

Rembrandt based *Saint Bartholomew* on a model found in other paintings (see *A Bearded Man*, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, inv. no. 2060) in much the same way that he based *Saint Paul* on a model.

7. No other large-scale paintings depicting apostles or evangelists are known to have been painted in an oval format. Rembrandt's *The Risen Christ*, 1661 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 6471; Br. 630), was cut into an oval form at some point in its history, but was probably conceived as a rectangular painting. The central portion of Rembrandt's *Christ in the Hyde Collection*, Glens Falls, New York (Br. 628), was also cut into an irregular oval before being reattached to the original canvas.

8. No commission for such a work is known.

References

- 1829–1842 Smith, 9 (1842): 800, no. 30.
 1868 Vosmaer: 308, 495 (also 1877 ed.: 359, 561).
 1873 Blanc: 291.
 1885 Dutuit: 7, 19, 49, 60, 69.
 1893 Michel, 2: 450, 555 (also 1894 English trans., 2: 132, 237).
 1897–1906 Bode, 5 (1901): 29–30, 174, no. 382, repro.
 1899 Bell: 82, 140 (also 1907 ed.: 78–79, 125).
 1906 Rosenberg, 2: 403, 308, repro. (also 1908 ed.: 561, 384, repro.; and 1909 ed., 561, 384, repro.).
 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 124, no. 178.
 1913–1916 Widener: intro., page opposite pl. 37, repro.
 1914 Valentiner: 248, no. 72.
 1921b Valentiner: 384, repro.
 1922 Valentiner: no. 14.
 1923 Meldrum: 202, pl. 400.
 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
 1927 Valentiner: 3–17.
 1930a Valentiner: 259–271.
 1931 Valentiner: intro., no. 127, repro.
 1931 Widener: 62, repro.
 1935 Bredius: 27, no. 612, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 27, no. 612, repro.).
 1942 Widener: 6, no. 655.
 1956 Benesch: 335–354, fig. 3 (also reprint in Benesch 1970: 190–203, fig. 158).
 1965 NGA: 110, no. 655.
 1966 Bauch: intro. 7, 12, no. 223, repro. 221.
 1968 Gerson: 378, no. 295, repro.
 1968 NGA: 97, no. 655, repro.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 613, no. 612, 515, repro.
 1969 Haak: 298–299, no. 497, repro.
 1969 Washington: no. 17.
 1975 NGA: 286–287, repro.
 1976 Walker: no. 374.
 1976 London: 21, 22, repro.
 1977b London: 62, 63, repro.
 1982 Halewood: 120, 118, repro.
 1984/1985 Schwartz: 310, no. 351, repro. (also 1985 English ed.: 322, 310, no. 351, repro.).
 1985 NGA: 331, repro.
 1986 Sutton: 313, no. 468, repro.
 1986 Tümpel: 339, 421, 343, repro.
 1986 Guillaud and Guillaud: 528, no. 615, repro.

1942.9.65 (661)

Rembrandt van Rijn

Philemon and Baucis

1658

Oil on wood,¹ 54.5 x 68.5 (21½ x 27)

Widener Collection

Inscriptions

At lower left: *Rembrandt f. 1658*

Technical Notes: The painting has been transferred and is now on a cradled, horizontally grained wood panel with a layer of gauze between the panel and paint layer. The original support also appears to have been wood. No ground layer is present; it was probably removed during transfer.

The paint is applied in successive, medium-rich layers of varying thickness, with broad and free brushmarking giving way to finer strokes in the faces. X-radiographs indicate that Mercury's right arm was originally higher and extended farther from his body. The upper edge of this underlying arm is now visible on the surface as a thin, white line. The nature of this line was mistaken by a previous restorer, who used it to form the upper edge of the glass that Mercury now appears to hold. The paint has suffered severe abrasion, particularly in the darks where the gauze interleaf is visible. Extensive repainting and reinforcement is found throughout.

A discolored, aged, natural resin varnish is present. Because of the extensive losses in the painting the decision was made in 1977 not to remove the old, somewhat disfiguring overpaint and discolored varnish. Conservation was undertaken only to consolidate flaking and cupped paint.

Provenance: Captain William Baillie [1723–1792], London; (his sale, Langford & Son, London, 1–2 February 1771, no. 73). Possibly English private collection by 1772.² Major Stanton; (sale, Christie & Ansell, London, 1 February 1777, no. 75); Moris.³ (Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris); Charles T. Yerkes [1839–1905], Chicago, by 1893; (sale, American Art Association, New York, 8 April 1910, no. 1160); (Scott and Fowles, New York); Otto H. Kahn [1867–1934], New York, by 1914; (Scott and Fowles, New York); Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, in 1922;⁴ inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, after purchase by funds of the Estate.

