

Rembrandt van Rijn

1606–1669

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN, born 15 July 1606 in Leiden, was the son of a miller, Harmen Gerritsz. van Rijn (1568–1630), and his wife Neeltgen van Zuytbrouck (1568–1640). The youngest son of at least ten children, Rembrandt was not expected to carry on his father's business. Since the family was prosperous enough, they sent him to the Leiden Latin School, where he remained for seven years. In 1620 he enrolled briefly at the University of Leiden, perhaps to study theology. Orlers, Rembrandt's first biographer, related that because "by nature he was moved toward the art of painting and drawing," he left the university to study the fundamentals of painting with the Leiden artist Jacob Isaacs. van Swanenburgh (1571–1638). After three years with this master, Rembrandt left in 1624 for Amsterdam, where he studied for six months under Pieter Lastman (1583–1633), the most important history painter of the day.

After returning to Leiden, Rembrandt quickly developed a reputation as a history painter and portraitist. By 1628 his work, and that of his colleague in Leiden, Jan Lievens (1609–1674), was enthusiastically praised by the secretary to the Prince of Orange, Constantijn Huygens (1596–1674). Huygens admired particularly Rembrandt's uncanny ability to convey feeling through gesture and expression and through dramatic contrasts of light and dark. That same year, Rembrandt, at the age of twenty-two, took on his first pupils, Gerard Dou (q.v.) and Isaac Jouderville (1612–1645/1648). Documents indicate that Jouderville paid Rembrandt one hundred guilders a year to study with him.

By 1631 Rembrandt had become financially involved with the Amsterdam art dealer Hendrik van Uylenburgh (c. 1587–1661). The nature of Van Uylenburgh's enterprise, which was called "an academy" in its day, is not entirely understood, but it appears that he orchestrated an active art studio that specialized in portrait commissions. In any event, around 1632 Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam, where he lived with Van Uylenburgh and ran his "academy" until 1635. Rembrandt achieved tremendous success. He received many commissions and attracted a number of students who came to learn his method of painting. Artists who had previously been trained elsewhere, including Jacob Back-

er (1608–1651), Govaert Flinck (1615–1660), and Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680), worked during these years at Van Uylenburgh's studio under Rembrandt's guidance.

In 1633 Rembrandt became engaged to Van Uylenburgh's niece Saskia (1612–1642), daughter of a wealthy and prominent Frisian family. They married the following year. In 1639, at the height of his success, Rembrandt purchased a large house on the Sint-Anthonisbreestraat in Amsterdam for a considerable amount of money. To acquire the house, however, he had to borrow heavily, creating a debt that would eventually figure in his financial problems of the mid-1650s. Rembrandt and Saskia had four children, but only Titus, born in 1641, survived infancy. After a long illness Saskia died in 1642, the very year Rembrandt painted *The Night Watch* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

During the 1640s life became more unsettled for Rembrandt. Geertje Dirckx (1600/1610–1656?) soon entered the household as a nurse for Titus and became a companion to Rembrandt. In 1649 he dismissed her and entered into a lifelong relationship with Hendrickje Stoffels (1626–1663). While Hendrickje seems to have been a warm and caring companion for Rembrandt, the early 1650s were fraught with personal turmoil. Rembrandt and Geertje Dirckx became embroiled in a number of contentious lawsuits that give the impression that he treated his former mistress quite badly. Rembrandt and Hendrickje never married because of stipulations in Saskia's will;¹ this situation caused Hendrickje public humiliation when she became pregnant in 1654. She was called before a council of the Dutch Reformed church and censored for having "lived with Rembrandt like a whore." Their daughter, Cornelia, was baptized on 30 October 1654.

Financial difficulties also beset Rembrandt during these years, and he was forced to declare insolvency in 1656. His estate, including his large art collection, was auctioned in 1657 and 1658. He then moved to an artist's quarter in the Jordaan district of Amsterdam, eventually renting a relatively small house on the Rozengracht where he lived for the rest of his life. Hendrickje and Titus subsequently formed a business partnership to protect Rembrandt from further demands of creditors.

