, vol. 2., figs. 263–317.
- 63 The more extensive *Sacred Thebaid* consisted of 81 engravings. It was probably commissioned by a publisher or religious patron as a sequel to Bloemaert's successful first set, but it was never published. Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, pp. 355–67, nos. 577–657, vol. 2, figs. 767–851.
- 64 As Knipping points out, “it was largely by the graphic arts that the southern artistic production found its way into the north.” Knipping 1974, vol. 1, p. 11.
- 65 In fact, Bloemaert would later repeat the figure of *St Ephraem* of the *Sacra Eremus Ascetarum* in his only known painting of an anonymous hermit; see *St Ephraem* (no. 176, fig. 277) and *An Anchorite* (c.1631) in Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, pp. 367–68, no. 658a, vol. 2, fig. 852a.
- 66 Hoenig in ex. cat. Leiden 1989, p. 86.
- 67 See Knipping 1974, vol. 2, pp. 441ff. for an extensive discussion of the fashion of solitude in both Catholic and Protestant countries.
- 68 In Philippe Desportes, *Oeuvres*, Rouan, 1611; quoted in Knipping 1974, vol. 2, p. 443. Justus de Harduijn provided a Dutch version of Desportes's sonnet in *De weerlicke Liefden tot Roosemont* (Antwerp, 1613) and with variants in *Goddelicke Lof-Sanghen* (Ghent, 1620); see Knipping 1974, vol. 2, p. 443, note 124.
- 69 The superiority of the *vita contemplativa* and its association with hermits became firmly established. For example, the title page of Bloemaert's *Thebais Sacra* features female personifications of the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. The former is depicted with a halo and the latter, bare-shouldered, clutches a spade in her left hand while her right hand is held to her mouth in a gesture of doubt. See Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, p. 357, no. 577, vol. 2, fig. 767.
- 70 Even the Catholic *Vitae Patrum* reflects this idealization of eremitism. For example, Knipping notes the idyllic flavour of Roseweyde's text, drawing attention to the often-cited exclamation: “*O beata solitudo, O sola beatitudo*” (“Oh, happy solitude, Oh, unique happiness”); in Knipping 1974, vol. 2, p. 444.
- 71 This function has been discussed by Ronni Baer in connection with Gerrit Dou's portrait of *Burgomaster Hassalaer and His Wife* in which a hermit painting hangs on the background wall (Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Museum of Art). Baer 1995, pp. 28–29.



# ALCHEMY IN DUTCH ART OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES *VAN DE CONSTEN DER ALCHIMIE*



*Volker Manuth, Jillian Harrold, Dianna Beaufort*

## ALCHEMY AND THE ARTS IN THE GOLDEN AGE

**T**HE DIARY of David Beck, a *schoolmeester* (teacher) in The Hague, describes a meeting on 6 July 1623 between himself, an acquaintance, and his neighbour, an apothecary. According to the entry, the three men passed the time engaged in conversation concerning the arts of alchemy and painting. To this end, writes Beck, they read passages in *mijnen Vermander* (i.e. Karel van Mander's *Het Schilder-boeck*, Haarlem, 1603–4) and looked at some of Beck's drawings.<sup>1</sup>

The two topics of this learned conversation, alchemy and painting, mentioned together in the same sentence by Beck, are closely related to the theme of this exhibition. More important, they indicate the popularity of the art of alchemy in the seventeenth century, a popularity which may seem incomprehensible to us today. The innumerable Dutch prints and paintings of alchemists from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reflect the abundant contemporary interest in the subject. No other European country produced a comparable number of images related to alchemy.

In order to gain a better understanding of the historical significance of alchemy and its place among other disciplines, the following must be taken into account. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the terms used to describe medicine, chemistry, physics, theology, philosophy, and law did not cover the same concepts as they do today. Moreover, the relevance of alchemy was in constant flux. During the seventeenth century it developed into a discipline which supplied important prerequisites for the evolution of other disciplines, chemistry and medicine in particular.<sup>2</sup> Despite numerous scholarly publications, however, the common perception of alchemy as some kind of magi-

cal hocus-pocus persisted. Some of the paintings in this exhibition seem to reinforce the image of the alchemist as someone who linked mystical and occult ideas with pseudo-scientific procedures. In light of the many stories about powders capable of prolonging life or of making humans immortal and the tales of the transmutation of impure metals into gold and silver, the alchemist does indeed appear to be the antithesis of the modern scientist. And undoubtedly, this negative image would have been applicable to some alchemists. Nonetheless, alchemy deserves an important place in the history of science as well as in cultural history.

One of the goals of alchemy was the separation of "pure" materials from "impure" ones, and thus the perfection of the imperfect.<sup>3</sup> A tract by the Dutch physician and chemist Steven Blankaart (1605–1702), entitled *De Nieuwe hedendage stoffscheiding ofte Chymia* ("The new contemporary separation of elements or chemistry"), published in Amsterdam in 1678, illustrates that the old Dutch term for chemistry was *scheydekonst* ("the art of separation").<sup>4</sup> In modern Dutch there are two different words for chemistry, one the word *chemie*, the other the older word *scheikunde* ("the knowledge of separation"), revealing alchemy's importance in the development of chemistry.

Attempts to create "pure matter," which some alchemists hoped would cure the ills of humanity, led to advances in the field of medicine. That a number of alchemists were nothing more than charlatans or quacks who preyed on the sufferings of the sick cannot be contested. Alchemical experiments did, however, also contribute significantly to pharmaceutical advancements. Chemiatry, the branch of chemistry dealing with, among other things, the development of drugs, gained great importance at the University of Leiden by way of the influence of the famous Swiss physician Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, better



known as Paracelsus (1493–1541).<sup>5</sup> Paracelsus and his followers believed that “natural phenomena might best be interpreted through chemical studies or analogies, and that true medicine is essentially nothing but chemistry.”<sup>6</sup> In their eyes, alchemy was able to provide a fair explanation of the four elements (water, fire, air, and earth) and thus the entire cosmos which these elements composed. The model of the cosmos derived from alchemical experiments would later lead to the development of “philosophical chemistry.”<sup>7</sup> As late as 1670, Nicolas Le Fèvre would write: “Chemistry is nothing else but the Art and Knowledge of Nature it self.”<sup>8</sup>

The growing scepticism towards alchemists in the Northern Netherlands was only partially linked to religious considerations. Many alchemists were devout Christians and regarded their activities to be in accordance with the desire for a more profound understanding of Divine Creation. Alchemists believed in a two-fold revelation, according to which God reveals Himself through Holy Scripture and through nature.<sup>9</sup> Both were to be studied intensively. A more significant reason for the diminishing interest in alchemy was the sudden progress made by the various natural sciences in the second half of the seventeenth century. The ideas and achievements of such luminaries as Newton, Leibnitz, and Christiaan Huygens led to innumerable revisions of the traditional world picture and to an increasingly marked separation of the classical scientific disciplines by way of specialization. In consequence, alchemy began its slow and inevitable demise, a process hastened in the following century by the Age of Enlightenment.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the numerous representations of alchemists in Flemish and Dutch art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries clearly reflect the great fascination contemporaries had with *de Consten der Alchimie*, as well as their sometimes critical view of its devotees.

## LITERARY AND PICTORIAL FORERUNNERS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

**T**HE INVENTION of printing led to an increase in the publication and distribution of alchemical texts in the sixteenth century. The highly speculative nature of early chemistry lent itself to purely symbolic or allegorical representations; alchemical treatises used symbols to represent complex concepts and processes that were difficult to explain otherwise.<sup>11</sup> In the well-

known *Splendor Solis* of 1582, for instance, a series of elaborate mystical and allegorical illustrations accompanies the text.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time there existed a tradition of didactic illustrations for alchemical treatises of a more practical nature. For example, one of the earliest books of applied chemistry to appear in German was the illustrated translation of Hieronymous Brunswick's *Liber de Arte Distillandi* (1519). The woodcuts in Brunswick's treatise describe the practice of alchemy in a visual way, and often include the alchemist himself.<sup>13</sup> Georg Agricola's *De Re Metallica*, published in 1556, served as the standard textbook of mining, metallurgy, and alchemy for over 200 years. The woodcuts that accompany the text illustrate the extraction of minerals from the ground and the process of distillation.<sup>14</sup> It was in this technical and didactic context that some of the earliest images of alchemists in their laboratories were produced.

During the sixteenth century, the image of the alchemist at work in his laboratory began to be represented by artists as a genre scene. This development began in the graphic arts, and it was not until the seventeenth century that large-scale oil paintings of this subject proliferated. Many of these early images were satirical, an approach that developed out of a literary tradition with roots in the Middle Ages. The satirical view of alchemy resulted from the fact that, at this time, alchemy was practised by both adepts and frauds. The distinction, as described by John Read, “...between an esoteric alchemy, whose hidden secrets were revealed only to chosen adepts, and an exoteric pseudo-alchemy, which is depicted as the uninstructed craft of mercenary gold seekers, or ‘puffers,’” was often drawn in alchemical writings themselves.<sup>15</sup>

The literary tradition, which was the forerunner of satirical images of alchemists, described the practises of the gold seekers. These “puffers” were used as examples within the broader context of discussions on human folly. The practice of alchemy was characterized as fraudulent and futile. A commonplace in much of this literature is the notion that the search for gold necessarily results in the poverty of the practitioner. One of the earliest examples is found in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* of the late fourteenth century. In “The Canon's Yeoman's Tale,” Chaucer describes a yeoman working as an assistant to an alchemist who is a lapsed practitioner of science. Failure is a central theme in this tale, which suggests that alchemy is futile and dangerous. Like gambling, alchemy leads to compulsive behaviour; men would sell



their possessions to finance this search.<sup>16</sup> The Dutch humanist Erasmus provides a sixteenth-century example in *The Praise of Folly* of 1511–12. He describes alchemists as “wonderfully clever in thinking up some new way to deceive themselves with a pleasing sort of fraud, until they have spent everything and don’t even have enough left to fire their furnaces.”<sup>17</sup>

Illustrations for this type of literature were the source for some of the first satirical images of alchemists in their laboratories. Two of the earliest examples are German. The first is in Sebastian Brandt’s *Das Narrenschiff* (The Ship of Fools) of 1494. In this work Brandt includes the study of alchemy, which is called “vain and deceitful,” as an example of foolish human behaviour.<sup>18</sup> The accompanying woodcut, believed to be by Dürer, represents the alchemist and his assistant at work. Like most of the characters illustrated in *Das Narrenschiff*, they wear fools’ caps. The second pictorial example can be found in the first German translation of Petrarch’s *De Remediis utriusque fortunae*, published in 1532. In a dialogue from *De Remediis*, Petrarch discusses the folly of those who promise gold: “Tell your alchemist to perform on his own behalf the things he promises to others, and banish first his own poverty...”<sup>19</sup> This dialogue was accompanied by a woodcut entitled *An Alchemist and his Assistant at Work*, by an artist now known as the Petrarch-Master, who was at one time thought to be Hans Weiditz. The image is of a very messy laboratory full of alchemical apparatuses. The alchemist and his assistant are wearing torn clothes, indicating their destitution.<sup>20</sup>

Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s *Alchemist*, published after 1558 (cat. no. 34), is the earliest known image of an alchemist by a Netherlandish artist. It served as the primary example for a type of satirical representation which was popular in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Bruegel’s image is in the tradition of the two prints discussed above. It recalls the print of the Petrarch-Master in its emphasis on poverty, shown by the disorderly state of the laboratory and the figures. The mocking sentiment of the *Narrenschiff* illustration is echoed in Bruegel’s portrayal of the foolishness of the search for the philosopher’s stone, emphasized by his inclusion of the fool’s cap worn by the assistant. However, the engraving differs from these examples in that its purpose was not to illustrate a literary description. Instead, it was a genre scene intended to stand alone.

In Bruegel’s print, the alchemist, seated on the left, is unaware of his wife behind him, who demonstrates that the family has no more money by holding out her empty purse. Through the window the alchemist and

his family are received into the poorhouse.<sup>21</sup> On the far right a man is seated at a desk, gesturing with one hand to the family and pointing with the other to a page of a book with the words “*Alge Mist*.” A pun on the word alchemist, *Alge Mist* means “all is crap” or “all is lost.” The figure, dressed in scholarly clothing, serves to reinforce the notion of the foolishness of alchemy, particularly when contrasted with serious scholarship and scientific experimentation. This image of the inherent futility of the pursuit of alchemy is underscored by the text (translation with cat. no. 34) accompanying the image. Bruegel’s engraving was widely known through distribution by the publisher Hieronymous Cock<sup>22</sup> and greatly influenced later images of alchemists.

Two prints from around 1570 descend directly from the composition originally conceived by Bruegel. The first is by Pieter Cool after Maerten de Vos and the second is by Pieter van der Borcht IV.<sup>23</sup> Both retain the basic composition and the moralizing message of Bruegel’s print.<sup>24</sup> However, in the De Vos engraving the composition has been reversed, with the alchemist on the right and the inevitable conclusion of the narrative – the acceptance of the family at the poorhouse – seen through a door on the left. Once again the laboratory is littered with alchemical instruments and the destitute wife and children are present, indicating the all-consuming obsession of the alchemist. The print by Van der Borcht reverses De Vos’s image,<sup>25</sup> making it similar to Bruegel’s with the alchemist on the left and the poorhouse on the right. Again, the wife and children appear as a reminder of the addiction and subsequent ruin that the pursuit of alchemy can bring about. However, the satire is broader here: this print forms part of a series in which the figures are all apes. Although it was popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to represent everyday human activities being performed by apes, it was unique in an alchemical scene.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of the sixteenth century, the satirical image of the alchemist was waning. Of the painted images popular in the seventeenth century, only Jan Steen’s seem to continue the tradition established by Bruegel. In many of his paintings of alchemists, Steen included the wife and child in the background, as well as some remnant of the door or window present in compositions that followed Bruegel. The zenith of pseudo-alchemy had occurred between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries; alchemy gradually moved away from the focus on uninstructed gold-making and emerged into prominence in the seventeenth century.



## THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE SEVENTEENTH century has been called “the era of phlogiston”<sup>27</sup> because it was at this time that the transition from alchemy to chemistry occurred. In the latter half of the century, chemists such as the Dutchman Herman Boerhaave (1664–1734) contributed to the transformation of the mystical and sometimes erratic art of alchemy into the science of chemistry. But even Boerhaave could not entirely deny the validity of traditional alchemy and the cogency of alchemical symbols and their intrinsic meanings. It had, after all, not been long since the physician to the Prince of Orange, Helvetius (1625–1709), was reputed to have made over half an ounce of lead into gold in The Hague.<sup>28</sup> In December 1666, Helvetius had received a stranger into his home who presented three small stones which he claimed would produce gold.<sup>29</sup> The events which ensued caused Helvetius to abandon his considerable suspicion about alchemy and, indeed, to write an account of transmutation that was the most sound and persuasive to date. A letter from the philosopher Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) to Jarrigh Jelles, a Mennonite merchant in Amsterdam, relates that Spinoza himself spoke with Helvetius about his success and saw the melting pot “whose inner walls were still gilded over.”<sup>30</sup>

Alchemy still had its followers, particularly at the turn of the century, when the collapse of religious orthodoxy invoked an increased interest in a spiritual alchemy, which, according to Alison Coudert, “filled the religious needs of an age adrift on a sea of conflicting ideologies.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, the religious and spiritual associations of alchemy were in no way new; alchemy had appropriated the language and symbols of Christianity since the Middle Ages. Needless to say, the Catholic Church disapproved of alchemy (especially Gnostic alchemy, which saw man as divine, god-like, and in a state prior to perfection). However, the Reformer Martin Luther liked the “good art of alchemy.”<sup>32</sup> He viewed it as an ancient natural philosophy and was impressed by the concept of resurrection and separation of unclean matter from that which was deemed worthy. Separating “pure” from “impure” matter, isolating an element or the “aerial Spirit,”<sup>33</sup> and the interaction of mercury, sulphur and salt were all analogous to the relationships of the soul and earthly life. For the Swiss physician and alchemist Paracelsus, the greatest reward of alchemical knowledge was an understanding of the mystical relationship of God, humanity, and nature.<sup>34</sup> While his chemical philosophy pro-

duced revolutionary medicines and cures,<sup>35</sup> Paracelsus’s fundamental aim was to expose the deepest secrets of nature, not by way of mathematics and logic, which he distrusted, but by using Holy Scripture as his source.<sup>36</sup> The writers of much seventeenth-century alchemical literature continued to deal with the mystical and the spiritual, but only a small scientific elite of the late seventeenth century managed to structure explanations and experimentations in the discipline of chemistry.

Undoubtedly, alchemists of the Netherlands made significant contributions to the famous art of alchemy. The Amsterdam alchemist Jan Cornelisz. van Amsterdam and the physician Jacobus Mosanus (1564–1616), for example, transcribed an alchemical treatise attributed to Isaac Hollandus. Johannes Baptista van Helmont (1579–1644), from Brussels, the first to recognize gases as distinct substances, believed in alchemical transmutation<sup>37</sup> and pursued research in retreat, rejecting the academic establishment. His son, Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont (1614–1699), who published his father’s complete works in 1648, described the qualities of a proper alchemist:

He that will study this Art, must be pure of Heart, of a pious life, stedfast in Mind, and a religious keeper of secrets.

And also be endowed with a good understanding, bodily health, and a good fortune.<sup>38</sup>

A similar, though stronger, sentiment exhorting that an alchemist be pious and morally pure was expressed by the Calvinist alchemist Willem Blomfeld, who believed that alchemists were called to their profession by God.<sup>39</sup>

The Dutch alchemist Wilhelmus Mennens (1525–1608) analyzed the alchemical history of the Israelite judge Gideon and the Greek hero Jason, both of whom were associated with a golden fleece.<sup>40</sup> In *The Alchemist* (London, 1612), the British playwright Ben Jonson listed the biblical figures involved with alchemy, not the least of whom was Adam, who, he contended, was the first alchemist. Prestige is accorded not only to Adam, but also to Dutch alchemical treatises:

I’ll show you a book, where Moses and his sister,  
And Solomon have written of the art;  
Ay, and a treatise penn’d by Adam...  
Of the philosopher’s stone, and in High Dutch...  
Which proves it was the primitive tongue.<sup>41</sup>

The treatise *Tabula Chémica* was in fact translated into Middle Netherlandish, likely from a Latin edition of the original Arabic text. The translator also revealed



the spiritual affiliations of chemical transmutations in a poem with Christian overtones added to the text.<sup>42</sup>

Heinrich Khunrath (b.1560) studied medicine and occult alchemy, and came to believe that the soul housed mystical transmutations.<sup>43</sup> A print of c.1604 by Hans Vredeman de Vries depicts the hermetic mystic Khunrath kneeling in prayer before a tabernacle in a large laboratory.<sup>44</sup> The room, rendered in the scientific perspective typical of Vredeman de Vries, is decorated with noble aphorisms and mystical inscriptions.<sup>45</sup> The Hebrew name of the Lord is legible on the tabernacle, while the paraphernalia represented in the print refer to the proportion and harmony required for a successful alchemical operation. Evidently this new branch of spiritual alchemy inspired new kinds of images.

Spiritual alchemy made a distinct break in the seventeenth century with the quasi-scientific or material-based branch of alchemy. Visual images reflect this division. While the fools of Brandt's *Narrenschiff* and Bruegel's alchemists were transformed into the victims of hubris and vanity in works by Jan Steen and Cornelius Bega, serious practitioners were the subjects of paintings by David Teniers the Younger and Thomas Wijck.<sup>46</sup> Jan Steen's alchemist (Frankfurt am Main) exemplifies the continuation of the strong sixteenth-century satiric tradition.<sup>47</sup> The protagonist is the obsessive gold seeker who melts his last lump of silver while his family falls victim to his dream and clearly shows its despair. Hendrik Heerschop's *The Alchemist's Explosion* (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) depicts a similar alchemist, shown in his laboratory when his experiment erupts. In the background, the alchemist's wife cares for their baby as the couple's investment goes up in smoke. Heerschop and Steen undoubtedly intended their narratives to be comical; Heerschop's alchemist is animated and exaggerated in his surprise, while Steen's characters gesture as though they are performers on a stage.

The mocking of charlatans reflects alchemy's questionable position in the realm of academia. The decisive schism between alchemy and chemistry in the seventeenth century aroused great interest in the figure of the alchemist.<sup>48</sup> The contradictions between the objective and subjective portrayals of alchemy mirror the varying views of alchemy itself. The choice between a meditative alchemist, a philosopher, a charlatan, or an alchemist upholding moral didacticism was evidently left up to the artist.

Most artists depicted the alchemist as a type. Thomas Wijck, for instance, elevated the status of alchemy by using the exotic Eastern philosopher type.

In *The Alchemist and Death* (cat. no. 37), however, the type is more difficult to discern. The most intriguing interpretation of this painting sees John Dee and Edward Kelly as the subjects. An English astronomer once held in high regard in the court of Elizabeth I, Dee took on Kelly as his assistant in 1582. Kelly had had his ears cut off in 1580 as punishment for stealing coins;<sup>49</sup> that Wijck's apprentice has ears casts doubt on this interpretation. The ancient "Roman" motifs in *The Alchemist and Death* are similar to those in an earlier drawing by Wijck (Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam) and evoke the Eastern philosopher type. Nevertheless, in his painting, Wijck's atypical presentation of a disorganized alchemist searching in vain for gold, the philosopher's stone, or redemption facilitates his task of moral instruction.

Other artists who represented the alchemist in his various *personae* include Thomas van Apshoven, Cornelis Dusart, Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, Gabriel Metsu, Frans van Mieris, Adriaen van Ostade, and David Rijckaert III (see cat. no. 35); and David Teniers the Younger's alchemists were often reproduced by other artists in engravings. The art of alchemy itself had had practical applications for artists since the Middle Ages. For example, medieval pigment recipes used by artists had alchemical undertones, and the Purple of Cassius was allegedly discovered by the seventeenth-century Amsterdam physician Andrea Cassius, who produced a purplish precipitate during an experiment designed to discover the elixir of life.<sup>50</sup>

This intimate connection between alchemy and artistry led some artists into temptation. Vasari recorded that the Italian Parmigianino (1503–40) fell prey to the seduction of alchemy; he abandoned a commission in Parma, and died in poverty as a result of his obsession with alchemy. But the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens, when invited by one Master Brendel to form a lucrative partnership, responded eloquently that he had already found "the true philosopher's stone in [his] brushes and paints."<sup>51</sup> Still, while no other artists in the Northern Netherlands could claim such success as Rubens, they certainly understood the implications of an experimental science and allowed their art to express the contemporary views of the Dutch public. A merging of the rational and the irrational manifested itself in the images of alchemists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The humour and satire of early representations were transmuted into the serious and spiritual expressions of more advanced alchemical practices in later works which, while still harbouring moralizing commentary, formed a unique genre in Dutch art.



- 1 See Beck, 1624/1993, p. 128: “*Te voor hadde ick in mijne keucken met Jan La faille ende mijn Buerman Van Wou Apoteker, mennig praetien van de Consten der Alchimie ende der schilderens, ende speculeerden een wijle in mijnen Vermander ende sommige mijner Teijckeningen.*”
- 2 Concerning the early history of chemistry as a university discipline in the Northern Netherlands, see Van Spronsen 1975, pp. 329–45.
- 3 For reference to the extensive literature on alchemy, see the various footnotes included in this essay and the bibliography. In addition, see Debus 1966, pp. 3–29.
- 4 See Van Spronsen 1975, p. 329.
- 5 Van Spronsen 1975, pp. 329–32.
- 6 Debus 1966, p. 8.
- 7 For a discussion of this term, see Debus 1977.
- 8 Nicasius le Febure, *A Compleat Body of Chymistry trans. by P.D.C., Esq., one of the Gentlemen of His Majesties Privy-Chamber*, London, 1670, p. 1.
- 9 Debus 1966, pp. 7–11.
- 10 On the subject of alchemy in the Age of Enlightenment, see Dietlinde Goltz, “Alchemie und die Aufklärung,” in *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 7, 1972, pp. 31–48.
- 11 Alchemical symbols are discussed in F. Sherwood Taylor, “Symbols in Greek Alchemical Writings,” *Ambix* 1, 1937–38, pp. 64–67. Gerard Heym explains some of these illustrated alchemical books in “Some Alchemical Picture Books,” *Ambix* 1, 1937–38, pp. 69–75.
- 12 *Splendor Solis*, with an introduction and explanatory notes by J.K., reprint, London 1912. This reprint includes reproductions of the 22 allegorical pictures from the original manuscript in the British Museum, dated 1582. *Splendor Solis* is also described in Read 1966, pp. 67–69.
- 13 Brunschwick’s work was first published in 1500 and again in 1512. The German edition of 1519, entitled *Buch zu Distillieren*, was more elaborate and illustrated. Jan Read discusses this work and reproduces two of the woodcuts. He attributes it to the workshop of Gruninger. See Read 1944, p. 241, pl. I, figs. B and C.
- 14 An example of an illustration that shows two figures working at distillation in a laboratory can be found in book 12 of Georg Agricola’s *De Re Metallica*.
- 15 Read 1966, p. 2.
- 16 J.D. North discusses Chaucer’s view of alchemy, arguing that Chaucer differentiated between false science and the true study of alchemical precepts. J.D. North in Von Martels 1990, pp. 81–88.
- 17 Erasmus 1519, p. 61.
- 18 Brandt as translated by Alexander Barclay in 1509, in Brandt/Barclay 1966, p. 219.
- 19 Quoted in Read 1944, p. 243; Petrarch’s interpretation of alchemy is also discussed by Winner in Von Simson/Winner 1979, p. 195.
- 20 Illustrated in Read 1947, p. 33. Van Lennep mentions that the print has also been attributed to Holbein. See Van Lennep 1966, p. 150, note 1.
- 21 This composition, with the conclusion of the narrative seen in the background, is similar to an earlier example by Cornelis Anthonisz. Teunissen, *Sorgeloos Living in Poverty*, from the *Sorgeloos* series of 1541 (Holl. XXX, p. 32, no. 4). The subject of this print is the tale of Sorgeloos and poverty rather than alchemy.
- 22 Read 1947, p. 63.
- 23 The De Vos print is illustrated and described in Holl. XLIV (text), p. 257, no. 1285, XLVI (plates), p. 161. For the print by Pieter van der Borcht IV, see Holl. III, pp. 106–07, no. 576.
- 24 The influence of Bruegel’s print on later representations of alchemists, seen in the prints by De Vos and Van der Borcht, is discussed in depth in Brinkman 1982, pp. 41–53. Also mentioned is a drawing by Jan Verbeek and a 1618 engraving for Schoonhiovius’s emblem book of that year by Crispijn van de Passe II. This early seventeenth-century example is missing the satire of the Bruegelian tradition.
- 25 Brinkman establishes a chronology for these two prints in Brinkman 1982, pp. 44–47.
- 26 This is probably the earliest representation of an alchemist as an ape. This was not a very common image; one of the few later examples is *Le Plaisir des Fous*, by David Teniers the Younger, known to us through an engraving reproduced by John Read in *Endeavour* 4, 1945, p. 95.
- 27 Read 1966, p. 32.
- 28 Burland 1968, p. 100. Helvetius was the Latin name of Johan Friederich Schweitzer, who was born in Köthem and who died in The Hague.
- 29 Coudert gives an animated account of Helvetius and the stranger, who explained that the philosopher’s stone took four days to make, contrary to some commonly held beliefs that it took seven days (paralleling Creation) or nine months (the time between conception and birth). Coudert 1980, pp. 50–52.
- 30 Letter of 25 March 1667, quoted in Patai 1994, p. 396. Spinoza also mentions Helvetius’s declaration to publish his findings, the title of which reads in the English translation: *A briefe of the Golden Calf. Or the worlds idols. Discovering the rarest miracle of Nature. How in less then a quarter of an hour by the smallest proportion of the Philosopher’s Stone, a great piece of common lead was totally transmuted into the purest transplendent gold...*
- 31 Coudert 1980, p. 83.
- 32 Wittkower 1963, p. 85.
- 33 See Allen Debus, “Chemistry and the Quest for a Material Spirit of Life in the Seventeenth Century,” in Debus 1987, pp. 245–63.
- 34 Debus, “Science vs. Pseudo-Science: The Persistent Debate,” in Debus 1987, p. 5.
- 35 Erasmus witnessed the healing of his friend and publisher Johann Froben by the physician, and he himself requested Paracelsus’s help after taking ill. Later, in a letter, Erasmus thanked Paracelsus: “I cannot offer thee a reward equal to thy art and knowledge – I surely offer thee a grateful soul.” Cited in Holmyard 1968, p. 166.
- 36 Debus, “The Chemical Philosophers: Chemical Medicine from Paracelsus to van Helmont,” in Debus 1987, p. 237. Paracelsus understood the Creation story in Genesis as a chemical process of separation. See p. 244.
- 37 Van Helmont tells of the stone converting commercial mercury into pure “virgin” gold. Pagel 1982, p. 117.
- 38 Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, *An hundred and fifty-three chymical aphorisms: to which whatever relates to the science of chymistry may fitly be referred/done by the labour and study of a country hermite, and printed in Latin at Amsterdam*, London, 1688, Aphorism 13–14, p. 3.
- 39 Coudert 1980, p. 84. Coudert mentions Blomfield in passing and offers no further information about his life.
- 40 In *Aurei vellei, sive sacrae philosophiae vatum selectae unicae mysteriorumque ac Dei, naturae, et artis admirabilium libri tres*. Cited in Patai 1994, p. 25.
- 41 Act 2, scene 1, line 80. Quoted in Patai 1994, p. 19 and Read 1966, p. 39.
- 42 See Marianne Marinovic-Vogg, “‘Son of Heaven’: The Middle Netherlands Translation of the Latin *Tabula Chemica*,” in Martels 1990, pp. 171–74. The poem is not included in any of the known Arabic or Latin versions, indicating that it was the translator’s addition, just as the exaltation of the Arabic author Muhammad ibn Umail as “*Hamils zone*” or



the Son of Heaven was certainly not part of the original manuscript.

