

11

“So typical of Rembrandt”

Physical properties

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The wooden support:

The baptism of the eunuch is painted on a panel of 95,6 cm x 64,2 cm three horizontal boards of Baltic oak glued flat together and thick of 0.8 to 0.9 cm. The wood is cut on a quarter-to-quarter basis (radial cut) and is slow growing (fig.1). The upper and middle planks contain bands of sapwood (4-5 annual rings) at the joints.



Fig. 1 The present painting and the cradle with Christie's lot number 642 VR sold as a painting by Rembrandt in 1798 and in 1973.

Originally, this panel had no structural reinforcement other than its frame 17th century. However, it is not uncommon to find such defects on panels produced during the 'Thirty Years' War.

It is the common support Rembrandt used for all his paintings before 1632, except for a few painted on copper. The panel is not in its original shape. Some wood was shaven off on the right side (fig. 2).

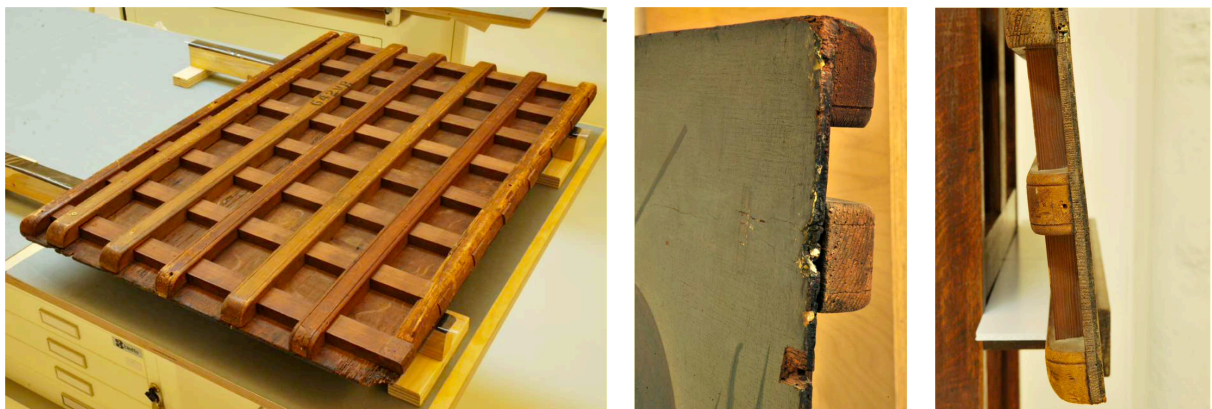


Fig. 2 The painting and the cradle, the cutting on the right side and the regular edge of the left side.

The presence of numerous insect galleries in the center of the planks suggests either the presence of a “lunure band” (internal non-hardened sapwood) or attacks by 'wet wood' insects when the quarters remained in winter storage in the forest after being split.¹ In theory, these defects in the wood made it unsuitable for use as a painting medium as required by

¹ This is because the heartwood of oak - the central, rot-proof part of the wood - cannot be attacked by the "dry wood" insects of our European regions except in the non-hardened parts such as the sapwood or the lunure areas. Only "wet wood" insects can attack the wood when the tree has just been felled and the wood remains at a high internal moisture content.

the guilds in the Years' War (1618-1648).² Movement in the joints between the boards has resulted in some paint loss, a phenomenon observed in most panel paintings on more than one plank. At a given moment in the past, a cradling grid was mounted on the back of the painting, presumably in order to reduce movement of the boards (fig.3). This treatment, which is no longer recommended for panel paintings, may have exacerbated the effects of the inevitable expansion and contraction of wood in varying atmospheric conditions. Other damages were caused by clumsy handling of the painting (fig.4-5).



Fig. 3 The insect damages and the restoration. The movements of the boards.

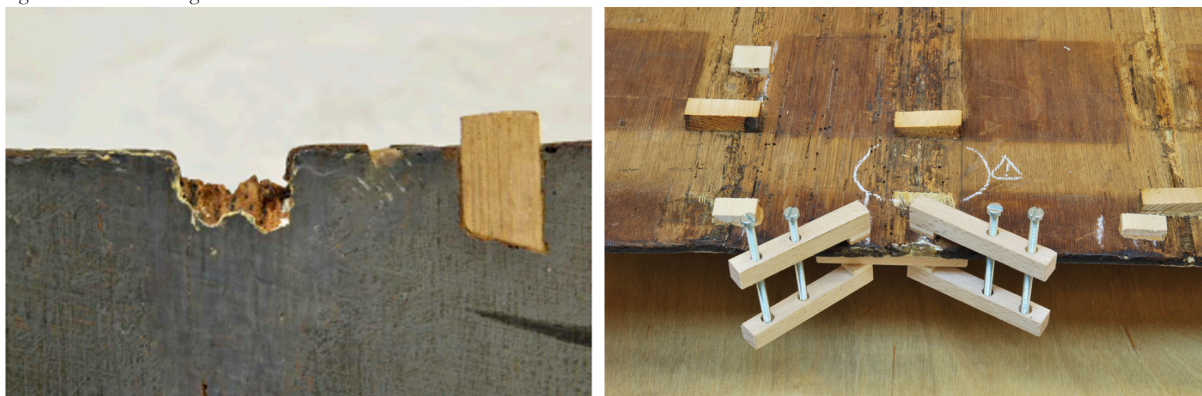


Fig. 4 Damage accidentally caused by a Dutch art dealer during an inspection (Dec.11. 2013) and the repair performed by Jonathan Graindorge.



Fig. 5 The lower dexter corner of the panel was damaged. The broken and detached part of the panel, about 4 cm2.

In 2015 the support was repaired by Jonathan Graindorge Lamour, and in the same year, the painted surfaced was restored by Regina Costa Pinto, a restorer who has been entrusted with prestigious commissions from the Louvre, including Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* (fig. 6).

² It is found very frequently on the panels used by Pieter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt. Bernard Allien, December 10. 2021

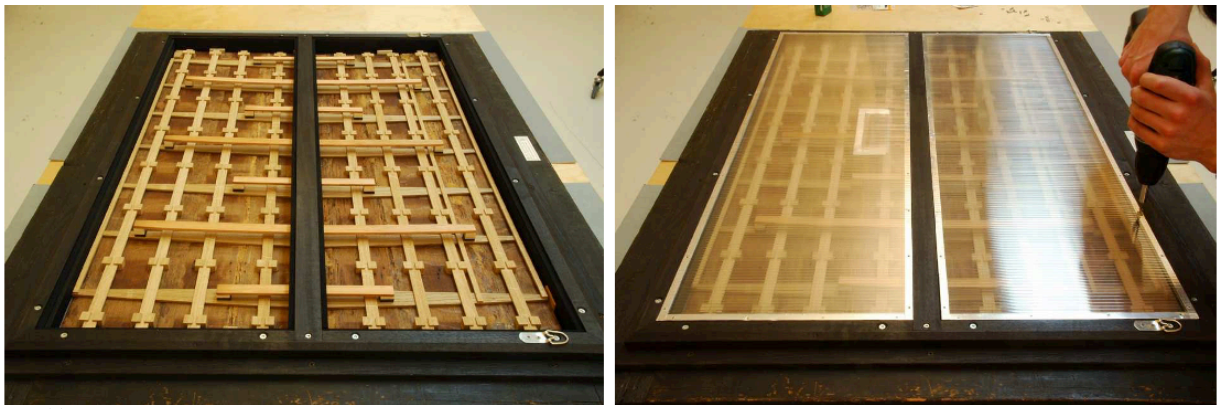


Fig. 6 The new support system of the panel that follows the variation of the boards.

Her work on the *Baptism of the eunuch* entailed a measure of inpainting, filling in passages of paint loss (fig. 7). After the cleaning made by the restorer, Professor Fernando García García interpreted the original traces graphically to understand the artist intention, supervised and participated in the restoration of Philip's face (fig. 8). The original traces of the master's brushstrokes were found and respected, as much as possible, as suggested by Michiel Franken.



Fig. 7 Restoration zone of movement in the joints between the boards in which has resulted in some paint loss (multispectral)



Fig. 8 Fernando García García and the restorer, Regina Costa Pinto during a session focused on Philip's head area.

The source and treatment of light:

During the restoration, after the cleaning of the varnish, we have discovered the attracting point of the painting. It is a surprising patch of light on eunuch's hair that represents a key element of the painting. It results that there are three sources of light and a trajectory (fig.9):

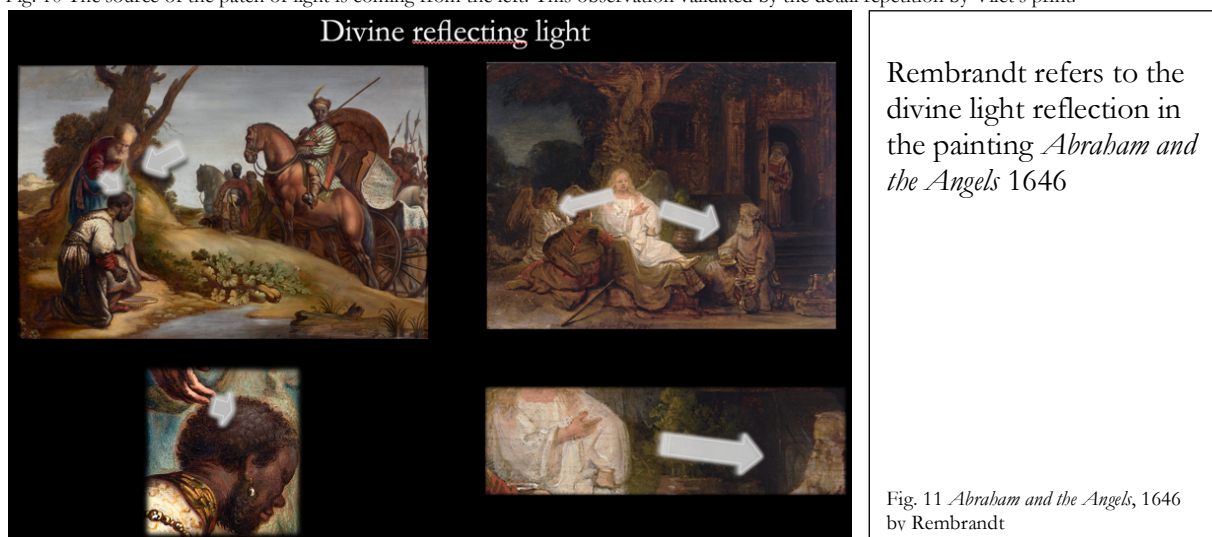


Fig. 9 Three lights intervene: the vertical divine one that reflects a patch of light another is oblique coming from the East.