Although Rembrandt did receive a number of important portrait commissions during the late 1650s and early 1660s, stylistic trends had veered away from his deeply personal manner of painting. He became more and more isolated from the mainstreams of Dutch art. No students are documented as having worked with him during the latter half of the 1650s, and only one student, Aert de Gelder (1645–1727), is known to have come to study with him in the 1660s.

Rembrandt's financial situation remained poor during the 1660s. He owed a substantial amount of money, in particular to the art dealer and collector Lodewijk van Ludick, a debt he hoped to repay with the money he would receive from his large painting for one of the lunettes in the Amsterdam Town Hall, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis* (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm). Rembrandt's composition, however, was rejected by city authorities in 1662. To raise funds he was then forced to sell Saskia's grave in the Oude Kerk. He never regained financial solvency and during his last years lived on the savings of his daughter, Cornelia.

Although Rembrandt remained famous as an artist, there seems to have been little to lighten the burdens of his life during his last years. In 1663 a plague that ravaged Amsterdam claimed the life of Hendrickje. Four years later Titus married Magdalena van Loo (1642–1669), but in 1668 he also died, the victim of another epidemic. When Rembrandt died on 4 October 1669, he was buried in an

unknown rented grave in the Westerkerk, Amsterdam.

Notes

1. Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, 320, doc. no. 1654/15. Dudok van Heel in Berlin 1991, 57, explains that according to Saskia's will Rembrandt, should he remarry, was bound to transfer half of their joint assets to Titus. After her death their net value was determined to have been over forty thousand guilders. Presumably Rembrandt did not have twenty thousand guilders to give to Titus in the early 1650s.

Bibliography (see additional bibliography in short references)

Orlers 1641: 375.
Houbraken 1753, 1: 254–273.
Smith 1829–1842, 7 (1836).
Bode 1897–1906.
Hofstede de Groot 1906.
Rosenberg 1906.
HdG 1907–1927, 6 (1916).
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Bauch 1960.
Bauch 1966.
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Gerson 1968.
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Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979.
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Chapman 1990.
Berlin 1991.

Issues of Attribution in the Rembrandt Workshop

AS AN INTRODUCTION to the following entries on paintings by Rembrandt and his school it seems appropriate to discuss briefly the history of Rembrandt connoisseurship as it pertains to this collection. This overview is intended to provide a framework for understanding the approach to attributions that is taken in this catalogue.

That Rembrandt was a genius has never been questioned, yet one of the ironies of Rembrandt scholarship is that each generation has developed its own perception of his genius.¹ This phenomenon is most clearly seen in the different character attributed to the artist's oeuvre since the early nineteenth century. In 1836 John Smith accepted 614 paintings

as being by the master, although many of these he knew only from written descriptions or from prints after the originals.² Still, Smith was convinced that the qualities of Rembrandt's genius are evident to an "experienced eye." According to Smith, these qualities, beyond manual dexterity, consist of "beauties which emanate from a higher source, such as expression, delicacy of gradation, and harmony of tints, [and] are beyond the reach of all who are inferior to the master himself."³ Smith, however, knew neither the very early nor the very late paintings by Rembrandt, the latest dated work with which he was familiar being Rembrandt's 1664 depiction of *Lucretia* (1937.1.76). As was so often the case with

Smith, moreover, he saw in Rembrandt's choice of subject reflections of the artist's own life. Lucretia's tragedy, he felt, was painted in reaction to the trouble Rembrandt had experienced during the painful close of his life.⁴