- 43 Author of *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*, Magdeburg, 1602.
- 44 According to Read, it is after Khunrath's own design. Read 1947, p. 69.
- 45 *Hoc hoc agentibus nobis, aderit ipse Deus* ("disciplined work brings help from God") is inscribed on the drapery. Read 1947, p. 70.
- 46 The image of chemical philosophers, for example, sometimes resembled St Jerome in his study. Van Lennep 1966, p. 161.
- 47 Steen's painting is dated around 1668. Brinkman mentions this painting and at least six others by Steen, who was known to have made drawings after Bruegel. See Brinkman 1982, pp. 48–52.
- 48 Van Lennep 1966, pp. 167–68.
- 49 For more information about Dee and Kelly, see Holmyard 1968.
- 50 Purple of Cassius had been used since the fifteenth century by artists involved with alchemy. See Wallaert, "Alchemy and medieval art technology," in Von Martels 1990, p. 154–61, esp. p. 160.
- 51 Cited in Wittkower 1963, p. 84.



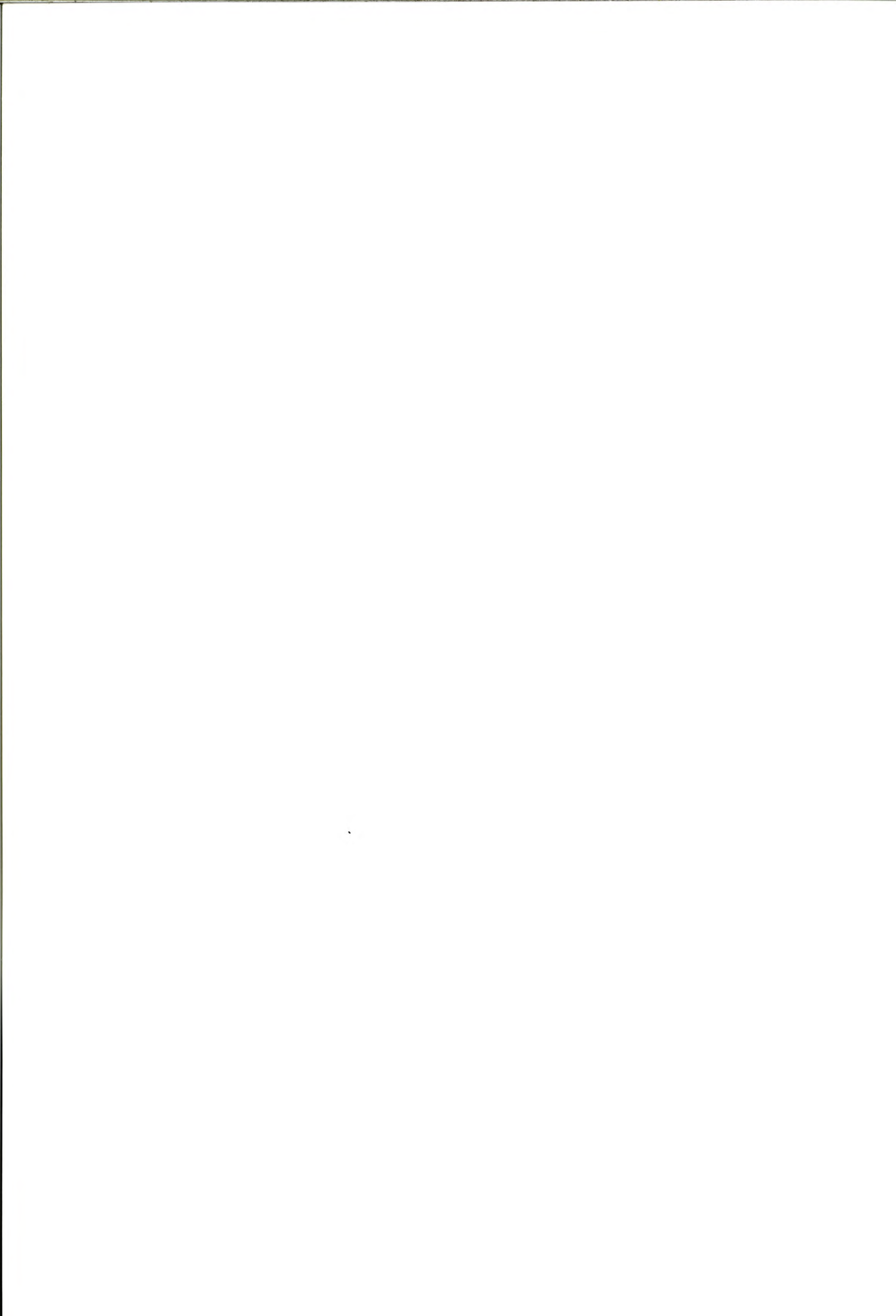






PLATE 1: Isaac Luttichuys, *Portrait of a Young Scholar*; Milwaukee, Collection of Daniel and Linda Bader (cat. no. 1)





PLATE 2: Haarlem School, *The Four Evangelists*, Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (cat. no. 21)



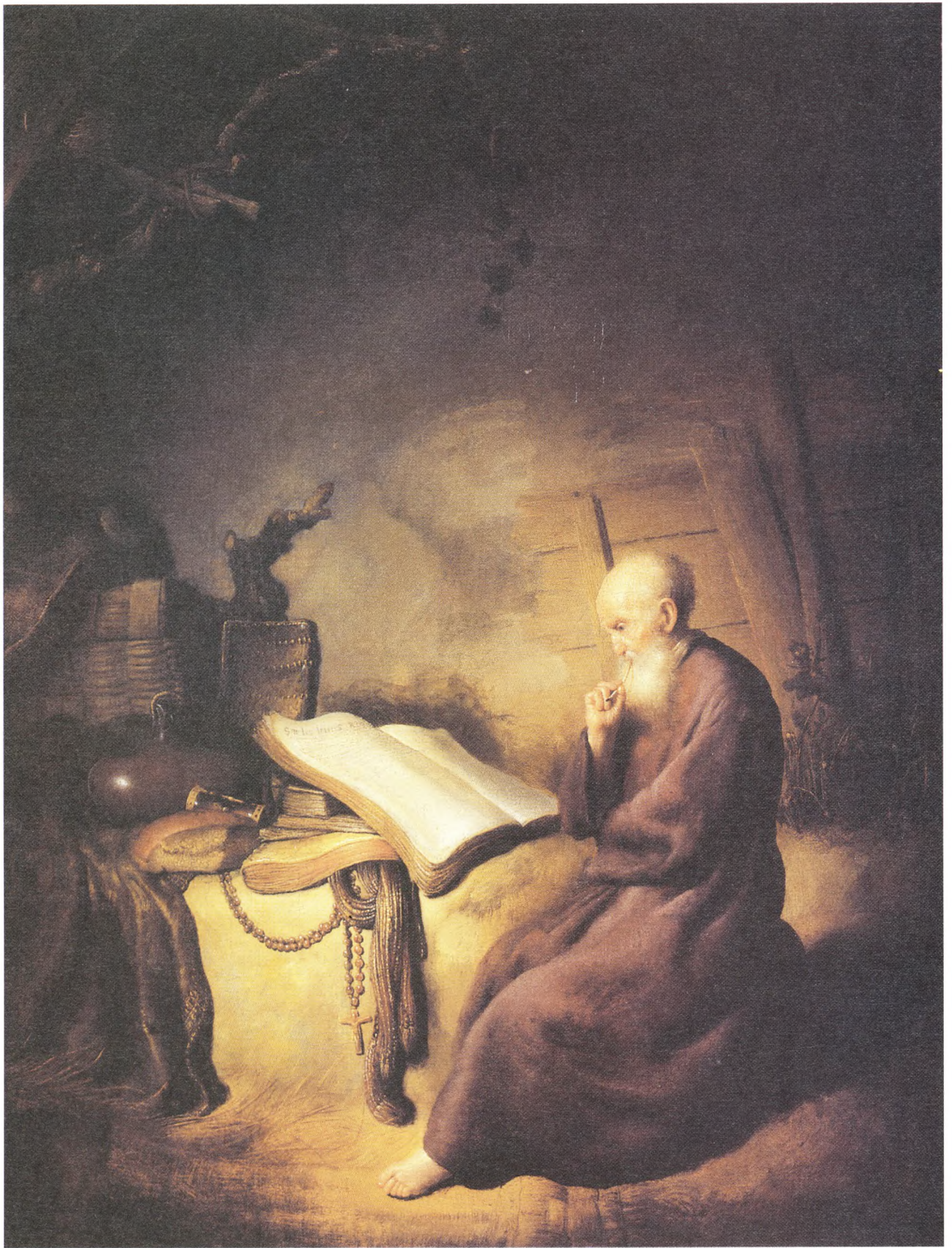


PLATE 3: Leiden School, *St Jerome*, Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader (cat. no. 27)





PLATE 4: Hendrik Heerschop, *The Alchemist*, Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader (cat. no. 38)



# CATALOGUE



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# Isaac Luttichuys

(London 1616–1673 Amsterdam)

## *Portrait of a Young Scholar*

Canvas, 97 x 80.5 cm

Inscribed: *I Luttichuys Fecit Anno 1657* (signature only visible under ultraviolet light)

Milwaukee, Collection of Daniel and Linda Bader

Very little is known about the life of Isaac Luttichuys, who was born in London to Dutch parents in 1616. Documents regarding his training have not survived. By 1638, at the latest, he was living in Amsterdam; around 1650, he worked there as a productive and successful portraitist. His half- and full-length portraits are characterized by a lively description of elegant, fashionably dressed sitters. Despite a tendency towards stereotypical compositions, the artist's works are particularly successful in conveying the surface qualities of different materials and fabrics. It appears that his patrons were mostly members of the upper social ranks of Amsterdam and Haarlem, as well as scholars.

The traditional identification of our sitter as the Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Danckerts is based on the fact that the text, open to an illustration of a flayed man holding his own skin, is an anatomy book published by Danckerts in 1647. However, both Hofstede de Groot and McTavish have rightly pointed out that the sitter cannot be Cornelis Danckerts (1603–1656), because he was already dead when this portrait was painted.<sup>1</sup> Another portrait of a young man with a globe and a scroll (whereabouts unknown) is dated 1657, the same year as the present painting, and was identified in 1921 as *Portrait du cartographe Cornelis Danckerts*, the son of Cornelis Danckerts.<sup>2</sup> The different dimensions of the lost painting (127 x 101 cm) make it unlikely, despite formal similarities, that the paintings were pendant portraits of the father and son. Nor do the two sitters show the required generational age difference.

Comparable celestial globes appear in innumerable seventeenth-century Dutch portraits, genre paintings, and still lifes. In most cases they appear to refer to the “universal” character of science rather than to a specific interest of the depicted person in astronomy or astrology.

In 1556, the anatomical textbook *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* by Juan de Valverde, based on Andreas Vesalius (see cat. no. 5), was published in Rome.<sup>3</sup> The Danckerts family published a Dutch translation in 1647, which contains 42 copperplate engravings.<sup>4</sup> The first plate in the second volume shows the figure of a standing man like the one on the open page in the present painting; he carries his skin in his right hand and a dagger in his left. Such models, either sculpted or drawn (so-called *écorchés*), were used for teaching purposes (see cat. no. 35). Therefore, it is very likely that the sitter is a yet unidentified medical doctor with a special interest in anatomy.<sup>5</sup> The occasion for the commission of the painting could have been the awarding of a doctoral degree upon the completion of the sitter's medical studies.

V.M.

**PROVENANCE** Art dealer J. Goudstikker, 14th cat., Amsterdam, 1919/20, no. 23; De Ridder, Cronberg; A. Janssen, Amsterdam, 1921; sale Ruth K. Gaylord *et al.*, New York (Sotheby Parke-Bernet), 4 June 1980, lot 227 (ill.; as Dutch 17th Century: Portrait of a Gentleman); sale M.J. Seery *et al.*, New York (Sotheby Parke-Bernet), 14 July 1981, lot 59 (ill.; as Isaac Luttichuys: Portrait of a Gentleman)

**LITERATURE** Valentiner 1938, pp. 171 and 177, no. 17; David McTavish in ex. cat. Kingston 1984, p. 56, no. 25 (ill.)

1 David McTavish in ex. cat. Kingston 1984, p. 56. For Hofstede de Groot's opinion on the problem of the identification of the sitter, see Valentiner 1938, p. 171. Information on the Danckerts family is provided by F.G. Waller, *Biographisch woordenboek van Noord-Nederlandsche graveurs*, The Hague, 1938, pp. 74–75.

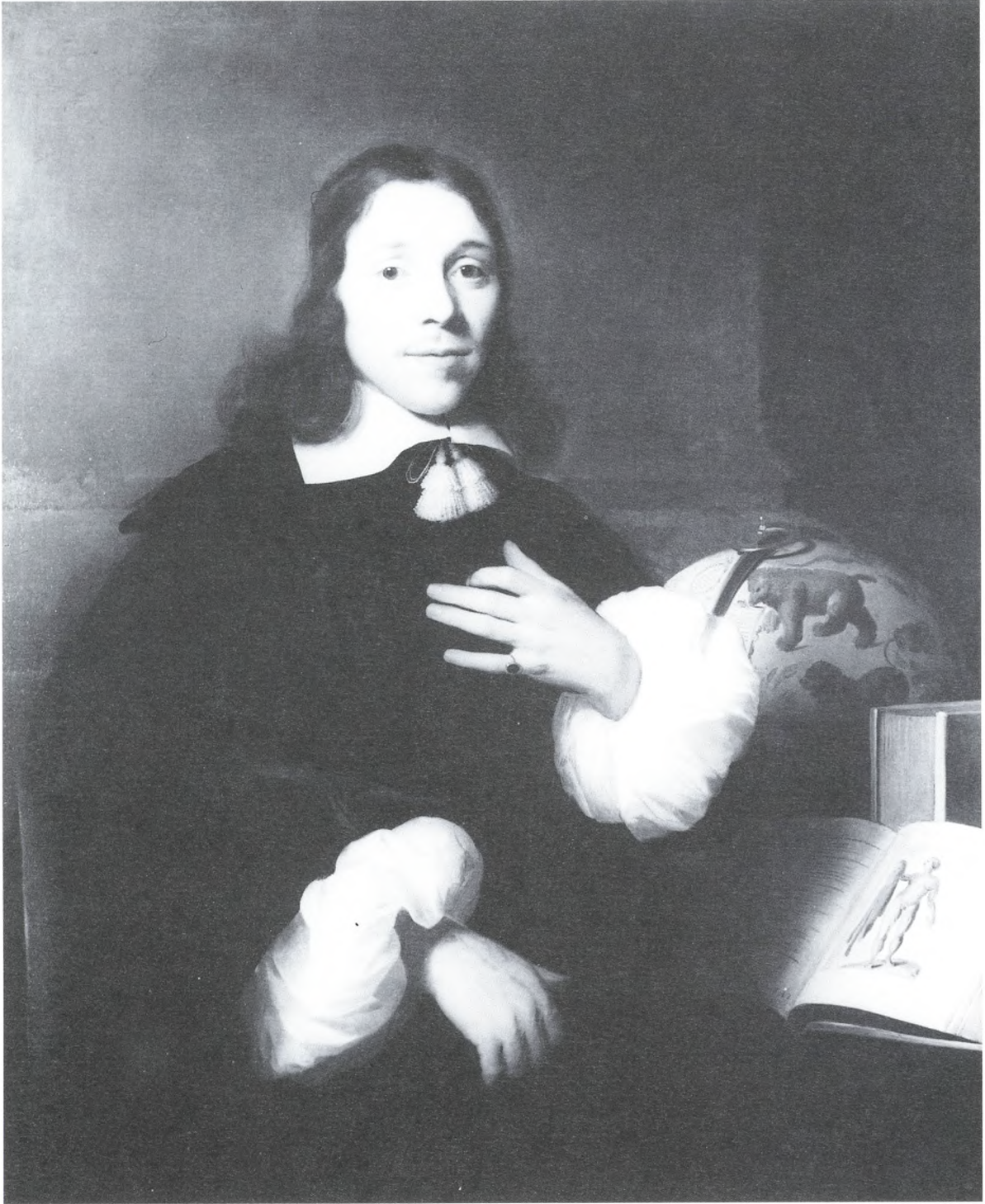
2 The painting was sold at auction, Amsterdam (F. Muller), 24–27 May 1921 (Lugt 82238), lot 28. For an illustration, see Valentiner 1938, p. 178, no. 18, fig. 18.

3 W.S. Heckscher, *Rembrandt's Anatomy of Dr Nicholas Tulp*, New York, 1958, pp. 100, 215, pl. XXXV.

4 The title of the Dutch edition is *A. Vesalii en Ververda anatomie, ofte Afbeeldinghe van de deelen des menschelijcken lichaems, en derselver verklaringhel/Met een Aenvijnsinghe om het selve te ontleden volgens de leringe Galleni, Vesalii, Fallopii en Arantii, T'Amstelredam by Cornelis Danckertsz, in de Kalverstraat, in de Danckbaerheyt, 1647.*

5 I would like to thank Jaap van der Veen, Amsterdam, who kindly confirmed my suspicion that the sitter is not a member of the Amsterdam publishing family, the Danckerts, but rather an unidentified medical doctor. Van der Veen pointed out that Johannes Danckerts (1638–1694), a son of Cornelis, did indeed study medicine, but he did not receive his doctoral degree in Italy until 1667.







## Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)

*Portrait of the Preacher Cornelis Claesz. Anso*

Etching and drypoint, 18.8 x 15.8 cm (B. 271)

Inscribed: *Rembrandt f 1641*

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sir Edmund Walker Collection, 1926

Cornelis Claesz. Anso (1592–1646) was a wealthy Amsterdam shipowner and cloth merchant. Like Rembrandt's business partner and eventual relative by marriage, Hendrik Uylenburgh, Anso was a follower of the Frisian Anabaptist Menno Simons. Rather than relying on a system of ordained preachers, the Mennonites (*doopsgezinden*) chose their most talented biblical interpreters to lead the congregation.<sup>1</sup> Anso, named to this unpaid position for the Waterland Congregation north of Amsterdam in 1617, demonstrated his learning in a number of theological tracts.<sup>2</sup>

Dressed in a wide-brimmed hat, ruff, and scholar's *tabbaard*, Anso appears to address a member of his congregation beyond the borders of the print. The scholar's right hand holds a pen and rests on a heavy volume. With his left hand, he indicates the biblical passage which he is expounding. A similar composition, though including Anso's listener (his wife Aeltje Gerritsdr. Schouten), and a similar rhetorical gesture are to be found in Rembrandt's portrait painting of 1641 (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie). Present in the etching, but not in the drawing which most likely served as the *modello* (London, British Museum), are an illusionistically rendered nail and a painting turned to face the wall behind the sitter.

Joost van den Vondel's epigram, exhorting Rembrandt to "paint Cornelis's voice,"<sup>3</sup> is mentioned in Jan Emmens's seminal essay of 1956. Emmens traces the debate concerning the pre-eminence of the word (considered immaterial and everlasting) over the image (a material entity and therefore ephemeral) and of the sense of hearing over sight from Antiquity onwards. In Emmens's view, Rembrandt, in the painted portrait, took up Vondel's challenge to paint Anso's voice.<sup>4</sup> Another interpretation of the print points to a central tenet of the Mennonites which maintains that the spoken or written word, and not the image, should be the vehicle of God's message; thus the painting within the print has been taken down from the wall and is presented with its back to the viewer.<sup>5</sup> J.B.

1 Schwartz 1985, p. 217.

2 Pieter J.J. van Thiel in *Amsterdam/Berlin/London 1991–92*, vol. 1, p. 224, no. 33.

3 Emmens 1956.

4 A similar epigram, claiming that "the real person, full of spirit, is painted by the poet himself," was written by Jan Vos

about Joachim von Sandrart's portrait of P.C. Hoof. The epigram is quoted in the original Dutch in Emmens 1956, p. 138. Jan Lutma II may well have had this epigram in mind when he engraved his vivacious portrait of Hoof (cat. no. 10).

5 Busch 1971.

## Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)

*Portrait of the Remonstrant Minister Johannes Wtenbogaert*

Etching and drypoint, 22.4 x 18.7 cm (B. 279)

Inscribed: *Rembrandt ft 1635*

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sir Edmund Walker Collection, 1926

Inscribed with a Latin quatrain by Hugo de Groot (1585–1645)

*"Quem pia mirari plebes quem castra solebant  
damnare et mores aula coacta suos,  
lactatus multum, nec tantum fractus ab annis  
Wtenbogardus sic tuus, Haya, redit."*  
HGROTIUS

"He who was revered by the people, whom the pious factions used to damn, who was appointed by the Court because of his character, who was much tossed about, yet not broken by the years, your Wtenbogaert, returned to The Hague." HGROTIUS  
[Trans. from Latin by the author]

Johannes Wtenbogaert (1557–1644) was a prominent figure in the dispute between the liberal members of the Reformed Church and the strict Calvinists. A minister in Utrecht, he became the court preacher and the tutor of



Princes Maurits and Frederik Hendrik of Nassau-Orange in The Hague. Wtenbogaert was a close friend and confidant of Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), a preacher in Amsterdam since 1588 who taught theology at Leiden University from 1602 until his death. In his teachings Arminius criticized predestination, an important element of Calvinist theology. According to John Calvin, since God was all-knowing and almighty, He predetermined who was to be saved and who to be damned. Arminius argued instead that Christ had been sacrificed to save all believers and not just a chosen few. He thus described predestination as God's decree to save from perdition those upon whom He had bestowed faith. These ideas, often wrongly referred to as the doctrine of free will, brought Arminius into conflict with the orthodox Calvinist clergy. Arminius's ideas became well known through a declaration drawn up by Johannes Wtenbogaert and signed by 44 of his followers. This declaration, the so-called *Remonstrance* presented to the states of Holland, asserted the authority of the state over the church. It was also a plea for greater tolerance in questions of religion. The defenders of this declaration were called the Remonstrants, as opposed to the Counter-Remonstrants, Arminius's orthodox opponents.

The quarrel escalated, and in 1618 Wtenbogaert was banned. Only after the death of the orthodox Prince Maurits of Nassau-Orange in 1625 could he return from exile. The Latin verse by Hugo Grotius on the print describes the tensions faced by Wtenbogaert. With the words *iactatus multum* ("much tossed about"), Grotius also alludes to Virgil's *Aeneid* (1,3).

On 13 April 1633, Wtenbogaert visited Amsterdam to have his portrait, commissioned by one of his followers, painted by Rembrandt,<sup>1</sup> and two years later Rembrandt etched his portrait. Although the etching clearly refers to the painting of 1633, there are significant differences. The 78-year-old theologian, reduced to a half-figure format in the etching, is surrounded by scholarly attributes. He wears a *tabbaard*, a fur-lined gown with a broad shawl collar and long, wide sleeves, with his arms protruding from slits at the elbows.<sup>2</sup> In addition, he wears a black skull-cap, a distinctive accessory of Dutch ecclesiastics and scholars during the seventeenth century. v.m.

1 Wtenbogaert mentioned the portrait by Rembrandt in his diary. See Strauss/Van der Meulen 1979, p. 99, document 1633/2. For Wtenbogaert's follower, see S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, "De remonstrantse wereld van Rembrandts opdrachtgever Abraham Anthonisz'n Recht," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 42, 1994, pp. 334–46.

2 For the history and significance of the *tabbaard*, see the excellent article by Marieke de Winkel, "Eene der deftigsten dragten – The Iconography of the Tabbaard and the Sense of Tradition in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Portraiture," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46, 1995, pp. 145–67; for Wtenbogaert, see esp. pp. 158–59.



