

9. B. 21.
10. For a discussion of the relationship of Rembrandt's self-portraits from 1639 and from 1640 to Raphael and Titian, see De Jongh 1969, 49–67; Chapman 1990, 72–78.
11. Van Rijckevorsel 1932, 150, however, did suggest the additional influence of Titian's *Portrait of 'Ariosto'* (National Gallery, London, see above) on Rembrandt's 1659 *Self-Portrait*. The illusionistic format of self-portraiture was put in the context of the northern portrait tradition by Stephanie Dickey during a Rembrandt symposium held in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, January 1992.
12. For a discussion of various interpretations of these paintings see Chapman 1990, 94–95, 97–101.

References

- 1829–1842 Smith, 7 (1836): 88, no. 215.
 1868 Vosmaer: 493 (also 1877 ed.: 358, 560).
 1883 Bode: 542, 585, no. 197.
 1885 Dutuit: 43, 61, 70, no. 165.
 1886 Wurzbach: no. 160.
 1888 Champlin and Perkins: 4: 24.
 1893 Michel, 2: 235 (also 1894 English ed.).
 1897–1905 Moes: 315, no. 60.
 1897–1906 Bode, 6 (1901): 13–14, no. 431, repro.
 1898 Michel: 467–480.
 1899 Bell: 83–84, 145 (also 1907 ed.: 79–80, 126).
 1899a Hofstede de Groot: no. 33, repro.
 1902 Neumann: 488 (also 1922 ed.: 2: 540, 542).
 1906 Veth: 161–162.
 1906 Rosenberg: 404, no. 343, repro. (also 1908 ed.: 562, no. 403, repro.; and 1909 ed.: 562, no. 403, repro.).
 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 273–274, no. 554.
 1909 Knackfuss: 158–159, pl. 164.
 1913–1915 Graves, 3 (1914): 1010.
 1921b Valentiner: 403, repro.
 1923 Meldrum: 137, 199, pl. 339.
 1929 Rutter: 64–67, repro.
 1931 Valentiner: no. 141, repro.
 1932 Van Rijckevorsel: 150.
 1935 Bredius: 4, 51, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 4, 51, repro.).
 1941 NGA: 164, no. 72.
 1942 Borenius: 35, no. 81, repro.
 1943 Benesch: 21–33, fig. 11.
 1948 Rosenberg: 30–31, color frontispiece (also 1964 rev. ed.: 47, frontispiece).
 1949 Mellon: 87, repro.
 1960 Roger-Marx: 13, repro., 64, 96.
 1960 Baird: 8, 14, 15, repro.
 1965 NGA: 109, no. 72.
 1966 Rosenberg and Slive: 71–72, pl. 50.
 1966 Bauch: 17, no. 330, repro.
 1967 Erpel: 46, 184, pl. 56.
 1968 NGA: 97, no. 72, repro.
 1968 Gerson: 443, no. 736, repro., 503.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 47, repro., 551.
 1972 Roberts: 353–354.
 1975 Wright: 98–99, pl. 81.
 1975 NGA: 284, 285, repro.
 1977 Bolten and Bolten-Rempt: 199, no. 486, repro.
 1978 Clark: 30, 31, repro.
 1982 Wright: 32, repro., color pl. 88.
 1984/1985 Schwartz: 352, color repro. 417.

- 1985 NGA: 328, repro.
 1986 Tümpel: 368–369, color repro., 427, no. A 72.
 1986 Guillaud and Guillaud: no. 739, color repro.
 1986 Sutton: 314, repro.
 1992 Edinburgh, no. 53, color repro.

1937.1.77 (77)

Rembrandt van Rijn

A Young Man Seated at a Table (possibly Govaert Flinck)

c. 1660
 Oil on canvas, 109.9 x 89.5 (43¼ x 35¼)
 Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Inscriptions

At center right: *Rembrandt 166[?]*

Technical Notes: The support, a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, has been lined with the original tacking margins trimmed. A row of later tacking holes along the left and top edges of the original support suggest a prior reduction in size, although cusping at right and bottom indicate that the present dimensions are close to or slightly smaller than the original dimensions. Large complex tears are found in the lower right background and between the hands.

