at the Gallery then as a summer intern. The problems of the genesis of the painting as understood at that time were published in Wheelock 1988, 218–220.

12. Similar effects are found in the x-radiographs of Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. See the illustration in *Corpus* 1982–, 3: cat. A 111, page 134.

13. The piece to the left is approximately 37.9 cm wide and that to the right approximately 73 cm wide.

14. This calculation is based on the existing width of the righthand piece of canvas (about 73 cm) with an addition of about 7 cm for the apparent reduction along the right edge. This reduction is calculated by noting that, with the exception of his left hand, the man who supports Mary in the Hermitage painting was eliminated in the Gallery *Descent* when the canvas was cut.

15. In one instance it seems as though the unpigmented layer fills cracks in the dark layer.

16. See Technical Notes.

17. For Renesse's life, see Vermeeren 1978, 3–23, and Sumowski 1983, 4: 2469–2470. Renesse was born on 17 September 1626, in Maarssen, near Utrecht. His father, Ludovicus (Lodewijk) Gerardus van Renesse, was a preacher. After his father moved to Breda in 1638, Constantijn entered the University of Leiden, where he was inscribed for literary studies, although he later, in 1642, changed to philosophical studies. He may well have begun his artistic studies in Leiden, although nothing is known about his apprenticeship. An inscription on the back of a drawing of *Daniel in the Lion's Den* in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (inv. no. MB 200), indicates that he had made the drawing in 1649, "the second time that he had been with Rembrandt." His artistic career was short-lived, presumably ending by 1654 when he was named secretary of the city of Eindhoven. In the same year he married a daughter of the burgomaster of Breda. He died on 12 September 1680.

18. See Falck 1924, 191–200.

19. Particularly interesting in relation to the Washington *Descent from the Cross* is his drawing of the *Lamentation of Christ on the Cross*. Sumowski 1979–1992, 9: no. 2166a. Although executed around 1650, this scene is likewise a free adaptation of a Rembrandt composition from the mid-1630s, his grisaille oil sketch of c. 1635 (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 43). The main conceptual difference is that while Rembrandt depicted the dead Christ lying prone in the Virgin's lap so that he could emphasize the profound emotional reactions of the Virgin and the various bystanders to Christ's death, Renesse raised up the body of Christ so that the viewer focuses upon Christ himself. In so doing Renesse not only changed the arrangement of the main figure group, he also cropped the scene dramatically. It is exactly the same thought process that occurs in the Washington *Descent from the Cross*.

20. Illustrated in Sumowski 1979–1992, 9: no. 2188^{xx}.

21. See Foucart 1988, 108–113; Sumowski 1983, 4: no. 1658a.

22. For a reproduction see Hollstein 1949–, 20: 12, no. 5.

23. One such painting is the life-size *Lamentation* in the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, inv. no. SN252, which is signed "Rembrandt f. 1650." The composition of this work resembles that of Renesse's drawing of the same subject (see note 19). The figure of Christ, as well as the old woman at his feet, is reminiscent of comparable figures in *The Descent from the Cross*. For a discussion of this painting, see Robinson and Wilson 1980, cat. 116.

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1942.9.66 (662)

Rembrandt Workshop (possibly Willem Drost)

The Philosopher

c. 1653
Oil on walnut (oak extension and strips), 61.5 x 49.5 (24¼ x 19½)
Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The cradled panel support is composed of two vertically grained boards of wood joined horizontally through the hands. The join is 5.5 cm from the bottom edge. The main board is walnut, and the lower extension is oak. Edging strips have been added to the top and sides.[1]

A thin white or beige ground layer is present on both upper and lower panel boards, with variations in composi-

tion. Density in the x-radiograph indicates the presence of a small amount of white lead in the ground in the main panel but not in the extension. A thin, dark, translucent red layer was laid directly on both panel boards, with variations in the pigment's composition.[2]

Paint is applied thickly in light passages, with low impasto and loose brushmarking, and more thinly in dark passages and the background. The imprimatura color is incorporated into the radiating lines on the hat, and into the flesh tones, where mid-tones are created by thinly glazing the red underlayer. Several changes are visible as pentimenti in infrared reflectography and in the x-radiograph. The contour of the proper right shoulder was raised slightly, and the hat was initially larger. The gray background was then drawn over the hat to decrease its size, followed by a repainting of the hat in its present size.

Provenance: (Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris, 1905). Maurice Kann, Paris, by 1906;[3] (Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris); sold 20 December 1906 to Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

Exhibited: New York 1909, no. 96. Washington 1969, no. 5.

