

2. Smith 1829-1842, 7: 163, no. 505, includes a provenance listing: "Collection of an Artist, 1783." This reference, however, could not be verified.

3. For the circumstances of the gift, see Williams 1831, 1: 129. I would like to thank Burton Fredericksen, director of the Getty Provenance Index, for bringing this reference to my attention (letter 5 February 1988 in NGA curatorial records).

4. It is clear that she has finished reading the Bible since the back cover is on top, the normal position of a book when one closes it.

5. See, for example, HdG 1907-1927, 6: 401, no. 876.

6. Rosenberg 1948, 1: 45.

7. Gerson/Bredius 1969, 578, no. 362, suggest associations with Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout (1621-1674). Schwartz 1984/1985, 380, rejects the painting in his concordance without explanation. Ernst van de Wetering (personal communication, 1991) has indicated to me that he does not accept the attribution of this painting to Rembrandt.

8. *Corpus* 1982-, 3: 321-327, A132. The painting is generally in a poor state of preservation with the exception of the area around the face. The signature and date of 1639 are not considered by the RRP to be authentic, but the date is accepted as appropriate on the basis of style.

9. Gerson/Bredius 1969, 578, no. 362.

10. For illustrations of these two etchings, see Münz 1952, 2: 54 and 61.

11. For an excellent overview of Bol's work see Blankert 1982b; and also Sumowski 1983, 1: 282-425.

12. For an extended discussion of the various attributions that have been given to this painting and convincing reasons for the attribution to Bol, see Van Thiel in Berlin 1991, 322-327, no. 65.

## References

- 1829-1842 Smith, 7 (1836): 163, no. 505.  
1831 Williams, 1: 129.  
1858 Blanc: 168.  
1897-1906 Bode, 4 (1900): 35, 168, no. 288, repro.  
1906 Rosenberg: not cited (1908 ed.: 590, no. 267).  
1907-1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 401, no. 876.  
1923 Meldrum: 195, pl. 236.  
1924 Knackfuss: 62.  
1926 Hymans: no. 47.  
1930 Schmidt-Degener: no. 53, repro.  
1931 Valentiner: no. 79.  
1935 Bredius: 16, 362 repro. (also 1935 English ed.: 15, 362 repro.).  
1937 Cortisoz: 39, repro. opp. 38.  
1941 Berenson and Valentiner: no. 196, repro.  
1943 Benesch: 26, fig. 13, repro., 33 (reprinted in Benesch 1970, 1: 142-143, fig. 116, repro.).  
1948 Rosenberg, 1: 45; 2: pl. 65 (also 1964 rev. ed.: 77-78, fig. 65, repro. 76).  
1949 Mellon: 83.  
1960 Roger-Marx: 201, repro. 200, no. 61.  
1965 NGA: 109, no. 73.  
1968 NGA: 97, no. 73, repro.  
1966 Bauch: 26, no. 508.  
1968 Gerson: 348-349, no. 264, repro., 498.  
1969 Gerson/Bredius: 578, no. 362, repro. 283.  
1975 NGA: 284, no. 73, repro. 285.  
1976 Walker: 279, no. 368, repro. 278.  
1976 Fowles: 137.

1984-1985 Schwartz: 380 (also 1985 English ed.: 380).

1985 NGA: 328, repro. 238.

1986 Tümpel: 241, repro.

1990 The Hague: 391.

1942.9.62 (658)

## Rembrandt van Rijn

### *The Mill*

1645/1648

Oil on canvas, 87.6 x 105.6 (34½ x 41⅞)

Widener Collection

**Technical Notes:** The original support is a fine-weight, tightly woven, plain-weave fabric, lined with the tacking margins trimmed. Cusping, which extends 7 cm into the painting, is present along the bottom edge, indicating that it is original. No cusping exists along the top or sides of the painting, which would seem to indicate that these edges have been cut. The right edge, however, has a puzzling characteristic: the paint ends approximately 1 cm short of the edge, although the ground extends until the edge. Whether the paint had been left unfinished along this edge, or whether the painting is not, in fact, trimmed, cannot be established with certainty.

A double ground is present, consisting of a reddish brown lower layer followed by a yellowish gray upper layer.<sup>1</sup> A thin black or dark brown underpaint layer is present under the mill. Paint is applied thinly and fluidly in the dark areas and thickly in the sky, water, and foliage, with broad brushmarking and low impasto.

Numerous changes and reworkings by the artist are evident. The x-radiograph shows that a reserve was left for the mill, the contour of the hill, a bridge that originally crossed the water from the promontory to the right edge, and its reflection in the water below. Cross-sections indicate that the span of the bridge was blocked in with a black or dark brown layer of paint. In executing the painting, the profile of the hill was lowered on the left and the bridge and reflection were eliminated. At that time a second layer of blue was added to the sky. The water was reworked and the boat and oarsman introduced. Striations in the trees show the paint was reworked while still wet. Infrared reflectography also shows the adjustment to the hill, with a pentimento of a form, perhaps a building, on top. Other pentimenti indicate slight adjustments to the left side of the mill and the top blade position, a lowering of the church tower, and the substitution of the small crouched figure for a large standing figure on the promontory.

The painting is in excellent condition, with only minor flake losses along the edges, and a small loss and abrasion in the upper left corner. Dark gray stains in the sky may be due to the discoloration of the pigment smalt. Small residues of hardened old varnishes and retouchings are present.

In 1976, a small slit in the lower left corner was repaired. Treatment was carried out in 1977-1979 to consolidate flaking paint, remove the old lining and replace it, and remove discolored varnish and retouching.