The double ground consists of a thick, red brown lower layer followed by a slightly thinner pearly gray layer. Paint is applied as dry to fluid pastes, with glazes and scumbles, occasionally incised with the butt end of a brush. Brushstrokes have been worked wet into wet or drawn over dry impasto to create texture, although lining has flattened the texture. The x-radiograph shows changes in both hands, with the proper right hand loosely sketched and the proper left hand either lower, reconfigured, or both (fig. 1).

Paint loss is confined to the tears and the edges, where sections of the original fabric have been torn away. Overpaint on the hands, background, hair, and face suggest that these areas may have suffered from abrasion. A discolored varnish layer obscures the surface. No treatment has been carried out since acquisition.

Provenance: Possibly Gustaf Adolf Sparre [1746–1794], Göteborg and Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp, near Helsingborg; by inheritance to his wife [d. 1830], Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; by inheritance to her grandson, Adolf de la Gardie [1800–1833], Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; by inheritance to his father, Jacob, Count de la Gardie, Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; Carl, Count de Geer, Leustra, before 1855; by family trust to his granddaughter, Elizabeth, Countess Wachtmeister [1834–1918], Castle Wanås, Sweden;¹ Count Carl Wachtmeister [Wachtmeister Trust], Wanås, until 1926; (Duveen Brothers, New York and London); sold December 1926 to Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh and Washington; deeded 28 December 1934 to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

Exhibited: *Uställningen af äldre Mästares taflor ur Svenska privatsamlinger*, Bukowskis, Stockholm, 1893, no. 161. *Exhibition of Dutch Art, 1450–1900*, Royal Academy, London, 1929, no. 83. Amsterdam 1935, no. 29. *Masterworks of Five Centuries*, Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, 1939, no. 88a. Washington 1969, no. 20. *Giorgione to Picasso*, Musée Marmottan, Paris, 1976, no cat. *Paintings from American Museums*, State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; Museum of Ukrainian Art, Kiev; Belorussian State Museum of Fine Arts, Minsk, 1976. *Great Dutch Paintings from America*, Mauritshuis, The Hague; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1990–1991, no. 53.

THIS PAINTING of a stylish young man, posed with one arm akimbo and the other gracefully resting on the table beside him, is one of Rembrandt's most sympathetic late portraits. The sitter's handsome features and gentle expression, enframed by the long locks of his hair, suggest warmth and sensitivity. At the same time, the understated simplicity of his dress, from the plain white collar, left open at the neck, to his black costume and hat, reinforces the sense of self-assurance so evident in the pose.