2



3



*Portrait of a Young Scholar*

Canvas, 96.5 x 78 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

This portrait of an unidentified man is clearly influenced by Anthony van Dyck's portrait of *Lucas van Uffel* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).<sup>1</sup> There is a noticeable similarity in the position of the sitter, who seems to use his right hand to rise from his chair while the other hand rests on a table upon which lie objects suggesting an interest in scholarship and the arts. The table is covered by what appears to be an Anatolian carpet of a type that gained popularity in Netherlandish painting between 1645 and 1655 and continued to be represented for several decades thereafter.<sup>2</sup> On the table are a book of music and another book open to a page with a portrait of a young man. The sculpted bust on the table was believed, in the seventeenth century, to be a portrait of Seneca. Rubens owned a bust like this one, as part of his collection of antique sculpture; he included it in his painting of the *Four Philosophers* (Florence, Palazzo Pitti) as well as in several drawings and engravings.<sup>3</sup> In the present painting the sitter wears a collar with tasselled strings of a type that first appears in Dutch portraits in the late 1640s. The absence of puffed shirt sleeves (see cat. no. 1) would indicate a date for this work in the first half of the 1650s.

The painter of this portrait is unknown, though attributions have been made to Philippe de Champaigne, Pieter Franchoys, Karel Dujardin, and Wallerant Vaillant.<sup>4</sup> The painting obviously reflects a strong Flemish influence, as can be seen in the close relationship of composition and subject to Van Dyck's portrait of Van Uffel. However, such aspects of this work as the directness of the sitter's gaze, his closeness to the picture plane, and the even distribution of light and shade are also characteristic of seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture. The combining of elements from different regional schools was not unusual, since many Dutch artists produced portraits influenced by Flemish art for the upper class.

J.H.

PROVENANCE Trafalgar Galleries 1979; art dealer Neville Orgel, London, 1981

LITERATURE Cohen 1979, pp. 10–15, no. 5 (col. ill.); Liedtke 1984, vol. 1, p. 59 (ill.); ex. cat. Kingston 1984, no. 28 (col. ill.); ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, no. 37 (ill.)

1 Liedtke 1984, vol. 1, p. 58, ill. 12.

2 For a discussion of this style of carpet in Netherlandish paintings, see Onno Ydema, *Carpets and their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings (1540–1700)*, Zutphen, 1991, pp. 30–31.

3 Further information about this bust and its reproduction in Rubens's work can be found in Marjon van der Meulen,

*Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. Copies after the Antique*, part XXIII, London, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 142–44, vol. 2, pp. 135–38, 143–44, 149, 158, 210–11, vol. 3, figs. 218–27. See also Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: the lure of classical sculpture, 1500–1900*, New Haven, 1981, pp. 51–52; and Prinz 1973, pp. 410–28.

4 Anthony Blunt attributed the painting to Philippe de Champaigne in Cohen 1979, p. 12; Walter Liedtke suggested Wallerant Vaillant in Liedtke 1984, vol. 1, p. 58; and in letters to the present owner dated October 1988 and October 1989, Pieter Franchoys was suggested by Jacques Foucart, and Karel Dujardin by George Keyes. These attributions are listed in a November 1989 letter from the present owner.







## Lucas Franchoys the Younger

(Mechelen 1616–1681 Mechelen)

### *Portrait of a Doctor*

Canvas, 94.6 x 76.2 cm

New York, Jack Kilgore & Co., Inc.

The portrait depicts an unidentified scholar sitting behind his desk. His right hand rests on a skull, placed on an open book, and a niche in the background wall contains a human skeleton leaning on a grave-digger's shovel.

On one hand, the skull and the skeleton refer to the limited span of human life and the transience of human endeavours (see cat. nos. 32 and 33). On the other hand, they identify the sitter as a medical doctor. The representation of the skeleton follows a woodcut from what was likely the most famous anatomical textbook of the modern period, Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, first published in Basel in 1543 and dedicated to Emperor Charles V. Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), who was from Brussels, is considered the founder of systematic anatomy.<sup>1</sup> The designs for the illustrations have been attributed to the Lower Rhenish painter Johann Stephan von Calcar (Giovanni da Calcar) who, according to Vasari, worked temporarily in Titian's workshop in Venice. The renowned anatomical textbook, which reappeared in numerous editions, includes a woodcut title page depicting representations of human skeletons and Vesalius dissecting a female cadaver; besides the skeleton holding a shovel, there is a wailing skeleton, its arms raised in mourning, and another that is absorbed in thought while contemplating a skull on an altar. The Latin inscription on the altar, "*Vivitur ingenio, caetera mortis erunt*" ("Genius lives on, all else is mortal"), reminds the reader of the end of his or her life. The skeleton with the shovel that Lucas Franchoys copied from a Vesalius edition can be found on the title pages of numerous seventeenth-century anatomical textbooks.<sup>2</sup> One may thus conclude that the sitter is in all likelihood an anatomist.

The Mechelen artist Lucas Franchoys began as an apprentice in the workshop of his father, Lucas Franchoys the Elder (1574–1643), and continued his training with Peter Paul Rubens in Antwerp. The fluent handling of the paint, especially visible in the cuffs of the sitter's white shirt, seems to reflect the influence of Rubens. At the same time, the self-conscious, distant bearing of the anatomist-sitter reminds the viewer of Franchoys's contemporary from Brussels, Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674), who had been working in Paris since 1628 as court painter to the Queen Mother Marie de' Medici and Louis XIII. It is more than likely that the two artists met, since Lucas Franchoys the Younger also worked for the French court. The shape of the sitter's collar suggests that the painting was created in the 1650s.

V.M.

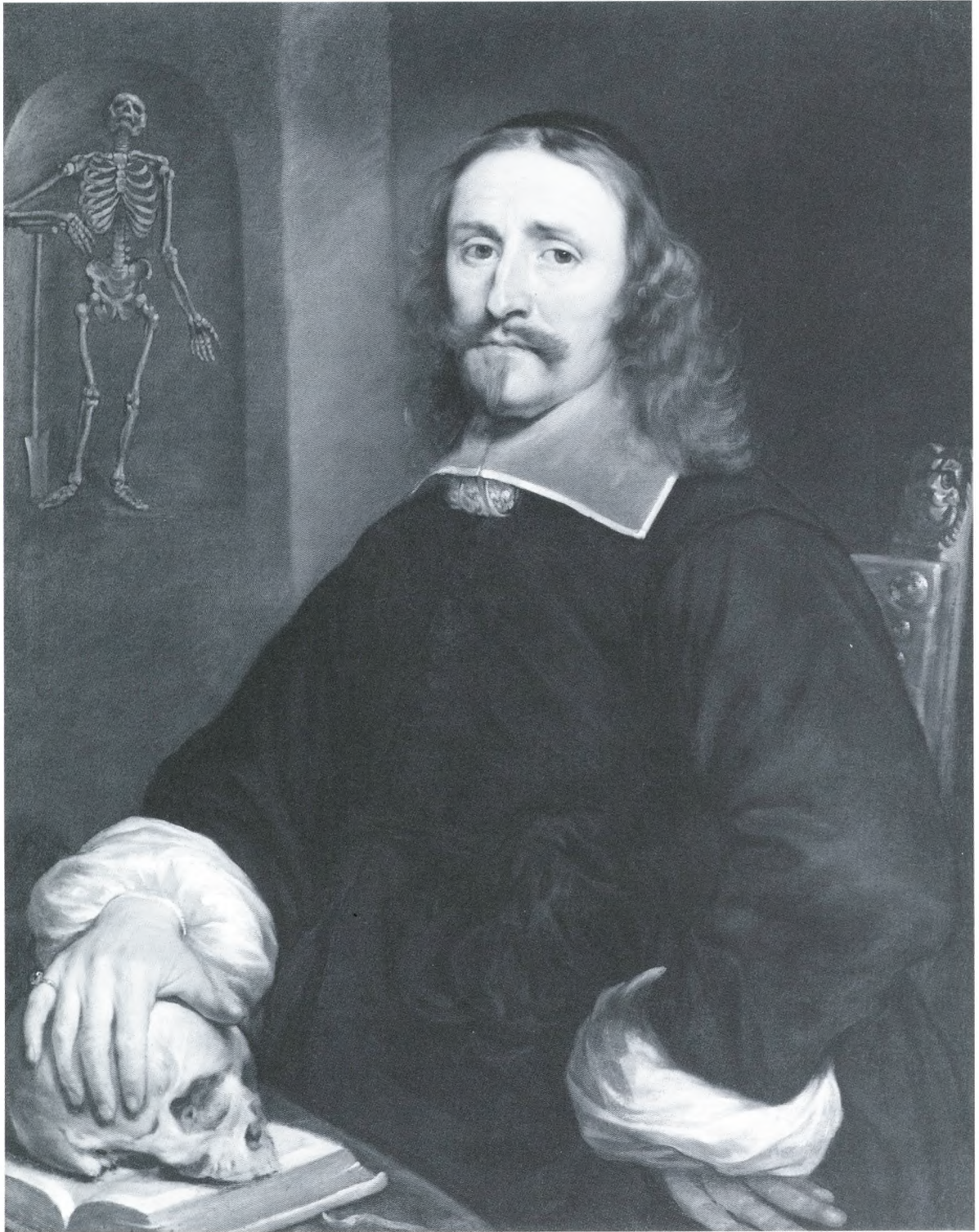
PROVENANCE Adolphe Stein, New York, 1965

LITERATURE Colsoul 1989, pp. 212–13, cat. no. 73, pl. 137

1 Of the extensive literature on Andreas Vesalius, I would like to cite only the following: H. Cushing, *A Bio-Bibliography of Andreas Vesalius*, New York, 1943 and J.B. de C.M. Saunders and C.D. O'Malley, *The Illustrations from Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*, Cleveland, 1950, reprint, New York, 1973.

2 See G. Wolf-Heidegger, Anna Maria Cetto, *Die anatomische Sektion in bildlicher Darstellung*, Basel, New York, 1967, p. 472, fig. 145, p. 475, fig. 151, p. 488, fig. 190.







6

## Pieter Nason

(Amsterdam 1612–1688/91 The Hague)

### *Portrait of René Descartes*

Canvas, 75 x 62.5 cm

Signed and dated middle left: *PETER NASON / 1647*

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

PROVENANCE Collection James S. Murghahan, Dublin, from 1933; Neville Orgel, London, until 1982

7

## Franciscus van Schooten Jr

(? 1615–1660 Leiden)

### *Portrait of René Descartes*

Engraving (possibly used as frontispiece to *Geometria. Amsterdam 1656*), 16.8 x 10.2 cm (Holl.1)

Inscribed: *FRANCISCUS À SCHOOTEN PR.MAT.IAD VIVUM DELINEAVIT ET FECIT ANNO 1644.*

On oval frame: *RENATVS DES-CARTES, DOMINVS DE PERRON, NATVS HAGÆ TVRONVM, ANNO. M.D.XCVI, VLTIMO DIE MARTII.*

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (Gift of Segsworth Estate, 1944)

The French scientist-philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650) spent most of his adult life in the Northern Netherlands and wrote all of his books there. His first book, the *Discours de la Méthode*, published in Leiden in 1637, presented a radically new scientific-philosophical system whereby an understanding of the laws of nature could be obtained through reason allied with observation and experiment.<sup>1</sup> Descartes's mechanistic world-view provoked heated controversies in the United Provinces.<sup>2</sup> Orthodox Calvinist academics objected to his eschewal of traditional – *i.e.* Aristotelian – science and philosophy, including established proofs of God's existence, and accused Descartes of atheism. Despite being officially banned by all five of the country's universities, Cartesianism flourished in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

The leading figure promoting an awareness of Cartesian science was Franciscus Van Schooten Jr, the amateur artist responsible for the portrait engraving of Descartes.<sup>4</sup> Van Schooten made Descartes's acquaintance in 1636 when he drew the figures for the two appendices on meteors and light included in the *Discours de la Méthode*. Van Schooten also revised and translated Descartes's *Géométrie* into Latin (1638), making it available to a wider scholarly audience. However, it was as a professor at the Nederduytsche mathematyke, Leiden's school of engineering, that Van Schooten made his greatest contribution to the dissemination of Cartesianism in the Northern Netherlands. Undoubtedly, his most important pupil was Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695), who studied at the school in 1645.<sup>5</sup> Generally considered the greatest Dutch scientist, Huygens shared a number of Descartes's interests. Among his numerous accomplishments was his theory of light based on the transmission of waves, an extension of Descartes's mathematical explanation of light.<sup>6</sup> Christiaan Huygens's younger brother, Constantijn Huygens Jr, is the author of the laudatory poem appended to the portrait engraving of Descartes.

Of the numerous portraits of Descartes produced in the Northern Netherlands, an oil sketch by Frans Hals, today in Copenhagen, was the one most often copied in the seventeenth century and remains the most canonic image of the scholar.<sup>7</sup> Johan Nordström has argued that Descartes did not actually sit for Hals, but that Hals based his portrait on his imagination and on Van Schooten's engraving.<sup>8</sup> A pupil of Van Schooten, Erasmus Bartholinus, judged an engraving after Hals's oil sketch to be a poor likeness. However, Bartholinus wrote that Van Schooten's engraving "represents him [Descartes] exactly according to nature, as far as I and others can judge."<sup>9</sup> Seymour Slive questions the reliability of Bartholinus's judgement, and therefore rejects Nordström's argument.



Supporting Slive's position, but not mentioned by him, is Descartes's own judgement of Van Schooten's portrait engraving. In a letter dated April 9, 1649, Descartes thanks Van Schooten for having produced the engraving, but maintains that "*la barbe et les habits ne me ressemblent aucunement.*"<sup>10</sup>

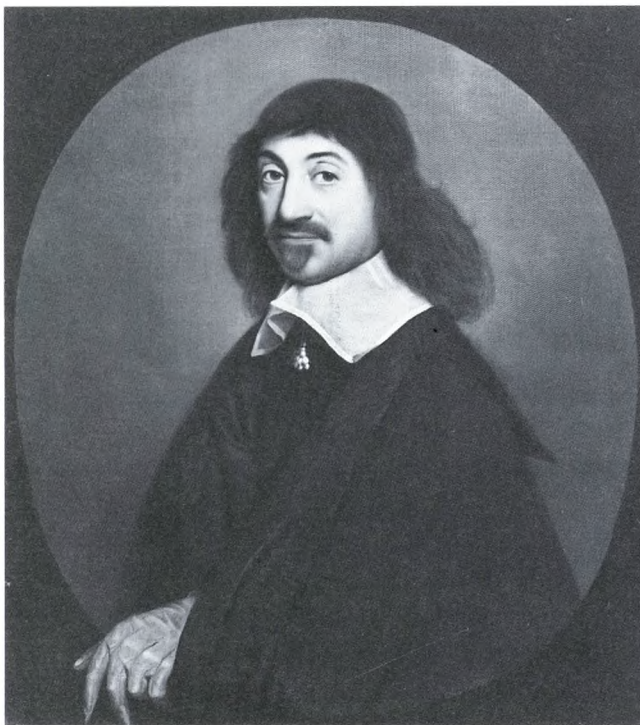
Although Descartes spent some time in The Hague in the early part of 1647, the place where the portrait painting was most likely produced and the date it is signed, there are reasons to believe Descartes did not sit for the artist, Pieter Nason. Slive has suggested that Nason's painting has "some of the 'toughness' and 'blackness' of Van Schooten's 1644 portrait of Descartes ..."<sup>11</sup>

Apparently, Nason also reproduced the beard from the Van Schooten engraving, which, as we now know from Descartes's letter, did not resemble the scholar's actual beard. Nason's use of a simulated oval opening was probably also suggested by Van Schooten's engraving. Whereas Van Schooten heightened the illusionistic aspect of his porthole by including a cast shadow, Nason portrayed Descartes's finely rendered, gloved hand poking out of the simulated frame.

J.B.

- 1 For an overview of Descartes's scientific and philosophical work, see Struik 1981, ch. VII.
- 2 A detailed account of the Cartesian controversy in the United Provinces is given by Israel 1995, pp. 584–87, 888–94.
- 3 For a discussion of the fate of Cartesianism at the University of Leiden, see Ruestow 1973, chapter III.
- 4 The author of this portrait engraving is erroneously identified as the elder Franciscus Van Schooten in Holl. XXVI, no. 1, p. 55.
- 5 Matthey 1973, p. 383.
- 6 Christiaan Huygens's theory was published in his *Traité de la lumière*, Leiden, 1690. For an overview of his contributions

- to science, see Struik 1981, ch. VIII. Another pupil of Van Schooten, Johannes Hudde (1628–1704), is responsible for making improvements to the microscope that were necessary for its successful application in scientific research.
- 7 Slive 1970–74, p. 168.
- 8 Nordström's argument is discussed and refuted by Slive 1970–74, pp. 167–68.
- 9 Quoted in Slive 1970–74, p. 167.
- 10 *Oeuvres de Descartes*, eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, Paris, 1897ff., vol. 5, p. 338.
- 11 Written communication to Dr Alfred Bader, 28 February 1983.



6



*Primus inaccessum qui per tot secula verum  
Eruit è tetrìs longa caliginis umbris,  
Mysta sagax. Natura tuus, sic cernitur Orbi  
Cartesius. Vultu sacros in imagine vultus  
Iungere victura artificis pia dextera fame,  
Omnia ut aspicerent quem secula nulla tacebunt.*  
CONSTANTINI HUYGENII F. SC.

7



## Constantijn Daniël van Renessee

(Maarssen 1626–1680 ?)

*Portrait of a Jewish Doctor*

Canvas, 99 x 72.3 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Any number of scholars in seventeenth-century Amsterdam could have resembled this sitter. A mortar and pestle on the table to the left identify him as a doctor. In his left hand he holds a folio, attesting to his intellectual status. The sitter's dress has given rise to the tradition of identifying him as Jewish, and the name "Joseph Delmedigo" has been proposed.<sup>1</sup> This identification is tempting, because Delmedigo was a physician and a Jewish religious scholar, even an enigmatic mystic, who lived in Amsterdam in the mid-1620s. He was depicted in a print of 1628 by Cornelis Delff.<sup>2</sup> However, neither his features nor his age accord with the Bader painting. It dates to around 1655, because the sitter's collar corresponds to the fashion of these years. At this time, Delmedigo was in his early 60s, and lived in Prague. Van Renessee's sitter is young and smooth-featured. Furthermore, the full beard does not identify him as Jewish because it was not restricted to Jews in the Netherlands; such a beard is also worn by Cornelis Claesz. Anso in Rembrandt's portrait etching (cat. no. 2), for instance, and perhaps reflected a fashion among scholars.

Van Renessee's enthusiasm for learning probably developed through his own studies at Leiden University, and was particularly apparent in his ambitious history paintings. He spent some time as a pupil in Rembrandt's studio, which we know from student drawings with corrections by the master.<sup>3</sup> From 1653 on, Van Renessee divided his time between the practice of his art and a civic post. As a portraitist, he did not develop a real facility for animating facial expressions, and here he characterizes his sitter in a subdued fashion. He concentrates on the figure's dark mass, the carefully balanced asymmetry in pose, and the clear and forceful rhetorical gesture of the free hand. In the face, the powerful line of the nose and the deep, dark eyes project focused thought. D.d.w.

PROVENANCE Tomas Harris collection; sale, London (Sotheby's), 23 February 1972, lot 6 (as Rembrandt); Saskia Jüngeling Gallery, The Hague; acquired by the present owner, 30 June 1974

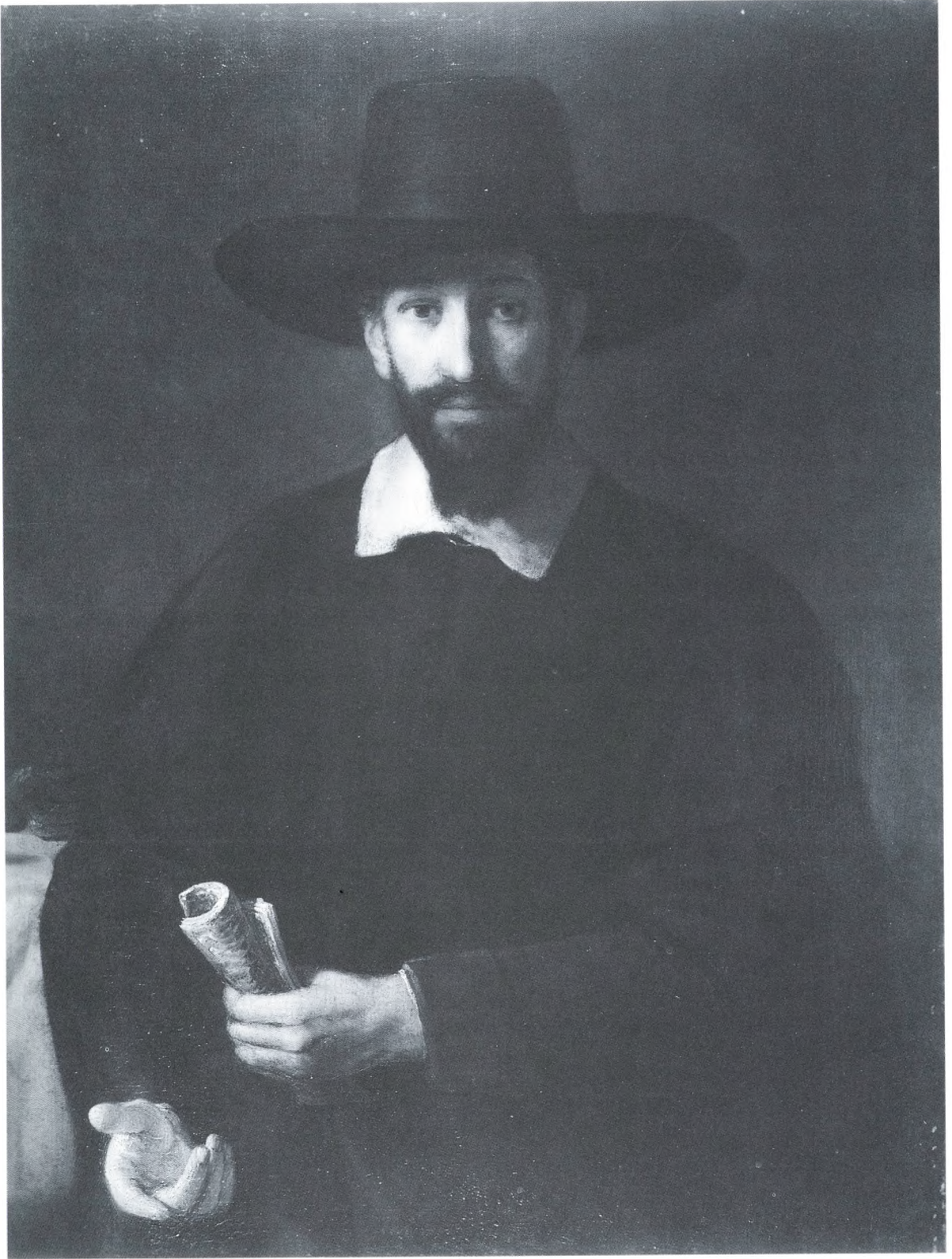
LITERATURE Ex. cat. West Lafayette, 1980, no. 13 (ill.); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 4, p. 2471, no. 1655, p. 2473 (ill.), vol. 6, p. 3633

1 Concerning the sitter's identity, see Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 6, p. 3633.

2 Holl. V, p. 180, no. 44. According to the inscription, the print was made after a painting by W.C. Duyster.

3 The inscription "*tweede ordinatie By Rembrandt*" on the verso of a drawing by Van Renessee entitled *The Judgement of Solomon* (formerly London, C.R. Rudolf; for ill., see Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 9, p. 4831, no. 2151) refers to its critique by Rembrandt. Also, a drawing of the *Annunciation* by Van Renessee (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett) has been corrected by Rembrandt; for ill., see Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 9, p. 4921, no. 219xx. See Vermeeren 1978–79, pp. 5–13.







## Sir Godfrey Kneller

(Lübeck 1646 – 1723 London)

*A Scholar in an Interior*

Canvas, 100.3 x 93.3 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Kneller studied in Amsterdam in the 1660s, as a pupil of Ferdinand Bol and of Rembrandt. There are strong formal and colouristic similarities with Kneller's signed and dated 1668 *Old Student* (Lübeck, St. Annen Museum).<sup>1</sup> Also notable is the use of the butt end of the brush in the rendering of the figures' beards.

The figure here is probably a Jewish scholar, since he wears a sort of Jewish prayer shawl.<sup>2</sup> The model resembles the baker in *Joseph Interpreting the Dreams of his Fellow Prisoners* (Schwerin, Staatliches Museum)<sup>3</sup> and Joseph in *The Rest on the Flight* (Nivâ), which may also be an early Kneller.<sup>4</sup>

The Bader picture shows the high quality Kneller was capable of in his mid-twenties. Its gravity is characteristic of his best mature works. This half-length portrayal of a thoughtful scholar was a type the artist returned to throughout his career, often with brilliant results.<sup>5</sup>

J.D.S.