In reality the nature of Rembrandt's oeuvre, as well as its autobiographical nuances, has proved to be far more complicated than Smith anticipated. By the beginning of the twentieth century the great Rembrandt scholar Wilhelm von Bode had rejected a large number of works included in Smith's catalogue and added an almost equal number of new discoveries in his eight-volume corpus of Rembrandt's works.⁵ Many of the fifty to sixty newly discovered works included in the last volume of his corpus were oil sketches, unfinished preparatory works, or boldly executed paintings from the end of Rembrandt's career. One of Bode's major discoveries, for example, was the *Man with a Gilded Helmet* (see 1942.9.70, fig. 2) that he bought for the Berlin Museum.⁶ The broad brushwork of paintings such as this epitomized for Bode Rembrandt's independence and creative genius. Bode, with a mindset influenced by the nineteenth-century romantic movement and its ideals of creative genius, greatly admired Rembrandt's chiaroscuro effects, which suppressed surface details to such an extent that the artist could render "souls rather than...existences."⁷ Indeed, Rembrandt's art marked for Bode "a climax in the development of universal art."

As great as Rembrandt was as an artist, Bode maintained that the "thinker and poet in him were still greater than the painter; they even worked occasionally to the detriment of the artist, seducing him into a fantastic handling of simple motives that demanded a purely realistic treatment."⁸ Bode noted that not all of Rembrandt's works were of equal quality, their failings being "merely the defects incidental to his great and original genius."⁹ For him, Rembrandt had to be "studied as a whole, only thus is he comprehensible and unsurpassable." Bode meant by this the need to look at Rembrandt's drawings and prints as well as his paintings, but even more the need to accept the coarse, the refined, the elegant, and the harsh as all part of the totality of his genius.

Bode's inclination to incorporate a wide range of styles into his Rembrandt corpus was expanded upon by his protégé Wilhelm Valentiner, who, through his publications on Rembrandt in the first decades of the twentieth century, also introduced a large number of paintings into Rembrandt's oeuvre.¹⁰ With works added by Bode, Valentiner, and Hofstede de Groot,¹¹ the corpus of Rembrandt's

work grew to over seven hundred paintings. Many of Bode's Rembrandt discoveries, and most of Valentiner's, however, have not withstood the test of time. Later scholars, in particular Abraham Bredius, Jakob Rosenberg, and Kurt Bauch, rejected a number of attributions given by Bode and Valentiner,¹² but until 1969, when Horst Gerson published a revised edition of Bredius' 1935 catalogue, art historians had not recognized the degree to which Rembrandt's oeuvre had become bloated with wrongly attributed paintings.¹³

Gerson's publication, which accepted only 435 paintings as authentic, shocked the art world, for he rejected a number of paintings that had long been considered among Rembrandt's major works, including *The Descent from the Cross* (1942.9.61) and the 1650 *Self-Portrait* (now called *Portrait of Rembrandt*) in the National Gallery of Art (1942.9.70). Gerson attributed a large number of his rejected paintings to Rembrandt's pupils but also maintained that many had been painted by later imitators.

In recent years the issues of Rembrandt attributions have been kept very much alive by the publications of the Rembrandt Research Project (RRP), hereafter referred to as the *Corpus*. This project was organized in 1968 with the intent of studying Rembrandt paintings within a scientific framework.¹⁴ Working first under the leadership of Josua Bruyn and then under Ernst van de Wetering, the RRP has applied even more stringent standards than those found in Gerson's publication. Rembrandt's oeuvre, as a result, is once more in the process of being radically trimmed. All indications are that the RRP will accept no more than 250 paintings as authentic works by the master.

The RRP has been extremely critical of the interpretation of Rembrandt as an artist that grew out of the romantic era. It has maintained that Rembrandt's artistic development is quite predictable and logical, and has thus tended to limit the range of styles of painting that Bode, among others, found acceptable. To substantiate its belief, the RRP has given great weight to matters of painting technique, including the types and sizes of the supports, composition of the grounds, buildup of paint layers, and individual characteristics of brushwork. Relatively less weight has been given to questions of iconography.