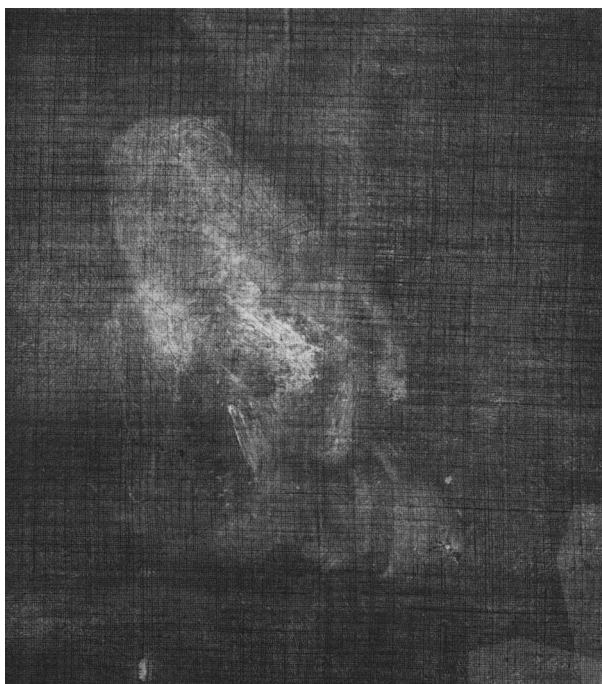
The name of the sitter is not known. The traditional designation that he is a "young man" seems more based on his elegant pose than on the nature of his face or hands.² With his angular features and somewhat heavy eyes, the sitter seems more mature, probably in his early to mid-forties. Uncertainty has also surrounded the date of the painting, despite the fact that it is signed and dated in the middle right background. When the signature and date were first noticed at the end of the nineteenth century they were read: "Rembrandt f. 1662."³ By 1935 scholars interpreted the date as "1663."⁴ Indeed, the signature and date are extremely difficult to decipher, and today the last digit of the date is no longer legible. Whether it was more legible in 1893 or 1935, and whether the reading "1662" or "1663" was correct is impossible to determine. Although such dates are stylistically plausible, the face is more delicately modeled than one would expect after the boldly executed heads found in Rembrandt's paintings of *Jacob Trip* and *Margaretha de Geer* (National Gallery, London, inv. nos. 1674 and 1675) of c. 1661, and *The Syndics of the Cloth Drapers' Guild* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, on loan from the city of Amsterdam; see NGA 1942.9.69, fig. 1), which he executed in 1662. The impact of these works on his portrait style is evident in the impastos and rough execution of the face of *A Young Man*, a portrait said to be dated 1663 (Dulwich Picture Gallery, inv. no. 221), or in *Portrait of a Man in a Tall Hat* (1942.9.69), which must have been executed in the mid-1660s.

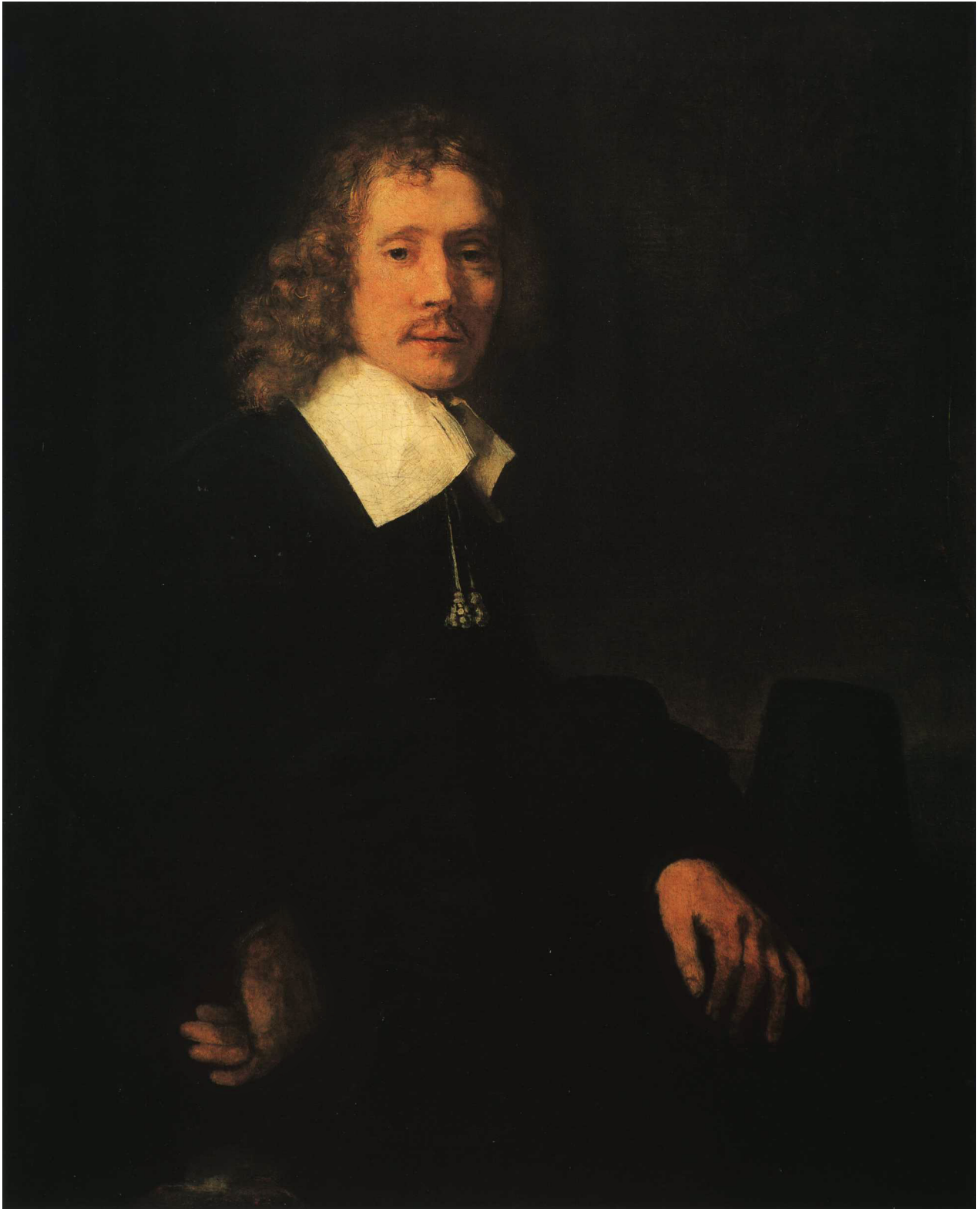
In this painting Rembrandt's brushwork is rela-