**Provenance:** Philippe, duc d'Orleans [1674–1723], Paris; Louis Philippe Joseph [1723–1792], Paris; T. M. Slade, London; William Smith, Norwich; Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne [1780–1863], Bowood Hall, Wiltshire, by 1824; by inheritance to Lord Lansdowne, until 1911; (Arthur J. Sulley, London); 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:** Pall Mall, London, 1793–1794, no. 125. British Institution, London, 1806; London, 1815, no. 137; London, 1864, no. 112. *Works by the Old Masters and Deceased Masters of the British School*, (Winter Exhibition), Royal Academy, London, 1878, no. 172; (Winter Exhibition), Royal Academy, London, 1888, no. 74. *Rembrandt Tentoonstelling*, Stedelijk, Amsterdam, 1898. *Exhibition of Works by Rembrandt*, (Winter Exhibition), Royal Academy, London, 1899, no. 40. Washington 1969, no. 6.

OF ALL THE PAINTINGS by Rembrandt in the National Gallery, none has provoked stronger feelings over the years than has *The Mill*. The enormous fame accorded it in the nineteenth century, when it was admired by artists and critics alike, culminated when it was sold in London in 1911 for the extraordinary sum of £100,000.<sup>2</sup> The purchaser was Peter A. B. Widener, the millionaire collector from Philadelphia. Before *The Mill* left England, it was brought to the National Gallery in London to be put on public exhibition for two brief days. Newspaper reports indicate that over eleven thousand people visited the painting each day (fig. 1). Somewhat later, Wilhelm von Bode, director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, and the greatest Rembrandt scholar of his day, visited Widener's son at his residence in Philadelphia, Lynnewood Hall, and pronounced the painting "the greatest picture in the world. The greatest picture by any artist."<sup>3</sup> The prominence the painting enjoyed at Lynnewood Hall was also accorded it at the Gallery after the Widener bequest of 1942. It has always been viewed as the most important Rembrandt painting in the collection. When John Walker retired as director of the National Gallery in 1969 he posed for photographers in front of *The Mill*.

Despite the painting's renown, which can be traced back to the eighteenth century when it was in the collection of the Duc d'Orleans, and the enthusiastic endorsement of Bode, the attribution of *The Mill* has been a matter of great dispute throughout this century. The expert who seems to have first questioned the attribution was Woldemar von Seidlitz. Although Seidlitz had raised the question in newspaper articles since 1902, his first serious analysis of the stylistic problems concerning the attribu-



Fig. 1. *The Illustrated London News*, volume 274, March 25, 1911

tion of *The Mill* appeared in the art journal *Kunst und Künstler* just after the sale of *The Mill*.<sup>4</sup> Seidlitz objected that the concept of this painting was different from other Rembrandt landscapes, that its low horizon, its lack of multiplicity, and above all, the strong contrasts of light and dark were uncharacteristic of Rembrandt. Seidlitz suggested that Aert de Gelder (1645–1727) might be considered as the artist since De Gelder preferred the warm transparent colors found in *The Mill*. Seidlitz, however, also admitted that landscapes by De Gelder were not known.

Almost simultaneously with the appearance of Seidlitz's article were newspaper reports that a recent cleaning of *The Mill* had uncovered the signature of Hercules Seghers (1589/1590–in or before 1638), a report that encouraged further speculation about the attribution.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent clarification of these reports revealed that the painting in question was not *The Mill* but another landscape. The associations between Seghers and *The Mill*, however, remained strong for many years.<sup>6</sup> As a result of these attacks on the attribution of *The Mill* (including the quite unfeasible idea that the painting was a nineteenth-century English forgery), Wilhelm von Bode, Abraham Bredius, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, Woldemar von Seidlitz, and Jan Veth wrote a series of

short essays on *The Mill* in the October 1912 issue of *Kunst und Künstler*.<sup>7</sup> Bode, Bredius, Hofstede de Groot, and Veth all emphatically defended the Rembrandt attribution and rejected the arguments advanced by Seidlitz in his previous article. Seidlitz agreed that *The Mill* could not have been painted by Seghers, but continued to question the attribution to Rembrandt.

After the flurry of excitement in 1911 about the sale of *The Mill* and the issues of attribution, the painting, interestingly enough, was not again seriously discussed in the literature for over sixty years. While the painting continued to be admired in the United States, and was accepted as a Rembrandt by scholars working in this country, primarily Rosenberg and Stechow,<sup>8</sup> a number of important Rembrandt scholars working in Europe quietly eliminated the painting from the artist's accepted oeuvre. Bredius, after having defended the attribution of *The Mill* in 1911, omitted it in 1935 from his corpus of Rembrandt paintings. Neither Bauch (1966) nor Gerson (1969) included the painting in his catalogue of the oeuvre.<sup>9</sup>

Interest in *The Mill*, however, peaked once again in 1977 when the decision was made at the National Gallery to clean the painting. *The Mill* was found to be structurally unsound, reason enough for the proposed restoration, but an added incentive was the issue of attribution. Only by removing the heavy layers of discolored varnish that had come to obscure the surface of the painting could anything be learned about the existing color tonalities and painting techniques, information, it was hoped, that could help determine whether or not the image had been executed by Rembrandt.<sup>10</sup>

The decision to clean *The Mill*, however, unleashed a storm of controversy that eventually even threatened the existence of the conservation program at the National Gallery.<sup>11</sup> The main point of contention was that the removal of the discolored varnish would alter irreparably the emotional impact of the image.<sup>12</sup> What became clear during the controversy was the unique position this work occupied among Rembrandt's paintings: *The Mill* was greatly admired for its inherent drama, but, at the same time, the darkly brooding image of the mill was central to the mythology surrounding Rembrandt's life. At issue, thus, was not just the matter of changes in the appearance of the painting, but also the way these changes would threaten fundamental beliefs about the artist.