The RRP has provided a new foundation for subsequent Rembrandt research. Aside from its careful descriptions of the works themselves, which also include the publication of much new technical information, the project has analyzed anew contemporary documents, including inventories, and exam-

ined issues of Rembrandt's workshop. The *Corpus*, however, has not been without criticism.¹⁵ The most consistent objections are that the RRP's view of Rembrandt's range of style and technique has been too narrow. The evidence gained from Rembrandt's etchings and drawings is that he often radically altered both style and technique to create different effects, sometimes within the same image. The RRP also appears to have made too many precise judgments of attribution given the unknowns that exist in our understanding of various aspects of Rembrandt's life and work, whether they be his relations to his patrons or the running of his workshop.¹⁶ On a personal level, I also differ from the approach taken by the RRP in that I do not entirely disregard the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century interpretations of Rembrandt's paintings. I tend to believe that Rembrandt's personal circumstances may well have affected the mood and subject matter of his works. While his career has certainly been over-romanticized, there are usually germs of truth in the myths surrounding his life and art.

One assumption that has been made in the *Corpus* that is consistent with the tradition of Smith and Bode is that Rembrandt executed paintings without the assistance of members of his workshop.¹⁷ While the discussions of some paintings in the *Corpus* raise the possibility of workshop collaboration in the master's works, such instances have been treated as the exception rather than the rule.¹⁸ Indeed, the designations A, B, C that the RRP has used in its first three volumes to differentiate between "accepted," "do not know," and "rejected" paintings do not provide a framework for works produced collaboratively in the workshop.¹⁹ The precise distinctions the RRP has made between autograph and non-autograph works, however, does not accord with workshop practice in the seventeenth century. Despite the opinions of Bruyn, it seems most likely that Rembrandt, like Rubens in Antwerp and Van Dyck in England, used his studio to help him produce paintings for the market, especially during the 1630s when his work was in great demand.²⁰

Despite the research of Van de Wetering, Bruyn, and others, many questions still remain about the practices of the Rembrandt workshop.²¹ Nevertheless, documentary evidence indicates that during the mid-1630s, in particular, Rembrandt worked together with pupils and assistants on the same compositions. The evidence for such an integrated approach to workshop production comes from many sources: inscriptions on paintings and etchings, re-workings found on drawings, collaborative works listed in his inventory, and, finally, the visual and

technical evidence of the works themselves. Indications of workshop collaboration include the series of four etched oriental heads from 1635 that are based on prototypes by Jan Lievens and are signed "*Rembrandt geretuckert*" [Rembrandt retouched]²²; the large *Abraham's Sacrifice* in Munich, a version of Rembrandt's painting in the Hermitage that is inscribed "*Rembrandt, verandert. En over geschildert. 1636*" [Rembrandt, changed. And painted over. 1636]; and a number of paintings in the 1656 inventory of Rembrandt's possessions that are described as having been "*geretukeert*" [retouched] by Rembrandt, and one work that is said to have been "*gemodelt*" [designed by] Rembrandt.²³ Although much debate exists over the meaning of these inscriptions and terms, it seems quite clear that Rembrandt occasionally worked together with members of his workshop on the same paintings. In some circumstances his intent may have been to demonstrate the correct manner of executing a painting, as he sometimes did with students' drawings. It also seems probable, however, that he developed various ways to utilize his workshop to increase his own production, particularly during the 1630s, when he received a large number of commissions.