- One is symbolic, supranatural and vertical. It comes from the Holy Spirit that touches Philip's shoulder and the hand that baptizes the eunuch,
- The source of the patch of light on the eunuch's head by refraction from Philip's hand comes from the left. The baptism is performed with the "good light" (fig.10-11).
- A natural oblique light comes from the right or the Levant and illuminates the small landscape in the background on the picture left side. It recalls another focus of light like the servant in the back room of *the Supper at Emmaus* ca. 1628.



Fig. 10 The source of the patch of light is coming from the left. This observation validated by the detail repetition by Vliet's print.



With the exception the Holy Spirit ray and the reflection ray from Philip's hand, the light comes from the so-called 'wrong' side as in several other paintings by Rembrandt, the light source also comes from the right, and not without reason: *The presumed wrong side, Verkeerde dagh*:

In most of Rembrandt's paintings, the light comes from the left. However, the Utrecht painting, made perhaps in 1626 also has a light source from the right.

In the present painting: "... the source of light is on the right. In Dutch technical parlance of the seventeenth century, this is called by the disarming term "verkeerde dagh," daylight from the wrong side. Although employed in a minority of paintings, it is not unusual. Rembrandt paintings with a source of light on the right include (fig. 12):

1. *Baptism of the eunuch*, 1626,
2. *David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul*, 1627 (fig.13)
3. *The supper at Emmaus*, 1629
4. *Philip baptizing the eunuch* c. 1631 (the present painting)
5. *Belshazzar's feast* from the early 1630s. etc.

The light from the East is not a happenstance: It plays a significant role: it shows that enlightenment comes from the direction of the rising sun. There is also a vertical or zenithal source of light. The texture of this light is more mystical than solar. It is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In both paintings of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, the beam directly hits the palm of Philip's right hand, the hand that baptizes the eunuch (fig. 13).

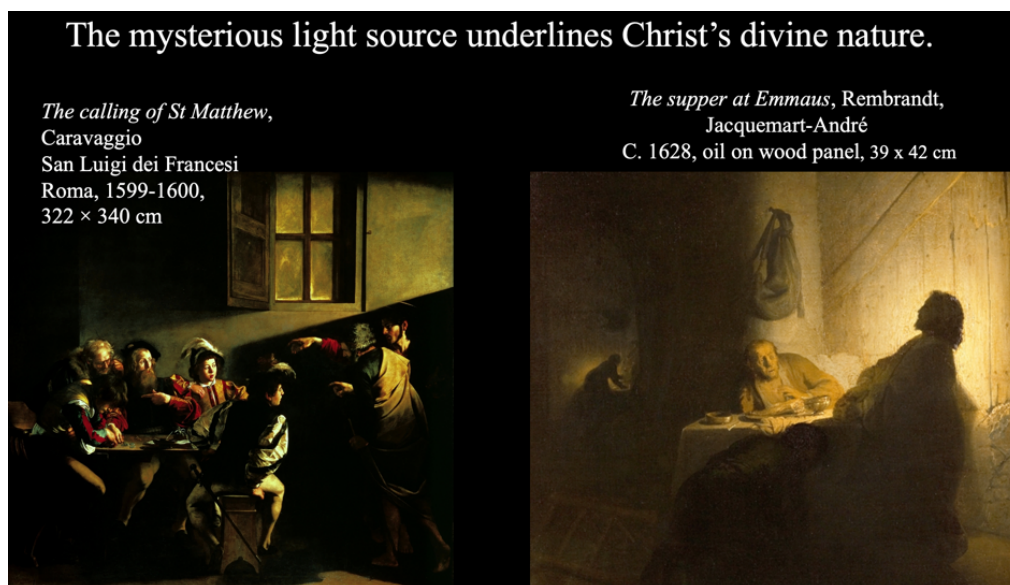


Fig. 12 *The calling of St. Matthew*, Caravaggio and *the Supper at Emmaus* with light coming from the right.



Fig. 13 *The supper at Emmaus* c. 1628 Musée Jacquemart -André, *Belshazzar's feast*, 1635-38 NG of London with light coming from the right.

The Utrecht painting and the *Baptism of the Eunuch* 1631 are in the same way and the light is coming from the East (fig.14). However, there is no light reflection on the eunuch's hair from Philip's hand in Utrecht painting (fig.15).



Fig. 14 The same source of light from the East for Utrecht painting and from the East and the Holy Spirit in the present painting.



Fig. 15 There is no reflection of light from Philip's hand on the eunuch's head in the Utrecht painting as if it were a clumsy pastiche of the present painting whose artist's intention is lost.

We know that allegorically “[...] the rising sun is related to the east. So, since Christ is the ‘light of the world’ (Jn 8, 12) the person of Christ and direction of east is closely related. [...] This turn to East, according to Origen: “symbolizes the soul looking toward when the true light rises. “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” (Mathew 24:27)³

In the present painting, the invisible deity manifests his presence by means of a divine, inexplicable ray of light, which falls from the left on Philip's

incandescent hand and rebounds from it onto the eunuch's head, to perform the act of baptism.

The eunuch's brigade stands motionless. Nothing stirs: not the sky, the air, nor even the dog.

The momentousness of the event they are witnessing is conveyed solely by means of a ray of light. A hand receives the invisible beam and deflects it in the form of a bright halo around the eunuch's head. Instead of showing a baptism done the usual way, with drops of water, Rembrandt offers us the visual experience of a divine encounter with God, in which His unexpected presence is revealed. At this numinous moment, the eunuch's entourage is filled with awe and the viewer kept at bay by the imperious commanding horseman. A hand is also given a preeminent role in Rembrandt's *Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1635. Joanna Sheers Seidenstein analyzes the significance of this raised hand in her "Divine Encounter, Rembrandt's *Abraham and the Angels*".⁴

It has noted that Rembrandt did not used the "good light" for some of the biblical stories as well as portraits including one of his last and important self-portraits (fig.16).



Fig. 16 Portrait of Jacques de Gheyn III, 1632, *Exce-Homo* 1634, NG. London, Rembrandt Self-portrait, 1659 NG Washington.

The order of working from back to front:

The nature and function of the ground with the order of working from back to front noticed by the restorer Regina Costa Pinto (fig. 214) and by Prof. Fernando García García. According to Ernst van de Wetering, this process of painted layers order is observed in many Rembrandt's artworks. From the sketchily done shapes with persuasive expressions and a landscape in the background, to the eunuch's entourage in the

⁴ Divine Encounter, Rembrandt's *Abraham and the Angels* Joanna Sheers Seidenstein is the 2015–17 Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow at The Frick Collection, New York. Published by The Frick Collection Michaelyn Mitchell, Editor in Chief Hilary Becker, Assistant Editor e Frick Collection, New York in association with D Giles Limited, London, (June 6, 2017).

middle ground to main stage (Philip and the eunuch) and 3D effects in the foreground (fig. 17-18).

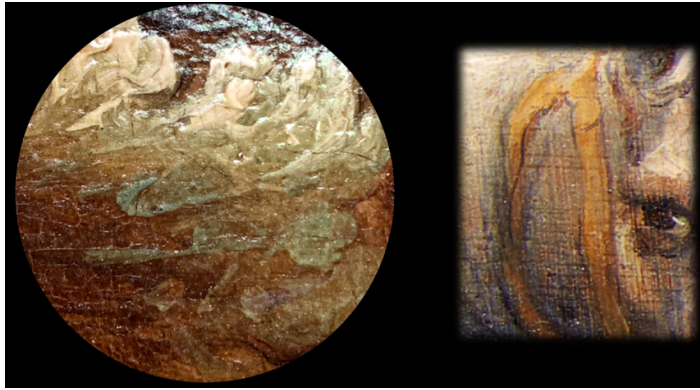


Fig. 17 Painted drawing without thickness in the background (on the right) and three-D vegetables with thick impasto in the fore ground (on the left).

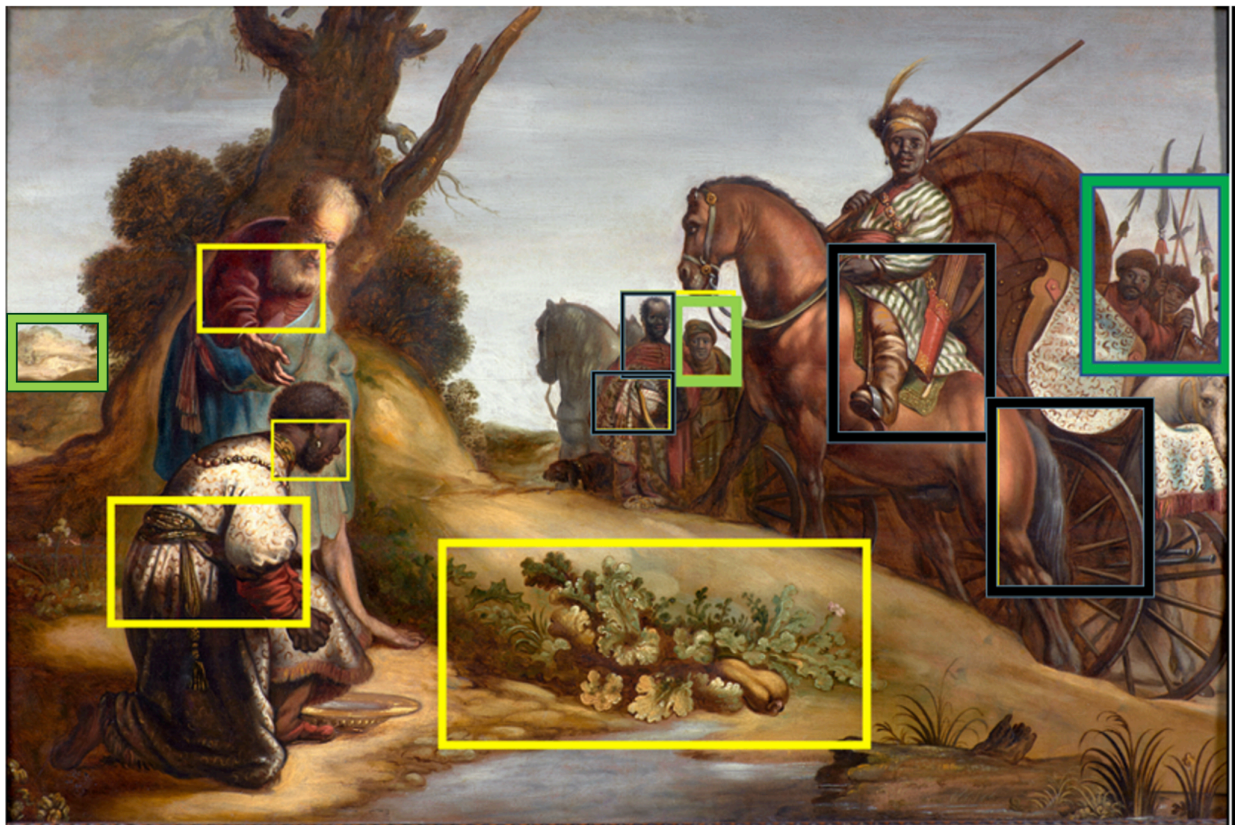
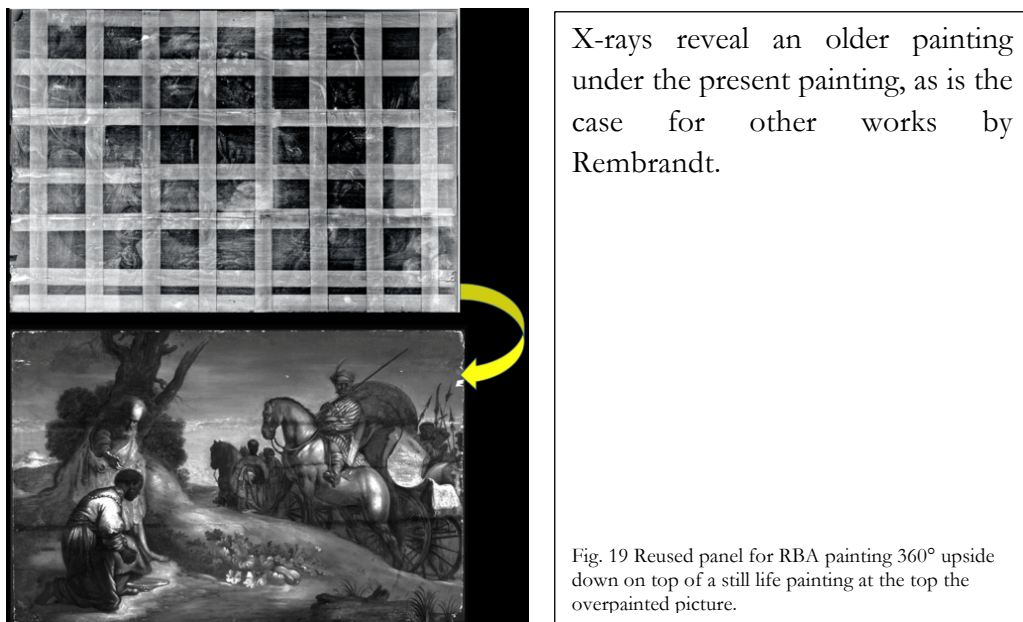