The myths that so integrally linked this painting to Rembrandt's life grew in the romantic era, when the dramatic lighting and stark silhouette of the mill

against the stormy sky struck a particularly responsive chord.<sup>13</sup> An old tradition that the painting represented the mill of Rembrandt's father added a personal aspect to the painting that appealed to nineteenth-century sensibilities.<sup>14</sup> A number of descriptions of the painting interpreted the foreboding mood of the stormy sky as an indication of the personal traumas many believed Rembrandt experienced late in his life. One writer saw in the "dark, forbidding clouds...the symbols of his financial worries, social stress, and personal bereavements."<sup>15</sup> Another critic wrote: "Dating from the late 1650's, when Rembrandt had drunk to the dregs the cup of sorrow, *The Mill* is by general consent, alike in conception and treatment, the most profoundly impressive landscape in Western art."<sup>16</sup>

Such interpretative assessments of *The Mill* were encouraged by the layers of discolored and darkened varnish that had accumulated on the painting. These thick layers of varnish, which had given the painting a golden tone, also obscured many landscape details, allowing for a more generalized effect. The chiaroscuro effects so admired by nineteenth-century critics were enhanced in 1911 when *The Mill* was selectively cleaned to bring out the contrast of the dark mill against the light sky.<sup>17</sup>

Just how distorted this image had become over time was evident by comparing the painting as it appeared before its restoration with an etching of it in reverse in the 1786 catalogue of the Duc d'Orleans' Collection (fig. 2). While in the print the mill is the dominant motif, other elements, including the surrounding buildings, little figures on the hillside and near the water, the cows on the far shore, and the church steeple beyond the dense profile of the distant trees, are clearly articulated. In the accompanying description, *The Mill* is found to be picturesque rather than dramatic:

This painting, as all those of this master, is of a vigorous and animated effect which has the principal interest of a site copied faithfully after nature. This simple composition does not owe to Rembrandt any other richness than that of harmony, and the magical effect which nourishes and revives everything. He possessed to an eminent degree this portion of picturesque genius, above all so essential in the genre of landscape (painting) where nature herself dictates the disposition of the scene, in determining the planes, the masses, and creates the borders that the fire of enthusiasm is unable to go beyond without risking to disfigure it.<sup>18</sup>



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Mill*, 1642.9.62





Fig. 2. Etching in reverse of *The Mill*, from 1786 catalogue of the Duc d'Orleans Collection

Neither the description nor the engraving emphasizes the effects of light and dark, the deep brooding, almost mysterious mood, so admired throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In 1793 the painting was acquired for £500 by William Smith, a prominent politician from Norwich and friend of J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851).<sup>19</sup> Its subsequent impact on English art and aesthetics was enormous. By 1806 *The Mill* was included in an exhibition of old master paintings at the British Institution. It was also among those works selected from the exhibition for artists to copy, as is evident in a drawing by Alfred Edward Chalon (1780–1860), which depicts three artists copying *The Mill* (fig. 3).<sup>20</sup> The artist wearing a top hat in this drawing is none other than Benjamin West (1738–1820).

The numerous copies, variants, and descriptions of *The Mill* in the early to mid-nineteenth century provide further information about its appearance during these years. A watercolor copy probably made between 1806 and 1811 by William Marshall Craig (c. 1765–c. 1834) emphasizes, as does the Duc d'Orleans catalogue, the picturesque qualities of the scene.<sup>21</sup> The blue sky in Craig's watercolor, as well as the vividly blue sky in a free derivation of *The Mill* painted by James Ward (1769–1859) around 1806, *Asbbourne Mill* (on loan to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts), also demonstrate how different the color tonalities were before the accumulation of discolored varnish, and perhaps tinted varnish, affected the appearance of the painting.

It is with Turner that the first truly romantic interpretation of *The Mill* is to be found. His notes

on Rembrandt's "celebrated" picture stress Rembrandt's forceful use of extreme contrasts of light and shade in the painting rather than its picturesque qualities: "But the sails of the mill are touched with the incalculable(?) ray, while all below is lost in inestimable(?) gloom without the value of reflected light, which even the sky demands, and the ray upon the Mill insists upon..."<sup>22</sup> The strikingly different appreciation of the painting may have to do with Turner's mindset, but the actual appearance of *The Mill* was also changing as the result of discolored or tinted varnish. In 1834 the painting was described by C. J. Nieuwenhuys in the following manner: "It is toward the approach of evening, when the remaining light of day illumines the horizon, and with the reflection of the water, throws the surrounding scenery into solemn gloom. The mysterious tone of the whole conveys to the mind a poetical effect."<sup>23</sup> By mid-century writers had begun to attribute much of the poetic charm of the painting to its rich golden tone, a legacy that continued unabated for 130 years.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, the restoration of 1977–1979 revealed that much of the painting's somber mood was the result of darkened varnish. The most dramatic changes were in the sky where the golden tonalities had been so prominent. The sky is now blue on the right, steel gray on the left and along the top edge. White clouds swirl across the sky behind the mill, creating a sweep of movement that adds drama to the setting. The water in the lower right is gray and blue, reflecting the color of the sky.