PROVENANCE Sale New York (Sotheby's), 4 June 1987, lot 37 (as Follower of Carel van der Pluym); Clovis Whitfield, London; acquired by the present owner in 1994

1 See Stewart 1983, no. 1.

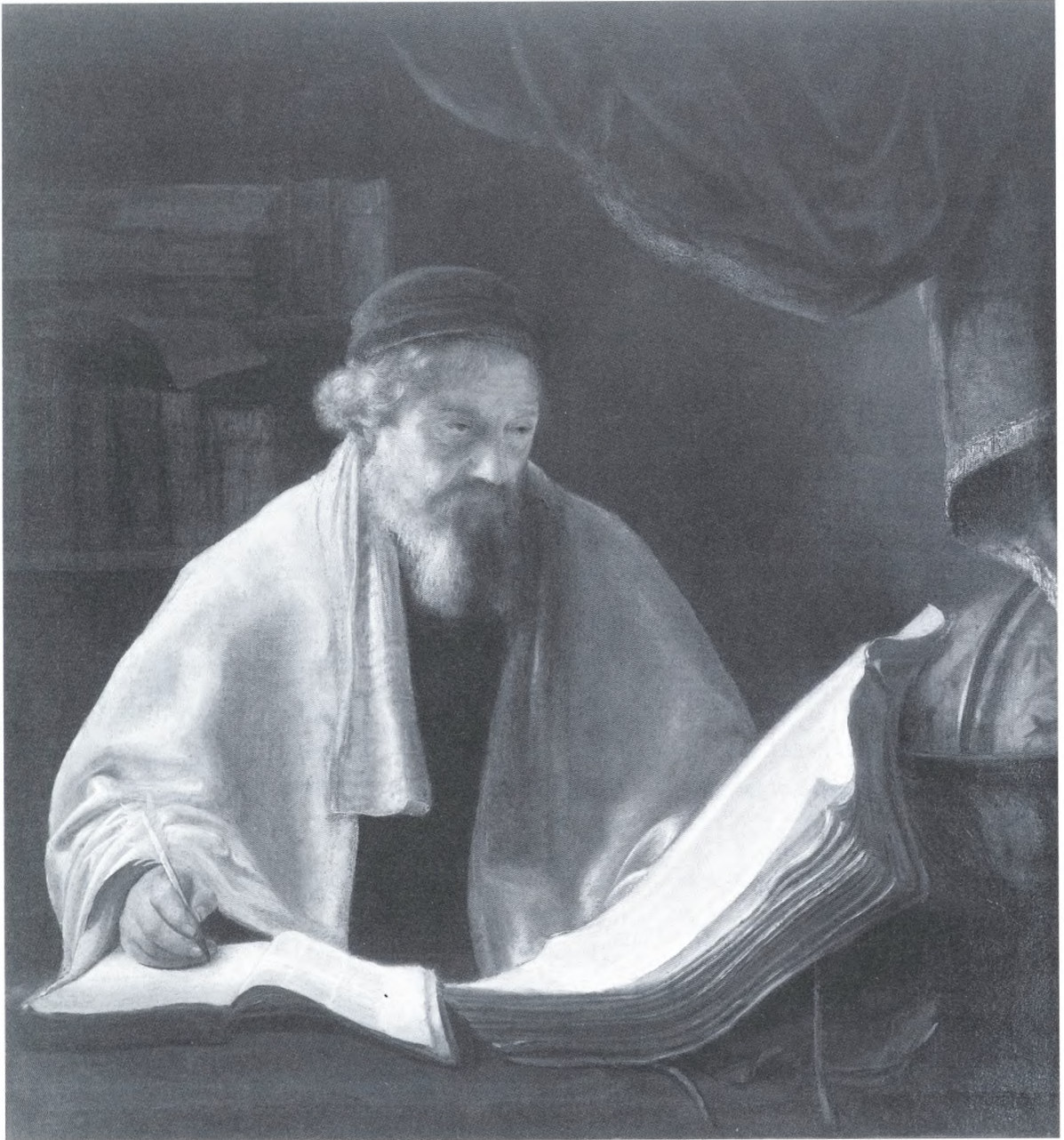
2 Dr Alfred Bader has kindly informed me that this is not a completely accurate depiction of a Jewish prayer shawl because it lacks fringes at the corners.

3 Once given to Bol, but assigned to Kneller by Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1486, no. 970.

4 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1978. Also once given to Bol, and then to Maes, but assigned to Cornelis Bisschop by Sumowski. In his review of Sumowski, Josua Bruyn noted similarities between the Schwerin and Nivâ pictures, but concluded that both were by Bisschop. See Bruyn in *Oud Holland* 102, 1988, p. 323, note 4.

5 For example, two portraits of *Joseph Carreras*, the 1689 *Sir Isaac Newton*, and two late portraits of Alexander Pope. See Stewart 1983, nos. 136, 137, 528, 577, and 579.







## Jan Lutma the Younger

(? 1624–1685/89 Amsterdam)

*Portrait of Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft*

Punch engraving, 28.9 x 21 cm (Holl. 7)

Inscribed: P.C. HOOFT/ ALTER TACITUS./ OPUS MALLEI PER IANUM LUTMA.

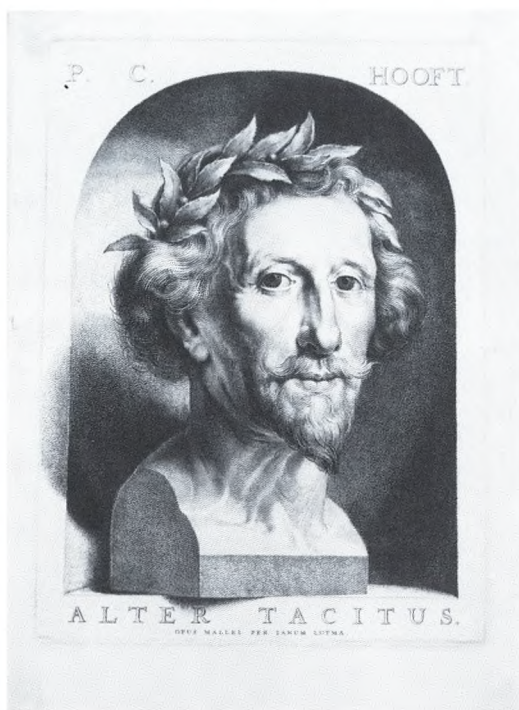
Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Purchase 1984

Jan Lutma conceived his portrait of the Amsterdam historian, poet, and playwright Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft (1581–1647) as an antique bust placed at an angle in a niche. Because there are several engraved portraits in this format by the artist, it is possible that they were created for a projected compilation of *uomini illustri*, or famous men. Two of these portrait engravings are dated 1681 and 1685, suggesting that Lutma's portrait of Hooft is from around the same period. Of the many sources that could have served as Lutma's inspiration, the engraved series of antique busts included by Joachim von Sandrart in his 1675 *Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste ...* shows the greatest similarities. Unlike the print series that could have served as his model, however, Lutma's engravings do not reproduce actual antique busts, but fictitious contemporary ones, encouraging a comparison between the deeds of his seventeenth-century sitters and those of the great figures of Antiquity. This comparison is reinforced in the Hooft portrait by the laurel wreath crowning the sitter's head and by the inscription beneath the bust, *Alter Tacitus* ("another Tacitus"). The reference to the first-century A.D. Roman historian pays homage to Hooft's completion of *Nederlandsche Historien*, a history of the Dutch revolt against Spain from the abdication of Charles V in 1555 to 1587. Hooft, whom contemporaries such as Joost van den Vondel often compared to the classical author, was also responsible for the first Dutch translation of Tacitus's writings.

The detailed treatment of Hooft's facial features, the illusionism inherent in the projecting base of the bust, and the shadows cast in and outside of the niche combine to create an extremely life-like effigy. The wisps of hair captured by Lutma's burin could hardly be duplicated in an actual sculpture. The vivacity of Lutma's portrait is further underscored by tonal illusionism, for which the artist employed a difficult and seldom-used technique, which he called *opus mallei* (hammer work).<sup>1</sup> Small dots were made on a copper plate with punches that a silversmith like Lutma would have been skilled at handling.

J.B.

1 Other examples of the use of this technique are given by Ackley in ex. cat. Boston 1981, pp. 31–32, no. 17 and p. 280, no. 195.





# Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)



## *Portrait of Abraham Francen, Apothecary*

Etching, 15.8 x 20.8 cm (B. 273-IV)

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sir Edmund Walker Estate, 1926

The subject of this portrait of a man seated with his back to an open window, handling a large print on which another portrait is reproduced, has commonly been identified as Abraham Francen (b.1612), friend of Rembrandt and guardian to his daughter Cornelia.

The accoutrements of the interior – a large triptych on the wall, two paintings, an open book, a skull, and a seated Asian statuette – designate the sitter as a collector. Isabella van Eeghen noted that Abraham Francen was never depicted as a buyer of art, though he occasionally appeared as a merchant.<sup>1</sup> In the notice of his marriage to Susanna Molenijser, Francen was registered as an apothecary, and later in life was documented as a master of medicine. His professional studies in medicine would surely have led him to discourses and debates on nature and alchemy, since in the seventeenth century “Medical topics [were] frequently discussed and understood in relation to elemental theory, the chemical theory and properties of the earth and the generation and growth of metals.”<sup>2</sup> The skull in this portrait may indicate that the sitter is an educated man, an appropriate association for an apothecary. The statuette may have come from Francen’s sons, Abraham and Johannes, who had travelled to East India.

The etching’s loose resemblance to Rembrandt’s etching of Jan Six (signed and dated 1647; B. 285-II) suggests that the two were executed within the same time frame, and further, that the etching of Francen either began as a compositional study for another work, or was intended to represent another individual altogether. The etching has been linked to a documented commission by the patron Otto van Kattenburch. The document stipulated a value of 400 guilders for an etching of Van Kattenburch, to be done from life, and to be “equal in quality to his portrait of Mr Jan Six.”<sup>3</sup> Whether this commission can be linked to the present etching is debatable.

The sitter’s rich and statesmanly attire and his surroundings have been noted as inconsistent with Francen’s circumstances, since he occasionally suffered from financial difficulties. As far as we know, his death went unrecorded, suggesting that he died without status or estate. Nevertheless, the image of a learned man, acquainted with cultural objects and seated comfortably in his domestic environment, is fitting and well chosen when understood in the context of the burgher consciousness of the Dutch Republic.

D.B.

1 Van Eeghen 1969, p. 174.

2 Allan Debus, “The Chemical Philosophers: Chemical Medicine from Paracelsus to van Helmont,” in Debus 1987, p. 250.

3 Strauss/Van der Meulen 1979, p. 334, document 1655/8.





## Heijmen Dullaert

(Rotterdam 1636–1684 Rotterdam)

### *Young Scholar in His Study*

Canvas, 68.4 x 52.3 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The Rotterdam painter Heijmen Dullaert is one of the few artists whose connection to Rembrandt has been documented. His training in Rembrandt's workshop must have taken place in the early 1650s, because by 1653 he already acted as a legal witness for his master. His relatively small surviving *œuvre* includes not only genre scenes and still lifes, but portraits and history paintings. Dullaert also worked as a poet, and many of his verses were published during his lifetime.

Werner Sumowski's attribution of the painting is based on Dullaert's *Doctor in his Study* (Groningen, Museum voor Stad en Lande).<sup>1</sup> It shows an almost identical x-frame chair, and the young man's conspicuously striped *japonsche rok* (Japanese gown) returns in this painting as a garment in the background. However, with regard to the handling of paint, the two works show significant differences which can possibly be explained by Dullaert's frequent changes in style. The warm earth colours and the direction of light in the present painting are much more reminiscent of Rembrandt's style.

The letters "CAS" on the book beside the young man's right arm present an interesting riddle. Since parts of the inscription are covered, one can only speculate about its precise meaning. It is conceivable that the letters stand for "Cassiodorus," the famous sixth-century Roman statesman and scholar. Cassiodorus, who lived as a monk during the latter part of his life, was the author of a chronicle of the world (*Chronica*) and a history of the Church (*Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*), both of which were much read in post-medieval times. A more banal explanation is equally possible: the inscription could stand for the Dutch word *Casboek*, meaning a ledger used to record personal and business-related income and expenditures. V.M.

PROVENANCE Mathiesen Gallery, London, 1953; sale London (Sotheby's), 11 April 1991, lot 10 (col. ill.); art dealer Rafael Valls, London; sale Vienna (Dorotheum), 18–19 March 1992, lot 99 (col. ill.; "lower left corner: fragment of signature")

LITERATURE Cat. Mathiesen Gallery, London, 1953, no. 55 (ill.; as Karel van der Pluym, formerly attributed to Chr. Paudiss); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 5, p. 3090, no. 2041 (as attributed to Dullaert), p. 3172 (ill.), vol. 6, pp. 3641, 3687 (col. ill.)

<sup>1</sup> For an illustration of Dullaert's painting in Groningen, see Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, no. 343.

## Cornelis Bisschop

(Dordrecht 1630–1674 Dordrecht)

### *A Seated, Gesturing Scholar in His Study*

Canvas, 137.5 x 103 cm

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University

(Gift of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, 1978)

The painting, formerly attributed to Karel van der Pluym, was recognized by Werner Sumowski as a work by the Dordrecht painter Cornelis Bisschop, who began his training in the late 1640s in Amsterdam with Rembrandt's student, Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680). After his return to his native city of Dordrecht, Bisschop was influenced by another Rembrandt student, Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693). The impact of the works of Rembrandt and his circle can clearly be detected in the warm, predominantly brown earth tones.

The turn of the scholar's head and the gesture of his left arm undoubtedly point to the two portraits of Cornelis Claesz. Anslo, which Rembrandt completed in 1641. Whether Bisschop was able to study Rembrandt's painting (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie) in addition to the published engraving (cat. no. 2) is open to question. For his



composition Bisschop referred to a drawing of a scholar, attributed to his former teacher Bol (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett).<sup>1</sup> The desk with the books and globes and the pose of the figure are clearly modelled after the drawing. Bol had in turn combined motifs from Rembrandt's painted and engraved portraits of Anso, which he also used for his *Man with a Hat at a Desk* from the late 1650s (St Petersburg, Hermitage).<sup>2</sup>

The pieces of armour strewn on the floor near the column refer to the transience of worldly power and the glory of war.<sup>3</sup> In addition, this choice of objects suggests a connection with St Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which refers to "the breastplate of righteousness" (6:14), "the helmet of salvation," and "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (6:17). The apostle Paul also mentions "the armour of God," donned by the believer "to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against... the rulers of the darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (6:11–12). Awareness of the allegorical-theological meaning of the pieces of armour described by Paul was widespread among artists (see cat. no. 30). For instance, in his instructions for still-life painting, Gérard de Lairesse names, among other things, the *borstharnas* (breastplate) and the *zwaard* (sword) as appropriate objects for a still life devoted to a theologian. For his interpretation he refers to the philosopher Antisthenes, the poet Homer, and the apostle Paul.<sup>4</sup>

This reference to Paul, whose theology was especially important for the various denominations of the Protestant church, suggests that Bisschop's scholar may be interpreted as a model for a way of life in which the study of the Scriptures ensures the successful resistance of the temptations of evil. As an expression of the *vita contemplativa*, religious study is an important part of a life pleasing to God. The awareness of the transience of earthly existence is thus set against the hope for eternal life, to be gained by spiritual struggle

V.M.

PROVENANCE Sale Lord Belper *et al.*, London (Christie's), 9 July 1976, lot 77 (as A. de Gelder)

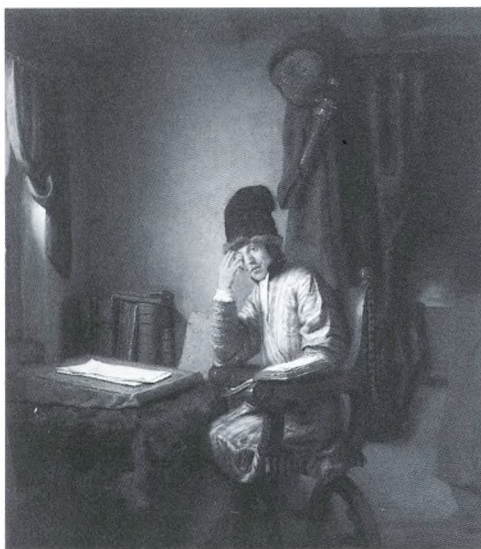
LITERATURE Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1961 (as C. Bisschop), p. 1965, note 69, p. 1980 (col. ill.), vol. 6, p. 3626; Bruyn 1988, p. 323 (as C. Bisschop); Von Moltke 1994, p. 184, no. R64, fig. 95 (as not by A. de Gelder; whereabouts unknown)

1 For ill., see Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 1, no. 237xx. According to Bruyn 1988, p. 323, the drawing should be considered to be by Bisschop.

2 Bol's painting is signed and dated: *Rembrandt f. 1657*. The signature is a later addition. Judging by the dress of the sitter and the style of the picture, it could have been painted around 1655. See Blankert 1982, p. 133, no. 105–1 and plate 106A; Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 313 (ill.).

3 For an account of the development and history of arms and armour in still-life painting, compare Klemm, in ex. cat. Münster/Baden-Baden 1979–80, pp. 244–51.

4 Gérard de Lairesse, *Het groot schilderboek*, Haarlem 1740, vol. 2, book 11, ch. 3, p. 282.



12



13



## Attributed to Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)

*Scholar Writing by Candlelight*

Copper, 13.5 x 13.5 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The fascination with extreme light effects, triggered by the works of the Italian painter Michelangelo da Caravaggio (1573–1610) and shared by generations of artists, can hardly be overestimated. An awareness of these light effects reached the Netherlands at the start of the seventeenth century. After the return of a group of Utrecht painters from Rome, Dutch artists – including Rembrandt and his students – began experimenting with artificial light sources. One example is this small painting of an aged scholar studying at night, by the light of a candle or an oil lamp. The source of light is covered by an open folio so that its effect is only evident from the areas of light and shadow in the background.

The issue of the authorship of this painting, formerly attributed to Rembrandt, is still unresolved.<sup>1</sup> In 1790 the French painter and collector Jean-Baptiste Pierre Le Brun produced an etching of the painting, which he considered to be by Rembrandt, as stated in the inscription: “*Gravé d’après le Tableau de Rembrandt ...*” On an unknown date after 1790, the initials G.D.F., indicating the Leiden painter and Rembrandt pupil Gerrit Dou (1613–1675), were added to the painting. The letters were placed between the second and third lines on the sheet of paper affixed to the back wall of the room. The initials were easily removed during a 1958 restoration in Vienna.<sup>2</sup>

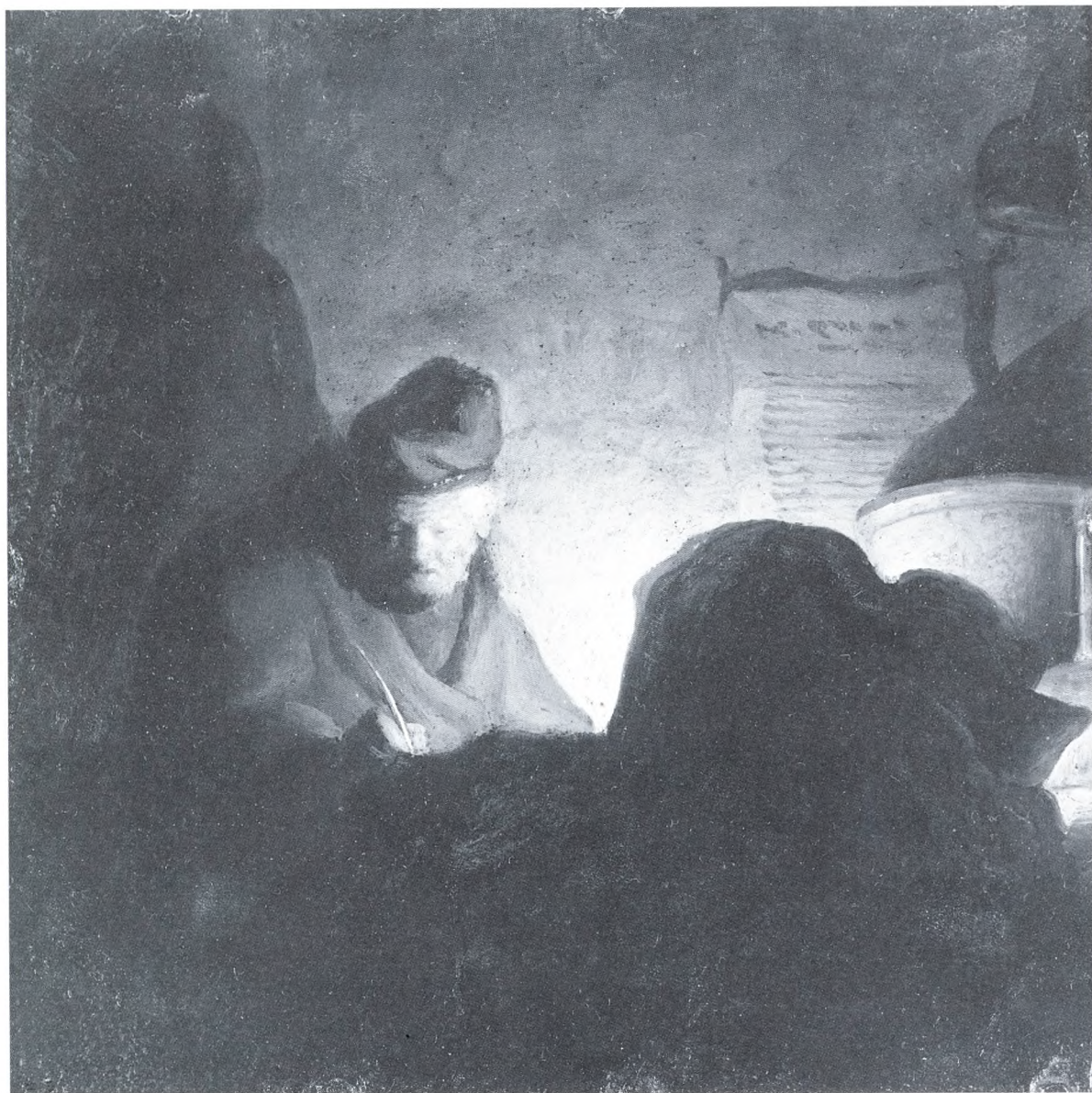
The long and controversial discussion of the authorship of the painting has always focused on the question: Rembrandt or Gerrit Dou? However, stylistic reasons speak against either painter being the author of the work.

On one hand, the subject matter accords with a group of similar paintings created under the immediate influence of Rembrandt in his native Leiden during the second half of the 1620s. If, on the other hand, one compares his autograph works of this period with the painting in the Bader collection, disparities in conception and painting technique are instantly apparent. The main difference lies in the very summary rendering of forms and different surface textures. Despite its similar use of a shielded light source, Rembrandt’s painting *The Parable of the Rich Fool*, dated 1627 (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie),<sup>3</sup> shows a much stronger interest in the representation of different materials and the way they reflect candlelight. In his painting *The Apostle Paul at His Study Desk* of 1629/30 (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum),<sup>4</sup> Rembrandt combines natural and artificial light. He unifies both light sources and investigates the gradations of light values in the shaded areas. The right half of the Nuremberg painting, with the huge folio that covers the candle or oil lamp, is very similar to the painting in the Bader collection and may have served as a model. The Rembrandt Research Project suggests that the Bader painting may be by the artist from Rembrandt’s immediate circle, who created *The Flight into Egypt* (Tours, Musée des Beaux-Arts) and *A Nocturnal Scene* (Tokyo, Bridgestone Museum of Art).<sup>5</sup> At any rate, Gerrit Dou cannot be considered the author. His early works differ significantly in the rendering of individual details, the more evenly distributed lighting, and the choice of colours.

The supposition that the painting was made under Rembrandt’s influence in Leiden will have to suffice for the time being. The already-mentioned comparison with Rembrandt’s *Apostle Paul* in Nuremberg yields a point of reference for a possible date of 1629–31. Around 1630, Rembrandt experimented in his Leiden studio with small copper panels as painting supports. In order to give the colours a transparent and especially brilliant character he gilded the ground, as for example in *An Old Woman at Prayer* (commonly known as “Rembrandt’s Mother”) in the Salzburg Residenzgalerie.<sup>6</sup> Although this particular preparation of the copper support cannot be found in the painting in the Bader collection, the anonymous master’s choice of support may have been inspired by Rembrandt’s workshop.

V.M.





**PROVENANCE** Documented since 1738; J.B.P. Lebrun, Paris, 1790; Dubois, Vienna; F.X. Mayer, Vienna; acquired by the present owner from M. Mayer, grandson of F.X. Mayer (For a more detailed account of the provenance, see Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 557–58)

**LITERATURE** For a summary of the extensive literature on the painting prior to 1982, see Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, p. 554, C18; in addition: ex. cat. Kingston 1984, pp. 14–16, no. 7 (ill.); ex. cat. Yokohama/Fukuoka/Kyoto 1986, p. 152, no. 3 (col. ill.); ex. cat. Tokyo 1989, p. 125, fig. 2; ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 30, no. 12 (ill.)

- 1 Regarding the different opinions on the authorship of the painting, see Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, p. 554, C18, and McTavish in ex. cat. Kingston 1984, pp. 14–15.
- 2 For an account of the painting's restoration, see Bader in ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 30, with an illustration of Le Brun's etching and a photograph of the painting before the removal of the monogram by J. Hajsinek.
- 3 Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 137–42, A10.
- 4 Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 137–42, A10.
- 5 Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 554–57, C18.
- 6 Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 272–75, A27.



## Anonymous painter

*Portrait of Rembrandt*

Canvas, 76.2 x 63.5 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The portrait reveals the distinctive physiognomy of Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn. He looks out at the viewer from behind a window sill. In his hands he holds a book, most likely a sketchbook, an inkpot, and a pen, and he seems to be drawing something seen from his window.

The act of drawing, either after images or from models, was an essential part not only of the artist's education, but also of the master's daily practice. In the course of their education, pupils started by drawing after drawings and prints, then after paintings, followed by plaster casts and reliefs, and finally after the living model.<sup>1</sup> It was considered most important that students practise their drawing skills continuously. The guild in Padua even required apprentices to continue their drawing during otherwise sacrosanct guild festivals.<sup>2</sup> And the necessity for constant practice continued after apprenticeship. Even an accomplished master drew as a means of training his manual skills and his eye. Most artists, like Rembrandt, kept their drawings in stock for later use,<sup>3</sup> often in sketchbooks and so-called *kunstboeken* (albums in which drawings and prints were pasted).

The depiction of an artist drawing may refer to a motto (originating with the ancient painter Apelles but well known in Rembrandt's time) as part of an emblem: *Nulla dies sine linea* ("No day without a line").<sup>4</sup> In this context, the painting may also refer to the last of the three Aristotelian principles considered since the Renaissance to be essential to the artist's education: nature (natural talent), training, and practice. According to Erasmus, practice is "the free exercise on our own part of that activity which has been implanted by Nature and is furthered by Training."<sup>5</sup>

Practice can be related to *exercitatio* or *usus*, the terms used by the classical writers Quintilian and Plutarch. *Usus* appears in two mottos, known to Dutch artists and writers, that emphasize the use of drawing and writing tools: *Nil penna, sed usus* ("Not the quill, but its use"), and a variation mentioned by Crispijn van de Passe, *Nil carbone, sed usu* ("Not the charcoal, but its use").<sup>6</sup> Although this motto may be related mainly to the depictions of quill cutters (see cat. nos. 16, 17), it may also apply to the portrayal of a working artist who makes use of a quill. In Hendrick Goltzius's engraving *Ars and Usus* (Bartsch 111), the personification of *Usus* draws while holding an ink pot in his left hand, as does Rembrandt in this painting.

There are five other known versions of the present painting: one each in the museums of Dresden, San Francisco, and Budapest, and two others in the private collections of Cotterell Dormer in Rousham, Oxfordshire, and Voogt, Oosterbeek, The Netherlands. All of the versions seem to be based on a lost original by Rembrandt. A mezzotint by Jacob Gole (c.1660–c.1737) appears to be the most faithful copy after Rembrandt's self-portrait.<sup>7</sup> The condition of the extant paintings makes it difficult to determine which one can be considered closest to Rembrandt's original.

V.M., A.R.

PROVENANCE Collection of the British painter William Mulready (1786–1863); art dealer Christenssen, Willesden (London); art dealer Neville Orgel, London; acquired by the present owner in 1977

LITERATURE Ex. cat. West Lafayette 1980, no. 18 (ill. and col. ill. on cover); ex. cat. Kingston 1984, pp. 20–21, no. 9 (ill.; as ascribed to Rembrandt); ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, pp. 8–9, no. 1 (col. ill.; as Dutch, c.1655); ex. cat. West Lafayette 1992, pp. 20–21 (ill.)