tively smooth, as is appropriate for the youthful appearance of the sitter. While he has used rapid strokes of the brush in the impastos on the forehead to suggest highlights and has painted the hair wet into wet, the features are not built up with striking juxtapositions of dense impastos and revealed underlying layers of paint. Instead, Rembrandt has modulated his forms with carefully nuanced strokes that capture the play of light on the sitter's face.⁵ Subtle accents along the eyelids, the lower portions of the whites of the eyes, and in the irises help bring the man's face to life. Since the style falls somewhere between the more densely painted and carefully articulated portraits from the late 1650s and the roughly executed portraits of the early 1660s, it seems appropriate to propose, as have others, a date of about 1660 for this work.⁶

The attribution of this painting has never been questioned, and there is no reason to do so. Indeed, Gerson considered it "one of the most beautiful of the late commissioned portraits."⁷ Much of its beauty stems from the subtle fusion of Rembrandt's vigorous brushwork with a graceful pose reminiscent of portraits by Anthony van Dyck. Unfortunately, as Gerson also mentioned, the work has suffered. The quite dense and discolored varnish that covers the painting obscures a certain amount of

Fig. 1. X-radiograph of left hand in 1937.1.77





Rembrandt van Rijn, *A Young Man Seated at a Table* (possibly Govaert Flinck), 1937.1.77



Fig. 2. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Jan Asselijn*, c. 1647, etching, drypoint and burin, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection

abrasion and old restoration and prevents the full three-dimensional character of the figure from being appreciated. Although there is retouching in the face, most predominantly in the mustache, the most obvious condition problems occur in the thinly painted hands. The repaint on the right hand is particularly unfortunate as it obscures the proper modeling of its form. The character of the left hand is confusing, for brushstrokes belonging to an initial concept are visible through the fingers. This earlier hand, which is more fully visible in an x-radiograph, was lower and may have had a stronger accent of light upon it than does the current hand (fig. 1). Another change evident in the x-radiograph is that the white collar originally jutted up higher and covered a bit of the sitter's face, just to the left of his chin.