The land has changed as well, although the transformations have not been as dramatic as in the other areas. Instead of a large undifferentiated mass of brown in the foreground, a rich range of earth tones and blacks articulates the ground, the foliage, and the bricks that form the wall of the bulwark. The figures have emerged from the darkness, in particular a man climbing the hill on the left, who was virtually indistinguishable in the painting's former state. On the far shore are two cows and what appears to be a herd of sheep. The reflections in the distant water are soft and lucid and add to the greatly enhanced feeling of depth that the painting now has.

Finally, the appearance of the mill itself has changed: it does not appear as massive as it formerly did. It is painted in a wide range of earth tones that culminate in a soft salmon color at the ends of the sunlit sails. The mill, moreover, is clearly not situated in the foreground plane, but in the middle ground, behind the bulwark rising above the water. Just below the mill are fences that help integrate its

architectural character with the surrounding landscape.

The changes that occur after a painting has been cleaned are often dramatic. In this instance they carried even added weight. Few paintings have been revered in the way that *The Mill* has for qualities that were derived from darkened varnish. Many feared that the impact this painting created would be destroyed if the varnish were removed, that it somehow could lose its sense of mystery. Fortunately, that fear was groundless, and the painting continues to impress the viewer with the profundity of its conception. The drama is still present, only it is richer, more varied, and less somber. The appearance is now quite comparable to that found in early nineteenth-century copies and variants of *The Mill*, although it is probable that viewers then were able to see even more detail in the landscape than is presently possible.<sup>25</sup> These areas of relatively thin paint may well have darkened over time as a result of relinings that affected the color and texture of the support and ground.

While the restoration of *The Mill* has done much to correct the misinterpretations of the mood of the scene, it has not solved the controversy about the attribution. As mentioned (see note 7), neither Schwartz nor Tümpel have included the painting in their recent monographs on Rembrandt, and Josua Bruyn, in an essay for the Rembrandt Research Project, has attempted to attribute *The Mill* to Rembrandt's pupil Ferdinand Bol.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, this author and Cynthia Schneider have firmly supported the attribution to Rembrandt.<sup>27</sup>

The problem of attribution is admittedly difficult but, while I am clearly in the minority among scholars today, I feel that an attribution to Rembrandt is the correct one. *The Mill* is admittedly different from other Rembrandt landscape paintings: it focuses quite dramatically on a single motif, rather than integrating a number of smaller elements as do both his fantasy landscapes of the late 1630s and his small *Winter Landscape* of 1646 (Gemäldegalerie, Kassel, inv. no. 242). *The Mill* is also painted on canvas rather than on wood, Rembrandt's normal support for his landscapes. Nevertheless, neither of these differences is reason to exclude the landscape from Rembrandt's oeuvre, and there are many compelling reasons for including it. The difference in support is related to the painting's large size, larger than that of other Rembrandt landscapes. While the paint is applied more thickly than in Rembrandt's panel painting *Landscape with a Castle*, c. 1640–1642 (Louvre, Paris, inv. no. R.F. 1948–35), it is used in a



Fig. 3. Alfred Edward Chalon, *Study at the British Institution*, 1806, pen and ink and wash, London, British Museum

manner consistent with his paintings on canvas. Rembrandt invariably painted quite fluidly and thinly on panel, using glazes to create translucent effects. He utilized a canvas support differently, particularly by dragging a fully loaded brush across its rough surface to create variety in his textures. This technique is effectively used in *The Mill* to suggest the broken ripples circling out from the woman washing her clothes at the water's edge. Despite this fundamental difference, the techniques employed in these two paintings are not entirely different. The bulwark below the mill is defined by black strokes painted over brown earth tones in a manner comparable to Rembrandt's definition of the dark architectural forms in *Landscape with a Castle*.

While *The Mill* was consistently dated in the 1650s by earlier scholars, particularly those who wanted to associate the somber character of the image with Rembrandt's hardships during that decade, the color tonalities that emerged after the restoration are more consistent with the 1640s. Compositionally, moreover, the combination of dramatic elements (swirling clouds and silhouetted mill) with prosaic ones (figures washing clothes at the water's edge) has its closest parallel in Rembrandt's etching *The Three Trees* of 1643 (fig. 4), where a multitude of figures go about their daily lives within a landscape threatened by dramatic storm clouds. Also reminiscent of Rembrandt's work of the 1640s are the Elsheimer-like qualities of the reflections of trees and animals along the distant shore, effects that Rembrandt most explicitly developed in *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1647 (fig. 5).<sup>28</sup> Comparable as well in the two paintings are the blocky, somewhat generalized forms of



Fig. 4. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Three Trees*, etching, 1643, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gift of R. Horace Gallatin

the staffage figures. The figure types in *The Mill* are also those found in Rembrandt's drawings from the mid-1640s. The old man walking along the path is similar to his *Three Studies of an Old Man*, c. 1643–1644 (British Museum, London), while the man rowing the boat is reminiscent of *Two Men Rowing* (fig. 6).<sup>29</sup>

The painting as we see it today is not how it was originally conceived. X-radiographs indicate that in an initial stage of the painting a landscape mass rose behind the mill and a stone bridge on large piers

spanned the water before the bulwark (fig. 7).<sup>30</sup> The reflection of the bridge can even be seen in the calm water below. The x-radiograph has also revealed that no thread distortions in the weave of the canvas exist along either side or the top of the painting, an indication that the support may have been trimmed in these areas (see Technical Notes). Just how much time elapsed before the changes were made cannot be said with certainty, but probably not much. The presence of wrinkled paint along the upper right edge indicates that this covering layer was applied before the underlying paint was completely dry.