Although the size of Rembrandt's workshop at various stages of his career is uncertain, a number of artists, including Govaert Flinck (1615–1660), came to Rembrandt only after they had had preliminary training with another master. They must have come to learn his style, but presumably they were proficient enough to assist Rembrandt with his own productions. The collaboration in Rembrandt's workshop thus could have taken many forms: Rembrandt could have provided a model, either a drawing or oil sketch, for an assistant to use as a basis for a painting executed in his style; he could have blocked in the composition on the canvas or panel before it was completed by an assistant;²⁴ he could have had assistants paint costumes and even hands on commissioned portraits;²⁵ finally, he almost certainly retouched and improved upon works produced for him by students and assistants. One can also imagine that two or more students could have worked on the same painting. Moreover, many paintings that were probably worked on over a period of time are a frequently overlooked complicating factor. Whether or not the nature of workshop productions appreciably altered from one decade to the next is difficult to determine, particularly since little documentation about the workshop exists after Rembrandt's financial difficulties of the 1650s.²⁶

The hypothesis that Rembrandt worked closely with members of his workshop at various stages of

his career accounts for the many Rembrandtesque paintings that are difficult to attribute to a specific member of his workshop. It also is consistent with his documented practice of signing works made by members of his workshop. It helps explain why paintings not executed primarily by Rembrandt were inscribed with the master's name, and, finally, why so many works listed in Rembrandt's inventory as being by his hand appear to have been workshop productions.²⁷

This synopsis of the history of Rembrandt connoisseurship in the last century and a half has specific implications for the National Gallery. The Rembrandt paintings here, almost without exception, came from two major collections, that of the Widener family and that of Andrew Mellon.²⁸ Both collections were formed at a time when Bode's influence on Rembrandt connoisseurship was at its height. The Wideners collected their Rembrandt paintings from 1894 until the 1920s. Peter A.B. Widener probably met Bode when the German art historian came to Philadelphia in 1893, during his tour of American collections after viewing the Chicago World's Fair.²⁹ Widener's later advisor and the advisor of his son Joseph Widener was none other than Wilhelm Valentiner. Mellon collected slightly later than did Widener, and he acquired many of his paintings from the Hermitage in the 1930s. Nevertheless, his generation had also learned to love and appreciate Rembrandt through the eyes of Bode. Thus, as a collection, the Gallery's paintings tend to be the types of paintings Bode and Valentiner most admired, works from the end of Rembrandt's life, when his brushwork is bold and evocative. Following romantic inclinations, paintings intimately associated with the artist also appealed to these collectors. Widener's first painting by Rembrandt was a portrait of Saskia (1942.9.71), and his most famous work was thought to represent the mill of Rembrandt's father (1942.9.62); each collector owned a self-portrait (1942.9.70 and 1937.1.72). Virtually all the Rembrandt paintings in these collections were covered with discolored and even tinted varnishes to give them that "golden glow" so admired in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A large number of paintings acquired by Widener and Mellon were extremely famous at the time of their purchase, and their acquisitions were highly acclaimed by both the leading experts and the popular press. Nevertheless, as scholars have reduced the size of Rembrandt's oeuvre in the second half of the twentieth century, many of these same works have been viewed critically; some have been attributed to pupils of Rembrandt, some have been called later

imitations. Other paintings have entered into an undefined limbo, where vague doubts about the attribution are expressed verbally or in the literature, but where no specific arguments have been advanced to explain why they should not be accepted as authentic.

In trying to determine the attribution of paintings to Rembrandt and his school for this catalogue, a wide range of material has been analyzed, from the provenances of the works, to old reproductive prints and descriptions in sales catalogues, to the opinions of other scholars. Iconographic issues have been explored by looking at both texts available to Rembrandt and probable visual sources. A concerted effort was made, moreover, to examine all of the paintings carefully in the laboratory. Paintings were looked at under the microscope, x-radiographs were taken, infrared and ultraviolet photographs were made, and panel and canvas supports were analyzed. A number of works were restored so that discolored varnish and old overpaint could be removed. Much new information has also been acquired from investigations undertaken in collaboration with members of our scientific department.³⁰

The results of the restorations and technical examinations have often been dramatic, providing reassessments of the quality of a number of individual works, and, in some instances, leading to new attributions. Nevertheless, not all issues of attribution have been fully resolved. In some instances the style and technique could not be identified with specific artists from the Rembrandt workshop. Other paintings were discovered to be in such poor condition that a clear assessment of painterly qualities was not possible. Finally, some paintings could not be restored in time for the deadline for this publication, with the result that discolored varnish and overpaint continue to hinder an informed judgment of the character of the surface.