1 Bolten 1985, p. 243.

2 Joseph Meder, *The Mastery of Drawings*, New York, 1919, trans. and rev. Winslow Ames, New York, 1978, p. 214.

3 For the inventory of Rembrandt's possessions dd 25–26 July 1656, see Strauss/Van der Meulen 1979, pp. 349–88.

4 Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, XXXV, 84. For a popular seventeenth-century emblem with this motto, see Rollenhagen 1613, part 2, no. 24: *Nulla dies abeat, quin linea ducta sit, usus solus erit, magnos qui facit artifices* ("No day passes without drawing a line. Practice alone makes great artists.") The Dutch version can be found in Philips Angels's *Lof der Schilder-konst*, Leyden





1642: "...dat noyt Dach voor-bij mach gaen, of daer werdt een treck gedaen," as quoted in Bauch 1960, p. 141.

5 Erasmus of Rotterdam, *De Pueris Instituendis*, Paragraph 11. See William H. Woodward, *Desiderius Erasmus concerning the Aim and Method of Education*, New York, 1964, p. 191.

6 Rollenhagen 1613, part I, no. 36: *En struthum nil penna iuvat, quod nesciat uti; non penna est scribas quae facit, usus erit* ("See, the wing is of no use to the ostrich because it does not know how to use it. It is not the quill that makes the poet but its use.") Crispijn van de Passe, *Van 't Light der teken en schilder konst*, Amsterdam, 1643. A didactic engraving in Van de Passe's

book shows the hand of an artist, drawing a head, surrounded by laurel branches which are bound together below by two crossed quills. An inkpot stands next to the hand in the wreath. Above the hand: *Nil carbone sed usu*; below the hand: *Nulla dies sine Linea*. See Jochen Becker, "Dieses emblematische Stück stellet die Erziehung der Jugend vor' – Zu Adriaen van der Werff. München, Alte Pinakothek, Inv. Nr. 250," *Oud Holland* 90, 1976, pp. 77-107, p. 102 (ill.). For Van de Passe's drawingbook, compare Bolten 1985, pp. 27-47.

7 Wurzbach 1906-11, vol. 1, p. 596, no. 111; Holl. VII, p. 215 (ill.).



## Leiden School

*Quill Cutter*

Canvas, 60.6 x 46 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

PROVENANCE Sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 15 August 1995, lot 78, (as Hendrick de Heerschop, after 1672)

## Paulus de Lesire

(Dordrecht 1611–after 1656 The Hague)

*Quill Cutter*

Canvas, 78.8 x 60 cm

Inscribed: PdL

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The subject of both paintings is an old bearded man shown half-length sharpening his quill while seated behind a table. Both men appear in Japanese gowns (*Japonsche Rock*), a garment worn in the home in the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The representation of a quill cutter occurred only sporadically before Gerrit Dou's (1613–1675) paintings of the subject, executed between 1628–31, and was later popularized by his followers.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle emphasized the virtue of daily practice in education, a precept related to the well-known emblem of a hand holding a quill.<sup>3</sup> Thus the quill-cutting man may be understood as an allegory of diligent study. The first painting (cat. no. 16) is consistent with this interpretation, because on the table, covered by an oriental rug,<sup>4</sup> the artist has included various objects referring to his scholarly pursuits: two open books, ink wells and wax, an hourglass, and a globe.<sup>5</sup>

A parallel iconographic tradition in which the quill cutter symbolizes sloth has also been adduced.<sup>6</sup> The Aristotelian ideal of practice is thus inverted so that cutting a quill is seen as a wasteful chore that distracts scholars from the more important act of writing. De Lesire's *Quill Cutter* has been mentioned in this context,<sup>7</sup> but this negative meaning is unlikely because the painting lacks specific references to the neglect of study.<sup>8</sup> The table is cluttered with an open book resting against a wooden box, an uncovered ink well, a small notebook,<sup>9</sup> and several bundles of paper, all of which suggest that the man has merely paused briefly to sharpen his quill before returning to work.

J.H., S.R.

PROVENANCE Sale, Amsterdam (Mensing) March 1950, lot 117; sale Claude Levin, Paris 1962; sale Mrs. Selma Zielinsky-Moos, Zurich 1962

LITERATURE ex. cat. Kalamazoo 1967, p. 13 (ill.; as attr. to K. van der Pluym); ex. cat. West Lafayette 1980, no. 4 (ill.); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1715, no. 1149, p. 1730 (col. ill.); ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 26, no. 10 (ill.); ex. cat. West Lafayette 1992, p. 25 (ill.); ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 248, note 10; Bader 1995, pl. 1

- 1 Lubberhuizen-Van Gelder 1949, pp. 25–38.
- 2 Dou's two versions of *Rembrandt's Father Sharpening his Pen* are illustrated in Martin 1913, p. 23.
- 3 According to Emmens 1963, pp. 129–30, Aristotle's writings about education were widely known from the Renaissance onwards. See also cat. no. 15.
- 4 See cat. no. 4 for further information on the use of oriental rugs in Dutch painting.
- 5 The globe was used as an attribute of study in other depictions of scholars in Dou's circle; e.g., Frans van Mieris, *Quill Cutter* (Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 6, p. 3734, no. 2388, p. 4003,

ill.) and M. Matthiesen, *Scholar in his Study* (Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 502, p. 521, ill.). Globes similar to that in the painting were made in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century by manufacturers such as Johannes Janssonius (see K. Schillinger in ex. cat. Dresden 1983, p. 195, nos. 245, 246) and Joan Willemsz. Blaeu (see L. Wagenaar in ex. cat. Amsterdam 1992, p. 183, no. 403).

- 6 See Bettina Werche in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, pp. 246–48; Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1794.
- 7 Werche in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 248, note 10.
- 8 Jan Lievens's moralizing *Quill Cutter* (Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1794, no. 1235, p. 1874, ill.) depicts the man as a miser and includes a moneybag, indicating Avarice, and an hourglass, a symbol of *vanitas*; in Adriaen Van Ostade's *Quill Cutter* (ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 248, fig. 56.2), the man attends to his quill while his neglected books lie on the floor.
- 9 On this notebook is written the intertwined monogram "PdL." Until a recent cleaning, this monogram was overpainted, leading several art historians mistakenly to attribute the painting to Rembrandt, based on its similarity to his early style. Regarding the cleaning and the attributions by Abraham Bredius, Wilhelm Valentiner, Max Friedländer, and Herman Voss to Rembrandt, see ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 26.





16



17



## Hendrick Goltzius

(Mühlbracht 1558–1616/17 Haarlem)

### *Minerva*

Engraving, 32 x 25 cm (B. 62, Holl. 139)

Monogrammed HG and inscribed underneath the foot of Minerva: *Cum privil. Sa. Ca. M. Anno 1596.*  
Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada (139)

Allegorical and mythological figures were important subjects in the *œuvre* of Hendrick Goltzius. This print was part of a series of four goddesses engraved by Jan Saenredam and Cornelis Visscher after designs by Goltzius. Minerva, born out of the forehead of Jupiter, is the goddess of wisdom, and presides over war and the arts.<sup>1</sup> In Goltzius's print, weapons adorn the lower corners, and musical instruments and artists' tools appear in the upper corners, representing music and painting respectively. The goddess was linked to martial and artistic endeavours because she embodies the virtue of *Prudentia* (wisdom).<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was she who taught Erichthonius to hitch horses to a chariot, which is represented in the upper left background. She also tamed and bridled Pegasus, the winged horse that produced Hippocrene, the fountain of inspiration, when it struck its hoof against a rock. The Muses, who transmit the gift of inspiration to humanity, accompany Pegasus in this scene in the lower right corner. The owl was one of Minerva's traditional attributes, as was the gorgon shield, which she lent to Perseus to subdue the Medusa,<sup>3</sup> a deed referring to ingenuity in warfare.<sup>4</sup>

With such references, Goltzius defends the activity of the artist as an intellectual endeavour, as opposed to a mere craft. Goltzius's secular notion of inspiration reflects his knowledge of Italian humanism. D.d.w.

- 1 Van Mander published a moralized version of Ovid's text, *Witleggingh van den Metamorfozes*, as the fifth book of his *Schilder-Boeck*. For the passage on Minerva, see Van Mander 1604, book 5, fol. 42r.
- 2 King 1989, pp. 244–50, cites a number of images of Minerva as patron of the arts which related to the project for the Antwerp house of Frans Floris. As a source she points to Cesare Ripa's iconography of Minerva in his *Iconologia*, where

she is presented as presiding over war and several of the arts: Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, Rome 1603, facs. ed., Hildesheim 1970, p. 54.

- 3 Van Mander instructs artists on how to depict Minerva in his *Uytbeeldinge der Figuren*, his iconography of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, included as book 4 of his *Schilder-Boeck*. See Van Mander 1604, book 4, fol. 126v.
- 4 Van Mander/Miedema 1973, vol. 1, fol. 5r, 49, p. 86, and vol. 2, p. 392.





## After Pieter Bruegel the Elder

(Bruegel 1525/30–1569 Brussels)

### *Temperance*

Engraving, 22.3 x 28.7 cm (Holl. 138, Van Bastelaer 1992, no. 138)

Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada (15571)

Inscribed lower right corner on block: BRUEGEL; on the hem of the dress of the allegorical figure: TEMPERANTIA; below the image two lines of Latin verse:

*“Videndum, ut nec voluptati dediti prodigi et luxuriosi  
appareamus, nec avara tenacitati sordidi aut obscuro existamus.”*

“We must look to it that, in the devotion to sensual pleasures, we do not become wasteful and luxuriant, but also that we do not, because of miserly greed, live in filth and ignorance.”<sup>1</sup>

This print forms part of a series of allegorical representations of the Seven Virtues and the Seven Vices. *Temperance* was likely engraved by Philip Galle after a signed drawing of 1560 by Pieter Bruegel now in Rotterdam.<sup>2</sup>

The figure of *Temperance* stands in the centre of the composition with a bridle, a clock, and eye glasses, her attributes. These elements belong to a long pictorial tradition of representing the Cardinal Virtues, of which *Temperance* is one.<sup>3</sup> Her foot rests on the arm of a windmill. She is surrounded by groups of figures that represent activities associated with the Seven Liberal Arts. Clockwise from the lower left hand corner are: Arithmetic, which encompasses a variety of activities including currency exchange; Music, represented by the voice and various instruments; Rhetoric, signified by a play on a stage; Astronomy, in which a practitioner uses a compass to measure the distance between the stars; Geometry, in which everything is measured with compasses and lineals; Dialectic, represented by scholars in animated discussion; and Grammar, illustrated by a group of children being instructed by a master. Just above the mathematical group, a painter can be seen. The inclusion of painting in the traditional canon of the Seven Liberal Arts was not completely accepted at the time.<sup>4</sup> J.H.

1 Translation from ex. cat. St Louis 1995, no. 35.

2 Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Inv. P. Bruegel no. 1. For a discussion of this drawing, see Konrad Renger in ex. cat. Berlin 1975, pp. 69–70, ill. 104.

3 An earlier sixteenth-century example of *Temperance* with a bridle, with which Bruegel would have been familiar, is an

engraving of c.1520 by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael (B. 295). In Alciati's *Index Emblematicus* of 1531, emblem 27, the bridle is held by the allegorical figure of *Nemesis*, who represents *Moderation*.

4 King 1989, pp. 239–56.





*Democritus and Hippocrates in Abdera*

Canvas, 94 x 64 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The ancient philosopher Democritus of Abdera (460–c.357 BC), a pupil of Leucippus, sits in front of a rocky landscape among the attributes of his learning. He is joined by Hippocrates, who observes him attentively and apparently prepares to address him.

The scene refers to an incident recorded in the apocryphal correspondence of the ancient doctor Hippocrates.<sup>1</sup> The Abderites considered Democritus to be insane because he laughed constantly. Consequently, they asked the famous medical doctor Hippocrates for help. Hippocrates quickly realized that Democritus's laughter was not a sign of insanity, but a reaction to the ways of the world, to the suffering and folly of humankind, and a sign of great wisdom. In Dutch painting of the seventeenth century, the juxtaposition of the laughing Democritus and the weeping Heraclitus of Ephesus, the melancholic philosopher, is depicted more often than the scene represented here.<sup>2</sup>

By 1573, a Dutch translation of the letters of Hippocrates had been published in Antwerp. However, the theme was only taken up in art at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the circle of the Dutch Pre-Rembrandtists such as Pieter Lastman, Jan Pynas, and Claes Cornelisz. Moyaert.<sup>3</sup> The dissemination of the ancient literary source was reinforced by the appearance in 1603 of the tragicomedy *Redenvreucht der wijzen in haer wel-lust...* by Adolphus Tectander Venator (Adolf de Jager) in Alkmaar. Venator mentions a number of details about the meeting of the two wise men which Backer includes in his painting, such as the characterization of the thin, pale Democritus with his long beard and heavy robe, sitting alone in a valley. With regard to the dead animals that surround Democritus, Venator has Hippocrates ask Democritus about the purpose of their dissection (Venator 1603, act 5, scene 3).

That Backer made use of a drawing for the head of Hippocrates<sup>4</sup> was first noted by Kurt Bauch.<sup>5</sup> The drawing was conceived as a preliminary study for the depiction of an old man in profile facing to the left (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister).<sup>6</sup> The original model for Democritus's head is identical to Backer's *Thinking Old Man at a Desk* (whereabouts unknown).<sup>7</sup>

The painting in the Bader collection underlines the distinction between Backer's and Rembrandt's approach to history painting. Backer preferred broad drapery, sometimes in strong colours, whose bulky folds emphasize the quality of the heavy fabric. The light unifies the forms and objects without differentiating their surface texture. Thoré-Bürger's identification of Backer as a pupil of Rembrandt is thus not supported by his works.<sup>8</sup> V.M.

PROVENANCE Grossherzogliche (Granducal) Galerie Oldenburg (Germany) before 1770; until 1804 in the possession of the German painter Johann Friedrich August Tischbein; sale Oldenburg (Galerie), Amsterdam (Muller), 25 June 1924 (Lugt 87140), lot 129 (as De Grebber); art dealer Hoogendijck, The Hague; coll. O. Garschagen, Amsterdam

LITERATURE Bauch 1926, pp. 21, 81, no. 57, p. 113, pl. 11; Van Gils 1936, p. 115, fig. 2; Blankert 1967, p. 41, note 22; Bader 1974, no. 2 (ill.); ex. cat. South Hadley 1979, no. 1 (ill.); Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 1, p. 18; ex. cat. West Lafayette 1980, no. 7 (ill.); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 193, no. 3, p. 206 (ill.), vol. 6, p. 3589; Bruyn 1984, p. 160, note 13; Manuth in ex. cat. Braunschweig 1993–94, pp. 156–58, no. 36 (col. ill.)

1 See *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, trans. E. Littré, vol. 9, Paris, 1861, pp. 361ff.

2 For an account of the pictorial tradition of this subject in Dutch art, see Blankert 1967.

3 For a discussion of and illustrations of the paintings, see Ben Broos, "Hippocrates bezoekt Democritus – door Pynas, Lastman, Moeyaert en Berchem," *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis*, 43, 1991, pp. 16–23.

4 Formerly in the Gruner Collection, Munich. For an illustration, see Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 1, p. 18.

5 Bauch 1926, p. 21, cat. no. 79.

6 For an illustration, see Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 221.

7 For an illustration, see Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 224.

8 Willy Bürger (Théophile Thoré), *Musées de la Hollande*, vol. 2, p. 15.







*The Four Evangelists*

Canvas, 132.1 x 189.2 cm

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (Gift of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, 1996)

The four evangelists gather in front of a cloudy sky; with them are their traditional symbols. Matthew, dressed in red, is in the immediate foreground with the angel. Beside him, in profile and leaning far to the right, is Luke, with the ox glancing over his shoulder. Mark sits behind the lion at a writing desk with an open book. He is turned towards the youthful John, listening attentively, while the eagle of John emerges from the clouds.

As witnesses to the life of Christ, the four evangelists enjoyed great popularity in the visual arts from the early Christian period onwards. The use of the symbols of the angel, ox, lion, and eagle – taken from the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (1:1–28) and from the Book of Revelation (4:1–11) – dates back to the second century AD. As authors of the canonical Gospels, the four evangelists earned a special place within Christian theology, based on their divine inspiration.

In Netherlandish art, the depiction of all four evangelists in one picture is rather rare. The earliest known example, by Frans Floris, survives only in the form of an engraving, dated 1566.<sup>1</sup> Further examples are by Pieter Aertsen (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Joachim Beuckelaer (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister). Rubens's *Four Evangelists* dates to the second decade of the seventeenth century (Potsdam, Schloß Sanssouci, Gemäldegalerie).<sup>2</sup> In the 1620s, his student Jacob Jordaens created a large-format painting of the same subject (Paris, Louvre).<sup>3</sup>

The patron and the original function of this work are not known. However, it is noteworthy that St Luke is clearly distinguished from the other evangelists by his activity. He is shown in the centre of the composition, not with a quill and a book, but with a silverpoint pencil, and a dark, arched panel, perhaps of slate. Here, reference is made to the legend that St Luke painted the first "true" image of the Madonna.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, he was honoured, even after the Reformation, as the patron saint and protector of painters and of artists' guilds, which incorporated the head of the ox of St Luke in their coats of arms. The Utrecht painter Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651), in his painting of the *Four Evangelists* (Princeton, Princeton University Art Museum), represented St Luke with the attributes of a painter: palette, brush, and maulstick.<sup>5</sup> Whether the particular presentation of the evangelist Luke in this painting has to do with a possible commission, connected to one of the Guilds of St Luke, remains open to question. Whatever the answer, the subject of the painting was favoured by Catholics and Protestants alike.

The problem of authorship is unresolved. The traditional attribution to the painter Pieter de Grebber is not convincing,<sup>6</sup> even though the colour scheme and the figure types suggest an origin in Haarlem around 1640. The subject matter was also taken up by the Haarlem painter Pieter Claesz. Soutman,<sup>7</sup> but not in a way that relates directly to the painting in Kingston.

V.M.

PROVENANCE Anonymous private collection, Europe; art dealer John H. Schlichte Bergen, Amsterdam, 1992; sale New York (Sotheby's), 11 January 1996, lot 228 (ill.; as P. de Grebber, around 1635)

LITERATURE Cat. John H. Schlichte Bergen, text by P. Huys Janssen, Amsterdam, 1992 (as P. de Grebber and studio)

- 1 See Carl van de Velde, *Frans Floris (1519/20–1570). Leven en Werken*, Brussels, 1975, vol. 2, fig. 192.
- 2 For Rubens's painting, see Hans Vlieghe, *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. Saints*, part VIII, Brussels, 1972, vol. 1, p. 70, no. 54, fig. 96.
- 3 Roger-Adolf d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*, Stuttgart, 1982, p. 126–27 (ill.). The same painting is likely mentioned in the Amsterdam inventory of 7 July 1632 of Rembrandt's teacher Pieter Lastman, "*Vier Evangelisten van Jacques Jordaens*" ("Four Evangelists by Jacob Jordaens"). A copy of the painting is

mentioned in the same inventory: "*Vier Evangelisten copie nae Jordaens met een vergulde lijst*" ("Four Evangelists copy after Jordaens in a gilded frame"). For the inventory, see S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, "De familie van de schilder Pieter Lastman (1583–1633)," *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, 45, 1991, pp. 111–32, esp. pp. 117 and 119.

- 4 See Catherine King, "National Gallery 3902 and the theme of Luke the Evangelist as artist and physician," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 48, 1985, pp. 249–55.
- 5 For Bloemaert's painting, see Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, vol. 1, p. 190, no. 223, vol. 2, colour plate XIII.
- 6 Peter Sutton, New York, who is preparing a monograph on Pieter de Grebber, has kindly confirmed the author's doubts regarding the attribution of the painting to De Grebber (oral communication, 21 March 1996).
- 7 For Soutman's painting, see cat. *Nationalmuseum Stockholm – Illustrenad katalog över äldre utländskt måleri (Illustrated catalogue – European Paintings)*, Stockholm, 1990, p. 337 (ill.).







## Govert Flinck

(Cleves 1615–1660 Amsterdam)

*King David Writing the Psalms*

Canvas, 129.5 x 96.5 cm

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (Gift of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, 1991)

The painting supplies few explicit indications about its subject, which has led Sumowski to hesitate in accepting the identification as King David. He has only ventured the title of *Ancient King in his Study*, and suggests Perianther of Corinth. A previous owner altered the painting so that it would be taken for a representation of St John the Evangelist. Prior to cleaning, the painting showed a text in Greek script from John's Gospel, and a breastplate emblazoned with a Maltese cross, also associated with this evangelist. In contrast, the crown behind the figure was painted over.<sup>1</sup> The very paucity of attributes for the subject implies an extremely prominent figure. According to a very long tradition, King David was depicted as the author of the Psalms, accompanying his own singing with the harp. Although this significant attribute is missing, the crown points to a possible identification with the Old Testament king.

This depiction combines exotic costume *à l'antique* with the energetic elegance of Govert Flinck's late style. By 1650 the artist had adopted a classicism based on Flemish painting, in response to demand among Amsterdam's regent class.<sup>2</sup> This trend particularly affected history and portrait painting, and this work may be a kind of "imagined historical portrait" of the Hebrew king who expressed his faith in the biblical Psalms. Here he is cast in the role of the scholar in his study, a tradition that had developed for the depiction of St Jerome (see cat. no. 25). There is no reference to his youth as a shepherd, only to his maturity as a King and spiritual leader. This adaptation afforded opportunities for Flinck's style of the period, which demanded refinement of pose and the display of luxurious fabrics. With the upward glance, the inspiration of the sitter is suggested as he applies himself to the writing of Divine Scripture.

D.d.w.

PROVENANCE Bukowski Gallery, Stockholm, 1986; sale, London (Christie's), 13 March 1987, lot 42 (col. ill.); as Jan van Noordt; Raphael Valls Gallery, London; Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, Milwaukee; given to the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, in 1991

LITERATURE Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 4, p. 1944; Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 6, p. 3707, no. 2277, p. 3865 (col. ill.); ex. cat. Milwaukee, 1989, p. 38, no. 16, p. 39 (ill.); *Aldrichimica Acta* 23, no. 3, 1990, p. 57 (col. ill. on cover); ex. cat. Milwaukee 1992

1 For an account of the cleaning of the painting and the discovery of the changes, see ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 38.

2 J.W. von Moltke, *Govert Flinck (1615–1660)*, Amsterdam, 1965, pp. 27–38.







## Jan Lievens

(Leiden 1607–1674 Amsterdam)

*St Paul*

Canvas, 94 x 78 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The Leiden artist Jan Lievens chose to portray St Paul engaged in scholarly activity. With pen just raised from the page, the apostle pauses for reflection while writing one of his epistles. Under the large book in front of him lies St Paul's other attribute, the sword, its hilt emerging in front to the right. In earlier images this weapon had been the most important symbol. It refers to the way he was martyred, but also reminds the viewer of his exhortations to "fight the good fight" (I Timothy 6:12) and to "put on the armour" (Romans 13:12), characterizing the martial severity of his vision of the believer's life. In this portrayal, these aspects of Paul are subordinated. His emphatic thoughtfulness – he is almost brooding – reinforces his role as a theologian.

St Paul was the most learned of the apostles. Before his Christian conversion he had shown great promise as a scholar of the law in the Pharisaic tradition. He also acquired a command of Greek and a familiarity with Hellenistic thought. Basing his thought on the Hebrew Scriptures and the teachings of Christ, he then wrote a comprehensive Christian theology.<sup>1</sup>

In the Northern Netherlands the writings of Paul contributed significantly to the formation of the doctrine of the Reformed Church. In the sixteenth century the Calvinists had taken up some of the contentions of Luther's Reformation concerning the role of the church and the primacy of faith as opposed to works; these drew heavily on Paul's writings. Moreover, while many of the arguments of such church fathers as Augustine and Jerome – on issues such as church organization and celibacy – were criticized by the Protestant Reformers, Paul's views gained in importance. In the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the Remonstrant controversy over grace and predestination again drew on Paul's writings, especially his epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians.<sup>2</sup>

This religious debate greatly affected Leiden, where Lievens painted this version of *St Paul*. In his valorization of the apostle, the artist recast St Paul as a model for Leiden's theologians. Lievens produced a considerable number of paintings of evangelists writing, including a series of four in the museum in Bamberg and a *St Paul Writing the Letter to the Thessalonians* in the Bremen Kunsthalle.

D.d.w.

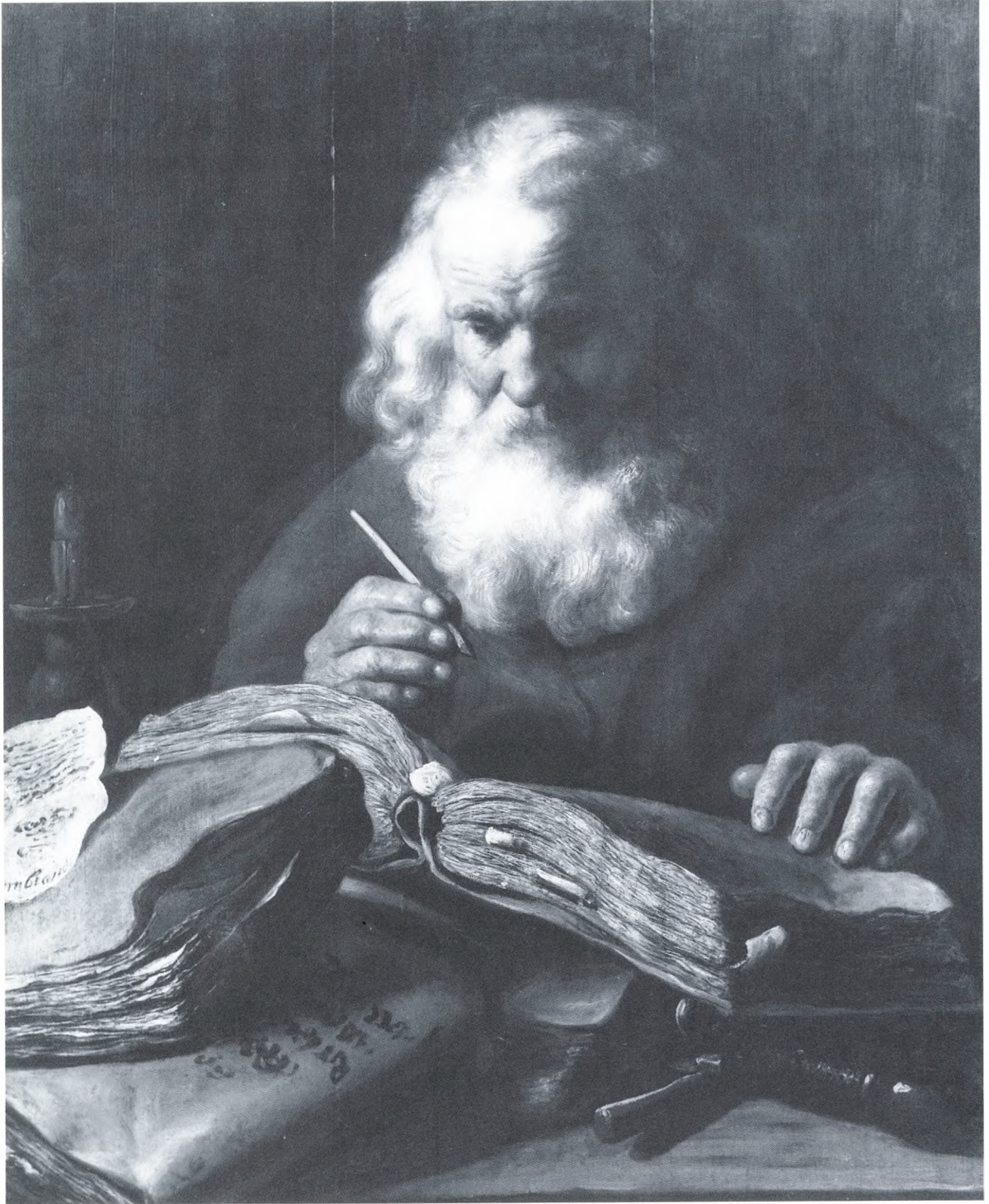
PROVENANCE Sedelmeyer, Paris; Goudstikker, Amsterdam; sale, London, 28 June 1929, lot 39; Newhouse Galleries, New York, around 1940; Private Collection, Texas; sale, New York (Robert Doyle), 23 January 1985, lot 43 (ill.)