The information gained from the x-radiograph provides a number of clues about the nature of this image. To begin with, the changes in composition required that the artist paint over the right part of the sky as well as the distant landscape and water above the level of the boat, reworkings that added to the dense quality of paint in these areas. More important, such major compositional changes demonstrate that Rembrandt was not attempting to paint a topographically accurate view, although he may well have been inspired by windmills situated on bulwarks on the outskirts of Amsterdam or Leiden. The shape and isolated character of the mill in this painting calls to mind the bastion "Het Blauwhoofd" on the outskirts of Amsterdam, a site he frequently drew in the 1640s and early 1650s.<sup>31</sup> Far more interesting as a possible visual source is the Pelikaansbolwerk in Leiden. As is seen in a 1649 drawing by Jan de Bisschop (1640–1686) (fig. 8), a



Fig. 5. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1647, oil on panel, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland



Fig. 6. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Two Men Rowing*, c. 1645, pen and ink, Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum

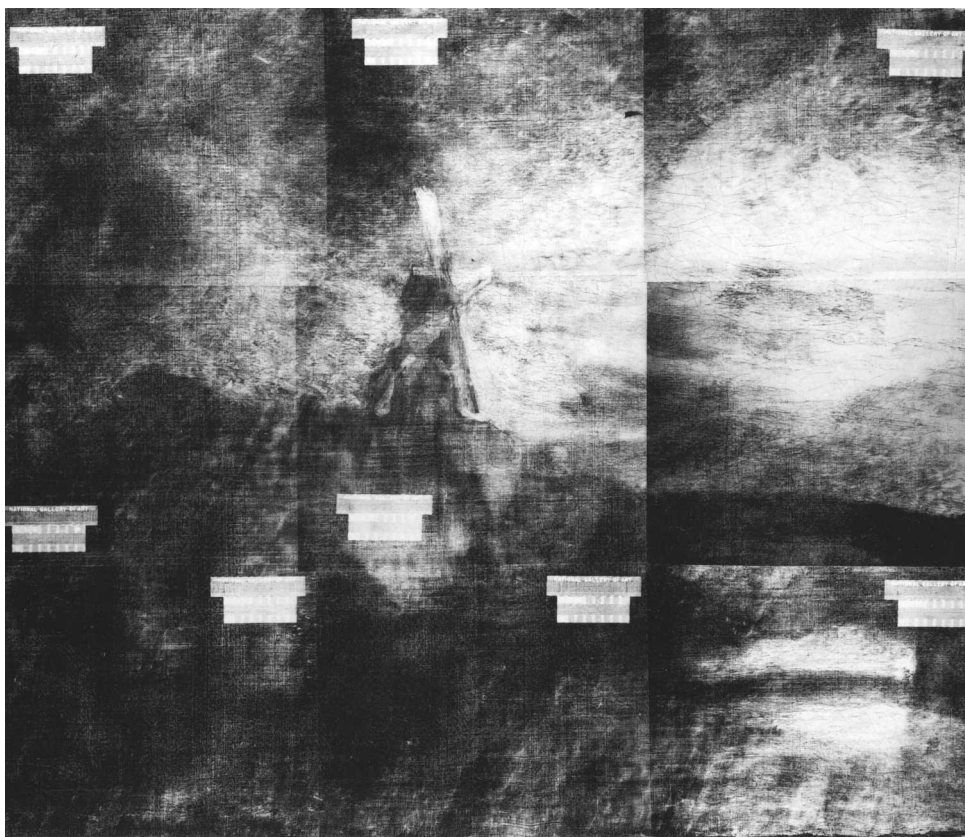


Fig. 7. X-radiograph of 1942.9.62

stone bridge supported on arched piers joined the bulwark with the tree-lined far shore, much as it appeared in the initial stage of *The Mill*. The mill on the Pelikaansbolwerk was, in fact, the mill of Rembrandt's father,<sup>32</sup> thus Smith's romantic associations may well have more validity than one might expect.

Whether or not his father's mill was Rembrandt's source of inspiration, the compositional changes he brought about served to give the mill an imposing grandeur. As it stands by itself on a rise just beyond the walled bastion, the mill becomes an almost iconic image, imbued with symbolic significance. In this respect, as well as for the compositional reasons mentioned above, *The Mill* is comparable to the etching *The Three Trees*, which almost certainly is a symbolically conceived landscape.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the symbolism traditionally associated with *The Mill* has been personal to Rembrandt and seen as a reflection of the tragedies that so affected his life in the 1650s, a closer examination of the painting in its cleaned state makes it clear that the symbolism is positive

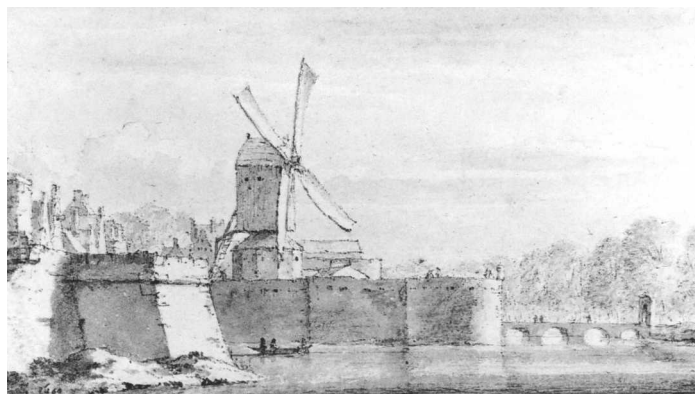


Fig. 8. Jan de Bisschop, *Pelikaansbolwerk*, pen and ink, Leiden, 1649, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet



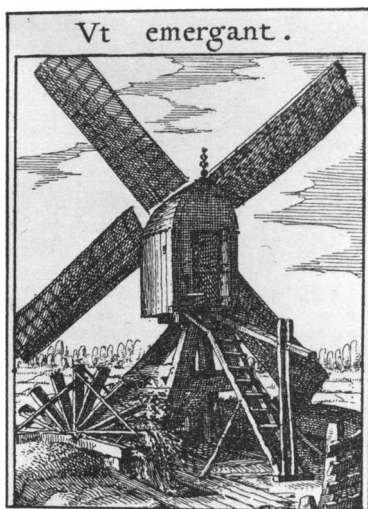


Fig. 9. Roemer Visscher, "Ut emergant," emblem from *Sinnepoppen*, Amsterdam, 1614

rather than negative.<sup>34</sup> The storm clouds have passed, and the salmon-colored sails face clear skies. Beneath the mill's reassuring presence, a male figure leans over the bastion's wall to gaze at the water and pastoral landscape beyond while others meander along the path in the foreground or go about their daily tasks on and near the water.

As Kauffmann has persuasively argued, the windmill had numerous associations in Dutch literary traditions, ranging from temperance to religious imagery. Zacharias Heyns, for example, in his emblem book of 1625, draws a parallel between the mill, which only turns when the wind blows, to man, who is dead in his heart until the spirit gives him life and makes him whole.<sup>35</sup> Another emblematic interpretation of the windmill that Kauffmann does not mention, however, may have more direct relevance to *The Mill* than a religious one. Roemer Visscher, in his extremely important emblem book *Sinnepoppen*, published in Amsterdam in 1614, gave political symbolism to the mill. His emblem "Ut emergant" (That they may rise up) depicts a mill quite similar to that in Rembrandt's painting (fig. 9). His text compares a windmill, which endures the onslaught of winds and harnesses them to remove the water from the land to make it viable for the populace, to a good prince who works tirelessly for the greater good of his people.<sup>36</sup> One cannot help but sense that Rembrandt's painting conveys something of this same sentiment. Whether or not he associated the mill with Prince Frederik Hendrik or, in a broader sense, with a strong, watchful government cannot be said, but the mill does seem symbol-

ically to act as a guardian. Silhouetted dramatically in the evening light, it faces a calm sky and still waters as storms threaten the landscape behind it. With its image comes a reassurance that peace and prosperity are at hand, and people can go about their daily lives without fear of war or uncertainty.

Political associations are often found in Rembrandt's work, most explicitly so in his allegorical painting *The Concord of the State* (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. no. 1717), which he probably completed in the early 1640s.<sup>37</sup> While the exact meaning of that painting is not understood, the issues of unity and concord that he addressed there are related to the same underlying concerns for peace and prosperity evident in *The Mill*. These concerns were of particular interest in the 1640s as efforts were being made to finalize a treaty with Spain. Indeed, the years in and around the Treaty of Münster of 1648 saw a great number of paintings by Dutch landscape artists that seemed to celebrate their cultural and political heritage.<sup>38</sup> *The Mill*, in its imaginative re-creation of a characteristic Dutch landscape feature, is one of the most profound of all of these works.

#### Notes

1. Pigment analysis is available in the Scientific Research department (26 September 1978 and 9 May 1979) for paint and ground layers.
2. The National Gallery curatorial files contain seventy pages of typed excerpts from English newspapers and magazines from the period of its sale in 1911.
3. Widener 1940 as quoted by Walker 1963, 274.
4. Seidlitz 1911, 550–552.
5. Arthur J. Sulley, the dealer who bought *The Mill* for Widener, alluded to such reports in London newspapers in a letter dated 24 July 1911 (NGA archives), which he wrote to A. Hauser, the restorer who cleaned *The Mill* in 1911.
6. Waterhouse 1932, 238–239: "the sight of *The Mill* has always given me a Hercules Seghers feeling, and I think Mr. Hind seems also to have wondered."
7. Bode et al. 1912, 21–27.
8. Rosenberg 1948, 1: 978; Stechow 1966, 137.
9. Although the attribution of *The Mill* was not questioned in the 1969 exhibition of Rembrandt paintings at the National Gallery (Washington 1969, no. 6), Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who curated that exhibition, has indicated to me (personal communication, 1993) that he did not believe in the attribution of the painting to Rembrandt at that time. He indicated to me that he did not express this opinion in the catalogue because he "was a guest of the National Gallery (Kress Professor)." He did, however, admit to a reporter from *Newsweek* (March 10, 1969, 88) that "chances are remote that 'The Mill' is a Rembrandt."
10. Prior to the restoration, I also had serious doubts about the attribution of *The Mill* to Rembrandt.
11. The controversy about the restoration of *The Mill* lasted about two years and involved a large number of museum directors, curators, and restorers. Indeed, the issues were quite complex emotionally, philosophically, and politically,

but neither the extent of the controversy nor its level of intensity would have existed had another painting been at issue. For Paul Mellon's recollections of the controversy see Mellon 1992, 311–313.