Fig. 18 Sketchy figures and a landscape in the background (green), horsemen (black), the servant and animal in the middle ground, the 3D vegetables, and main characters in the foreground (yellow).

X-rays analysis reveals the artwork is upside down and painted over an older image, upside down, which was typical of Rembrandt's practice:

Rembrandt made some thirty paintings on top of other paintings (fig.19).



“In 2013 the RAD’ART Institute in Geneva produced radiographies of the painting that show remnants of a still life that preceded the *Baptism*, upside down from the surface image. Because of the cradling on the back of the panel, this is difficult to see. However, the practice itself – the reuse of panels in this way – was not unknown [...]

The painting below the present one is a typical Dutch still life with a glass, apples, an embossed dish, fish, and a ruff (fig. 20).

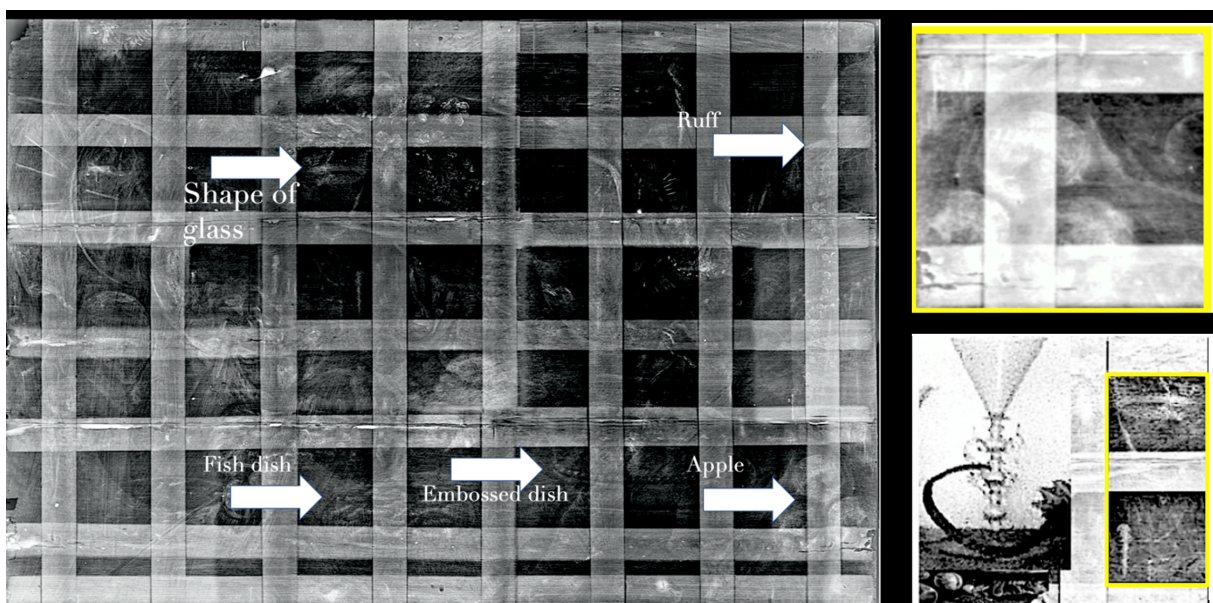


Fig. 20 A group of apples of the present painting, almost visible with the naked eye. A glass of wine in the hidden painting (Multispectral Analysis).

Rembrandt was already in the habit of reusing panels shortly before he made the present painting. In *David with the head of Goliath before Saul*, from 1627, the underpainted picture is a portrait (fig. 21).



Fig. 21 *David with the Head of Goliath before Saul*, 1627, oil on panel, traces of an underpainted portrait (27.5 cm x 39.5 cm), Kunstmuseum Basel and *Old Man in Military Costume*, 1630-31, oil on panel (50.8 à 66 cm), the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 78.PB.246 with an attempted recreation of the hidden portrait¹

The dendrochronology

In 2012 the panel was submitted for dating to the leading specialist in the dendrochronology of panel paintings, Dr. Peter Klein of Hamburg University.ⁱ He found differences in the felling dates of the three planks. The middle one was the oldest, from a tree whose earliest growth ring dates from 1465. It was the latest one to be felled, an event whose earliest possible date is 1629. Since two years were required for the seasoning of newly cut planks before they could be used for a panel painting, this gives 1631 as the earliest year in which the painting can have been made. Since that dating fits in with the period of the Rembrandt paintings with the closest ties to the new *Baptism of the eunuch*, it is accepted here as the approximate date, rather than the later dates in the 1630s that Dr. Klein regards as more probable. It was in 1631 that Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam where it is known that he had taken several of his Leiden paintings (*Simeon in the Temple*, *Lot and his Daughters* made in 1631 signed 1633 etc.) and possibly the present painting.

The pentimenti:

Pentimenti seen with the naked eye which show changes to the composition while the work was being made:

a) *Branches*: The painter overpainted these branches because they covered too large a surface in the sky (fig. 22).

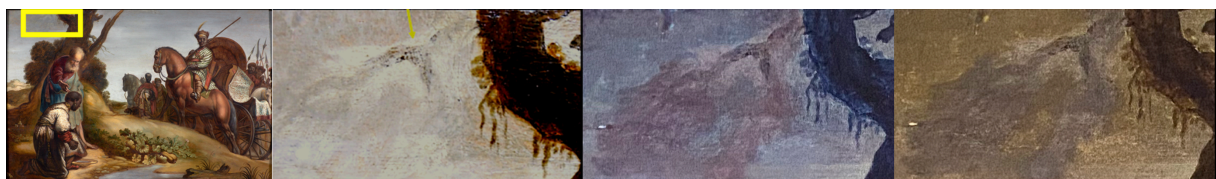


Fig. 22 Pentimenti of branches, multispectral images.

b) *Lance*: The lance was painted over after it was begun, to be replaced by another one in a parallel position (fig. 23).



Fig. 23 Pentimenti of lances.

Pentimenti revealed by multispectral images that show a change made in favour of greater realism:

These pentimenti concern the eunuch's right foot, a detail of his tunic, the landscape in the background and the harness of the warhorse ridden by the commander of the company (fig. 24-25-26-27).



Fig. 24 Eunuch's right foot.

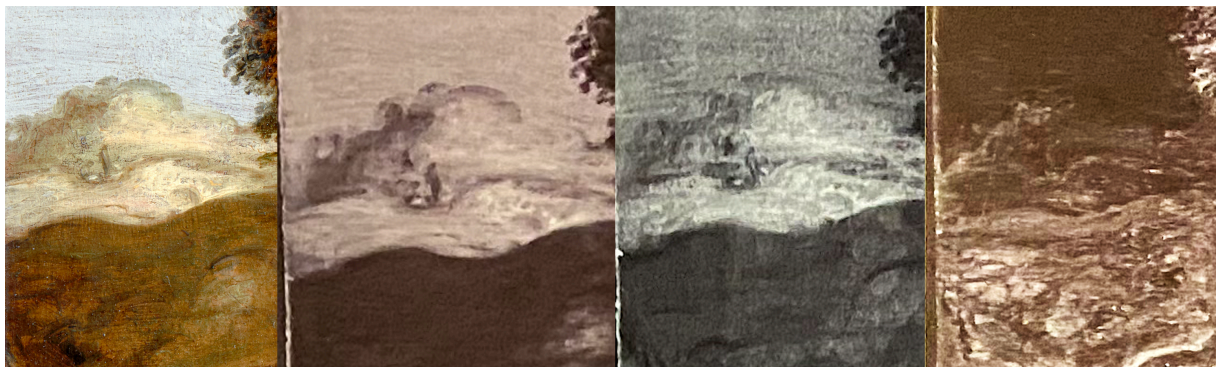


Fig. 25 Architectures or Jerusalem landscape, the pictorial layer and IR from multispectral analysis.



Fig. 26 Detail removed by a zealous restorer made after Vliet and Visscher's engravings Eunuch's fringes overpainted and traces in multispectral analysis.