Exhibited: *Paintings by Old Masters of the Dutch, Flemish, Italian, French, and English Schools*, Charles Sedelmeyer Galleries, Paris, 1898, no. 137. *Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1920, no. 9. *Rembrandt Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings*, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1922.⁵ Washington 1969, no. 18.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* provided Dutch artists with a wide range of mythological subjects, most of which contain underlying moralizing messages on human behavior. Surprisingly, the story of the visit of Jupiter and Mercury to the aged couple Philemon and Baucis, described by Ovid in the eighth book of



Fig. 1. Hendrick Goudt, after Adam Elsheimer, *Jupiter and Mercury in the House of Philemon and Baucis*, 1612, engraving, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gift of W. G. Russell Allen

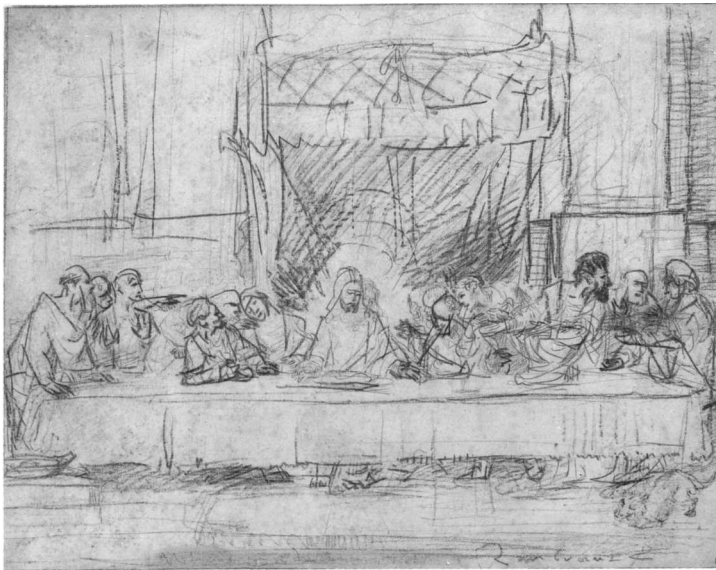


Fig. 2. Rembrandt van Rijn, after Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, c. 1635, red chalk, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975

his commentaries, was only rarely depicted.⁶ For those who found in Ovid subjects that allowed them to represent sensual scenes of love, betrayal, or deceit, the story had no appeal. For Rembrandt, however, the story of deities quietly revealing themselves to humble and devoted individuals struck a responsive chord that allowed him to penetrate the essence of the myth as no artist ever had.

The moral of the story, as interpreted by Karel van Mander at the beginning of the seventeenth century, is that hospitality and openness to strangers are virtues that are always rewarded.⁷ While Rembrandt evoked the warmth of the old couple's personality and suggested much of Ovid's vivid description of their humble abode, including the fire where Baucis had cooked the cabbage and bacon for their meal, his interest was not in the eventual rewards of their generosity but in the moment of revelation. Ovid writes that Philemon and Baucis recognized that they were in the presence of gods when their bowls of food and wine kept replenishing themselves. In fear, they raised their hands in prayer. Then, in an effort to offer better fare, they tried to catch their only goose, who escaped their grasp and fled to the strangers for refuge. The moment Rembrandt has depicted is that in which Jupiter both commands them not to kill the goose and blesses their offering with a firm yet comforting gesture.

Early in his career, Rembrandt had painted a number of episodes from Ovid, including the *Abduction of Proserpina*, now in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin,⁸ but the dramatic characterization of their narratives are totally different in kind from this quiet, reverent scene. The differences in subject matter and presentation, between the dynamic theatricality of one and the subdued, evocative nature of the other, are characteristic of Rembrandt's artistic evolution. Throughout his life, he carefully considered textual sources, whether they were biblical or mythological, but he also drew on others' interpretations of comparable scenes for his inspiration.⁹ When he first turned to Ovid around 1630, he did so under the influence of Rubens and, for example, clearly derived his inspiration for the *Abduction of Proserpina* from a print by Pieter Soutman¹⁰ after a Rubens composition. For *Philemon and Baucis*, painted in 1658, the visual sources are entirely different. They reflect a fusion of mythological and biblical images that helps account for the intense spirituality of the scene.