12. An article on the restoration in the *Washington Post* (16 September 1977) by Paul Richard, for example, had as a heading: "The Mystery of 'The Mill': Is It a Rembrandt? And When They Clean It, Will the Mood Go Along with the Varnish?" Walker 1984, 274, wrote a postscript on *The Mill* after the restoration. "In my opinion, it has gained in colorfulness but has lost in sublimity. The patina of time often adds to the beauty of a work of art, but how this painting looked when Rembrandt finished it we shall never know."

13. For a fuller treatment of this subject than offered in this entry see Wheelock 1977a.

14. Buchanan 1824, 1: 195, seems to have been the first to write that Rembrandt had depicted "a view of his Father's Mill on the banks of the Rhine." Smith 1829–1842, 7: 189, cat. 601, gave the painting the title *Rembrandt's Mill*. Smith (7: xiii) placed special significance on the mill in Rembrandt's training, writing: "...having acquired a knowledge of the rules of art, he retired to his father's mill, and from the somber interior of this mill, he is supposed to have first caught the hint of that powerful opposition of light and shade, which he subsequently carried to such high perfection in his works, and hence he may be said to have created a new Era of painting."

15. Taverner 1911.

16. "Huge Offer for 'The Mill'" 1911.

17. On 8 April 1911, Arthur Sulley, the dealer who had bought *The Mill* for Widener, sent a letter to Dr. Bode in Berlin to inform him that he had just sent *The Mill* by special messenger to Berlin to have the painting examined by Professor Hauser, Bode's restorer. Sulley felt that Hauser knew "more about the cleaning of Rembrandt pictures, and of Rembrandt's manner of painting, than everyone else put together." He asked Bode to consult with Hauser as to whether the picture should be cleaned. He wrote, in a manner that mirrors the concerns expressed during the conservation controversy of 1977–1979: "I have the feeling that if it is cleaned right down that the picture may lose some of the poetic charm which it has, and which is perhaps intensified by the old and discoloured varnish." Bode, however, was in Italy at the time, so the decision about the nature and extent of the cleaning was left entirely in the hands of Professor Hauser. He telegraphed Sulley on 10 April: "...it would spoil the picture to clean off all the varnish. It is enough to remove the yellow patches on the right side of the sky and water to heighten the effect." Sulley telegraphed his permission for partial cleaning that same day. (The correspondence between Arthur Sulley and Widener, Bode, and Hauser is preserved in the NGA archives.)

18. Abbé de Fontenai 1786, 1:

Ce tableau, comme tous ceux de ce Maître, est d'un effet vigoureux et piquant qui fait le principal intérêt d'un Site copié fidelement d'après Nature. Cette composition simple ne doit à Rembrandt d'autre richesse que celle de l'harmonie, et la Magie d'effet qui feconde et vivifie tout. Il possédait à un degré eminent cette portion de génie Pittoresque, si essentielle surtout, dans le genre du Paysage où la Nature dicte elle même l'Ordonnance de la Scène, en détermine les Plans, les Masses, et pose des bornes que le feu de l'enthousiasme, ne peut franchir sans risquer de la défigurer.

19. The Duc d'Orleans sold his Dutch, Flemish, and German paintings to an English speculator, T. M. Slade, in 1792 in the midst of the French Revolution. The selling price was 350,000 francs. Slade, who secreted the paintings out of France, exhibited them for sale the following spring at the Old Academy Rooms in Pall Mall. *The Mill* was bought by Smith at this exhibition.

20. I would like to thank Ernst van de Wetering for bringing this drawing to my attention.

21. The watercolor, which measures 27.2 x 32.4 cm, is in the Boston Athenaeum. Craig, who in 1812 was appointed Water-Colour Painter to Queen Charlotte, frequently exhibited at the British Institution. This watercolor was made as part of an ambitious attempt to publish a series of books containing engraved reproductions of old master paintings then in England. Only one volume was completed (*Tresbam's British Gallery of Pictures*, London, 1818), in which *The Mill* was not included. This information was kindly provided to me by Harry Katz, Art Department, Library of the Boston Athenaeum (letter, 15 July 1983, in NGA curatorial files).

22. As quoted in Gage 1969, 198–199.

23. Nieuwenhuys 1834, 12.

24. Waagen 1854–1857, 3: 158, wrote: "The contrast between the warm gleams of the setting sun, with the deep, golden, transparent tones of the foreground, the luminous evening sky, and dark rain-clouds are as finely conceived as they are splendidly executed." Walker 1984, 274, wrote: "And this melancholy sentiment, this mood of sublime sadness, which Rembrandt conveys through the stark simplicity of a windmill silhouetted in the fading light against the mist-filled sky, is indescribably moving."

25. The amount of detail described in *The Mill*, however, may also have been exaggerated as a result of the aesthetic of the picturesque that was current in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

26. Schwartz 1984; Tümpel 1986. Josua Bruyn, in *Corpus* 1982–, 3: 49, attributes *The Mill* to Bol and dates it around 1650. Bruyn's primary point of comparison, Bol's only known landscape painting, *River Landscape with Cattle* (art market, 1992), is not convincing. Albert Blankert, the author of the Bol monograph, also does not believe Bol painted *The Mill*. (He expressed this opinion at the Rembrandt Symposium in Amsterdam in 1992. Blankert, however, also doubts the Rembrandt attribution for this painting.) Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann (personal communication, 1993) is presently emphatic in his belief that *The Mill* is not by Rembrandt (see note 9).

27. Wheelock 1979; Schneider 1990, 44–46, cat. 6, 183–190. Seymour Slive (personal communication, 1993) also accepts the attribution of *The Mill* to Rembrandt.