One consequence of the opaque quality of the varnish is that the background cannot be properly read. Nevertheless, behind the figure can be vaguely discerned a large rectangular form that was read in the 1935 Rijksmuseum exhibition catalogue as a window opening with a beveled windowsill. To the left

was thought to be seen a bluish black curtain.⁸ The right edge of the shape, however, curves slightly outward near the bottom in such a way to suggest that the form is not a window but a stretched canvas. With such a backdrop the painting could well depict a painter seated before a canvas. Indeed, the relaxed, informal pose of the sitter speaks to such an interpretation. Rembrandt had already depicted the painter Jan Asselijn (after 1610–1652) in such a manner, seated before one of his paintings in an etching of about 1647 (fig. 2).⁹ Comparable as well is *Portrait of Paulus Potter*, 1654 (Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 54), by Bartholomeus van der Helst (c. 1613–1670).

Should this portrait represent an artist, an unexpected but probable sitter is Govaert Flinck (1615–1660), if one is to judge from the engraved portrait of him, here shown in reverse, included in Arnold Houbraken's *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* of 1753 (fig. 3).¹⁰ Although the source for Houbraken's print is not known, the image he depicts resembles to a remarkable degree the sitter in Rembrandt's portrait. Not only are the shapes of the eyes, nose, and mouth similar, Flinck had a similar mustache and also long, flowing hair. If it does represent Flinck, Rembrandt would have had to have painted him before 2 Feb-

Fig. 3. Arnold Houbraken, *Govaert Flinck*, shown in reverse, from *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen*, The Hague, 1753



ruary 1660, the date of Flinck's unexpected death at the age of forty-four, unless it was a posthumous portrait.¹¹

Whether or not Govaert Flinck would have asked Rembrandt for a portrait at this stage of his career is, of course, a legitimate question. He was at the height of his fame in 1660. He had long since left the orbit of Rembrandt, with whom he had studied in the mid-1630s, to become a successful portrait and history painter in a classicizing style admired by the important patrons he associated with in both Amsterdam and his native Germany. He was wealthy, well-connected, and had a remarkable collection with a heavy concentration of sculpture and paintings by Italian and Flemish masters, including Anthony van Dyck. In 1659 he had received the most prestigious commission of his life: he was asked by the burgomasters to paint twelve large paintings for the gallery of the Town Hall of Amsterdam. The world in which he operated seems so different than the one in which Rembrandt moved.

Nevertheless, Rembrandt's genius as a portrait painter was still widely acknowledged by certain segments of Amsterdam's population, including artists and art collectors. A number of his late portraits, both etched and painted were of artists or art collectors, and Flinck, despite the different style in which he then worked, could qualify on both accounts. More important, there is an immediacy to this portrait that suggests that the contacts between the sitter and the patron were personal as well as professional. That the old master, who had been bypassed for the enormous commission to decorate the Town Hall, produced such an affectionate portrait of his former protégé, either just prior to his unexpected death or in reaction to it, is perhaps too much to ask. Yet the evidence, such as it is, suggests this possibility.¹²

Notes

1. This possible provenance, and that which precedes it, is outlined by Ben Broos in *The Hague* 1990, 390.

2. Broos, in *The Hague* 1990, 392, proposed, on the basis of quite circumstantial evidence, that the sitter was Jacob Louysz. Trip (1636–1664) and that the portrait was commissioned on the occasion of his marriage in 1660. It is unlikely, however, that this portrait represents a sitter who was only twenty-four to twenty-eight years old.

3. The date was first mentioned in Stockholm 1893; it was repeated by Bode 1897–1906, 6: 3–4. The exact inscription was given by Granberg 1911–1913, 1: 125.

4. Amsterdam 1935, 60–61, no. 29; Bredius 1935, 14, no. 312.

5. These effects are evident despite some overpaint in the shaded portion of the face below the sitter's left nostril and in the mustache.