Adam Elsheimer's painting *Philemon and Baucis*, 1608 (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, inv. no. 1977), known to Rembrandt through Hendrick Goudt's engraving of 1612 (fig. 1),



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Philemon and Baucis*, 1626.9.65



Fig. 3. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ at Emmaus*, 1628, oil on panel, Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André

was a primary source of inspiration.¹¹ One sees here the gods lounging in the corner of the dimly lit, humble home of the old couple who are busy preparing the meal. Elsheimer, however, depicted an earlier moment of the episode than did Rembrandt, before Philemon and Baucis had become aware of the divinities' identities. Rembrandt switched the relative positions of Jupiter and Mercury so that Jupiter, the primary deity, faces the viewer frontally. Dressed in exotic and loosely draped robes, he dominates the scene, and takes on a Christ-like appearance that strongly echoes that from Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*. Rembrandt knew of this composition from a number of sources and made at least three drawings after it, the most extensive of which he executed around 1635 (fig. 2). Leonardo's composition had a profound impact on Rembrandt's art for the rest of his life, and he adopted it for a number of different subjects in prints, drawings, and paintings.¹² In his 1654 etching of *Christ at Emmaus*, for example, he depicted Christ in a pose comparable to that seen in the *Last Supper*.¹³ As Stechow and others have emphasized, Jupiter in *Philemon and Baucis* partakes of much the same spirit.¹⁴

Rembrandt's appreciation of the thematic connections between Ovid's story and *Christ at Emmaus*, however, did not just develop at the end of his life.¹⁵ His earliest depiction of the biblical story, in 1628 (fig. 3), used as its compositional basis Goudt's same print of *Philemon and Baucis* (fig. 1).¹⁶ Here, however, Rembrandt transformed the light of the oil lamp into

a mystical aureole of light behind Christ that frightens and astonishes the apostles. Rembrandt remembered this dramatic effect when he painted a comparable glow of light behind Mercury. Although the light here is more subdued, it serves to give a mysterious radiance to the darkness and illuminate the golden raiments of Jupiter.

As in Rembrandt's depictions of *Christ at Emmaus* (fig. 3), light, rather than symbolic attributes, signifies the revelation of divinity. Rembrandt also uses light to help accent important compositional elements. He reinforces the significance of Jupiter's gesture, for example, by placing it on axis with a vertical board on the rear wall that is illuminated by Mercury's aureole of light. He uses other elements of the dwelling to reinforce his figural composition: the diagonal beams and rope draped over the table both draw the group together and suggest the subdivision within it.

This work is the only extant painting of *Philemon and Baucis* in Rembrandt's oeuvre. Quite possibly, however, he included this subject within the series of scenes from Ovid that Baldinucci reports he painted for a Dutch merchant/magistrate.¹⁷ Baldinucci probably learned of this series from Bernhardt Keil (1624–1687), a Danish artist and Rembrandt pupil who traveled to Italy after being in Amsterdam from about 1642 to 1651. Although no dates for this series of paintings are known, it may belong to the period of Keil's residence in Amsterdam. Two drawings in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin¹⁸ have frequently been considered preliminary drawings for the Wash-

Fig. 4. Thomas Watson, mezzotint after *Philemon and Baucis*, 1772, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet



ington painting. The episodes from the story of Philemon and Baucis depicted in the drawings, however, are so different that they have to be understood as independent creations. Closer in concept is Rembrandt's sympathetic drawing of *St. Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha*, c. 1654/1655 (Musée Bonnat, Bayonne),¹⁹ in which Saint Peter's pose resembles, in reverse, that of Philemon.

The painting is in poor condition. Perhaps as a result of the transfer process, which was probably undertaken in the nineteenth century, there are losses in many of the thinly painted areas of the painting. A good deal of old overpaint exists on the surface. The awkward lower portions of Mercury's torso almost certainly result from such reconstructive work.²⁰ A mezzotint by Thomas Watson of 1772 (fig. 4) demonstrates that the head of Jupiter has also suffered. The overpaint has flattened Jupiter's nose into a flat triangular shape, whereas the mezzotint suggests that his nose was originally accented along its ridge.

Notes

1. The painting has been transferred from one wood panel to another. See Technical Notes.

2. A mezzotint of the composition was executed in 1772 by Thomas Watson (see fig. 4; Charrington 1923, 151, no. 182).

3. In a copy of the Earl of Essex sale catalogue at Christie's, London, the consignor's name is written in the margin as "Maj. Stanton." A handwritten results sheet bound into the same volume gives the following result: "75. 32/11/-Moris." The Getty Provenance Index has confirmed that it was Stanton who offered the picture for sale and Moris who purchased it.