Fig. 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Aristotle Contemplating a Bust of Homer*, oil on canvas, 1653, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchased with special funds and gifts of friends of the Museum, 1961

WITH PIERCING, deep-set eyes, this bearded man leans forward and stares off to his right. He wears a wide, floppy barret and a red-and-yellow patterned robe draped over his shoulders. While this mysterious and intense figure has traditionally been identified as "The Jewish Philosopher," this designation is undoubtedly fanciful. Nevertheless, the image clearly depicts a concerned individual who seems to be actively brooding over his thoughts.

From 1639 until 1656 Rembrandt lived in a large house on the Jodenbreestraat on the edge of the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam. During those years, and particularly from the late 1640s, he frequently depicted Jewish models in his paintings. As Rosenberg has suggested, Rembrandt probably found in the picturesque faces of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews an intense spirituality that suggested to him the spirit of the people that populated the ancient world.[4] At a time when he was searching for a deeper emotional understanding of biblical and historical figures, he found in these care-worn faces an underlying philosophical awareness of human existence. While a painting such as this was undoubtedly executed from life, it was not considered a portrait in the conventional sense, but rather a *tronie*, a bust-length figure study that was an imaginative evocation of the model.

This man, with his sad eyes and sharply chiseled features, is seen again in one of Rembrandt's most memorable figure studies, *A Bearded Man in a Cap* (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 190). He was also the model Rembrandt used for his 1653 masterpiece, *Aristotle Contemplating a Bust of Homer* (fig. 1). Thus, although this work is neither signed nor dated, it must have been created at about this time, and, perhaps somewhat earlier, because the figure looks slightly younger. In both of these other paintings, moreover, Rembrandt has given the figure a fuller beard than is apparent in *The Philosopher*. The differences between *The Philosopher* and these other works, however, are more profound than those of age and beard size. In the latter paintings Rembrandt has suggested a more thoughtful individual both by emphasizing the wrinkles in his forehead and by throwing the upper portion of his face into shadow. In contrast to *Aristotle*, the expression of *The Philosopher* lacks subtlety and psychological understanding. The differences are in part ones of intent, but they also suggest that the works were created by different artistic personalities.

A close examination of the painting techniques in *The Philosopher* indicates that this work, while executed with great sensitivity, cannot be by the master. The primary difference between it and comparable works by Rembrandt from the early 1650s is that here the features are more sharply defined and articulated. The eyes are particularly distinctive because of the pink accents along the lower portion of

Rembrandt Workshop (possibly Willem Drost), *The Philosopher*, 1942.9.66

the lid. The nose, likewise, is forcefully modeled, with thick impastos along the bridge and thin translucent paints that reveal the ocher ground beneath in the shadow. Other areas, particularly the beard, are painted with feathery strokes that are unlike Rembrandt's brushwork. Also unusual in the beard is the way that the edges have been softened with strokes of white from the white shirt beneath it.

A more marked difference in handling from that seen in Rembrandt's own works is the rather superficial indication of the colored pattern of the man's robe. The contour of the robe, moreover, is not sensitively conceived. Not only does it not define a logical form, but the nuances of shading that one finds along such a contour in Rembrandt's paintings are absent. Finally, the hands lack structure.

The awkward appearance of the hands must have bothered an early collector or restorer. From the time that the painting first entered the Rembrandt literature in 1905 until it was cleaned in 1981, the hands were covered by two layers of overpaint, a gray layer with a dark brown resinous one over it (fig. 2). Just when they had been overpainted could not be determined by technical examination, but it was clearly done at a relatively late date because the overpaint covered old-age crackle and paint losses. Quite possibly the overpaint was applied during the eighteenth century, for in 1772 a larger version of the composition without the hands was auctioned in Paris.[5]

Fig. 2. Photograph of 1942.9.66 before restoration

Although no trace of the painting from this sale has ever been found, another version of *The Philosopher*, also without hands but on canvas, appeared on the art market in London at about the same time as the Washington painting appeared in Paris. In 1911 this version passed through the collection of Maurice Kann in Paris, the same collector who had owned *The Philosopher* in 1905, the year before Peter A. B. Widener bought it. In 1914 Kann sold the recently discovered version to the Berlin collector Marcus Kappel, whose collection was catalogued by Wilhelm von Bode. Bode, who had published *The Philosopher* in his corpus on Rembrandt paintings in 1906, reversed himself in his catalogue of the Kappel Collection and argued that the Kappel painting was the original.[6] Although the whereabouts of this painting is now unknown, Bode's assessment of the Kappel version has found little support in the literature.[7] The National Gallery painting was accepted as a Rembrandt by all Rembrandt scholars until it was rejected in 1969 by Gerson.[8]