6. Washington 1969, 30, no. 20; Schwartz 1984/1985, 339, no. 396.

7. Gerson/Bredius 1969, 574, no. 312.

8. Amsterdam 1935, 61: "Hij is gezeten voor een vaag aangegeven venster-opening met afgeschuind kozijn. Links een blauwig-zwart venster-gordijn."

9. As Seymour Slive has pointed out to me (personal communication, 1993), in the case of Asselijn this pose was used as a means to hide his crippled left arm.

10. Houbraken 1753, 2: 18.

11. Rembrandt had made other posthumous portraits, including his painting of Saskia, 1643 (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; Br. 109), and his etched portrait of Jan Cornelis Sylvius, 1646 (B. 280).

12. As Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann notes (personal communication, 1993), the portrait could have been commissioned by someone other than Flinck himself even if it represents Flinck.

References

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- 1885 Granberg: 3, no. 2.
- 1886 Granberg: 27, no. 49.
- 1892 "Rembrandt tafla": 311, no. 38.
- 1893 Michel: 568 (also 1894 English ed., 2: 247).
- 1893 Stockholm: no. 81.
- 1895 Göthe: 24, no. 53.
- 1897–1906 Bode, 7 (1902): 3, 4, no. 488, repro.
- 1899 Bell: 183 (also 1907 ed.: 154).
- 1906 Rosenberg: 405, 370, repro. (also 1908 and 1909 eds.: 564, 500, repro.).
- 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 366, no. 784.
- 1910 Hahr: 83, repro.
- 1911–1913 Granberg, 1 (1911): 125, no. 536, repro. no. 56.
- 1923 Meldrum: 203, pl. 431.
- 1926 "Ein Rembrandt von Schweden": 207–208.
- 1928 "America Lends": 1, 12, repro.
- 1929 London: no. 83.
- 1929 Rutter: 64–66.
- 1929 Van Puyvelde: 151–169.
- 1929 Gibson: 1–12, repro.
- 1929–1930 Bauch: 9–23.
- 1930b Valentiner: 1–4, repro.
- 1931 Valentiner: no. 159, repro.
- 1935 Amsterdam: no. 29.
- 1935 "L'Exposition Rembrandt": 271–274, repro.
- 1935 Rich: 2–5, repro.
- 1935 Bredius: 14, 312, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 13, 312, repro.).
- 1935/1970 Benesch: 67 (reprinted 1970).
- 1937 "A National Gallery": 143, repro.
- 1939 San Francisco: no. 88a.
- 1941 Berenson and Valentiner: no. 203, repro.
- 1941 NGA: 167, no. 77.
- 1943 Benesch: 20–33, repro.
- 1949 Mellon: 88, repro.
- 1952 Behrman: 28 (also 1972 ed.: 25).
- 1956 Knuttel: 219, 273.
- 1959 Bauch: 105–106, repro.
- 1961 Porkay: 10–15, 28–29, figs. II, IV.
- 1963 Porkay: 13, 15, 26–27, fig. II.
- 1965 NGA: 109, no. 77.
- 1966 Bauch: 23, no. 439, repro.
- 1968 NGA: 98, 166, no. 77, repro.
- 1968 Gerson: 504, no. 405, 153, repro., 446, repro.
- 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 574, no. 312, 238, repro.

- 1969 Washington: no. 20.
 1974 Hasselgren: 111, 127, 131, 195, 198, no. G 53, repro.
 1975 NGA: 284, 285, no. 77, repro.
 1978 Bolten and Bolten-Rempt: 202, no. 549, repro.
 1984/1985 Schwartz: 339, no. 396, repro. (also 1985 English ed.).
 1985 NGA: 330, repro.
 1986 Sutton: 314.
 1986 Tümpel: 413, no. 217, repro.
 1986 Guillaud and Guillaud: 362, no. 416, repro.
 1990 The Hague: no. 53.