LITERATURE Hofstede de Groot 1917, p. 69 (as Rembrandt, c.1632, originally signed Rembrandt in lower left corner); Six 1919, p. 85 (as Lievens); Bredius 1921, p. 147 (as Lievens); Valentiner 1921, p. 3, p. XV (ill., as Rembrandt); Hofstede de Groot 1922, p. 10 (as Rembrandt); Schneider 1932, p. 172, no. XV (as Salomon Koninck); Bauch 1933, pp. 219–20 (as Lievens, perhaps with Rembrandt); Bauch 1939, p. 246; Van Gelder 1953, p. 14 (perhaps as Lievens); Gerson 1954, p. 180 (as Lievens); Bauch 1967, pp. 259–60 (ill.); Schneider/Ekkart 1973, p. 340, no. XV; Gerson 1973, p. 23; ex. cat. Braunschweig 1979, p. 56; Eikemeier 1980, p. 6; Kusnetsov 1983, p. 136 (as Lievens and Rembrandt); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1792, no. 1229, p. 1868 (ill.); ex. cat. Yokohama/Fukuoka/Kyoto 1986, p. 88 (col. ill.), p. 158, no. 32; ex. cat. Milwaukee 1989, p. 34, no. 14, p. 35 (ill.); Chong 1989, p. 16 (ill.)

1 E. Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*, New York, 1956, p. 4.

2 These letters are referred to repeatedly in the chapters in Calvin's *Institutes* (1559) on grace and predestination. The passages Calvin refers to for grace are Romans 8:30 and I Corinthians 4:7, in book II, ch. 5, part 2, p. 319. For arguments about predestination, in which Calvin applauds Augustine, the most important passage is Ephesians 1:4–6, in book III, ch. 22, parts 2, 3 and 10, pp. 933–34, 945. He also refers to Romans 9–11 in book III, ch. 22, part 4, pp. 941–42.







Abraham Bloemaert  
(Gorinchem 1564–1651 Utrecht)

*St Jerome Studying the Bible*

Canvas, 64.4 x 52.7 cm

Signed below the book, right side: *A Bloemaert. fe.*

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Although its whereabouts was long unrecorded, this depiction of St Jerome, which dates to the early 1620s, was known through an engraving made by the artist's son, Cornelius Bloemaert (c.1603–1692), shortly after it was painted. The engraving includes an inscription that identifies the subject matter. St Jerome is shown reading at a table by candlelight. He cradles the Bible in his right hand while his left grasps the base of the candlestick. The flame of the candle is hidden from view by the cardinal's hat, but its light illuminates the saint's face, his long flowing beard, and his red *cappa magna*.

Abraham Bloemaert, a Catholic painter based in Utrecht, primarily produced history paintings and landscapes. The teacher of several generations of students, he was important in the formation of the Utrecht School. He learned of Caravaggesque light effects through some of his students, including Hendrik ter Brugghen (c.1588–1629) and Gerrit van Honthorst (1590–1656), who had visited Rome in the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Honthorst's genre scenes, which also feature a hidden source of light, Bloemaert's *St Jerome* projects a quiet, meditative mood. The illumination of the saint's face might be understood symbolically as spiritual light or the light of wisdom.

Numerous versions of Jerome in his study depict him seated at a desk with one of his attributes, the lion, at his feet. There are also many half-length figures of Jerome. One of the earliest examples is Aertgen van Leyden's *St Jerome* (1525–30, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).<sup>2</sup> In that painting the saint is seated at his desk before an open book. He is portrayed deep in thought, holding a skull in his left hand while resting his head on his right hand. On the wall behind him is a shelf of books flanked on the right by a cardinal's hat and on the left by a green curtain which partially covers a round mirror. The candle that illuminates this scene is entirely visible. Bloemaert, in contrast, dramatically simplifies the theme – all but the elements required to identify the subject are omitted. It is interesting to note that even though he was a Catholic, and willing to accept Catholic commissions for altarpieces, in this work Bloemaert minimized specific references to Catholic belief, such as the crucifix and rosary. Although "saint worship" was heavily criticized by Protestant authorities, judging by seventeenth-century inventories of members of different denominations in the Northern Netherlands, it is obvious that the subject was accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike.<sup>3</sup> Bloemaert's close-up view of the saint sharply focuses our attention on the act of studying. In this way, the picture blends humanist and ecclesiastic themes: it is a portrait not so much of St Jerome, Church Father, but of St Jerome, the scholar.

J.R.-C.

PROVENANCE H. Jüngeling, The Hague; acquired by the present owner in 1975

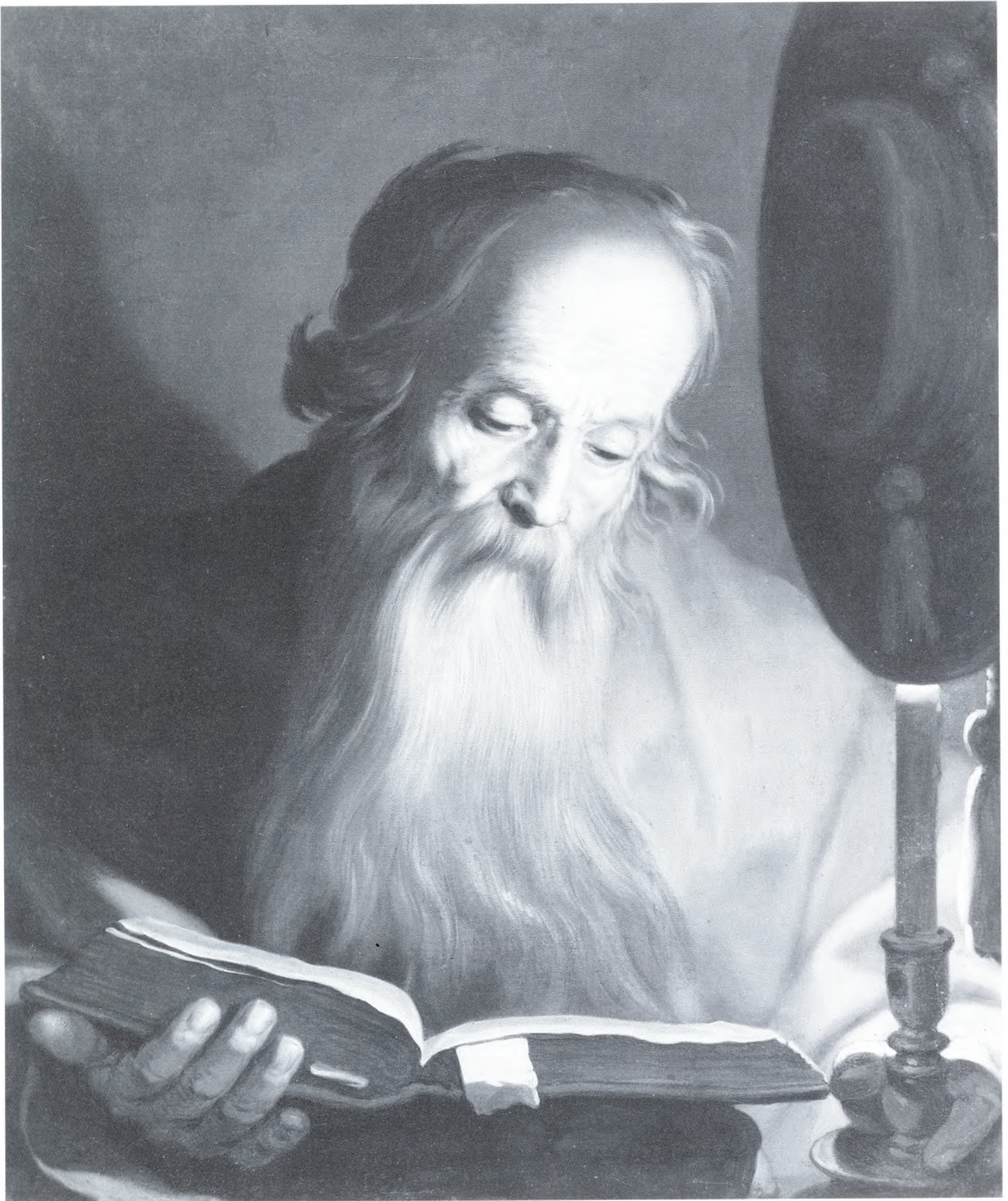
LITERATURE *Aldrichimica Acta* 9, 1976 (ill. on cover); Nicolson 1989, p. 64, fig. 1102; ex. cat. The Hague/San Francisco 1991, p. 207 (ill.); ex. cat. West Lafayette 1992, p. 27 (ill); Müller Hofstede in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, pp. 40–41; Manuth in ex. cat. Braunschweig 1993–94, p. 146, no. 31 (col. ill); Roethlisberger/Bok 1993, Vol. 1, pp. 223–24, no. 286, vol. 2, fig. 418; Bader 1995, p.219 (ill.)

1 Haak 1984, p. 208. However, Bloemaert's earlier work already showed the use of artificial light, as can be seen in his *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* of 1593 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).

2 Justus Müller Hofstede in Klessmann 1988, p. 20.

3 See the essay by David de Witt, Jane Russell-Corbett, and Sandra Richards in this catalogue.







## Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)

*St Jerome in a Dark Chamber*

Etching, burin and drypoint, 15.1 x 17.3 cm (B. 105)

Inscribed: *Rembrandt f. 1642*

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Sir Edmund Walker Estate, 1926

Rembrandt produced several etchings of St Jerome,<sup>1</sup> but *St Jerome in a Dark Chamber* is the only one that presents the saint in an interior. Here, in a dark room with a timbered ceiling, St Jerome sits at a table with an open book, resting his head on his left hand in contemplation. A crucifix is situated just below the window and a skull rests on a ledge on the rear wall of the room. A cardinal's hat, hanging from the spiral staircase, and the lion, barely visible beneath the table, identify the figure as Jerome.

This portrayal of the saint follows the pictorial tradition of Jerome in his study. Albrecht Dürer's highly successful engraving of 1514 was important in popularizing this subject in northern Europe. By introducing a skull into the saint's study, Dürer expanded the theme from one focused on the saint as scholar and humanist to one embracing the notion of transience. Through his manipulation of lighting and composition, Rembrandt plays down the more religious aspects of the subject.<sup>2</sup> He exploits *chiaroscuro* effects to enrich the meaning of his etching: in this depiction of the saint in contemplation, the dramatic shift of light and dark reinforces the idea of life and death suggested by the skull. Moreover, the light that pours through the window can be understood symbolically as the light of inspiration.

J.R.-C.

1 These include *St Jerome Reading* (1634), *St Jerome Praying* (1635), *St Jerome Kneeling in Prayer* (1635), *St Jerome Beside a Pollard Willow* (1648), and *St Jerome Reading in an Italian Landscape* (1653). See Holl. XIX, pp. 97–102 for illustrations.

2 For a discussion of the representation of St Jerome in Protestant Holland, see Baer 1995, pp. 28–29.





## Johannes Gillisz. van Vliet

(? c.1610–1668 ?)

### *St Jerome Kneeling in Prayer*

Etching, 34.8 x 28.5 cm (Holl. 13)

Inscribed lower right: *RHLv. Rijn jn. / JG. v. vliet fec. / 1631*

Kingston, Private collection

Johannes Gillisz. van Vliet's etching of St Jerome praying in the wilderness is a copy after a lost painting by Rembrandt.<sup>1</sup> Produced during the last year that Rembrandt was working in Leiden, it is one of four prints that Van Vliet made in 1631 which name Rembrandt as the inventor.<sup>2</sup> This etching became an important source for numerous other depictions of Jerome, particularly among the circle of artists working in Leiden.

To the left of the kneeling saint is an arrangement of various objects, while to his right, a grape vine winds around a dead branch. The portrayal of Jerome beside a dead tree stump or branch is an iconographic tradition dating from the late fifteenth century. An early example of this kind of representation is Albrecht Dürer's engraving, *St Jerome in Penitence* (c.1497, B. 61). The dead branch or tree elaborates the meaning of the image and relates to the belief that the Cross on which Christ was crucified was made from the wood of the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

In Van Vliet's copy of Rembrandt's painting, the themes of Jerome in the wilderness and Jerome in his study (see cat. nos. 24, 25) are combined. The hourglass and the still-life elements symbolize the transitory nature of life, while the grape vine around the dead branch and the crucifix refer to redemption and salvation. For Rembrandt and his Protestant contemporaries, however, what was probably of particular interest was the opportunity these themes provided to depict the virtues of asceticism and the *vita contemplativa*.<sup>4</sup>

J.R.-C.

1 For an account of the current state of research on Van Vliet, see ex. cat. Amsterdam 1996.

2 Regarding the importance of Van Vliet's etchings as copies of lost Rembrandt paintings, see Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, pp. 35–51.

3 For a discussion of the iconography of the dead stump in depictions of Jerome, see Kuretsky 1974, pp. 571–74.

4 Vellhagen 1993, p. 18.





*St Jerome*

Canvas, 78 x 60 cm

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

The subject of this painting was previously believed to be an anonymous hermit of the type popular in the Leiden school.<sup>1</sup> Close scrutiny of the painting, however, reveals the identity of the recluse. The barely discernible cardinal's hat and cope along the left edge of the canvas and the lion in the lower left corner are attributes of St Jerome.

The composition of the painting, with Jerome represented full-length in a grotto setting and accompanied by assorted religious texts and *vanitas* symbols, was established in early Leiden images of the saint, such as Rembrandt's lost painting of *St Jerome in Prayer*, known through Johannes van Vliet's reproductive etching of 1631 (cat. no. 26). In fact, the still life on the left of the present painting relates closely to that in the Van Vliet print. Since both compositions feature a propped, open book, a calabash, a draped rosary, and a long, fringed sash, it is likely that the artist of this work was familiar with the print. In addition, the artist's technique links the painting to the Leiden School. Characteristic of Gerrit Dou's circle, the paint surface is smooth and all details are meticulously rendered, with great care taken to differentiate the diverse textures of materials.

This image of *St Jerome* departs from the Leiden iconographic tradition of the saint in its omission of a crucifix. Also unusual is the lack of emphasis on Jerome's saintly attributes, which are well hidden in the shadows. And while the hourglass and the still life are common symbols of the brevity of life, the absence of a skull significantly reduces the moralizing message usually conveyed by similar images.<sup>2</sup> Such paintings were intended to warn viewers of the inevitability of death and consequently, of the vanity of worldly pursuits, and to advocate a life of temperance and piety. The absence of overt religious imagery and *vanitas* symbols therefore suggests a more secular reading of the painting.

The hermit saint is shown in profile, seated before a book; his quill is held to his mouth in what seems to be a moment of contemplation. In contrast to Van Vliet's print and the *Hermit with a Large Book* (cat. no. 28), which respectively show the protagonists kneeling in prayer and in a state of deep meditation, St Jerome concentrates on the book before him. Thus, this painting relates more closely to the iconographic tradition of the scholarly St Jerome, initiated in the Italian Renaissance and popularized in the north by Albrecht Dürer's and Lucas van Leyden's prints of the early sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Although Protestant doctrine did not espouse many of St Jerome's beliefs,<sup>4</sup> his asceticism and erudition drew the admiration of devout scholars from numerous denominations.

S.R.

PROVENANCE Lewis G. Nierman, Plantation, Florida

LITERATURE Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 5, p. 3061, p. 3064, note 51, p. 3071 (col. ill); Bader 1995, pl. 25, p. 223

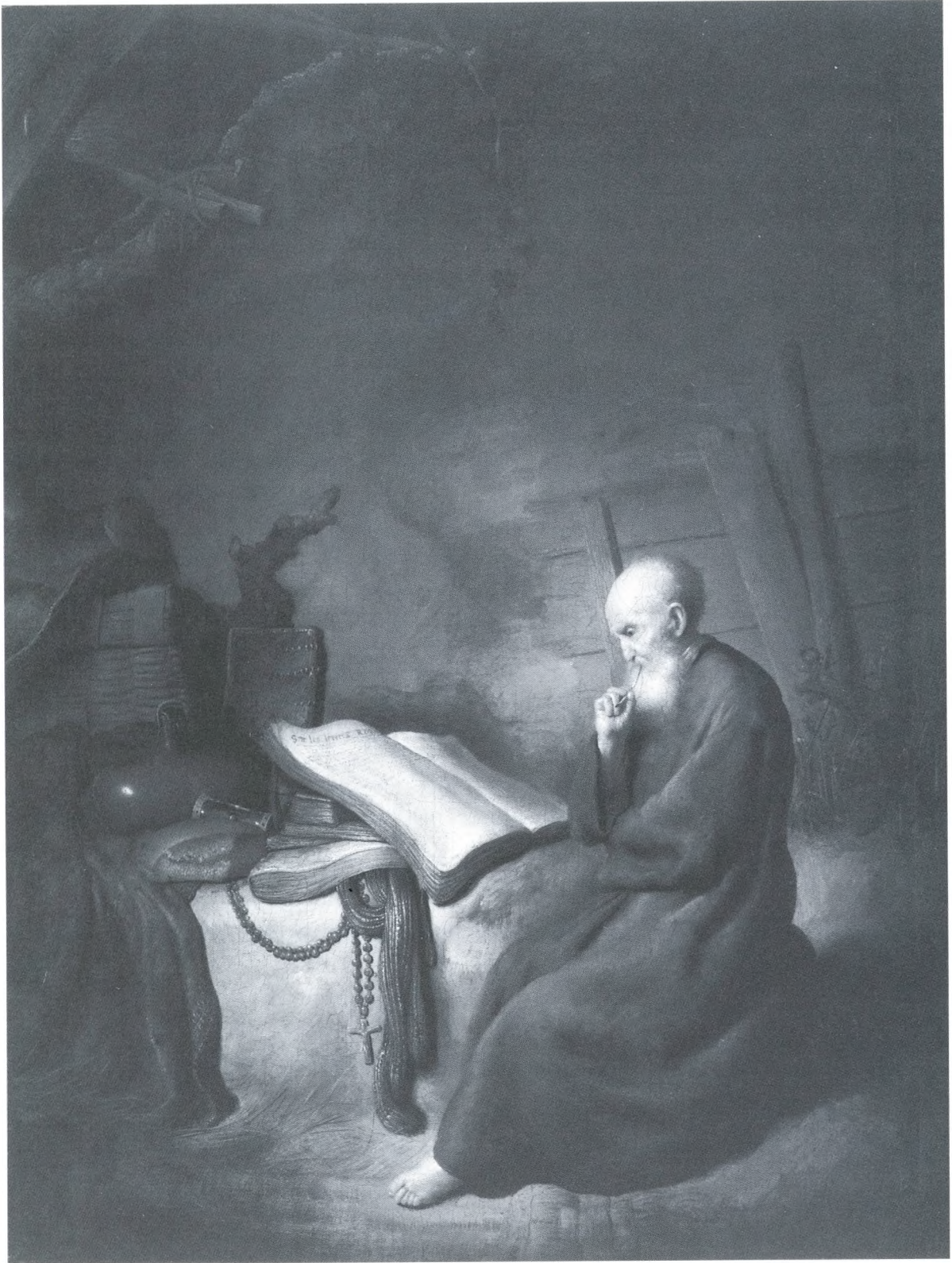
1 See Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 5, p. 3071 for the painting entitled *The Thinking Recluse*.

2 According to De Jongh, the skull "immutably stamps any still life ... with the seal of *vanitas* ... [it] always dominates and permits of only one interpretation." De Jongh in ex. cat. Auckland, 1982, p. 31.

3 Velhagen 1993, pp. 16–17.

4 For a discussion of St Jerome and Protestantism, see Rice 1985, pp. 137ff.







*Hermit with a Large Book*

Canvas, 106.7 x 94 cm

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (Gift of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, 1974)

The hermit is depicted full-length, seated in a landscape before the entrance to a grotto. To the right is a desiccated tree from which hangs a lantern, symbolizing God, "The true light that enlightens every man..." (John 1:9).<sup>1</sup> At the base of the tree are several large books, a basket and gourd which refer to the hermit's poverty and his renunciation of material possessions, and a human skull and horse's skull, both common *vanitas* motifs.<sup>2</sup> The hermit's hands are clasped in a gesture of devotion and his eyes look upwards, suggesting a state of deep spiritual contemplation. The first three letters of the book open on his lap, "MED," indicate that he is reading a book of meditations (*Meditationes*). An "S." (the Latin abbreviation of saint) followed by several letter fragments appears beneath the title. These letters may refer to the author of the text, but unfortunately, the saint's name cannot be deciphered with certainty.

The theme of an anonymous hermit, usually accompanied by an assortment of *vanitas* symbols, achieved remarkable popularity in the Leiden school, particularly among Gerrit Dou and his circle.<sup>3</sup> *Hermit with a Large Book* has been attributed to Jan van Staveren (1613/14–1669), a follower of Dou known for his paintings of hermits,<sup>4</sup> but the figure type, the landscape setting, and the size of the painting make an attribution to Van Staveren very unlikely.<sup>5</sup>

Pieter Lastman's *Hermit Reading* of 1611 may have initially stimulated interest in the depiction of hermits in the circle of Rembrandt and Lievens (see cat. no. 26).<sup>6</sup> Rembrandt's early Leiden paintings of St Jerome strongly influenced the subsequent pictorial tradition of hermit images. It is the absence of St Jerome's attributes, the lion and cardinal's hat, that differentiates images of unidentified recluses from those of the hermit saint. Catholic devotional objects, such as crucifixes and rosaries, were also frequently omitted.

The popularity of paintings of hermits raises questions about their intended audience, but unfortunately, little is known about the original owners of much seventeenth-century Dutch art. It has been argued that in order to capitalize on the popularity of St Jerome (see cat. nos. 24–27) and to appeal to Protestant patrons, the artists of these paintings simply stripped the saint of his attributes.<sup>7</sup> It is more likely, however, that such images represented an idyllic example of the *vita contemplativa* and would have appealed to Catholics as well as Protestants. Pious authors throughout Europe extolled the benefits of retiring from city life as a means of better contemplating one's religious beliefs.<sup>8</sup>

*Hermit with a Large Book* is unusual in its characterization of the protagonist as a middle-aged man, in contrast to the usual white-bearded old man. This figure's short beard and hair in a contemporary fashion suggest that the present painting may be a *portrait historié*. If so, the eremitic model of devotion would have assumed even greater immediacy for the patron.

S.R.

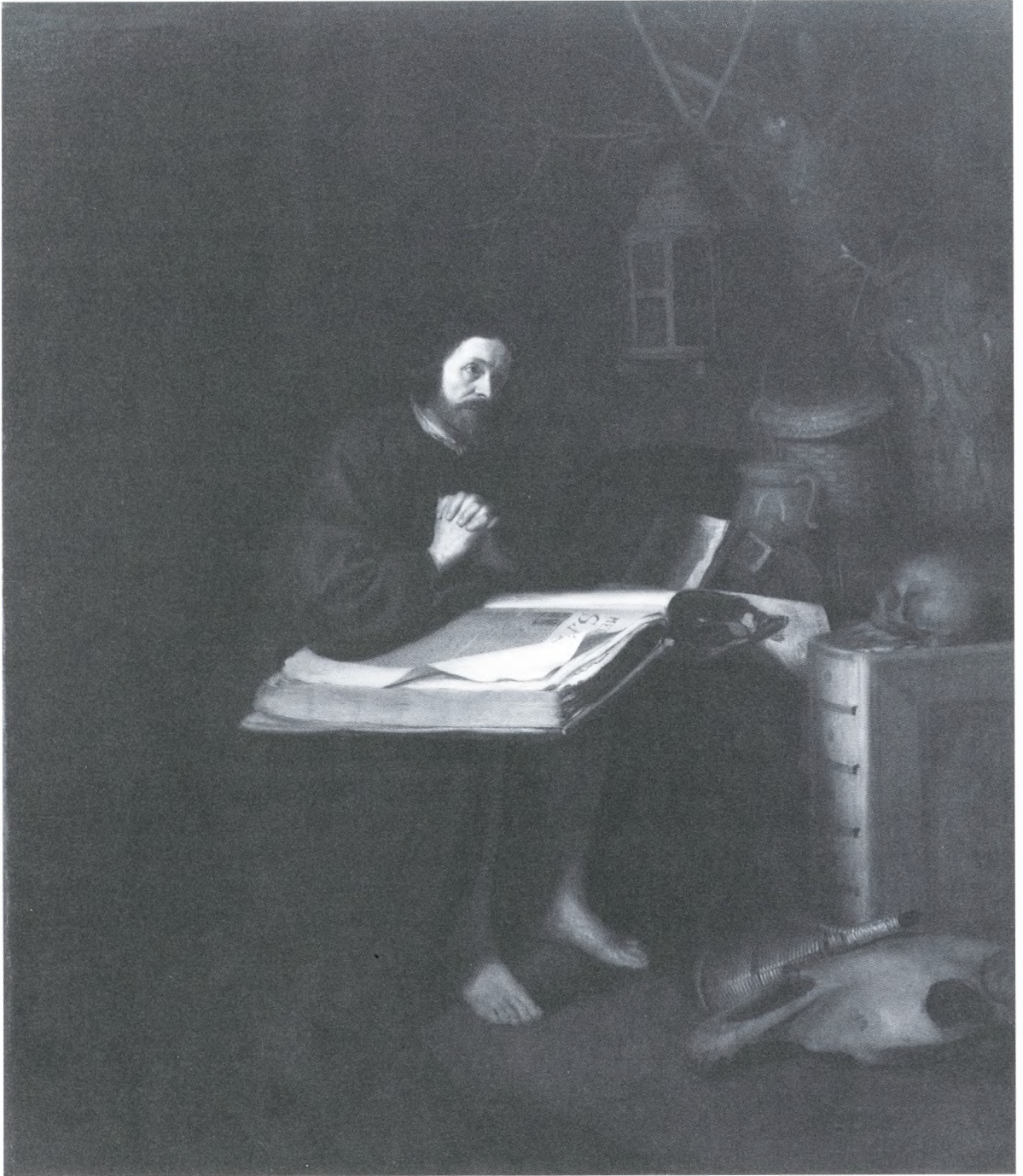
PROVENANCE Bert and Mia van Deun-Loyens, Bearse; acquired by Dr Alfred Bader in 1974

- 1 The dead tree not only alludes to the hermit's life in the wilderness, but also carries extensive Christian symbolism and was often included in northern sixteenth- and seventeenth-century depictions of Jerome. The tree may represent spiritual life through physical death. Kuretsky 1974, pp. 571–80.
- 2 Bergström argues that the horse skull is a symbol of the Horse of Death which brings away the dead (Bergström 1983, pp. 189–90). It is more likely, however, that the horse skull was intended to suggest the exotic, inhospitable origins of the early Christian hermits, who lived in the deserts of Egypt and Syria.
- 3 Dou is known to have painted at least ten different composi-

tions featuring hermits, some of which were repeated in different versions; see Martin 1913, pp. 5–11, 146.