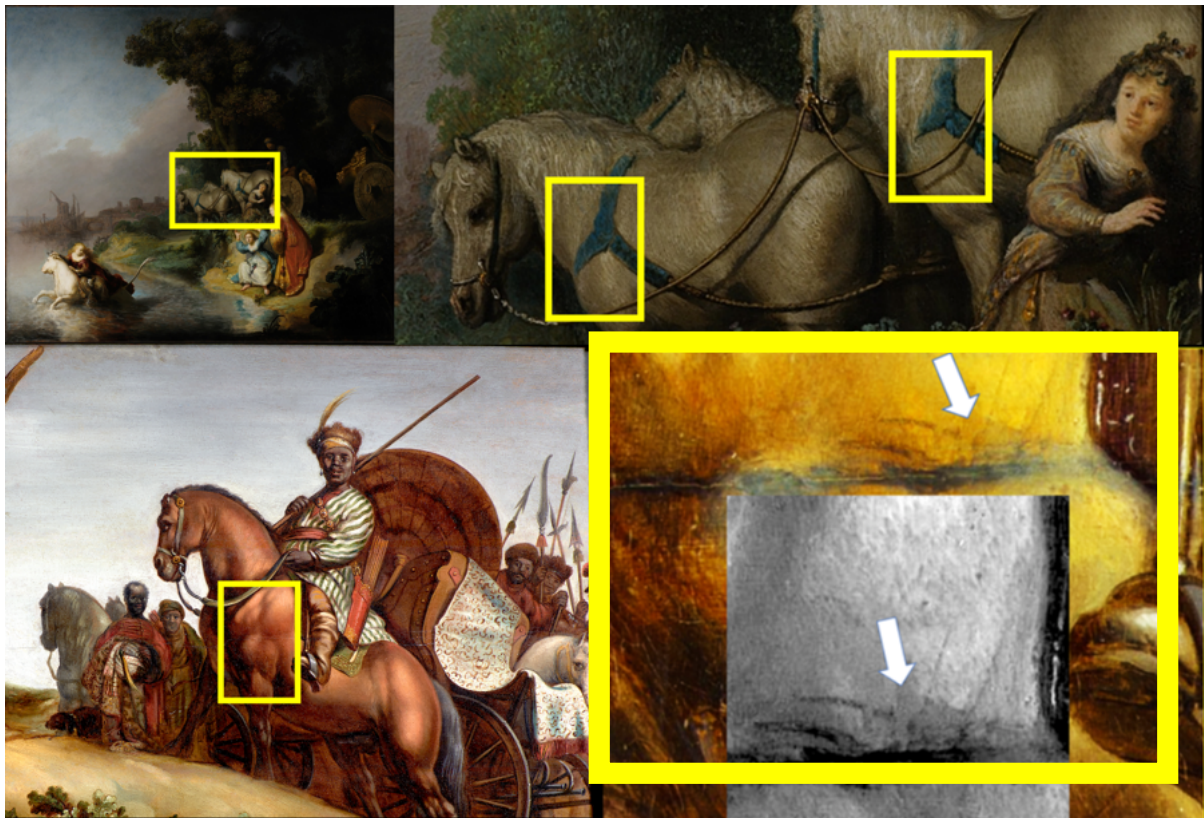


Fig. 27 Multispectral images show a formal harness like the ones of the draft horses of *the Abduction of Europa*, Rembrandt, 1632, Getty Museum.

While he was working, the painter realized that the harness he had drawn was suitable for a draft horse and not for a warhorse.⁵ So he painted over the first, inappropriate harness, which could have cause “strangulation,” and substituted it with one suitable for a warhorse. This is further evidence that Vliet and Visscher did not inspire the painting. The engravers directly copied the pictorial layer of the present painting and had no knowledge of what lay beneath. A restorer has obviously overpainted this detail.

Observation:

These changes were made to the composition in the course of the work and show the free and fast manner of working which is so typical of Rembrandt. They are rapidly and confidently done and are coherent with Rembrandt’s typical way of composing directly on the surface of the painting. Some details have been removed by a zealous restorer and found during the multispectral analysis. These kind of restorers' calamitous actions confuse the perception of the picture and may have given the impression of a painting details performed by Rembrandt's pupils. These are indeed much later modifications.

⁵Rembrandt will use the harness for draft horse in the abduction of Europe 1632, JP Getty Museum.
Bernard Allien, December 10. 2021

The reserves:

“The reserves left open when the composition was first laid down, such as those around the heads of the eunuch and the horseman, ... are another type of proof that the painting was an original and not a copy.” Gary Schwartz refers here to the report made by Regina Costa Pinto, who restored the painting (fig. 28).



Fig. 28 Reserves around the head.

The reserve around the eunuch's head plays a role in the “houding” effect. This halo of colour and light around his head gives the impression of an empty space between Philip's tunic and the eunuch's body and enhances the supernatural dimension of the saint and the person with whom he is interacting (fig. 29).

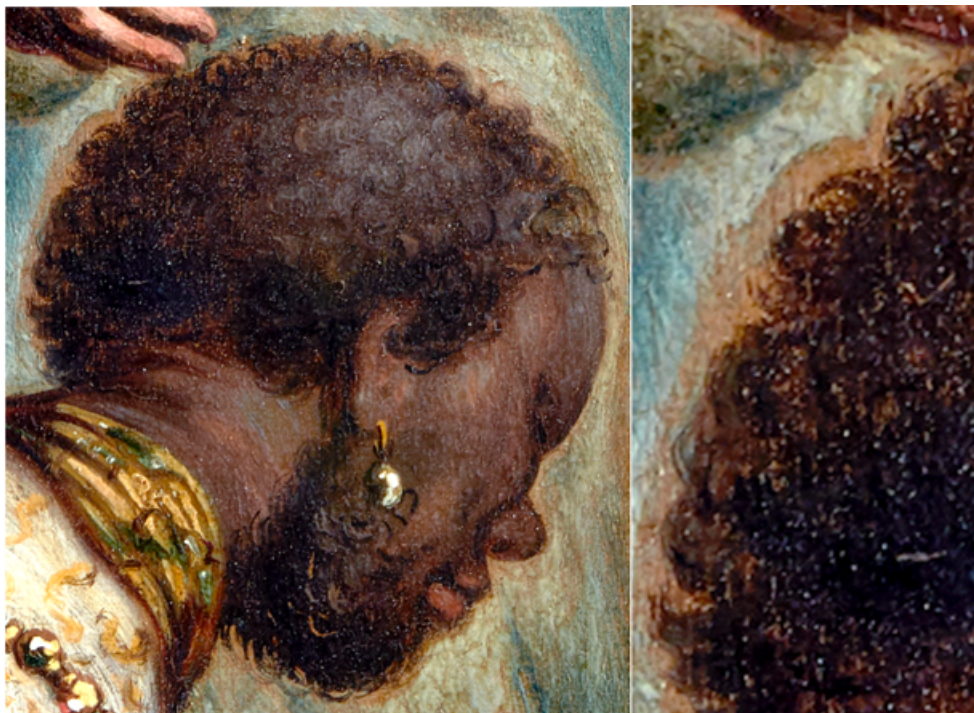


Fig. 29 Detail of the reserve around the eunuch's head with a houding effect that creates the head from Philip's tunic.

Observation:

The reserves left around the heads demonstrate that the present painting could be the original.

The incisions:

‘A specific texture, a calligraphic style using scratch-marks, which mainly curve in the same direction’.

According to Christopher White, these scratched lines were made by using the end of the brush to incise marks into the wet paint. Giovanni Morelli advocated in 1874 that a scientific method for determining the hand of the artist was to investigate the unimportant parts of the composition. Some of the techniques that have been identified as being used by Rembrandt are curls scratched through the paint into the ground, small brushstrokes with thinly applied and translucent paint, and paint applied wet-on-wet so that the colors and brushstrokes merge. In his early pictures, Rembrandt incised scratches through the paint to reveal the ground, particularly when representing curly hair, which Hofstede de Groot noted was a distinctive technique 1628 (Fig. 30) and 1629 (fig. 31) exemplify and demonstrate this technique (fig. 32).



Fig. 30 Incised hair in the present painting and detail of the Bust of *an Old Man in Fanciful Costume* 1635, Scratch-marks on Philip's beard.

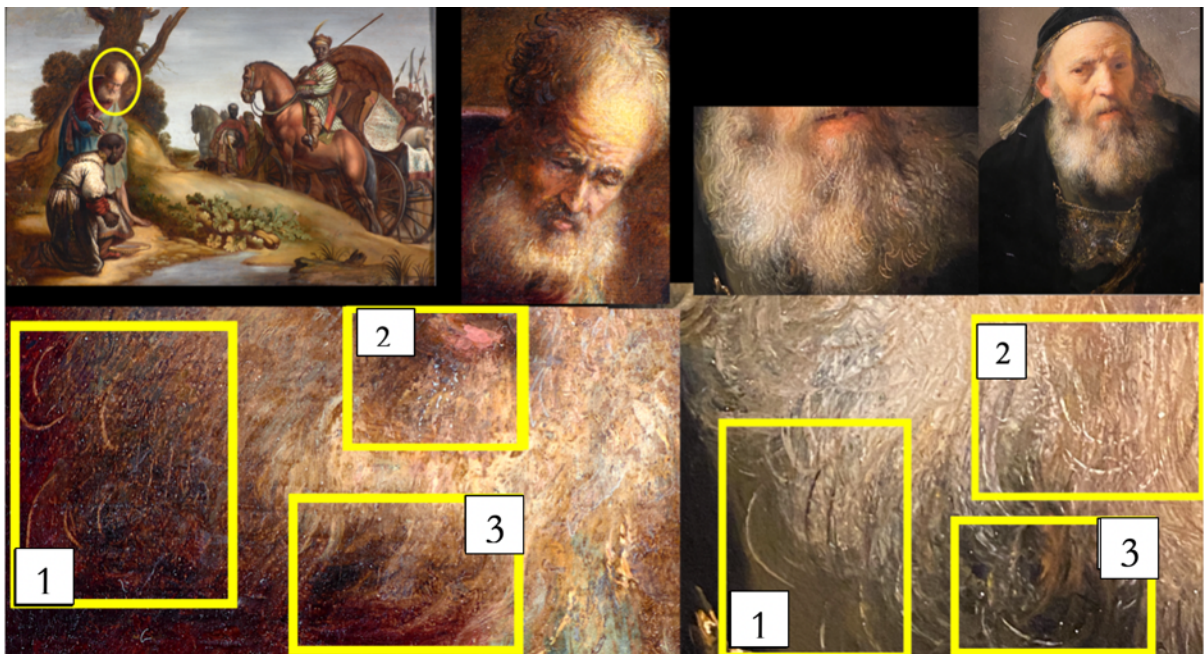


Fig. 31 Scratches on Philip's beard of RBA c. 1630 and detail of the Bust of *an Old Man in Fanciful Costume* 1635, 72.5 x 62.1 cm, Oil on mahogany panel, Royal Collection, London.