The paintings from the Rembrandt school have been grouped in this catalogue in four categories: Rembrandt van Rijn, Rembrandt Workshop, Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn, and Style of Rembrandt van Rijn. The distinctions are in basic accordance with National Gallery practice, as is outlined in the introduction to this volume. Within the Rembrandt van Rijn section, however, are also works designated "Rembrandt van Rijn and Workshop," a distinction here used when stylistic evidence indicates that Rembrandt collaborated in the execution of a painting. Collaboration between Rembrandt and members of his workshop may also have occurred in one form or another in paintings designated here simply as "Rembrandt Workshop," but in

these instances Rembrandt's hand cannot be identified in the final image. When a specific artist can be associated with a painting executed in the workshop that was produced to be sold under Rembrandt's name, the name of that artist is indicated in parentheses following the designations "Rembrandt van Rijn and Workshop" or "Rembrandt Workshop."

Notes

1. For overviews of earlier assessments of Rembrandt, see Slive 1953; Scheller 1961, 81–118; and Emmens 1968. For a general account of the history of Rembrandt criticism see Broomgaard and Scheller 1991, 106–123.

2. Smith 1829–1842, 7.

3. Smith 1829–1842, 7: 244.

4. Smith 1829–1842, 7: xxiv.

5. Bode 1897–1906.

6. Despite the enormous fame of this work, the *Man with a Gilded Helmet* is no longer attributed to Rembrandt. See Kelch et al. 1986.

7. Bode 1897–1906, 8: 19.

8. Bode 1897–1906, 8: 22.

9. Bode 1897–1906, 8: 30.

10. Valentiner's publications on Rembrandt are numerous; for the most important see Valentiner 1908 and Valentiner 1921b (2nd ed. 1923). For a full listing of his publications, see Raleigh 1959, 297–319.

11. HdG 1907–1927, 6.

12. Bredius 1935; Rosenberg 1948 (rev. ed. 1964); Bauch 1966.

13. Gerson/Bredius 1969.

14. Funding for this project was provided by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research (ZWO).

15. A partial listing of the various reviews of the publications of the Rembrandt Research Project is as follows: Editorial, *Burlington Magazine* 125 (1983): 661–663; J.R.J. Van Asperen de Boer, Review of vol. 1, *Akt* 9 (1985): 14–19; Peter Schatborn, Review of vol. 1, *Oud-Holland* 100 (1986), 55–63; Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, "The State of Research in Northern Baroque Art," *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 510–519, particularly 514–516; Walter Liedtke, "Reconstructing Rembrandt: Portraits from the Early Years in Amsterdam (1631–1634)," *Apollo* (May 1989): 323–331, 371–372; Sylvia Hochfield, "Rembrandt: The Unvarnished Truth?," *Art News* (December 1987), 102–111; Mansfield Kirby Talley, Jr., "Connoisseurship and the Methodology of the Rembrandt Research Project," *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 8 (1989), 175–214; Leonard J. Slatkes, Review of vol. 2, *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), 139–144. For an excellent overview of the controversies surrounding the Rembrandt Research Project, see Anthony Bailey, "The Art World ("The Polish Rider")," *New Yorker* (5 March 1990), 45–77.

16. To demonstrate how subjective interpretations of painting technique can be, it is necessary only to compare the results of the research of the RRP and those of Claus Grimm in Grimm 1991. Grimm, who also carefully analyzes artists' painting techniques as a basis for attribution, has arrived at a very different list of paintings he believes were executed entirely by the master than that found in the *Corpus*. He is, in fact, more restrictive in the paintings he attributes to Rembrandt than the RRP.