28. The relationship of the color tonalities in these two paintings is particularly close.

29. The London drawing is illustrated in Benesch 1954–1957, 4: no. 668; Benesch 1954–1957, 2: no. 361, dates the Budapest drawing "about 1637." In my opinion, however, his date is too early. The blocky forms of the figures are more consistent with those of the early to mid-1640s (see Benesch 1954–1957, 4: no. 659).

30. An infrared photograph also reveals the shape of the hill. A cross-section taken through the sky area in front of the bulwark has shown that a layer of black once defined the shape of the bridge.

31. See Schneider 1990, 91–92, cat. 10.

32. For information on Rembrandt's family in Leiden see P. J. M. de Baar and Ingrid W. L. Moerman, "Rembrandt van

Rijn en Jan Lievens, inwoners van Leiden," in Leiden 1991, 24–38. Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann (personal communication, 1993) has brought to my attention the fact that De Bisschop's drawing "Rembrandt's Mill" was reproduced by means of an etching by Flameng (as "le vrai moulin de Rembrandt") in Blanc 1859–1861, 1: 15.

33. For a discussion of the religious symbolism of *The Three Trees*, see Schneider 1990, 240–242, cat. 75.

34. Kauffmann 1977, 382, is the only author to interpret the scene in a positive manner: "Eine Komposition, die die Mühle himmelen hebt, aufsehererregend, als hätte der Maler Jugenderinnerungen verklären und glorifizieren wollen."

35. Zacharias Heyns, *Emblemata, Emblemes Chrestienes et Morales* (Rotterdam, 1625): "De mensch is doot in syn gemoet/ Den Geest verquict en leven doet."

36. Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen* (Amsterdam, 1614), emblem XL: "Een Prince die zijn ampt wel bedient, doet alle vlijt ende neerstigheyt dat zijn onderdanen ende burghers welvaren, ende goed neeringhe hebben: overleggende dagh en nacht in zijn herte, om alle hinder en ongheluck af te wenden, met den meesten oorboor en minste schade: ghelijck de Watermeulen lijdt den aenstoot van alle winden, om deur kracht van dien het water met zijn schepraden uyt te werpen..."

37. Gerson/Bredius 1969, 593, cat. 476, repro.

38. For a discussion of this issue see Wheelock 1989, 165–184.

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1942.9.59 (655)

## Rembrandt van Rijn (and Workshop?)

### *The Apostle Paul*

c. 1657  
 Oil on canvas, 131.5 x 104.4 (51¼ x 41⅞)  
 Widener Collection

#### Inscriptions

On desk at right: *Rembrandt f*

**Technical Notes:** The original support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric with non-original triangular fabric inserts in the lower left and lower right corners. Another diagonal insert with yet another weave pattern and ground has been added to the upper left. The support and inserts have been lined with the tacking margins trimmed. No cusping is visible, suggesting a reduction in dimensions on all sides.

A moderately thick, off-white ground was applied in a roughly oval form, with the upper right of the oval unfinished. The oval shape once extended below and substantially above the present confines of the composition (figs. 5 and 6). An oversized canvas may have been selectively primed with the intent to trim it to an oval shape and mount it on a smaller or shaped stretcher. At some point, however, this idea seems to have been abandoned and the composition was reconceived in a rectangular format. Original paint covers both primed and unprimed sections of the rectangular support.

The application pattern of the ground is visible in the x-radiograph, along with several artist's changes. Initially the apostle's elbow rested on a book lying on an inclined lectern. Minor changes are found in the proper right shoulder and adjacent to the proper left arm.

Paint was applied thinly in dark passages and thickly in light passages, with brushes and a palette knife. Flesh tones are heavily impasted and blended wet into wet. Severe abrasion in thinly painted passages has exposed the ground layer, and thicker passages are moderately abraded. Heavy retouching is found throughout, especially on the triangular corner inserts, which appear to be primarily later repaint. A thick, discolored, natural resin varnish covers the surface. No conservation work has been carried out since acquisition.

**Provenance:** Johan van Schuylenburg, The Hague; (sale, The Hague, 20 September 1735, no. 31). Marquis de Livois [d. 1790], Angers; (sale, Angers, 1791, no. 65). Gamba; (sale, Paris, 17 December 1811, no. 26). Ferdinando Marescalchi, Bologna, by 1824. Sir George Hayter; (sale, Christie & Manson, London, 3 May 1845, no. 82). M. le comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier, Paris; (sale, "son hôtel," Paris, 27 March–4 April 1865, no. 182). Lord Wimborne [formerly Sir Ivor Guest, 1835–1914], Canford Manor, Dorsetshire; (Arthur J. Sulley & Co., London); Peter A. B. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania by 1912; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

**Exhibited:** British Institution, London, 1841, no. 71 (as *Portrait of Cornelius Pietersz Hoofi*). Washington 1969, no. 17.

**SITTING BEFORE A TABLE** in the recesses of his prison cell, Saint Paul has brought his hand to his head as he ponders the words he is about to write in the epistle that lies before him. The weighty expression of his strong features underscores the depth of his belief and the purposefulness of his mission to spread Christianity to the heathen. The sword visible above the book is as much the "sword of the Spirit," the term he used to describe the word of God in his letter to the Ephesians, as it is the symbol of his military might before his conversion or the foreboding of his eventual martyrdom.

This large and imposing painting from the late 1650s depicts a figure that preoccupied Rembrandt throughout his life, from his 1627 *Saint Paul in Prison* (fig. 1), to his moving 1661 representation of himself in the guise of Saint Paul (fig. 2). As is evident from