The scratch-marks that add texture to the hair also serve to enhance the illusion of a light source from the righthand side. In contrast, *The Old Man*

in *Fanciful Costume*, which is thought to be from Rembrandt's workshop, has been noted as having "confused strokes of quite thick and sometimes dry, lumpy paint" which differentiates it from authenticated works by Rembrandt, in which the brushstrokes are smaller and the paint is thinner and applied wet-on-wet, as we have seen above.



Fig. 32 Scratches in self-portrait and in the eunuch's beard.

Despite the important difference of scale, compare the detail of the beard of the Bust of *an Old Man in Fanciful Costume* 1635, the *Old Man in a Cap* c. 1630 and Philip's head in the present painting. Small brushstrokes with thinly applied and translucent paint, and paint applied wet-on-wet so that the colours and brushstrokes merge. Philip's beard and the dog's bear of *Self-portrait in Oriental Attire*, 1631 are similar (fig. 33).

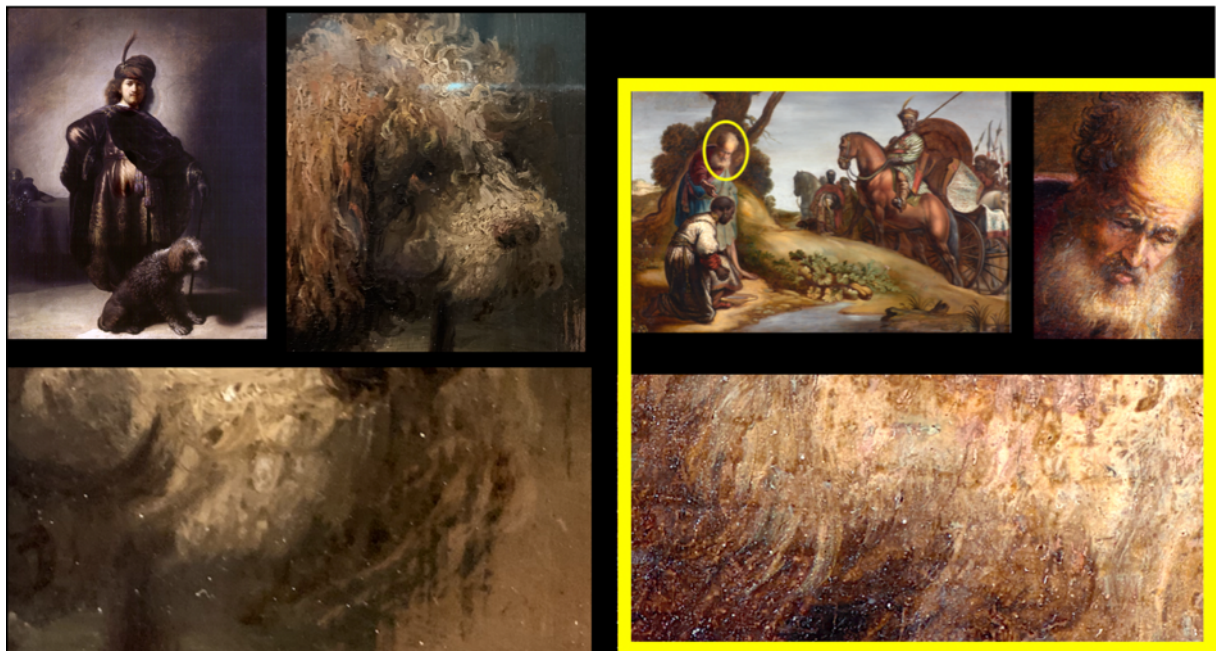


Fig. 33 Small brushstrokes with thinly applied and translucent paint, and paint applied wet-on-wet so that the colours and brushstrokes merge.

Material traces in auction houses:

- *“Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen” (1752)*

The sale of Rembrandt’s *“Baptism of the Eunuch”* at an anonymous auction of paintings on 6 April 1695 recorded in Gerard Hoet’s *“Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen”* (1752). *Catalogus van Schilderyen, Verkogt den 6 April 1695. In Amsterdam.*⁴⁸ *De Moormans Dooping, van Rembrand.* 46 – 0.⁶

- *June 9th, 1798, London, Christie’s catalogue:*

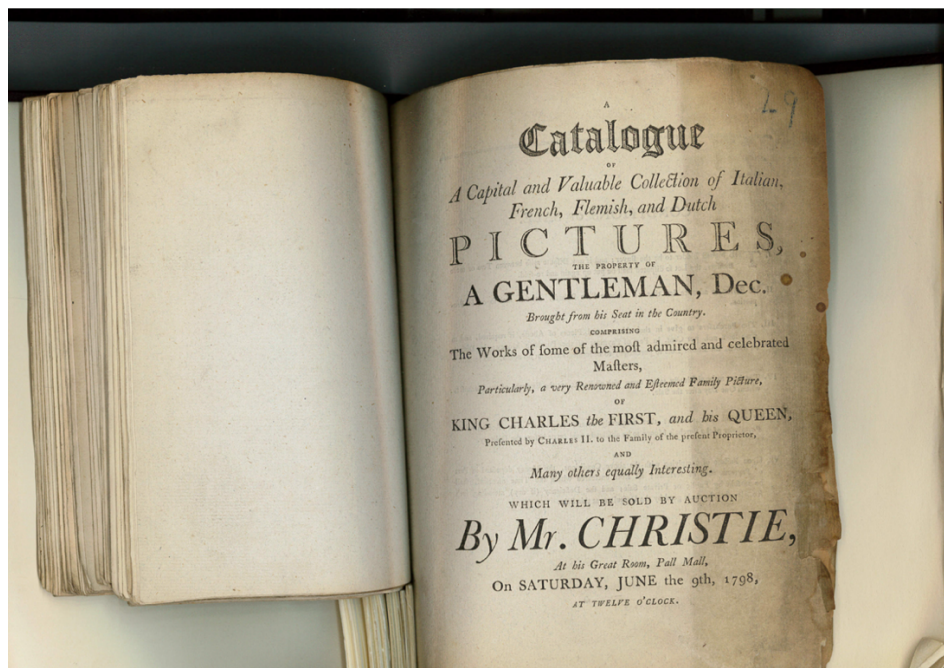


Fig. 34 Front cover, 1798 Christie’s catalogue.

⁶MetadatLocation: Nijmegen,UniversiteitsbibliotheekArchivetype: MagazijnCBAccess number:Authorname: GerardHoet/catalogiseerder/samensteller[cataloguer/compiler] Object name: Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen, met derzelver pryzen zedert een langen reeks van jaaren zoo in Holland als op andere plaatzen in het openbaar verkogt, 2 vols, ed. Pieter Gerard van Baalen, The Hague 1752 Inventorynumber: OD397c113Folionumber: Vol.1Folio side:Pagenumber: p.22-24:p.24RD: Urk. 371 NRDLiterature: Lugt155;GPILot0048[Hoet]fromSaleCatalogN-A9 Provenance: Permanent link: document/remdoc/c14050

“A catalogue of a Capital and Valuable Collection of Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch Pictures”. “The works of the most admired and celebrated Masters” (among them: Two paintings by Rembrandt). “Particularly, a very Renowned and Esteemed Family picture of KING CHARLES the FIRST and his QUEEN etc. (fig. 34).”

The catalogue mentioned two paintings by Rembrandt, including a *Baptism of the Eunuch* (fig. 35-36).

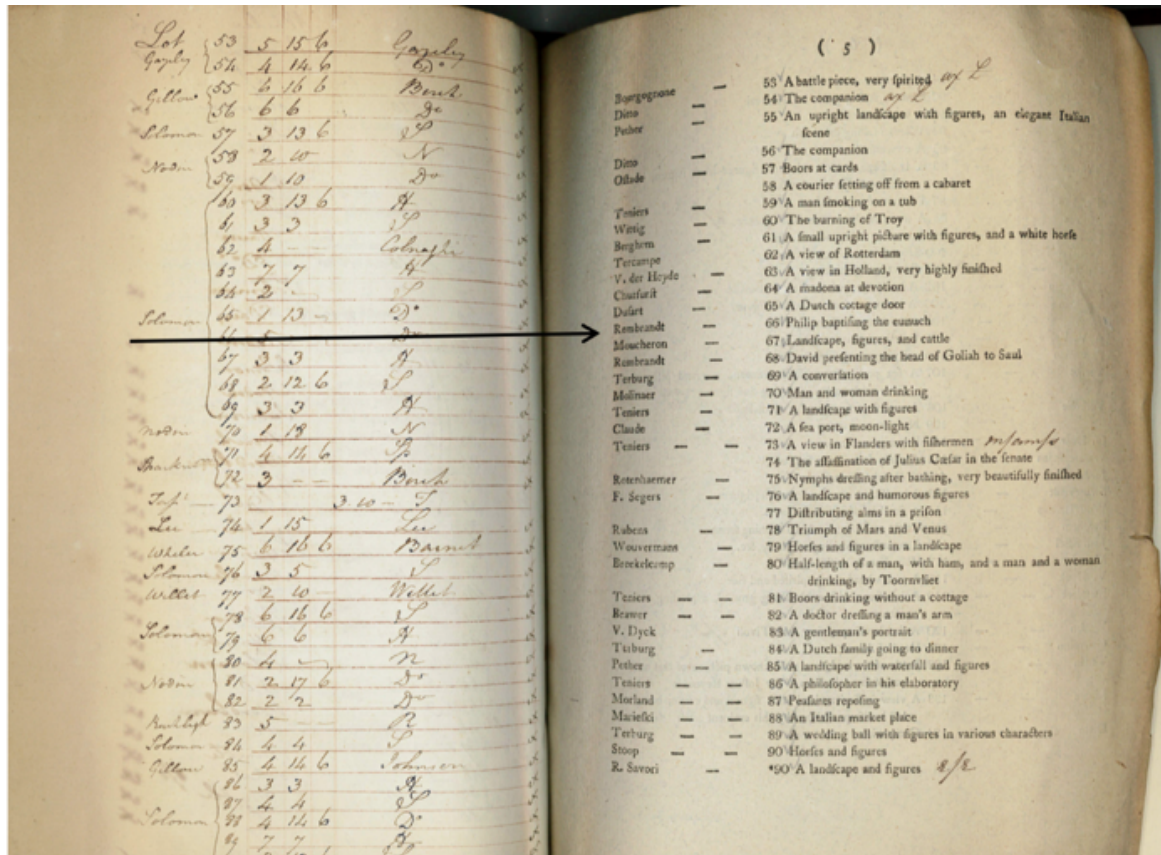


Fig. 35 Auctions, 1798 Christie's catalogue, mentioning *Philip baptising the eunuch*.