17. For an excellent assessment of Rembrandt's workshop practice, examined from the vantage point of the RRP, see Bruyn 1991, 68–89, and in particular pages 83–85: "On the whole, one may say that with Rembrandt design and execution were closely bound up. Instead of making use of sophisticated workshop procedures which could in part replace the share of the master's hand, he seems to have allowed invention and execution to be separated only in the early stages of the assistants' activities. Later, they would be welcome to their own design and only rarely did they intervene with his own work."

18. See, for example, Bruyn 1991, 85.

19. In the *Burlington Magazine* 135 (1993), 279, J. Bruyn, B. Haak, S. H. Levie, and P. J. J. van Thiel wrote a letter saying that they were no longer involved with the RRP. They indicated that the project would in the future be headed by Ernst van de Wetering, who intended to eliminate the A, B, C categorization in future volumes of the *Corpus*.

20. For discussions of the workshops of Rubens and Anthony van Dyck, see Wheelock in Washington 1990, 11–16, and Barnes in Washington 1990, 17–25. Bruyn (Bruyn 1991, 83), who does not believe that Rembrandt had assistants help him in the manner of Rubens, expressly contrasts the types of commissions Rembrandt and Rubens received and notes that no evidence of workshop participation has been found in the few large-scale commissions Rembrandt did receive, among them *The Blinding of Sampson* (Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, inv. no. 1383) and *The Night Watch* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. C5). Bruyn, however, is not consistent in his belief; for he argues that the horse in Rembrandt's *Portrait of Frederick Ribel on Horseback*, 1663(?) (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 6300), was executed by an assistant.

21. See, in particular, E. van de Wetering, "Problems of Apprenticeship and Studio Collaboration," in *Corpus* 1982–, 2: 45–90; Bruyn 1991, 68–89; and De Jager 1990, 69–111.

22. For a discussion of these works, see Peter Schatborn in Amsterdam 1988.

23. Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, 349–388, doc. 1656/12. Inventory numbers 25, 27, 28, 33, 120, and 123 record paintings retouched by Rembrandt, while inventory number 79 mentions a painting "designed by" Rembrandt. None of these works have been identified.

24. One large painting, however, that I am certain was executed with the help of assistants was *Belsazzar's Feast*, c. 1635 (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 6350; see p. 216, fig. 1). Although the attribution of this painting solely to Rembrandt's hand has never been questioned in print, the peripheral figures in this composition are executed in a range of styles that are inconsistent with Rembrandt's own manner of painting.

25. It has been recognized that an assistant painted the hands in one of Rembrandt's most prestigious commissions, his *Portrait of Johannes Uytenbogaert*, 1633 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SKA4885). See Amsterdam 1993b.

26. The large number of unfinished ("onopgemaect") paintings listed in the inventory of Rembrandt's estate taken on 5 October 1669 indicates that the artist did not immediately complete paintings that he had commenced. Perhaps he intended some of these to be worked up by assistants. For the inventory, see Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, 586–589, doc. 1169/5, nos. 8 and 11.

27. Bruyn 1991, 70–71.

28. The one exception is *Old Woman Plucking a Fowl*, which was given by Dr. and Mrs. Walter Timme in 1956.

29. Bode 1895, 13–19, 70–76, does not explicitly mention visiting Widener, but he does write that he went to Philadelphia. Since he was actively visiting museums and collectors, however, it hardly seems possible that he and Widener did not meet. Widener had been collecting Dutch paintings prior to 1893, but only in 1894 did he begin to acquire major examples (Rembrandt's *Saskia*, for example, from Sedelmeyer in Paris, the dealer who would publish Bode's corpus on Rembrandt). In that same year he also bought a number of

other important Dutch pictures, including Meindert Hobbema's *The Travelers* (1942.9.31), Pieter de Hooch's *The Bedroom* (1942.9.33), and Aelbert Cuyp's *Lady and Gentleman on Horseback* (1942.9.15). At about this time he also began to sell minor works from his earlier collection.