- 4 The attribution to Jan van Staveren by Dr Walther Bernt is mentioned in a correspondence regarding the painting dated 20 September 1974 from Dr Alfred Bader to Frances K. Smith.
- 5 Van Staveren's smaller canvases usually feature a more delicate-looking old man seated in an expansive landscape that often incorporates architectural ruins. See, for example, *Hermit with Book* (Beerse, B. van Deun) and *Recluse in Landscape with Ruins* (St Peter Port, D. Cevat).
- 6 Bruyn *et al.*, 1982ff., vol. 1, p. 544.
- 7 Baer 1995, pp. 28–29. For an account of Protestant criticism of St Jerome, see also Rice 1985, pp. 139–40.
- 8 For an extensive discussion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature concerning solitude, see Knipping 1974, vol. 2, pp. 441ff.







## Sir Godfrey Kneller

(Lübeck 1646–1723 London)

### *Abraham Simon (1617–c.1692)*

Canvas, 139.7 x 169.6 cm

Signed: *G. Kneller*

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University

(Gift of Prof. J. Douglas and Mary Cotterell Stewart, 1993)

Abraham Simon and his brother Thomas were England's greatest portrait medallists. Sir George Hill wrote: "There is nothing in any country in the Seventeenth Century to equal the delicacy of modelling and chasing of these little portraits and the cunning of their execution has not detracted from the direct sincerity of the portraiture."<sup>1</sup>

The artist and art historian George Vertue (1684–1756) tells us that "amongst other oddities [Abraham Simon] being a man of some learning had a mind to be a Clergyman but would not accept of less than a Bishops Mitre ..."<sup>2</sup> Vertue also says that Simon was "a perfect Cynic, so remarkable that his dress behaviour life and conversation, was all of a piece. wearing a long beard no clean linning [*sic*] went on pattins in the streets was often hooted after by the boys."<sup>3</sup>

Cynicism was a forerunner of Stoicism and Neo-Stoicism. The latter tried to reconcile the ideas of Stoicism with Christianity. Hence Simon is shown looking up from his reading towards an apparently heavenly light, with a pilgrim's hat and staff below. He is chained to a globe which he pushes back. His depiction in front of a cave evokes the traditional image of the hermit.

Kneller's full-length *Abraham Simon* is related to two emblems. The earlier, from Whitney's *Emblemes* (1586), shows a pilgrim passing by a globe in front of a tree and looking up at the *Tetragrammaton* (the Hebrew name of God). The other emblem, by Francis Quarles (1635), shows the winged soul Anima attempting to fly up to Divine Cupid in the sky, but finding it impossible to do so because her leg is chained to a globe. Beneath it is an inscription from St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (1:23): "I am in a streight betwixt two haveing a Desire to Depart and to be with Christ." There is a painting at Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, by Jan Bijlert of a reclining Magdalene who, with the help of an angel, spurns a globe and pearls, and turns to a spotlit crucifix.

Yet these images may be parallels to, rather than sources for, Kneller's picture, which appears to be essentially his own invention. It is really a *portrait historié*, showing Simon in the character of an elderly Christian pilgrim weary of this world (from which he has retired) but serenely sure of his ultimate goal in the next. While the identity of the sitter was lost (until demonstrated by the present writer in 1983), the picture's character as a history painting was recognized in the titles it was given, *Hermit Saint* and *St Jerome*.

We know little of the picture's early provenance. Because of the sitter's scorn for earthly things, it is unlikely that it was painted for him. Either it was a commission from a third party, or else Kneller painted the picture for himself. Kneller's self-portrait from around 1670, now in the collection of Mrs A. Alfred Taubman,<sup>4</sup> includes a bust of Seneca, the great Roman Stoic. Simon and Kneller were thus closely linked by a common philosophical outlook.

In lighting, colour, handling, and the characterization of the head, the *Abraham Simon* shows the continuing influence of Rembrandt, with whom Kneller had studied in the 1660s.<sup>5</sup> (As late as 1712, Kneller's *Arutin George*<sup>6</sup> partially echoes the design of Rembrandt's *Man in a Fur-Lined Coat* in Toledo (Bredius 278).) There are also formal and compositional similarities to a picture given by Sumowski to a follower of Kneller's first master, Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680), which may in fact be an early work by Kneller himself.<sup>7</sup>

J.D.S.





PROVENANCE Blaze Castle, Lord Clifford, 1778 ("in the antechamber, A hermit by Sir Godfrey Kneller", *Observations made during a Tour through part of England, Scotland and Wales...* 1780); sale collection Mrs. Stephen Winkworth, London (Sotheby's), 17 May 1961, lot 26; sale London (Christie's), 10 December 1971, lot 95; sale London (Sotheby's), 24 October 1973, lot 114; sale London (Sotheby's), 18 June 1975, lot 130; Kingston, J. Douglas Stewart; given to the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University in 1993.

LITERATURE Blankert 1982, p. 22, note 30; Stewart 1983, p. 29, no. 674, pl. 19c; Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, p. 1488, no. 979, and p. 1503 (ill.); Stewart 1993, pp. 250–55

- 1 Sir George Hill, *The Medal: Its Place in Art*, London, 1941, p. 21.
- 2 George Vertue, *Notebooks IV*, Walpole Society vol. 24, Oxford, 1936, p. 10.
- 3 George Vertue, *Notebooks I*, Walpole Society vol. 18, Oxford, 1930, p. 123.
- 4 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 3, no. 975.
- 5 See Rembrandt's etched *St Paul* of 1629 (B. 149, Holl. 4a), and the painted images of St Paul in Washington (c.1657, Bredius 612) and London (165[9?], Bredius 297).
- 6 Stewart 1983, no. 301.
- 7 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 1, p. 290: *Gelehrter am Schreibtisch*, Los Angeles, private collection. The chair arm is that in Kneller's above-mentioned self-portrait in the Taubman collection.



## Jacob van Spreeuwen

(Leiden 1611–after 1649 ?)

*Allegory of Vanitas*

Canvas, 60.9 x 58.4 cm

Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University (Gift of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader, 1991)

This painting by the Dutch artist Jacob van Spreeuwen depicts an old man in an interior, surrounded by a wealth of objects. Having previously occupied himself reading the open book on the table, he has stood up and turned around, and with an expression of surrender, he directs his gaze upward. He takes no notice of the surrounding objects, nearly all of which can be identified as characteristic symbols of earthly values and human endeavour. The jewelry and precious objects in the chest and the purse on the table represent material wealth. In combination with the saddle, the headgear, the weapons, and the helmet, these objects signify the active side of human life and relate material wealth to the glory of war.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the many books, the two globes, and the musical instruments seem to associate the contemplative side of life with the accumulation of knowledge and the experience of aesthetic pleasure.

All of the above are earthly delights and of no use to man after death. They are meant to remind the viewer of the transience of life and the ultimate futility of human endeavour. The picture is thus a *vanitas*. This interpretation is underscored by other typical symbols of transience: the extinguished candle and the skull indicate death (see cat. no. 32), the image of the boy blowing bubbles (*homo bulla*) in the background suggests that life is as fragile as a bubble, and the musical instruments signify not only sensual pleasure and harmony, but the fading character of sound (see cat. no. 31). The old man himself seems to realize the futility of his achievements when confronted with the impending and inevitable end of his life. Turning away from his possessions and his occupation, he looks towards God, seeking a promise of redemption.

Formerly attributed to the Haarlem painter Willem de Poorter, the painting has recently been given to Jacob van Spreeuwen, an attribution based on its strong parallels with a signed painting of the same subject (whereabouts unknown).<sup>2</sup> Throughout his career Van Spreeuwen seems to have specialized in interior scenes, depicting either men or women at work, surrounded by a number of objects.<sup>3</sup> In this painting the artist skilfully depicts the wide variety of materials and surface textures that characterize the different objects. In comparison to other works by Van Spreeuwen, this work indeed represents an unprecedented level of achievement. A.R.

PROVENANCE Sale New York (Sotheby's), 4 June 1980, lot 162 (ill.; as Karel van der Pluym); acquired by Lawrence Zombek; acquired by Dr Alfred Bader 18 January 1983; given to the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, in 1991

LITERATURE Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 4, pp. 2415, 2463, no. 1650a (col. ill.; as Willem de Poorter); Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 6, p. 3633 (as Jacob van Spreeuwen)

1 For a discussion of the moralizing, religious overtones of pieces of armour and weaponry, see cat. no. 13.

2 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 6, p. 3743, no. 2445, p. 4064 (ill.).

3 Sumowski 1983ff., vol. 4, pp. 2548–88, esp. nos. 1705, 1710, 1712–17.







Johan de Cordua  
(Brussels c.1630–1702 Prague?)

*Vanitas Still Life with a Calendar and Musical Instruments*

Canvas, 55.9 x 68.6 cm

Signed and dated on the ledge: *J. Coorda Fecit 1665*  
Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

*Vanitas* still lifes became very popular in northern Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Intended to remind the viewer of the uncertainty and impermanence of life, they developed from two main sources: from images of St Jerome, which include symbols of transience such as a skull or hourglass (see cat. nos. 25, 26); and from the practice of painting skulls and similar reminders of death as personal *memento mori* on the back of portraits, a tradition dating back to the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Little is known about Johan de Cordua or his work. He was born in Brussels around 1630 and was active in Vienna as a still-life painter. *Vanitas Still Life with a Calendar and Musical Instruments* depicts a group of objects casually arranged on a table against a dark background. Some of the objects in this picture can be divided into two types: those which signify earthly existence and those which symbolize transience. To the first group belong the globe, the music book, and the playing cards. The skull, the hourglass, the pocket watch, and the lamp with two extinguished wicks are all references to the fleeting quality of human existence. The musical instruments and the calendar straddle both iconographic groups.

Depictions of books in still lifes often refer to scholarship and wisdom, and thus, to aspects of human life. Here, however, the book is a German almanac opened to the page that marks the change from the Old to the New Year. The left page represents December, the right one, January.<sup>2</sup> A loose leaf of paper is inserted between the two pages in such a way that it mostly covers “December” and casts a shadow over about half of “January.” This image effectively expresses the idea that the Old Year is over and the future is unknown.<sup>3</sup> The writing on the inserted piece of paper is in Dutch and seems to refer to a certain amount of money received on 23 December.

The meaning of musical instruments in *vanitas* still lifes is complex. They are often a straightforward reference to the arts, and as such, can be understood as representing that which belongs to earthly existence. However, as with references to scholarship and the sciences, it is also possible to interpret objects denoting the arts as suggesting that life can endure through the fame brought about by success in the arts.<sup>4</sup> In this case, the presence of a music book open to a page of popular dance music, *Alemannde* and *Kourante*, suggests that the musical instruments refer to worldly pleasure and can therefore be read as a warning against sin and sloth.<sup>5</sup> The broken string on the violin reinforces this idea and makes it clear that the violin does not represent harmony, as it does in some genre scenes.<sup>6</sup>

*Vanitas* still lifes demand a certain knowledge on the part of both artist and viewer. While there was a didactic purpose in the production of these paintings, they were intended to be enjoyed as well. Seventeenth-century viewers of paintings such as Johan de Cordua’s *Vanitas Still Life with a Calendar and Musical Instruments* were not only reminded of the transience of life, but were also delighted by the skill and illusionism of these pictures and by the activity of interpreting them.

J.R.-C.

PROVENANCE H. Jüngeling, The Hague; acquired by the present owner in 1965

LITERATURE Voskuil-Popper 1976, pp. 64–65; ex. cat. South Hadley 1979; Bader 1995, p. 231 (ill.)

1 Cavalli-Björkman in ex. cat. Frankfurt 1993, p. 48.

2 The writing on the bottom of the January page reads “*Mach dich fröhlich/balt warm das Haus/Ein warme Stub sey dir*

*erlaubt*” (“Be happy/ and keep your house warm/ You are allowed to keep a warm chamber”).

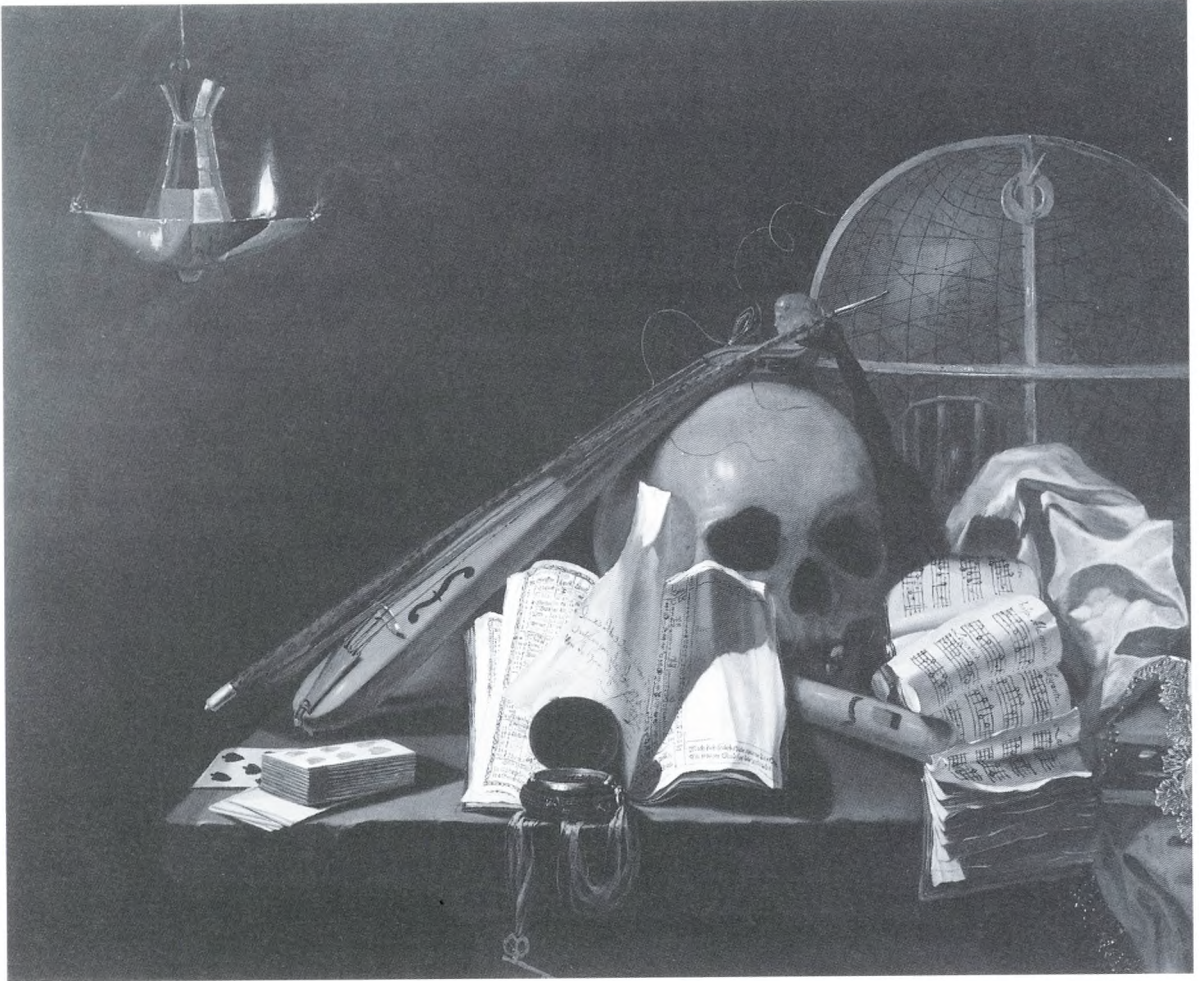
3 Voskuil-Popper 1976, p. 64.

4 Heezen-Stoll 1979, pp. 247–48.

5 Bergström 1983, p. 108.

6 Similarly, the playing cards can be interpreted in more than one way. They too can be a reference to the life of pleasure, but they can also refer to notions of fate. Peter Sutton in ex. cat. Philadelphia 1984, p. 191, cat. no. 37.







## Wallerant Vaillant

(Lille 1623–1677 Amsterdam)

### *Vanitas Still Life with a Skull, a Book, and a Candle in a Niche*

Mezzotint, 22.4 x 16.3 cm (Holl. 157)

Inscribed on the wall below: MEMENTO MORI, Lower Right: *W. Vaillant Fecit*

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of the Trier-Fodor Foundation, 1989

According to Christian belief, the Fall of Man gave Death power over all human beings. Since the thirteenth century, representations of the Crucifixion often included a skull, because according to legend, the Cross was raised on the grave of Adam. Starting in the fifteenth century and especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the skull developed into the most expressive symbol for the transience of human existence and thus was frequently used in *vanitas* still lifes and allegories.<sup>1</sup> The idea of omnipresent death was supposed to inspire humans to renounce pride (*superbia*) – a wellspring of sin – and consequently to lead a life of humility.

Vaillant has added a candle with a smoking wick to the skull. This candle refers to the proverbial lamp of life that is so easily extinguished. In contrast, the book represents the human desire to attain immortality through scholarly endeavours. The scholar's fame, manifest in his works, survives his mortal frame. The inscription on a mezzotint by Hendrik Hondius, dated 1626 (Holl. 19), showing a skull crowned with a laurel wreath on top of books and artists' tools, illustrates contemporary ideas on the permanent value of the arts and sciences: FINIS CORONAT OPUS ("the end crowns the work"). Like the laurel wreath on the skull, the intellectual achievements of humankind cannot wilt.

Wallerant Vaillant was one of the most influential artists in developing the mezzotint technique. He in fact perfected this graphic procedure, which had only been invented around 1650. Subsequently it became very popular, especially in England, where Vaillant had worked for several years. The German painter and art historian Joachim von Sandrart praised Vaillant in his *Teutsche Academie* of 1675 as someone who "*durch kontinuierliche übung und fleiß hierinn fast wunder tu*" ("performs miracles in the 'black art' through continuous practice and diligence").<sup>2</sup>

V.M.

1 Concerning the iconography of the skull in still lifes and allegorical images, see Klemm in ex. cat. Münster/Baden-Baden 1979–80, pp. 140–218, esp. pp. 191–218.

2 See Joachim von Sandrart 1675–80, vol. 1, part 1, book III, ch. XVI, p. 101.

## After Gérard de Lairesse

(Liège 1641–1711 Amsterdam)

### *Skeleton with an Hourglass*

Engraving with etching, 44.2 x 27.7 cm

Private collection

In 1685 an anatomical textbook by Govert Bidloo (1649–1713) was published in Amsterdam.<sup>1</sup> Bidloo had studied with the famous surgeon Frederik Ruysch (1638–1731), and in 1682 he received his doctorate from the University of Franeker. Subsequently, he taught anatomy at Leiden University, and from 1701 onwards was physician to William III of England, a descendant of the House of Nassau-Orange.

The title page of the book indicates that Bidloo commissioned 105 drawings from the painter and author Gérard de Lairesse as models for printed illustrations, possibly to be engraved by Abraham Blooteling (1640–1690).<sup>2</sup> De Lairesse produced sketches after prepared medical specimens and inscribed them as "directly



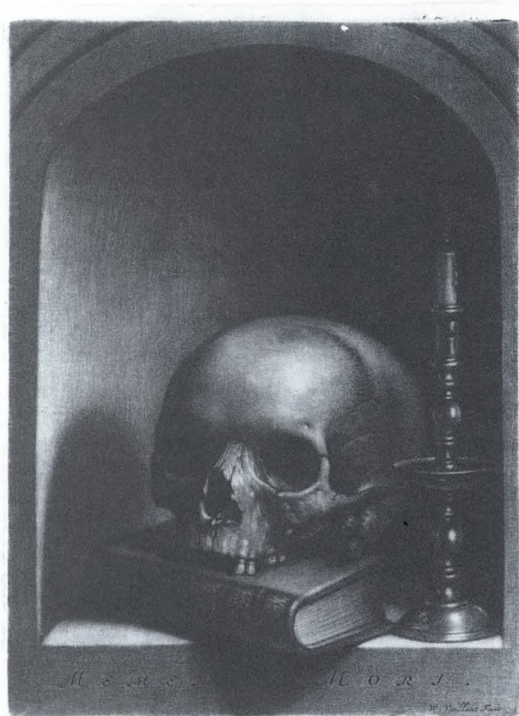
from life,” as Bidloo reports in his introduction. Some of the illustrations reveal that De Lairese used magnifying lenses for his drawings. It is possible that he and Bidloo were in contact with the Delft scientist Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1728). Van Leeuwenhoek’s improvements in the field of microscopy led, among other things, to the discovery of bacteria, capillary vessels, and red blood corpuscles. Although Bidloo’s book was criticized for its inaccuracies, the illustrations were praised for their aesthetic value, and were even plagiarized by the English anatomist William Cowper in 1698.<sup>3</sup>

Bidloo placed depictions of Adam and Eve and of two skeletons in front of open tombs at the beginning of the anatomical illustrations. The reference to Christian belief is evident: after the Fall of Man, Death was introduced into the world and limited the earthly existence of human beings. The hourglass held by the skeleton in its raised hand and the sarcophagus draped with a shroud urge the viewer to reflect on the way of all flesh. V.M.

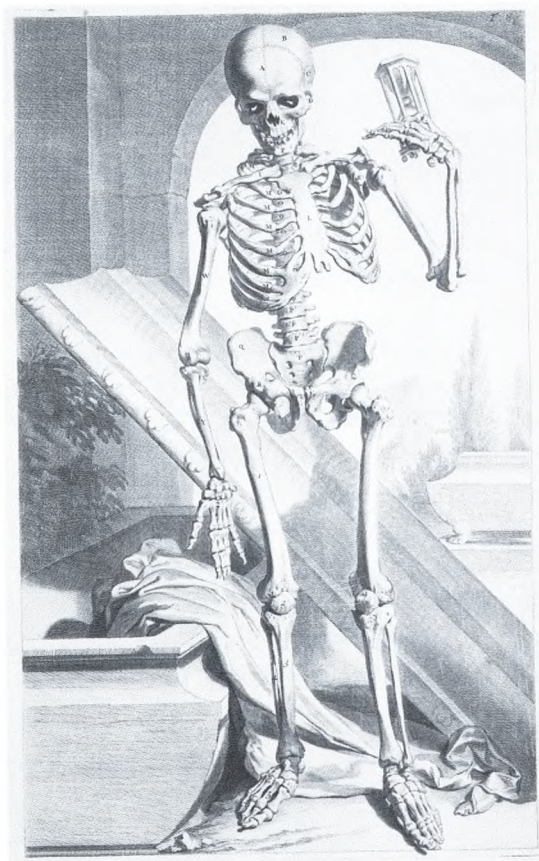
1 *Anatomia Humani Corporis, Centum & quinque Tabulis, Per artificiosiss[imus] G. de Lairese ad vivum delineatis...*, (Johann van Someren, Johann van Dyck, et al.), Amsterdam, 1685. I am grateful to Mimi Cazort of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, who kindly shared her knowledge of Bidloo’s *Anatomia* and who provided me with her entry on the illustration which will be part of the catalogue of the exhibition on anatomical illustrations at the National Gallery in 1996–97.

2 See note 1. For a discussion of the authorship of the engravings, see Dumaitre 1982, pp. 29–37 and Roy 1992, pp. 394–99.

3 William Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies, With Figures Drawn After The Life, By some of the best masters in Europe*, London, 1698. For Cowper’s edition and Bidloo’s reaction, see Dumaitre 1982, pp. 45–71.



32



33



## After Pieter Bruegel the Elder

(Bruegel 1525/30–1569 Brussels)

### *The Alchemist*

Engraving 34.2 x 44.9 cm, attributed to Ph. Galle

(Holl. 197; Holl. 260 under Hieronymous Cock; Van Bastelaer 1992, no. 197)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 (26.72.29)

(All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

Inscribed upper left: BRUEGHEL INVE; lower left: H COCK EXCUD CUM PRIVILEGIO;  
inscription below the image:

*“Debent ignari res ferre et post operari ius lapidis cari vilis sed deniq  
vari unica res certa vilis sed ubiq reperta  
Quatuor inserta naturis in nube referta nulla mineralis res est ubi  
principalis sed talis qualis reperitur ubiq localis.”*

“The ignorant should suffer things and labour accordingly. The law of the precious, cheap but at the same time rare stone is the only certain, worthless but everywhere discovered thing. With four natures stuffed into the cloud it is no mineral that is unique somewhere but is of such a kind as to be found everywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

*The Alchemist*, published by Hieronymous Cock (1510–1570), was engraved after a reverse drawing in brown ink signed by Bruegel and dated 1558 (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett).<sup>2</sup> This engraving is the earliest known image of an alchemist by a Netherlandish artist. Seated on the left, the alchemist drops a coin – probably his last – into a crucible. The room is littered with the instruments and ingredients necessary for his experiments. A large distillation vessel with a helm sits on the table to his right, and he is surrounded by crucibles, two bellows, a balance, filter cloths, a sieve, and many pots and sacks, some of which are labelled.<sup>3</sup> As he works, the alchemist is apparently unaware of his wife seated behind him. She clearly demonstrates that the family has no more money by holding out an empty purse. To her left is an assistant wearing a fool’s cap who blows a charcoal fire with a bellows.<sup>4</sup> Behind these figures, the children climb into the household’s bare cupboard to search for food. Through the window, the inevitable conclusion of the narrative can be seen. The alchemist and his family, finally completely destitute, are being accepted by the poorhouse, labelled *lospital*. On the far right a man, seated at a desk, gestures with one hand to the family, and with the other he points to the page of a book showing the words *Alge Mist* (“all is crap” or “all is lost”). The entire scene is, of course, underscored by the Latin text that accompanies the image.