Dufart	—	65	A Dutch cottage door
→ Rembrandt	—	66	Philip baptising the eunuch
Moucheron	—	67	Landscape, figures, and cattle
→ Rembrandt	—	68	David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul

Fig. 36 Auctions, 1798 Christie's catalogue, mentioning a second Rembrandt painting: *David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul*

After mentioning the existence of the present painting, the auction house has sent to us the pages of the catalogue of *June 9th, 1798, London 1798* catalogue (above) concerning ‘*Philip Baptising the Eunuch*’, lot 66, by Rembrandt. It was sold in the same time of *David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul*, lot 68, dated 1627,

The two Rembrandt paintings were sold on the same day. *David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul* ca 1627, now in the Kunstmuseum of Basel, was doubtless accepted as a Rembrandt painting. Lot 83 by Van Dyck, Lot 78 by Rubens are authentic "works of art by great masters".

The fact that the painting *Philip baptising the eunuch* was recorded in the 1798 Christie's catalogue confirms that this Rembrandt artwork once existed as it is documented by copies J. G. Vliet's and Visscher's prints which have

the particularity of repeating the rough cutting on the right edge of the present painting. This characteristic is distinctive and represent one of the best ways of identification.

The Utrecht painting could not be the one mentioned in the catalogue. According to RKD, this painting has never left Holland and which to this day is not documented before 1976 by any drawing, etching, literature or copies and which initially raised doubts about its authenticity among Rembrandt's specialists. The former owners did not notice the very visible signature *R* nor considered that it was a possible Rembrandt before the visit of H. Defoer to Nijmegen in 1976 who was convinced of it.⁷



Collection(s)

private collection mevr. J.V. Bijlard, Nijmegen

1900 - 1976 The painting was bought around 1900 by the grandfather of J.V. Bijlard.

Aartsbisschoppelijk Museum, Utrecht

bought with support of the Vereniging Rembrandt and the Prins Bernhard Fonds

1976

Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht , inv./cat.nr ABM s380

1976 -

Fig. 37 RKD map and the literature of the painting begins only from 1976.

David presenting the head of Goliath to Saul shows several elements in common with the present painting: the light comes from the right-hand side; there is a similar set of lances; and the image is painted on top of another, older one (fig. 38). This Rembrandt's artwork and the present painting were reunited again at the exhibition, *West Meets East in the Work of Rembrandt and His Dutch Contemporaries*, Kunstmuseum, Basel and Barberini Museum

⁷ Ernst van de Wetering did not consider that Philip's head is made by Rembrandt and does not attach importance to the signature: the R right leg

of Potsdam, 31 October 2020 to 14 February 2021. The vicinity of these two paintings seems meaningful as well in the sale of Christie's 1798 as the exhibition of 2020-2021.

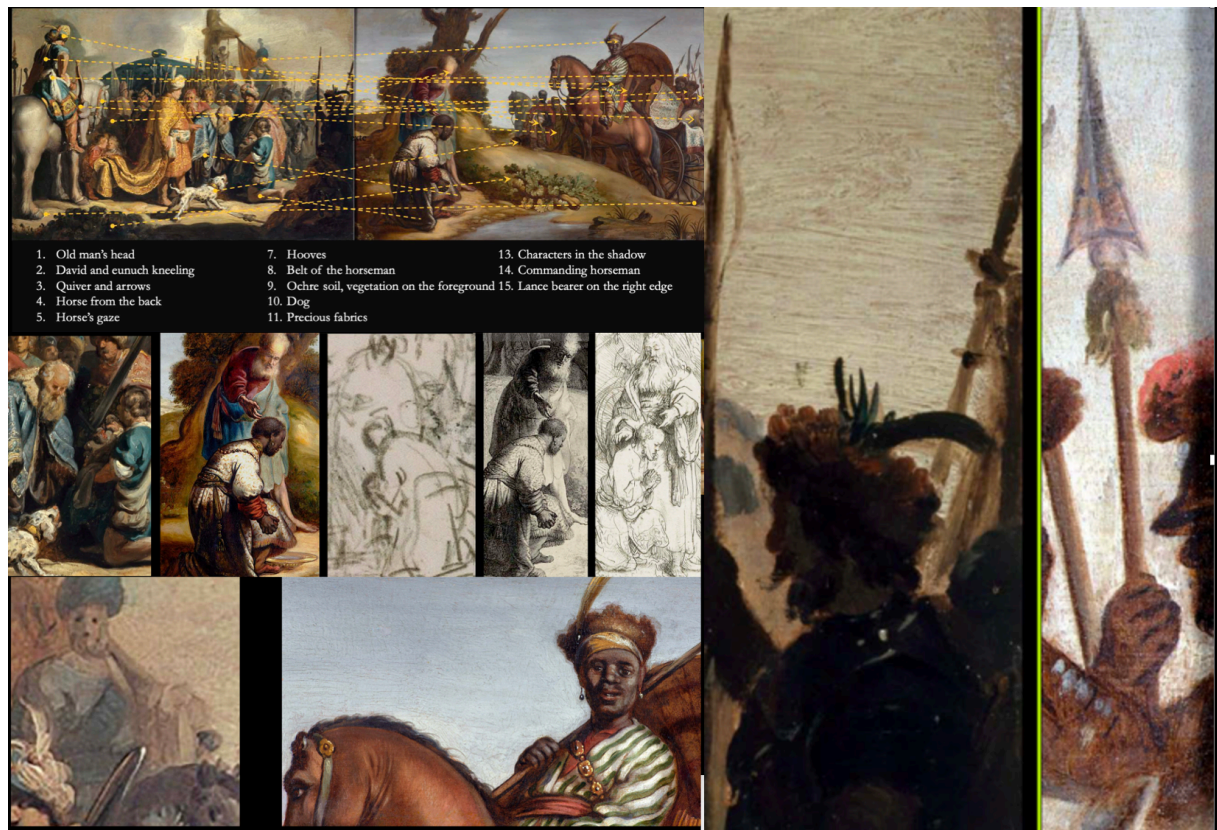
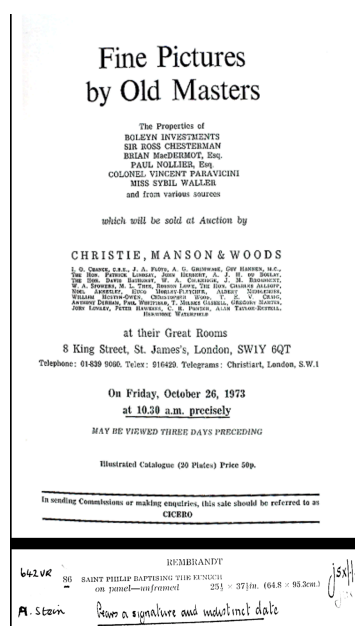


Fig. 38 Correspondences between David presenting Goliath's head to Saul and the present painting.

■ *October the 26th, 1973, Christie's catalogue:*

The painting reappeared "on Friday, October the 26th, 1973" with Christie's code **642 VR**, printed on the cradle of the panel painting, corresponds to the auction code in the catalogue (fig. 39-40).



Having identified the inscription "**642 VR**" on the wooden panel attached to the back of the painting, the Dutch art dealer Marina Aart found the announcement of its sale, **lot 86**, at Christie's London, on 26 October 1973, in which the painting is referred to as being by Rembrandt (fig. 39).

Fig. 39 Extract of 1973 Christie's catalogue, lot 86. *Saint Philip Baptising the eunuch* by Rembrandt. 642VR

642 VR REMBRANDT
 86 SAINT PHILIP BAPTIZING THE EUNUCH
 on panel—unframed 25½ × 37½ in. (64.8 × 95.3 cm.) jsxl.
 A. Stein Rears a signature and indistinct date

The dimensions correspond with the present painting: 64.8 x 95.3 cm

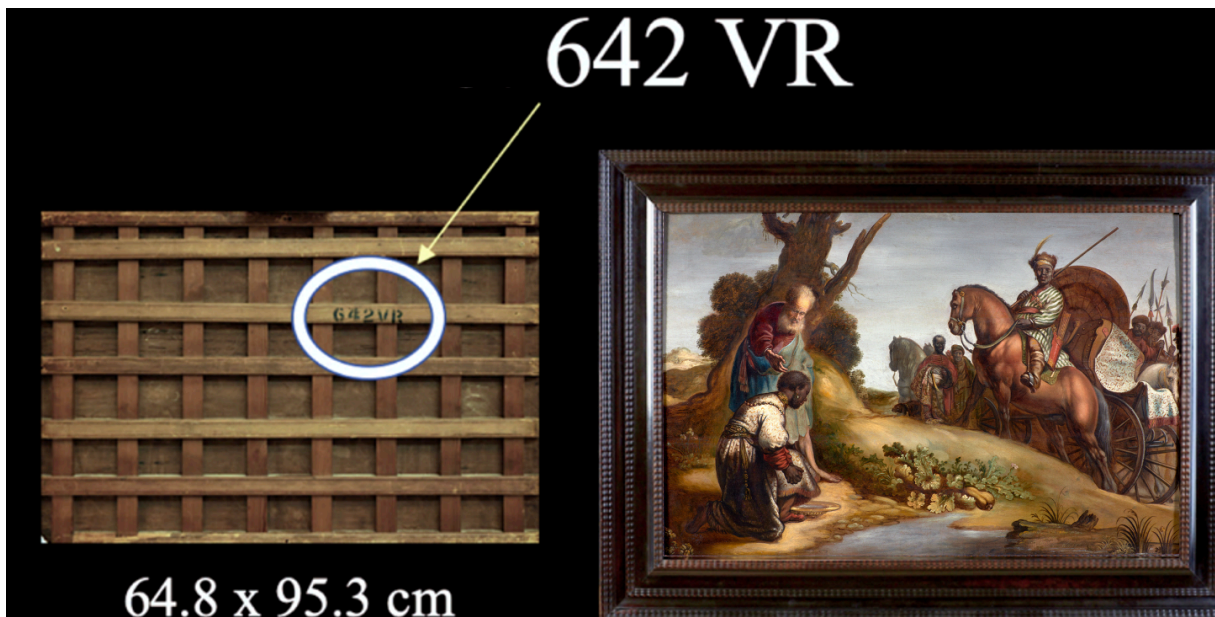


Fig. 40 Identification number 642 VR, *Saint Philip Baptizing the Eunuch* by Rembrandt, 1973 Christie's catalogue.