1942.9.60 (656)

Rembrandt van Rijn

The Circumcision

1661
 Oil on canvas, 56.5 x 75 (22¼ x 29½)
 Widener Collection

Inscriptions

At lower right: *Rembrandt. f. 1661*

Technical Notes: The original support, a medium-weight, loosely woven, plain-weave fabric, has been lined with the tacking margins unevenly trimmed. The absence of cusping and the presence of old, off-center, stretcher bar creases suggest the dimensions may have been substantially reduced. The double ground consists of a dark brown lower layer and a lighter brown upper layer.¹ The upper layer is translucent and has a rough texture to give it "tooth." A nearly pure black imprimatura or underpainting lies under the main figural groups and the left side of the design. The extreme solubility of this imprimatura may have contributed to the overall degree of damage.

The paint is applied in richly mixed and swirled layers, blended both wet into wet and wet over dry as glazes and scumbles. A number of cross-sections have been made to identify and locate the many complicated paint layers. The x-radiograph shows changes in the upper paint layers to enlarge the circumcisor's robe at the left, to expand the tent canopy horizontally, to alter the highlighting and positioning of the heads at the left, and to shade a once bright background area at the left.

The paint layers are quite damaged and areas of extensive repainting have been applied at various intervals. Old repainting, which was not possible to remove during the painting's restoration in the early 1990s, is found over the circumcisor's robe, the tent canopy, the heads and adjacent background of figures in the middle distance at left, Mary's headdress, and other areas of abrasion. The abraded portions include the shadows to the right of Mary and the Infant Jesus, much of the right side, the dark figures and shadows in the lower left, Mary's and the circumcisor's draperies, and the heads of the figures at center left.

Provenance: Probably Lodewijck van Ludick (1607–1669), Amsterdam, by 1662. Probably Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680)

by 1669.² Probably Isaak van den Blooken, the Netherlands, by 1707; (sale, Amsterdam, 11 May 1707, no. 1). Duke of Ancaster, by 1724;³ (sale, London, March 1724, no. 18); Andrew Hay; (sale, Cock, London, 14 February 1745, no. 47); John Spencer, 1st Earl of Spencer [1734–1783], Althorp House; inherited through family members to John Poyntz, 5th Earl of Spencer [1835–1910]; (Arthur J. Sulley & Co., London); Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, 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: *Exhibition of Paintings*, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, 1868, no. 735. *Rembrandt: Schilderijen Bijgebracht ter Gelegenheid van de Inhuldiging van Hare Majesteit Koningin Wilhelmina*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1898, no. 115. *Winter Exhibition of Works by Rembrandt*, Royal Academy, London, 1899, no. 5. Washington 1969, no. 22. *Rembrandt and the Bible*, Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, 1987, no. 11.

THE ONLY MENTION of the Circumcision of Christ occurs in the Gospel of Luke, 2:15–22: "...the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.... And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.... And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus." This cursory reference to this most significant event in the early childhood of Christ allowed artists throughout history a wide latitude in the way they represented the Circumcision.⁴

The predominant Dutch pictorial tradition was to depict the scene as though it occurred within the Temple, as, for example, in Hendrick Goltzius' influential engraving of the Circumcision of Christ, 1594 (fig. 1).⁵ In the Goltzius print, the *mobel* circumcises the Christ Child, held by the high priest, as Mary and Joseph stand reverently to the side. Rembrandt largely followed this tradition in his two early etchings of the subject and in his now lost 1646 painting of the Circumcision for Prince Frederik Hendrik.⁶

The iconographic tradition of the Circumcision occurring in the Temple, which was almost certainly apocryphal, developed in the twelfth century to allow for a typological comparison between the Jewish rite of circumcision and the Christian rite of cleansing, or baptism. Integral to this tradition was the assumption that shortly after the Circumcision, Christ was presented in the Temple. A close reading of Saint Luke, however, reveals that a period of time lapsed between the two events. After Luke describes the naming of Jesus at the rite of Circumcision, he continues: "And when the [forty] days of [Mary's] purification according to the law of Moses were