30. We have also benefited enormously from discussions with colleagues from other institutions, in particular Ashok Roy, David Bomford, Ernst van de Wetering, and Karen Groen.

1942.9.71 (667)

Rembrandt van Rijn

*Saskia van Uylenburgh,
the Wife of the Artist*

probably begun 1634/1635 and completed 1638/1640
Oil on poplar, 60.5 x 49 (23¾ x 19¼)
Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The cradled wood support consists of a single poplar board with a vertical grain, with a 2.1 cm L-shaped wood strip added along the left and bottom edges, and a 5.1 cm square insert at the lower right.¹ The frame hides the added strip. A thin chalk and lead white ground covers the surface.² A preliminary sketch in black paint is visible under the features.

Paint was applied fluidly in the background and figure, with slight impasto in the chain and collar. The x-radiograph shows changes in the design, some of which are visible with the naked eye (see fig. 4). The white collar and dark neckline were originally lower, exposing more of the neck. The dress was slightly fuller, as were the chin and cheek profile. The paint is in good condition, with little inpainting or abrasion.

The date of cradling is not known, nor is the date of the attachment of the L-shaped strip. The painting was cleaned in 1930. In 1976, the painting again underwent treatment. A lower natural resin layer was left in place, along with a hardened, pigmented natural resin layer on the dress.

Provenance: Bouchier Cleeve [d. 1760], Foots Cray Place, Kent; Sir George Yonge, Bart.; (sale, London, 24–25 March 1806, no. 79). William Wells, Redleaf, Kent; (sale, Christie & Manson, London, 12–13 May 1848, no. 67). (Sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 10 and 12 May 1890, no. 93); (P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London); H. Bingham Mildmay, Devon; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 24 June 1893, no. 58). (Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris); Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, in 1894; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

Exhibited: British Institution, London, 1831, no. 85. *100 Paintings of Old Masters*, Sedelmeyer Gallery, Paris, 1894, no. 31. New York 1909, no. 81. Washington 1969, no. 2.

SASKIA VAN UYLENBURGH, baptized on 12 August 1612, was raised in Leeuwarden, the principle city of the Province of Friesland. Her family members were leading patricians of that Frisian city, and her father, Rombertus Rommertsz. van Uylenburgh, served as burgomaster of Leeuwarden. Two of Saskia's cousins, Aaltje Pietersdr. van Uylenburgh and Hendrik van Uylenburgh, lived in Amsterdam, and it was presumably on a visit there that Saskia met Rembrandt, who had moved from Leiden to live in the house of Hendrik van Uylenburgh in 1632. Van Uylenburgh was a painter and flourishing art dealer, and Rembrandt, who as early as 1631 invested in the business, lived there and worked with Van Uylenburgh until 1635.³

Rembrandt and Saskia were betrothed on 8 June 1633. Married a year later on 22 June 1634, they lived together for nine years before her death on 14 June 1642. The couple had four children, but only one, Titus, born in 1641, survived infancy.

The image of Saskia that has been preserved for us through Rembrandt's many drawings, etchings, and paintings is incredibly varied. One sees through them her warmth and tenderness (fig. 1), but also a certain haughtiness; her robust energy and zest for life, but also the debilitating illnesses that frequently weakened her after the mid-1630s. One senses that a strong bond existed between Rembrandt and Saskia, but that, at the same time, her conservative upbringing and character seem to have made it difficult for her to fully accord to the kind of life she was expected to lead as the wife, and occasional model, of this extraordinary painter.

In this painting the personal nature of Rembrandt's representation is enhanced by Saskia's pose. Glancing over her right shoulder she looks out at the viewer. With her head tilted slightly forward she has a gentle yet engaging appearance. Nevertheless, one senses even in this appealing portrait the duality of Saskia's nature. While she wears a fashionable, albeit