Although Rembrandt's signature and date are usually not taken to be evidence of authorship, according to the Rembrandt Corpus IV chapter I, some elements of the signature are worth considering: (fig. 41).

642 VR REMBRANDT
 86 SAINT PHILIP BAPTIZING THE EUNUCH
 on panel—unframed 25½ × 37½ in. (64.8 × 95.3 cm.) jsxl.
 A. Stein Rears a signature and indistinct date

Fig. 41 Auctioneers handwriting on Christie's catalogue 1973.

In the seventeenth century, we know not only those buyers were keen to acquire signed artworks, but also that dealers would not risk investing in them if they could not be confident about their authenticity. The dealers knew that if they could guarantee the authenticity of the artworks, they would sell. This was the case in every major city in Europe. In London, for instance, in some auction houses, the buyer would receive one ducat if he could convincingly show that the artwork, he had acquired was a copy or had been made by a pupil.

[...] contemporaries knew that there were paintings in circulation which closely resembled the work of Rembrandt but were not by his hand. This was realized in other

countries. The compiler of the catalogue for an auction held in London in 1689 carefully phrased his description of a head study: 'thought to be an Original of Rembrandt'⁸.

Christie's of London was already a highly reputable auction house, selling paintings from the royal collection for instance, as in *June 9th, 1798* when the present painting was sold on the same day as the 'very Renowned and Esteemed Family picture of King Charles the First and his Queen'. Mr. Christie and his staff had to be quite confident about the authenticity of the artworks on sale.



Fig. 42 The signature of 1633 and the one inscribed lower left, 'Rembrandt, f. 1631.' (Multispectral analysis).

It was not unusual for Rembrandt to sign a finished artwork at a later date:

An earlier painting, *Simeon in the Temple*, was made by Rembrandt in 1628 and signed in 1633, using the same inscription found in the present painting:

"The undated *Simeon in the Temple* is inscribed lower right, 'Rembrandt, f.' Rembrandt did not begin to use this form of his signature until 1633 and so it seems probable that this inscription was added later. *Simeon in the Temple* must closely follow *The Apostle in Prison*, so was presumably painted in 1628."⁹

- *The Self-portrait in Oriental Attire* by Rembrandt was made in 1631 and signed "Rembrant" between 1632 and 1633 after modifications (addition of the andalu dog hiding Rembrandt's legs). During the course of 1632 Rembrandt began adding 'f' for 'fecit' to his signatures. Rembrandt originally wrote his name with 't', but some time in

⁸ Corpus IV, Chapter I, *By his own hand, the valuation of autograph paintings in the 17th century*. p. 27

⁹ Catalogue of the exhibition, Leiden, 2 November 2019: *Young Rembrandt, rising star*, (p. 41).

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1633 it became 'dt'. Judging from surviving paintings, it seems that he almost always signed his work.

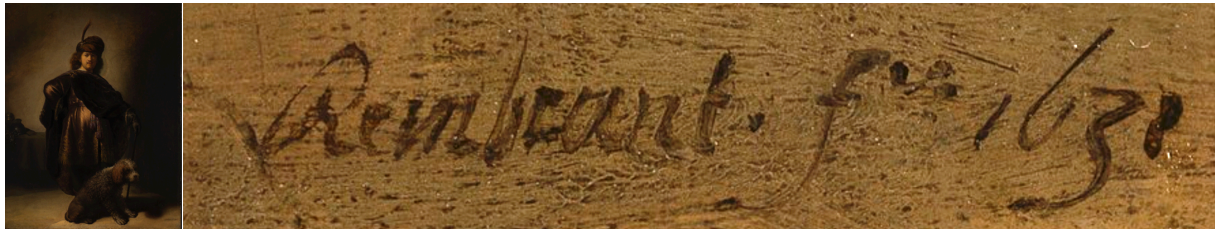


Fig. 43 *Self-portrait in Oriental Attire* 1631 with Rembrandt's signature of 1632-1633: Rembrandt.

Observation:

This painting is one of the works that Rembrandt may have executed in Leiden and that he took with him among other paintings that he would later complete and sign in Amsterdam, as is probably the case with the present painting.

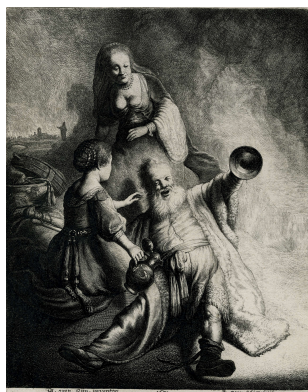
Lost paintings made c. 1630-1631 and printed by Vliet in 1631:

- *Saint Jerome Kneeling in Prayer*, Rembrandt drew a study of Saint Jerome (1630-1631). It was painted around 1631 and engraved by Vliet in 1631. Rembrandt's original painting is lost, and some observers thought the same of the present painting. In fact, they too easily deduced that since Vliet's engraving is vertical (as are all of Vliet's copies of Rembrandt), Rembrandt's original must also be vertical, which is simplistic given the large number of horizontal paintings in Rembrandt's oeuvre. It is difficult to imagine that Rembrandt and Vliet would have limited themselves to selecting only vertical models. It seems appropriate, as a fundamental principle of research method, not to rule out that the original could be made in a different format. For instance, *St. Jerome in Prayer* could also be in a horizontal format, especially since the lion is cut off and the right edge of the painting is seriously interrupted (fig. 44).

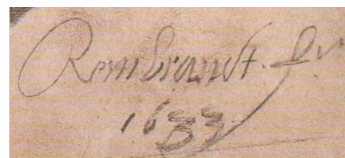


Fig. 44 St. Jerome in penitence drawing made by Rembrandt, (1630-1631), etching by Vliet after Rembrandt in 1631, British Museum.

- *Lot and his daughters* made by Rembrandt is a lost painting (fig.45). It has yet to be found, but we know that it was painted c. 1631, copied by Vliet in 1631, and the drawing by Rembrandt was signed in 1633 (RKD).



The drawing may have been made c. 1631, the date of Jan Gillisz. van Vliet's print but signed and dated only in 1633 (Royalton-Kisch/Schatborn 2011, no. 14).



R. van. Rijn. inventor - 1631 -

Fig. 45 Drawing *Lot and his daughters*, by Rembrandt 1631 and signed 1633

It is not unreasonable to guess that *Philip baptising the Eunuch* was painted in 1631, reproduced by Vliet in 1631 and then signed in 1631 or 1633, Rembrandt's drawing of *Lot and his daughters* (also entitled *the Drunken Lot* or *the Old Man seated*).¹⁰

The fact that Rembrandt's added his signature at a later date suggests that the painter must have kept the painting with him until 1633 and for the present painting, as it was for other paintings of the Leiden period.

¹⁰ Gary Schwartz, January 3, 2010, 301 1 Core list of Rembrandt drawings: signed drawings: Note that the drawing is later than the painting that it resembles. Frankfurt, Städel Museum References: Benesch 82. MRK 2010 or inv./cat.nr 857 Z. Royalton-Kisch/Schatborn 2011, no. 14. Bernard Allien, December 10. 2021

A painting made c. 1630-1631 and printed by Vliet in 1631 and signed in 1633 and after:

- *The Prophetess Hannah* was made in 1631 and engraved by Vliet in 1631.



An old woman reading or 'Rembrandt's mother as the Prophetess Anna'; whole-length female figure, seated to left, wearing a thick fur coat and with a book placed on her lap; after Rembrandt. c.1631 signed in 1633.

Fig. 46. Prophetess Anna, made by Rembrandt in 1631 and engraved by Vliet 1631.

An approach to the indistinct date:

The catalogue from Christie's of London, dated 26 October 1973, states that "*The painting bears a signature and an indistinct date.*"

Documentary evidence for the painting's existence is provided by the study of *the Old Man in a Cap* 1630, possibly the *Munich drawing* c.1630, Vliet 1631 and Visccher's print 1631-1635.

The first two numbers, "16", of the date are distinct. With the naked eye, and via meticulous multispectral inspection, we are able to read the signature, the "f" of fecit and the number 163, a bar seems to follow rather than a repetition of the same form of the number 3. So, without absolute guarantee, the most probable date is 1631.

The date and the signature of the painting are similar of Rembrandt's etching, *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Patterned Cloak*, (Bibliothèque Nationale) in black chalk (fig. 47).

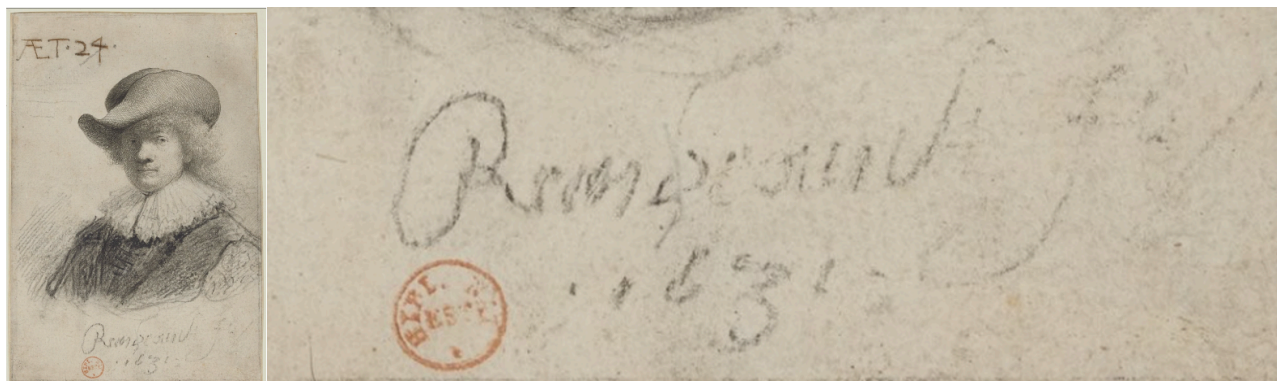


Fig. 47 Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Patterned Cloak*, etching, made 1631 retouched in drawing 1633-1634.

Signatures and dates from 1633:

Dr. Herman Kühn who supervised the stratigraphical analysis, and Regina Costa Pinto, who restored the present painting, found as had been presumed an “old signature with a date” on the pictorial layer, suggesting that these were added a few years after the execution of the painting.

A transparency made of the signature and date of the *Old Man Seated*, made in 1631 and signed in 1633, overlaid with those of the present painting, shows that the two coincide.