4. *American Art News* (9 December 1922) reported that the seller of the picture was Scott and Fowles. Scott and Fowles, however, had not owned the painting since 1910, as the journal also reported. Various other sources, including HdG 1907-1927, 6: 141, indicate that the owner during the mid-1910s was Otto H. Kahn.

5. No checklist or catalogue exists for this exhibition, but Fogg Art Museum records show that the picture, which was then owned by Otto Kahn, entered the museum on 26 March and left on 13 April.

6. See Sluijter 1986, 100. Schwartz 1984/1985, 323, notes that Jan Vos mentions a painting of Philemon and Baucis by "Van Zorg" in a poem published in 1662. He interprets this reference to mean Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh (1611-1670).

7. Karel van Mander, *Wtleggingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidii Nasonis*, Van Mander 1604. For an English translation of the story of Philemon and Baucis see Ovid *Metamorphoses*, 200-204.

8. For an illustration, see Gerson/Bredius 1969, cat. 463.

9. Tümpel 1969, 107-108.

10. See Clark 1966, 6, 8.

11. Andrews 1977, 153-154, cat. 24. The painting may also have been known to Rembrandt if, as seems possible, it was in the collection of Jan van de Cappelle (1626-1679).

12. This phenomenon has been extensively discussed in

the literature. See in particular Gantner 1964; Clark 1966; Washington 1983, under nos. 15-20.

13. Münz 1952, 1: 265, repro.

14. Stechow 1941a, 103-113. Stechow also stresses a connection between Rembrandt's concept and Rubens' composition of this scene (probably known to Rembrandt through a print by Meyssens). The relationship, however, is very tenuous. See also Rosenberg 1948, 1: 185 (also 1964 ed., 300).

15. Stechow 1941a, 103, emphasizes that the story of Philemon and Baucis was easily given a Christian interpretation. The old couple epitomized Christian virtues through their gentleness and willing sacrifice of worldly possessions. The story has Eucharistic connotations because of the importance of wine in it. Finally, the story parallels a number of biblical stories in which gods reveal themselves to mortals, among them Abraham entertaining the angels, a subject depicted by Rembrandt in his memorable etching of 1656 (B. 29).

16. Stechow 1941a, 111.

17. Slive 1953: 109. Filippo Baldinucci's comments appeared in his treatise *Cominciamento, e progresso dell'arte dell'intagliare in rame, colle vite di molti de' più eccellenti Maestri della stessa Professione* (Florence, 1686), 78.

18. Illustrated in Benesch 1954-1957, 5: no. 958, figs. 1170-1171; and 6: no. A76, fig. 1668.

19. Benesch 1954-1957, 5: 263, no. 949, fig. 1226. I owe this observation to Christine Boeckl.

20. So many losses exist in the painting that the decision was made in 1977 that it would not be advisable to undertake restoration of the painting, despite the presence of extensive overpaint and severely discolored varnish. See Technical Notes for a discussion of the glass apparently held by Mercury.

References

- 1829-1842 Smith, 7 (1836): 79-80, no. 194.
- 1868 Vosmaer (1877 ed.): 252-253.
- 1885 Dutuit: 58, no. 111.
- 1886 Wurzbach: 97 no. 493.
- 1893 Michel: 446-447, 561 (also 1894 English ed., 2: 128-129, 248).
- 1893 *Yerkes Collection*: no. 45 (also undated ed.: no. 23; and enlarged 1904 ed.: no. 81).
- 1897-1906 Bode, 6 (1901): 6, 46, no. 407, repro.
- 1898 Sedelmeyer: no. 137.
- 1899 Bell: 82, 184 (also 1907 ed.: 79, 156).
- 1905 Valentiner: 97.
- 1906 Rosenberg: 404, no. 325, repro. (also 1908 ed.: 562, no. 388, repro.).
- 1906 Valentiner: 118-128.
- 1907 Brown: 138, 211.
- 1907-1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 140-141, no. 212.
- 1908 Freise: 38-39.
- 1914 Valentiner: 140-141, 248, no. 76.
- 1920 New York: no. 9.
- 1922 "Widener Rembrandt": 1.
- 1923 Meldrum: 202, pl. 404.
- 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
- 1925-1934 Valentiner, 2 (1934): 407 (under nos. 607 and 608).
- 1929 Wilenski: 59-60.
- 1930 Borenius: 53-59.
- 1931 Widener: 68-69, repro.
- 1931 Valentiner: no. 132, repro.