The questions concerning the hands are of interest because *The Philosopher* is painted on two different panels. While most of the image is painted on a walnut panel, joined to it along the bottom edge is an oak strip measuring approximately 5 cm in width on which the hands are painted. While no difference in execution or in pigments is evident in the treatment of the hands on the main panel and on the strip, the grounds are not identical. In the ground of the main panel appear the elements mercury and tin, indicating the presence of vermilion and possibly lead-tin yellow, elements that are missing on the smaller strip. The differences in the grounds suggest that the bottom strip was added after the composition had been planned on a smaller scale, and thus, presumably, without hands.[9] Along with this alteration are a number of other design changes. The artist raised the model's right shoulder slightly and changed the shape of the hat at least three times. Initially he painted it substantially larger, then reduced it to the size of a skullcap, before painting it in its present size.

A number of stylistic similarities exist between this work and paintings by Willem Drost (active 1650s), who, according to Houbraken, was a pupil of Rembrandt.[10] Although the dates of his apprenticeship to Rembrandt are not known, a number of signed and dated works from the early 1650s indicate

that in these years he was strongly influenced by the master.[11] This period corresponds to the time this work was probably executed. One characteristic of Drost's paintings of male sitters that parallels the pose of *The Philosopher* is that figures often stare very intently out of the picture plane.[12] Facial features tend to be firmly modeled, although he frequently had problems depicting hands. Not only do many of them lack structure, but the wrists join awkwardly with the foreshortened arms.[13] Finally, he favored red and orange colors and patterned robes such as that worn by *The Philosopher.* A comparable example is his painting *A Young Woman* in the Wallace Collection, from about 1654 (fig. 3). Although Drost's artistic personality is not yet fully understood, the stylistic connection between his works and *The Philosopher* seems sufficiently strong to suggest that he may have depicted this striking image.

Fig. 3. Willem Drost, *A Young Woman*, c. 1654, oil on panel, Trustees of the Wallace Collection, London

Notes

1. The exact method used to encase this painting is difficult to determine because of the presence of the cradle. Dating the panel was not possible because of the complex construction and the use of walnut, which does not yield chronological information from dendrochronological examination.

2. Pigment analyses of the ground layers in both the main panel and bottom extension are available in the Scientific Research department (22 August 1984, 24 August 1984, 24 April 1986). XRF and cross-sections indicate the presence of vermilion in the ground on the main panel but not on the extension.

3. Sedelmeyer 1905, 36, does not mention that the painting came from the Kann Collection. Since provenance was generally cited in Sedelmeyer's catalogues, and Maurice Kann bought almost all of his paintings from Sedelmeyer, it seems reasonable to infer that *The Philosopher* had not yet been owned by Kann when Sedelmeyer offered it for sale in 1905. When the picture was catalogued in 1906 (Bode 1897–1906, 8: 39, 126, 378), Bode noted on page 126 that the painting was in the Kann Collection and then on page 378 that it had changed hands and was with Sedelmeyer.

4. Rosenberg 1948, 1: 59–63.

5. Louis-Michel Van Loo sale, Paris, 14 December 1772, no. 29. The painting which measured "2 pieds 8 pouc. sur 2 pieds 2 pouc.," is not only fully described, but the image is also known through a summary sketch by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin who attended the sale. See Dacier 1909–1921, 5: 1911.

6. Bode 1914, 6–7.

7. Bredius 1935, 11, no. 260. Bredius writes about the Kappel version: "I am not convinced either by the authenticity of the signature, or by the attribution." One notable exception is the opinion of Douglas 1948, 69–74, who wrote that the Kappel version (then being offered for sale by Duveen in New York) was the original.

8. Gerson/Bredius 1969, 569. Gerson notes that the Kappel version was in the H. John Collection, Milwaukee, in 1962. Gerson is misleading when he writes: "Bredius was unwilling to attribute either version to Rembrandt." Bredius did reject the Kappel version (see note 6) but merely noted the existence of the National Gallery (then Widener) painting.

9. See pigment analysis undertaken in August 1984 by Barbara Miller (NGA curatorial files).

10. Houbraken 1753, 3: 61.

11. Sumowski 1983, 1: 608–651.

12. See, for example, Drost's *Sitting Man with a Plumed Hat*, formerly Baron Alphonse de Rothschild Collection, Paris, illus. in Sumowski 1983, 1: cat. 331.

13. See Sumowski 1983, 1: cat. 329.

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1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
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1935 Bredius: 12, 260, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 11, 260, repro.).
1942 Widener: 6.
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1963 Walker: 313, repro.
1965 NGA: 110.
1966 Bauch: 12, no. 214, repro.
1968 NGA: 98, repro.
1969 Gerson/Bredius: 539, 569, no. 260A, repro.
1969 Washington: no. 5.
1975 NGA: 288–289, repro.
1975 Walker: 273, no. 362.
1985 NGA: 334, repro.