Observation: The signatures correspond almost exactly, as if made freely by the same hand, as do the first two numbers, **1** and **6** of the date (fig. 48).

The upper, S-shaped portion of the two last numbers is sufficiently clearly traced to imply the numbers **3** and **1**. The signature and date seem to have been made freely and at the same time, showing no evidence of hesitation. The inscription of the date 1633, with an unprecise shape of the numbers “33” is usual in Rembrandt’s work. In some of the paintings, however, these two last numbers are unreadable or missing perhaps because after writing the signature and the swooping f of ‘fecit’ Rembrandt’s brush was running out of its single load of paint. We see this alteration of the final numbers several times, for example, in the *Portrait of Johannes Wtenbogaert* by Rembrandt, 1633, Rijksmuseum and a number of other paintings made in later years (fig. 48).

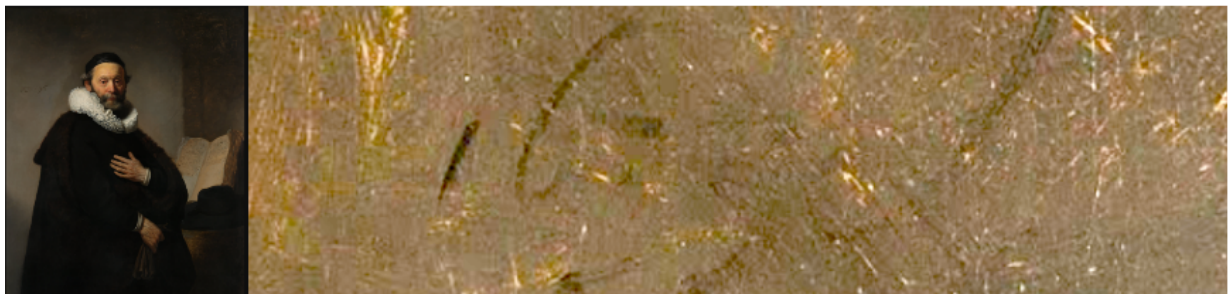


Fig. 48 Portrait of Johannes Wtenbogaert by Rembrandt, 1633, Rijksmuseum.

However, in the drawing of *Drunken Lot* (fig. 49), they are more distinct numbers because Rembrandt was using charcoal rather than paint (fig. 49-50-51). It helps to guess the shape of 33.

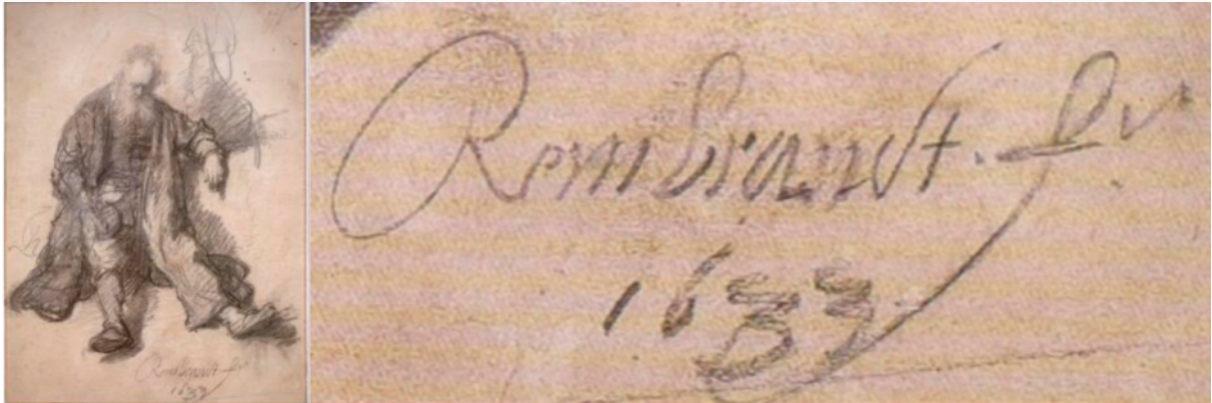


Fig. 49 *Drunken Lot* drawing made c. 1631, Rembrandt but signed 1633.

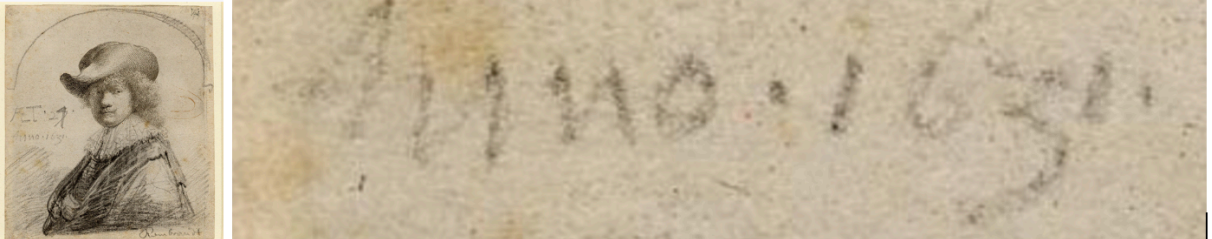


Fig. 50 Self-portrait of Rembrandt, in a soft Hat. 1631. British Museum, 1842,0806.134, the date "1631" similar Rba Etching, drawing, completed in black chalk and touched in pen and brown ink, 1633-1634. Martin Royalton-Kisch, 'Catalogue of drawings by Rembrandt and his school', 2010, Rembrandt, cat. no.7a.

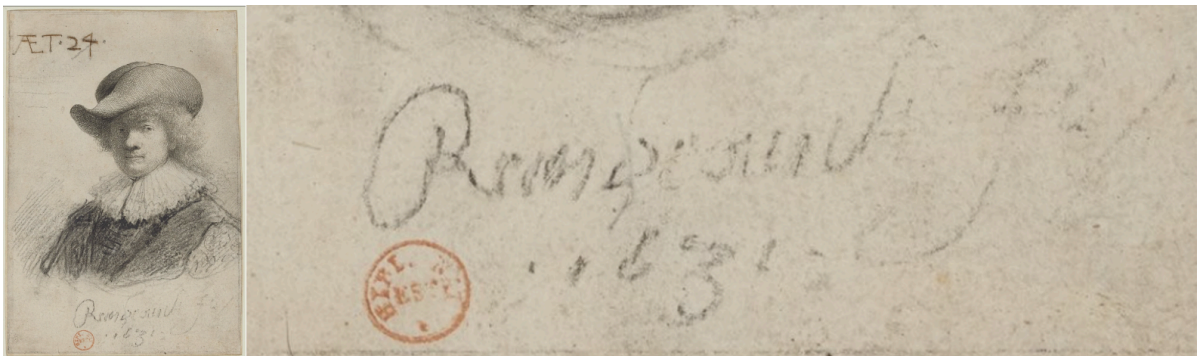


Fig. 51 Rembrandt, Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Patterned Cloak, etching, made 1631 corrected in black chalk 1633-1634.

A comparison of the signatures and dates using transparencies:

The signature and date of the present painting can be compared to those of *Self-portrait in a Soft Hat* of Rembrandt, 1631 (British Museum, 1842,0806.134), *Portrait of Johannes Wtenbogaert, Lot and his daughters* and Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Patterned Cloak*, made 1631 corrected in black chalk in 1633-1634. They merge correctly (fig. 52).

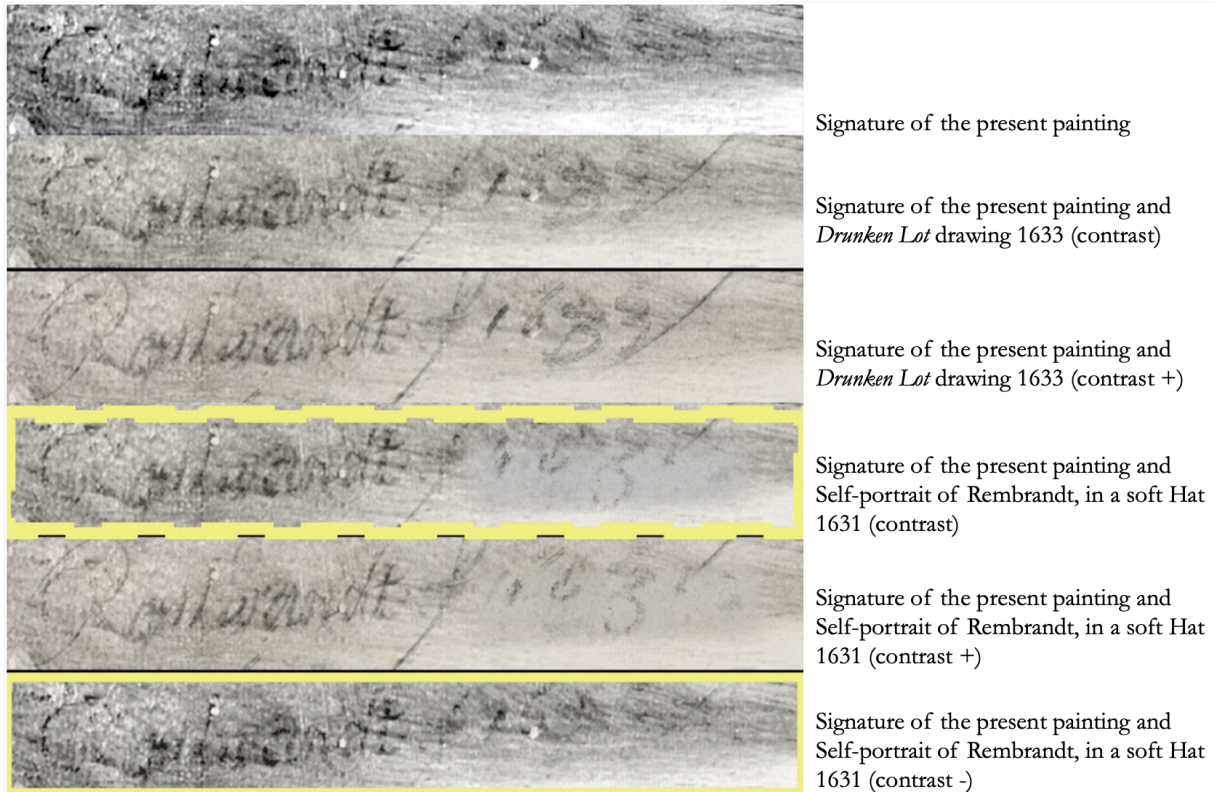


Fig. 52 Comparison, similarities and mix of the signature on the left between the present painting and the drawing by Rembrandt 1633, *Lot and his daughters*, and *Old Man Seated* and *Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Patterned Cloak*, made 1631 corrected in black chalk in 1633-1634 and the present painting