- 1932 Van Rijckevorsel: 77–78, 80, repro.
 1934 Stechow: 329–341.
 1935 Bredius: 21, no. 481, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 20, no. 481, repro.).
 1938 Waldmann: 334–343.
 1941a Stechow: 103–113, fig. 28a, repro.
 1941b Stechow: 225–231.
 1941 Valentiner: 272–296.
 1941/1942 Kieser: 146–147, 160–161.
 1942 Widener: 6.
 1948 Widener: 46.
 1948 Rosenberg, 1: 185 (also 1964 rev. ed.: 300).
 1954–1957 Benesch, 5 (1957): 277, no. 958; 6 (1957): 396, no. A76.
 1960 Goldscheider: 180, pls. 97, 98.
 1963 Walker: 313, 342, repro.
 1964 Gantner: 157–159, pl. 48.
 1965 NGA: 110.
 1966 Bauch: 7, no. 106, repro.
 1968 Gerson: 103, color repro., 108, 132, 155, 357, 364–365, no. 278, repro., 499.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 103, 108, color repro.
 1969 Washington: no. 18.
 1969/1982 Kitson (1982 ed.): no. 37, color repro.
 1975 NGA: 288, repro.
 1976 Walker: 283, no. 376.
 1977 Bolten and Bolten-Rempt: 145–147, 149–150, color repro.
 1984/1985 Schwartz: 323, 330, no. 373, repro. (also 1985 English ed.).
 1985 NGA: 332, repro.
 1986 Sluijter: 100.
 1986 Sutton: 313.
 1986 Tümpel: 249, 422, no. A26, repro.
 1990 Chapman: 91, no. 135, repro.
 1991 Sello: 82–88, repro.

1942.9.67 (663)

Rembrandt van Rijn

*Portrait of a Gentleman
with a Tall Hat and Gloves*

c. 1658/1660
 Oil on canvas,¹ 99.5 x 82.5 (39 1/8 x 32 1/2)
 Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The original fabric support was removed when the painting was transferred to a fine, plain-weave fabric with a gauze-like fabric interleaf. The x-radiograph shows a herringbone pattern that probably indicates the original canvas weave. An original, smooth, gray brown ground layer was retained at the time of transfer and reinforced with an additional, thick white layer that contains zinc white, a pigment available only after 1840. A double ground may have been applied originally, and the lower layer removed in the transfer; only a single original layer is visually evident.

The paint is applied thinly in the dark background and

costume, with glazed shadows and blended contours. Lighter areas are painted more thickly with pronounced brushmarking and low impasto in the face and collar. The x-radiograph (fig. 1) reveals changes in the white collar during painting; it was enlarged slightly and the lace border was added. The x-radiograph also reveals vigorously painted hands and cuffs that differ slightly from those presently visible. The transfer procedure has flattened the impasto and brushwork.

The paint layer is in poor condition and has been significantly overpainted on at least two separate occasions, once probably in the nineteenth century and again about 1922 (see below). The face is largely free of overpaint, as are the lighter hair, white collar, and right background. In the first restoration, the hands and white cuffs were overpainted, along with the mid-gray tones of the proper right arm and chest. The second restoration, in response to significant abrasion in the darker areas, was more extensive. Much of the hat, cloak, right sleeve, the clothing between the hands, and wide bands along the top and left edges were retouched, and the hands and cuffs were repainted a second time. In 1993 an attempt was made to remove the old inpainting in the sitter's left hand, but it was determined that the old restorations could not be removed without danger to the original paint layer.

1942.9.68 (664)

*Portrait of a Lady
with an Ostrich-Feather Fan*

c. 1658/1660
 Oil on canvas,² 99.5 x 83 (39 1/4 x 32 5/8)
 Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The original fabric support was removed when the painting was transferred to a fine, plain-weave fabric with a gauze-like fabric interleaf. A herringbone pattern in the background paint probably indicates the original canvas weave. An original ground, a smooth, gray brown layer, was retained at the time of transfer and reinforced with an additional, thick white layer which contains zinc white, a pigment available only after 1840. A double ground may have been applied originally, and the lower layer removed in the transfer; only a single original layer is visually evident.

The paint handling varies from thin glazes to rich, blended strokes with stiff paste accents in a broad range of brushwork and layering. The transfer procedure has flattened the impasto and brushwork, and a discolored varnish covers the surface. The paint layer is in poor condition and has been significantly retouched, though not as extensively as the companion portrait. Dark passages have been extensively abraded, exposing a broad and thinly executed underpainting.

The x-radiograph reveals a succession of losses along the left edge that have been covered with a band of overpaint extending in to the sitter's elbow and up to her shoulder. The infrared photograph suggests an equally large area of repaint along the top of the painting above the sitter's head. The hands and bracelets have suffered small losses, but the face, white costume, and fan are largely intact.

The transfer and overpainting date prior to Mr. Widener's