Bruegel’s satirical depiction of the alchemist has several literary and artistic precursors. In his *Narrenschiff* of 1494, Sebastian Brant discusses the pursuit of alchemy as foolish,<sup>5</sup> and in the accompanying woodcut after a design by Dürer, the alchemist and his assistant appear in fools’ caps. In addition, Chaucer and Erasmus have been suggested as literary influences on Bruegel’s interpretation of the alchemist as a fool.<sup>6</sup> The 1532 woodcut of an alchemist by the Petrarch-Master gives a similar impression of poverty.<sup>7</sup> There are also compositional similarities to Cornelis Anthonisz. Teunissen’s woodcut of *Sorgeloos Living in Poverty* from the *Sorgeloos* series of 1541 (Holl. 34). In this image, which addresses the issue of poverty, the conclusion of the narrative is visible through a window, much like the one in the *Alchemist*. Bruegel’s engraving influenced later images of alchemists. For example, the prints from around 1570 by Pieter Cool after Maerten de Vos (Holl. 5) and by Pieter van der Borcht IV (Holl. 576) both retain the basic composition and the moral of Bruegel’s print.<sup>8</sup>

J.H.

1 Translation according to ex. cat. St Louis 1995, p. 85; for information on the different states of the print, see Van Bastelaer 1992, pp. 263–67.

2 Number K.d.Z. 4399, 30.8 x 45.2 cm. For a discussion of the drawing, see Matthias Winner in ex. cat. Berlin 1975, pp. 60–64, no. 67; and Winner, “Zu Bruegels *Alchemist*,” in Von Simson/Winner 1979, pp. 193–202; also Peter Dreyer, “Bruegels *Alchemist* von 1558: Versuch einer Deutung *ad sensus mysticum*,” *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 19/22, 1977, pp. 69–113.

3 The objects in the laboratory are explained in Brinkman 1982, p. 41. The author also discusses the labels that can be read: the pots on the table are labelled “*sulfér*” (sulphur) and “*keye*” (pebbles); the sack next to the small stove on the right has the word “*drogerij*” (drugs) on it.

4 In Dutch, the word for “bellows” is the same word as “puffer,” a common derogatory name for alchemists at the time. See Read 1947, p. 69.

5 For Brandt’s description of alchemy, see Brandt/Barclay 1966, p. 219.

6 Winner discusses Bruegel and the *Narrenschiff* in Von Simson/Winner 1979, pp. 193–202; for Erasmus and Bruegel, see Butts in ex. cat. St Louis, 1995, pp. 16–18; for information on Chaucer’s view of alchemy as described in “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” see North 1990, pp. 81–88.

7 This illustration accompanies Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque Fortunae* Lib. I., I Dial. CXI; see Winner in Von Simson/Winner 1979, p. 195.

8 For a discussion of the two prints, see Brinkman 1982, pp. 45–47.





DEBENT IGNARI RES FERRE ET POST OPERARI QVATVOR INSERTA NATVRIS IN NVBE REFERTA  
 IVS LAPIDIS CARI VILIS SED DENIQ3 RARI RARI NVLLA MINERALIS RES EST VBI PRINCIPALIS  
 VNICA RES CERTA VILIS SED VBIQ3 REPERTA SED TALIS QVALIS REPERITVR VBIQ3 LOCALIS.



David Rijckaert III  
(Antwerp 1612–1661 Antwerp)

*Alchemist Studying at Night*

Canvas, 51 x 74.5 cm

Signed and dated bottom centre: *D. Rijckaert/1648*

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

In the isolation of his chamber at night, an old man sits at his work bench. He has just interrupted his reading of a book open to the illustration of a skeleton holding an hourglass. The equipment in the room and the objects on the bench identify him as a doctor and an alchemist. The moonlight shining through the open door, the light from the candle and the oil lamp, and the glow of the fireplace to the right illuminate the scene in an eerie manner.

In the 1640s, David Rijckaert III, son of an Antwerp family of painters, often occupied himself with the pictorial theme of alchemy. The subject and the composition of these paintings reflect the influence of David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690). Paintings comparable to the present canvas, but with the alchemist joined by his wife or an assistant, are to be found in Leipzig, Brussels, and Madrid.<sup>1</sup> A version in the museum in Vienna shows a remarkable correspondence, in lighting and in the equipment of the workshop.<sup>2</sup> Besides a bronze statue of a standing flayed man, an *écorché* used by anatomists and artists to study human musculature, the Vienna painting includes the anatomical textbook open to the illustration of a skeleton and an hourglass, which refers to the transience of human life (see cat. nos. 5, 33).

The nature of the old man's studies cannot easily be determined. The *écorché*, the skull, and the anatomical textbook seem to identify him as a medical doctor rather than as an alchemist. Nevertheless, there are indications that Rijckaert's scholar is occupied with alchemy. This profession is suggested not so much by the distilling flask in the right foreground, a device also used by doctors and apothecaries in the seventeenth century, but by the red-chalk drawing on the back wall of a lizard-like creature, with a large eye and a curled tail, in the foreground of a landscape. It is most likely a chameleon. This reptile's ability to change colour was perceived by the alchemists to parallel their own endeavours to convert matter. For example, the title page of Christopher Love Morley's *Collectanea chymica leydensia* (Leiden, 1693) shows two alchemists at the feet of a personification of the *anima mundi* ("soul of the world"), who holds a chameleon in her right hand.<sup>3</sup>

The old man's activity remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, with the artificial light sources illuminating the workshop at night, Rijckaert refers to the proverbial "burning of the midnight oil." The light characterizes the scholar's untiring quest for truth and knowledge and the truly serious character of his studies. v.m.

PROVENANCE Sale Luzern (Fischer), 8 November 1990, lot 2005 (ill.)

1 For illustrations of the paintings in Leipzig (Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 1350) and Brussels (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 156), see ex. cat. *Von Bruegel bis Rubens*, eds. E. Mai and H. Vlieghe, Cologne (Wallraf-Richartz Museum), Antwerp (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum), 1992–93, p. 429, fig. 77.1, p. 430, fig. 77.2. For the painting in Madrid (inv. no. 1730), see M. Días Padrón, Museo del

Prado, *Catálogo de Pinturas I (Escuela Flamenca Siglo XVII)*, Madrid, 1975, p. 343, pl. 217.

2 Rijckaert's painting in Vienna (inv. no. 1694) is on panel and measures 46.7 x 79 cm. See *Die Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien, Verzeichnis der Gemälde*, Vienna 1991, p. 106, pl. 470. Anton Joseph von Prenner (1683–1761) made a print after the Vienna painting. See Brinkman 1982, p. 28, fig. 11.

3 For an illustration, see Johannes Fabricius, *Alchemy – The Medieval Alchemists and their Royal Art*, London, 1994, p. 50, fig. 78.







## Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

(Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam)

*Faust*

Etching, drypoint, and engraving, 21 x 16 cm (B. 270)

Anagram inscribed in concentric circle from centre outwards:

INRI / +ADAM+TE+DAGERAM / +AMRTET+ALGAR+ALGASTNA++

Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada (5991)

This etching by Rembrandt from around 1652 shows a scholar who has been distracted from his work by an apparition at the window of his study. The apparition suggests parts of a human body with a circle of light as the head and a faintly visible arm and hand below. The hand points to an oval shape, which has been suggested to be a foreshortened mirror. It seems as if the scholar is directing his gaze towards the mirror rather than towards the apparition with its enigmatic inscription. The astrolabe, the books, and the skull surrounding the man indicate that he is a scholar.

In 1679 Clement de Jonghe identified the subject of the print as a *Practisierende Alchemist* ("Alchemist at Work").<sup>1</sup> Yet, in contrast to the pictorial tradition of practising alchemists in Dutch art, this depiction lacks such conventional attributes as the fire and the somewhat disorderly laboratory (see cat. nos. 34, 37). Instead, the image follows the tradition of the scholar in his study, surrounded by the paraphernalia of his profession (see cat. nos. 1, 12, 13, 16).<sup>2</sup> In the eighteenth century Valerius Röver referred to the print as *Dr Faustus*, a title it has retained to the present, although scholarship is increasingly convinced that the image cannot be connected to the *Faust* legend. It has been suggested that Rembrandt attended performances in Amsterdam of Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*, but this identification has been rejected on the basis that the devil, with whom Faust strikes a deal, is missing in Rembrandt's etching. An attempt to identify the elderly man as Dr Faustus Socinus, the leader of the Socinians, an anti-trinitarian sect in the Netherlands, has also been dismissed, because Rembrandt would hardly have chosen a lost profile to portray a recognizable individual and, moreover, he is not known to have had any connections with the Socinian sect.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the nature of the apparition and on the inscription, scholars today seem to agree that the print represents a cabalistic conjuring scene. The Cabala is a secret Jewish interpretative system concerned with mystical elements of the Old Testament. It attempts to explain the nature of the Supreme Being, the origin of the universe, creation, and the nature of angels. Its secrets have been guarded through a complex system of coded numerals and anagrams.

The inscription in the print has not been precisely identified, but it seems to be based on the tradition of handbooks for *magi*. Since Hellenic times the *magus* was believed to have had the power to conjure the ethereal spirits of the stars down to earth. *Magi* represent the active relationship between humans and the divine. In this context, the inscription does not relate directly to the contents of the scene, but is, rather, a formula made up of independent elements to call upon and conjure spirits and demons.<sup>4</sup> The anagram INRI can clearly be identified: it stands for *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* ("Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"). ALGA may stand for AGLA, a hebraic conjuration derived from one of the most common prayers, the eighth-hour prayer *Schemone essre*, and the AMTRET may be an anagram for the TETRAGRAMMATON (the four letters of the Hebrew name for God, JHWE, which stands for *Jahwe*).<sup>5</sup> The Jewish Cabala contained such astrological elements and astral-mythical beliefs, and there was a renewed interest in cabalistic experimentation in the seventeenth century. Rembrandt may have been introduced to aspects of the cabalistic tradition by his friend Menasseh-ben-Israel. It has recently been concluded that in this print, Rembrandt represents a union between two traditions that seem mutually exclusive: literary scholarship and magic.<sup>6</sup>

A.R.

1 Van Gelder/Van Gelder-Schrijver 1938, p. 1.

2 Barbara Welzel in ex. cat. Amsterdam/Berlin/London 1991–92, vol. 2, p. 258.

3 Welzel in ex. cat. Amsterdam/Berlin/London 1991–92, vol. 2, p. 258; Van de Waal 1964, pp. 7–48; In this essay, the

author attempts to prove a connection between this print and the Socinian sect.

4 Carstensen/Hennigsen 1988, pp. 295–96, 302.

5 Rotermund 1957, pp. 151–68, esp. p. 151.

6 Welzel in ex. cat. Amsterdam/Berlin/London 1991, vol. 2, p. 108.







## Thomas Wijck

(Beverwijk c.1616–1677 Haarlem)

*The Alchemist and Death*

Panel, 55 x 49 cm

Signed lower right: *TWijck*

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Thomas Wijck created many images of alchemists; the interior of this laboratory, with its vaulted ceiling, leaded glass window, and general disarray of alchemical tools and books, is consistent with other paintings by the artist in Braunschweig, Leipzig, Zurich, and Houston. The features of the studio have symbolic meanings, but also reveal a striking compositional resemblance to one of Wijck's earlier drawings of a Roman courtyard.<sup>1</sup> From the column, water well, and bucket hoist, to the framing arch, double background arches, and bordering railing piles atop, the derivation is clear. Symbolically, the column alludes to the ancient origins of alchemy, while the iron ring hanging from the vault of the ceiling is an unassuming detail that acts as Wijck's trademark, for it is a motif that occurs repeatedly in his paintings after his trip to Rome.

In this painting, the alchemist's distillation apparatus is placed inconspicuously in the background; the focus is on the alchemist and the kneeling youth to the right. The alchemist is startled out of concentration by Death while the youth prays before a lit candle, a skull and cross-bones, and a large book propped up on the floor. The hourglass and the seven sealed books of the Apocalypse hanging near the ceiling are also significant. The Book of Revelation had portentous meaning in the seventeenth century because of its message of judgement and consequential destruction, as well as the potential for a New Jerusalem, with which the Dutch identified. The theme of judgement prevails in images of all kinds. The widely circulated *Icones* (Lyon, 1538) by Hans Holbein the Younger not only described Christian morals, but also provided artists with compositional examples. It was perhaps Holbein's woodcut of the Parable of the Rich Man that served as an indirect model for Wijck's composition of Death and the alchemist. A 1538 copy of the woodcut depicts the rich man, with arms upraised, surprised by the greed of Death, who gathers his riches from the table between them.<sup>2</sup> The variation in Wijck's painting is that the parable is lost and Death's actions have more catastrophic implications. Perhaps Death's trumpet heralds the Seventh Seal, which brings thunder, lightning, and earthquake (Rev 8:5), represented in this painting by the fiery sky above. The Book of Revelation decrees that God will inevitably defeat all enemies, evil, and heretics (alchemists included, we may deduce). The aspirations of the alchemist brought to the fore his greed, sacrilege, and irreverence, all punishable by the ultimate annihilation explained as the Apocalypse.

Since the thirteenth century the skull and cross-bones had been symbolic of the Crucifixion (see cat. no. 32). While the skull may warn of the transience of life, a theme common to the Dutch *vanitas*, its adjacency to the cross-bones informs us of a deeper meaning: redemption comes to humanity through the Crucifixion, but alchemy too seeks redemption, and with the aid of the elixir of life, becomes a quest for redemption and immortality. The traditional association of the bones with those of Adam, who according to legend was buried at the Cross, and who was also identified as the first alchemist, emphasizes the need for redemption, manifested by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Such overt moralization is unusual for Wijck, who usually portrayed alchemists as serious, scholarly, meditative types, their philosophic qualities often enhanced by noble Eastern costumes. D.B.

PROVENANCE Sale J.A.Sichterman, Groningen, 20 August 1764 (Lugt 1401), lot 37; sale P. Lyonet, Amsterdam (Bunel, van der Schley, Ploos, Van Amstel, Yver), 11ff. April 1791 (Lugt 4706), lot 299; sale Leiden (A. Delfos), 19–20 October 1792 (Lugt 4953), lot 15 (as J. Wijck); sale Vienna (Dorotheum), 28 November 1967, lot 137 (as formerly in the collection of L.L.D. Phillips, Exeter)

- 1 The drawing is in the Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam; published in Giuliano Briganti *et al.*, *I Bamboccianti*, Rome, 1983, p. 227, fig. 7.6.
- 2 See Christian Tümpel, "Ikonographische Beiträge zu Rembrandt," *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 16, 1971, p. 28.

LITERATURE *Aldrichimica Acta* 1, no. 1, 1968 (ill. on cover)







## Hendrik Heerschop

(Haarlem 1620–after 1672 ?)

*The Alchemist*

Panel, 55 x 44 cm

Signed and dated lower left: *HHerschop/1671*

Milwaukee, Collection of Drs Alfred and Isabel Bader

Hendrik Heerschop studied with the still-life painter Willem Claesz. Heda for a period in 1642, and in 1648 was admitted to the St Luke's Guild in Haarlem. An annotation on a portrait drawing after a 1649 painting (both now lost) identified Heerschop as a pupil of Rembrandt.<sup>1</sup> While his etchings are comparable to the style of Rembrandt, *The Alchemist* of 1671 reveals only a hint of the master's influence.

The identification of the middle-aged bearded man as an alchemist is undeniable. He sits at a table on which there are several glass containers, one with a tubular extension connected to a distillation apparatus. On the floor are vats and flasks, and a uterus, the hermetic vessel so-called for its associations with the female matrix. At his feet and leaning against a large barrel is a chisel, used for marking and breaking stones. A bellows and two urns lie strewn on the foreground floor; it is the alchemist's use of the bellows to fan the flames which gave him the disparaging title of "puffer" or "*souffleur*." Overhead is a waterpot hanging from a decorative iron support attached to what seems to be a ceiling beam. Various vessels and a purse hang on the back wall. In a niche just above the table is a large metal distiller. There are also several books on the corner of a table, at the left and closest to the viewer.

Perhaps testing an elixir formula, Heerschop's alchemist sits with his right knee uncovered, an indication of poverty, while his torso is turned and his head is in profile. He leans forward over his wooden chair, blowing a stream of smoke from his mouth and holding a clay pipe, which may contain tobacco. The smoke may refer to the fleeting and vain pursuit of alchemical science, and may serve to remind the viewer of Psalms 102:3, "my days are consumed like smoke," or Sartorius's adage, "*Des menschen leven gaat als een rook voorbij*" ("earthly life passes by like smoke"). However, some contemporary humanist doctors praised tobacco smoking for its medicinal value (Stephanus Blankaart, Johann van Beverwyck, Cornelis Bontekoe).<sup>2</sup> Johannes Neander's dissertation on tobacco, published in 1622, outlined nearly 100 prescriptions;<sup>3</sup> the plant's potency as an agent of immortality fooled many, while alchemists were taken in by its apparent potential to yield gold.<sup>4</sup>

Images of alchemists were still popular enough in the latter half of the seventeenth century for Heerschop to have produced several versions of a particular image. Two others sharing approximately the same dimensions date from 1672 (Dresden) and 1682(?) (Pittsburgh).<sup>5</sup> The later painting depicts an explosion in the workshop and the resulting disarray. The image of the bare-kneed alchemist in the present painting conveys, in the tradition of Bruegel, the notion that the "philosopher's son" pursues the elixir of life in vain and in poverty. D.B.

PROVENANCE Sale Marie Vischer, Amsterdam (Mak), 27–30 May 1924 (Lugt 86969), lot 36 (sold as pendant with an "Herbalist"; Dfl. 740); sale H. de Stuers *et al.*, Luzern (Fischer), 21–25 October 1947, lot 3000 (listed as pendant with *Pfeifer-auchendem Alchemist*); sale London (Sotheby's), 4 April 1984, lot 150

1 Strauss/Van der Meulen 1979, p. 277.

2 Johannes van Beverwijck, in *Schat der Gesondheydt*, Amsterdam, 1649, and Cornelis Bontekoe, in *Verhandeling wegens de deugden en krachten van de tabak*, Amsterdam 1686, advocated the use of tobacco for combatting scurvy and gout, among other maladies, while Petrus Scriverius warned of the addictive nature of tobacco in *Saturnalia ofie Poetisch Vasten-Avond spel vervattende het gebruyk en misbruyk vanden Taback*,

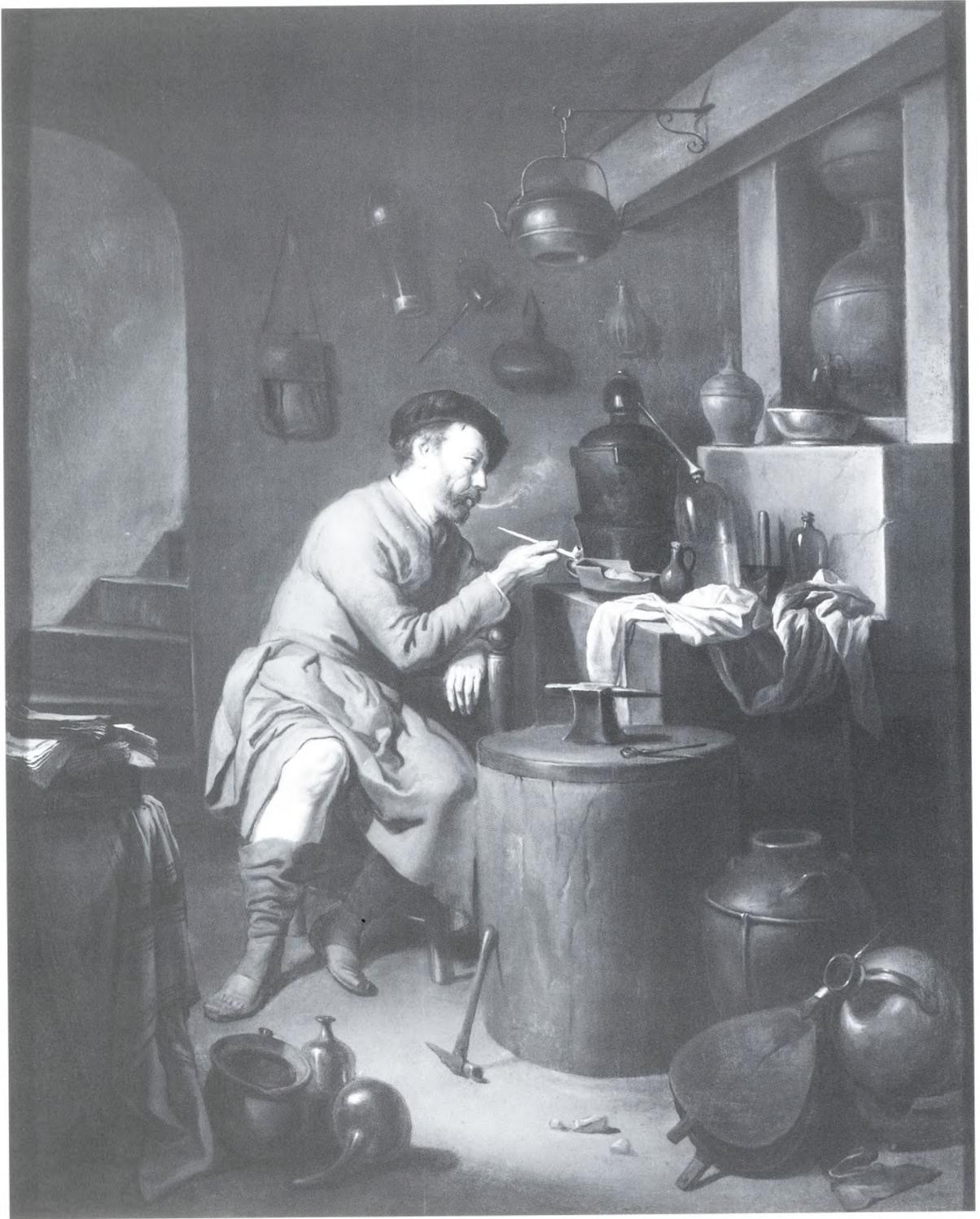
trans. into Dutch by Samuel Ampzing, Haarlem, 1630. See Schama 1988, pp. 197, 635, notes 150, 152.

3 Johannes Neander, *Tabacologia: hoc est, tabaci seu nicotianae descriptio Medico-Cheirurgico-Pharmaceutica*, Leiden 1622. See Ivan Gaskell, "Tobacco, Social Deviance and Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century" in *Holländische Genremalerei im 17. Jahrhundert*, eds. H. Bock, T.W. Gaehtgens, Berlin, 1987, pp. 117–37.

4 Georg Brongers, *Nicotiana Tabacum: The History of Tobacco and Tobacco Smoking in the Netherlands*, Amsterdam, 1964, p. 29.

5 *The Alchemist*, panel, 55 x 45 cm, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie; for an illustration see W. Bernt, *Die Niederländischen Maler des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 1948, p. 361. *The Alchemist's Explosion*, canvas, 58.5 x 48 cm, Pittsburgh, Fisher Collection; see Van Lenep 1966, p. 159.







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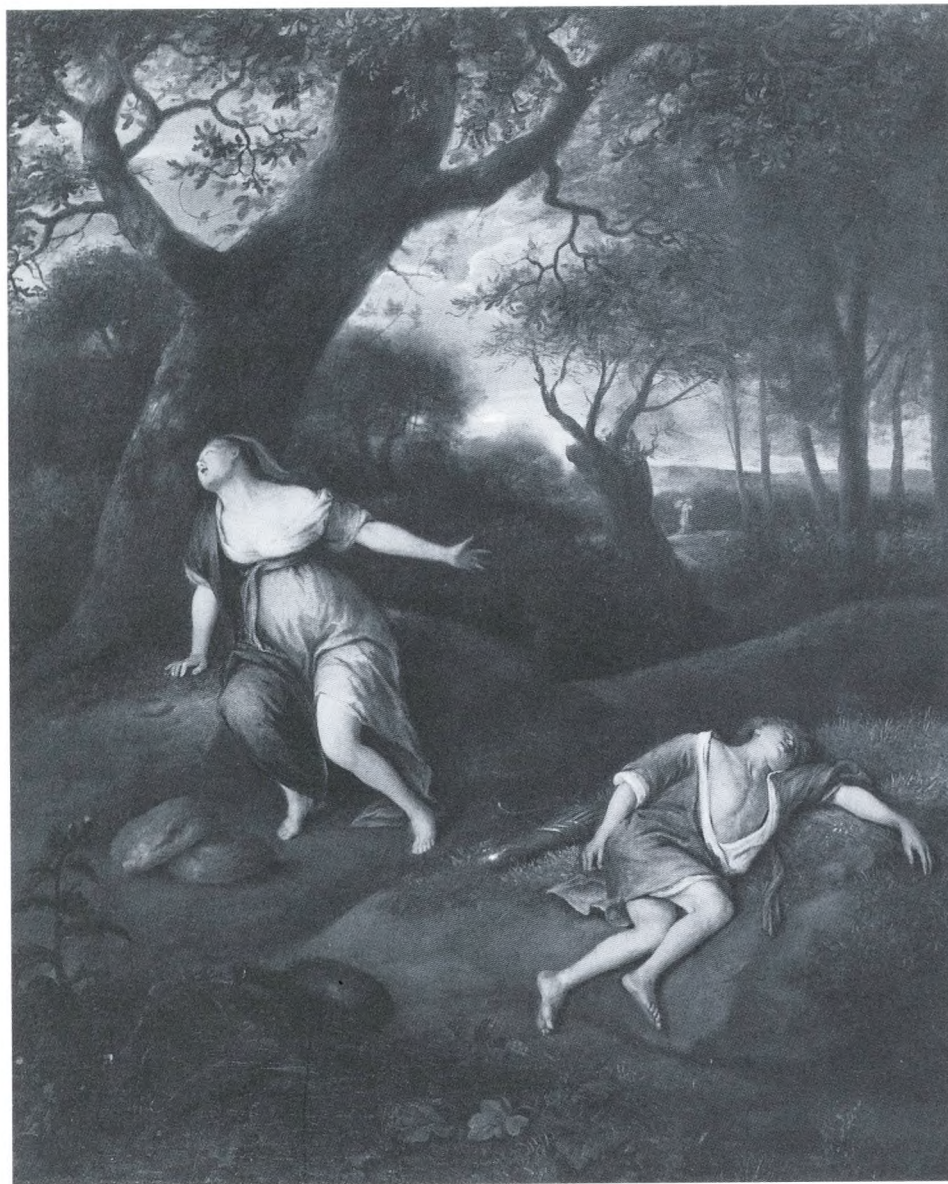
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