1937.1.79 (79)

Rembrandt Workshop

Joseph Accused by Potiphar's Wife

1655
Oil on canvas, 105.7 x 97.8 (41⅝ x 38½)
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Inscriptions
In lower right corner: *Rembrandt. f.1655.*

Technical Notes The original fabric support, consisting of a large piece (98.8 x 90.6 cm) with strips (6 cm in width) sewn onto the left and bottom edges, was transferred in 1854 to fabric with an open-weave, gauze-like fabric interleaf. In 1935 the transfer fabric was removed and the painting relined, with the interleaf retained. Sanding of the back of the original fabric during transfer removed the weave and cusping patterns and may have removed an original ground layer, had a double ground been employed. Only a single original layer is evident, a tan ground present on the main fabric and edge strips, situated above a white ground that was presumably added during transfer.[1] A black imprimatura was found under the figures of Joseph and the wife, and the tan ground was employed as a mid-tone in the wife's hair.

Paint is applied in complex, thin layers of medium-rich paint, creating a heavily textured surface enriched with transparent glazes. The x-radiograph and infrared reflectogram reveal changes, often visible as pentimenti, in the wife's proper right sleeve and index finger, above Potiphar's proper right wrist, and in the red cape, which was extended to the right. Abrasion in the background reveals remnants of a canopy, visible in infrared light, that initially was between Joseph and Potiphar.

Moderate abrasion is found in the background and in the dress of Potiphar's wife, along with moderate-sized losses, particularly in Potiphar and the background. Losses exist on all edges and along the seams of the narrow edge strips, where the paint application is original and consistent with the handling in the larger fabric piece. Conservation was carried out in 1979 to remove discolored varnish and soluble retouchings.

Provenance: Gerard Hoet, Jr. [d. 1760], The Hague; (sale, The Hague, 25 August 1760, no. 44).[2] Johan Ernst Gotzkowsky [1710–1775], Berlin; acquired in 1763 by Catherine II, empress of Russia [1729–1796]; Imperial Hermitage Gallery, Saint Petersburg; sold January 1931 through (Matthiesen Gallery, Berlin, P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London, and M. Knoedler & Co., New York) to Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh and Washington; deeded 1 May 1937 to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

Exhibited: *Rembrandt: Loan Exhibition of Rembrandt Paintings*, Knoedler Galleries, New York, 1933, no. 10. *A Century of Progress: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture*, Art Institute of Chicago, 1934, no. 105. Amsterdam 1935, no. 17. Washington 1969, no. 13. *Gods, Saints & Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt*, National Gallery of Art, Washington; Detroit Institute of Arts; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1980–1981, no. 28. *In Quest of Excellence: Civic Pride, Patronage, Connoisseurship*, Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, 1984, no. 52. *Painting the Bible in Rembrandt's Holland*, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1993. *Im Lichte Rembrandts, Das Alte Testament im Goldenen Zeitalter der Niederländischen Kunst*, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster, 1994, no. 25.

THIS PAINTING depicts an episode in the life of Joseph that is described in the Book of Genesis, chapter 39. Joseph, who had been sold to Potiphar, an officer of the pharaoh, came to be trusted and honored in Potiphar's household. He was, however, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, Iempsar, of trying to violate her, after her attempts at seduction had failed. When he fled from her, she held on to his robe and eventually used it as evidence against him. In this painting Iempsar recounts her tale to Potiphar as she gestures toward Joseph's red robe draped over the bedpost. While Potiphar listens intently to the story, Joseph, dressed in a long, brown tunic and with the keys denoting his household responsibilities hanging from his belt, stands serenely on the far side of the bed.

The story of Joseph was one that fascinated Rembrandt, for he devoted a large number of drawings, prints, and paintings to the life of this Old Testament figure. While his primary source of inspiration was undoubtedly the Bible, he also drew upon other literary traditions to amplify his understanding of the biblical text. Tümpel has argued that, in particular, Flavius Josephus' *Of the Antiquities of the Jews* was extremely important for Rembrandt's interpretations of Old Testament scenes.[3] Rembrandt owned an expensive German edition of Flavius Josephus, which is listed in the 1656 inventory of his possessions, the year after the execution of this painting.[4] Tümpel sees the pronounced focus on the bed in *Joseph Accused by Potiphar's Wife* as a direct response on Rembrandt's part to the emphasis placed on the bed in Josephus' account of this scene. In the text found