

The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca. 1630 “ ... a painting
that Rembrandt was apparently very proud of. ”

Ernst van de Wetering¹

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Description



The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca.1630 by Rembrandt, oil on oak panel, 64,8 x 95,3 cm, Private collection.

“Mostly attributions of paintings to Rembrandt are based exclusively on stylistic evidence because of the lack of primary sources. His Baptism of the Eunuch is a remarkable exception ...”

Prof. Dr. Volker Manuth²

Summary and conclusion, May 30, 2023, Nijmegen.

2. Prof. emeritus Dr Volker Manuth is the leading Rembrandt specialist and co-author of the corpus: “The Complete Paintings” (2019), Taschen. In 1987, he completed his PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin with a thesis on the iconography of Rembrandt’s Old Testament subjects. Since 2003, he has been a Professor of Art History at Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario and at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Member the Vereniging Rembrandt.

Description: an ancient story

The baptism of the eunuch, a 4th century iconographical story.

The Ethiopian eunuch was a man of prestige and wealth: a high-ranking official and treasurer at the court of the Queen of Ethiopia. On his way from Jerusalem to Gaza, the Eunuch was reading a text from the Old Testament, Isaiah 53: 7-8, at the time of his encounter with Philip. This text was interpreted as a prophecy of Christ in his role of suffering servant, and was used as a Scriptural basis to preach about Jesus' death and resurrection.

Philip, "listed in the Roman martyrology on June 6, was one of the seven deacons chosen by the Apostles to spread the gospels during the establishment of the church (Acts 6: 5-7). According to Byzantine tradition, he was, for a time, the Bishop of Tralles. In the early Christian period, he (Philip, the deacon) was sometimes confused with the apostle Philip, although neither has a strong iconographic tradition." Dr Odilia Magdalena Bonebakker.³

An ancient pictorial tradition:

"Before the fifteenth century, the subject was rare. The first images in Western art were reliefs on fourth-century sarcophagi (fig. 1). The theme is suitable for sarcophagi since baptism signified the death of the sinful life and unification with Christ (fig. 2).

The reliefs illustrated a motto that was often inscribed on epitaphs: that is, the importance of leaving the world in faith."

The painting *The Baptism of the Eunuch* from circa 1630 belongs to an ancient pictorial tradition. This tradition includes manuscripts, frescoes, and reliefs of sarcophagi, which present the essential elements of the theme: Philip, the eunuch, a scroll text, a horse-drawn wagon (sometimes) with one horse facing the viewer), a page and a dog.



Fig. 1 Philip, the deacon meeting the Ethiopian eunuch, 200-399, Museo Pio Cristiano, Musei Vaticani, System Number: 171735, citation: Wilpert, J., *Sarcophagi cristiani antichi*, I (1929), p. 27; pl. XXI.



Fig. 2 Lid of sarcophagus (fragment) 350/375 (3rd quarter of the 4th century AD) NI: MR 768 ; NC Ma 1599, Louvre.

3. Thesis Denomination and Iconography: The Baptism of the Eunuch in Netherlandish Art, 1520-1750. Chapter one: The Iconography and Pictorial Tradition p12-13-14. Odilia Bonebakker is a curator and lecturer of Early Modern Art and Theory at the University of Connecticut. She received her B.A. and M.A. in the history of Art from Queen's University and her Ph.D. in the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. Her doctoral dissertation was written on Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the lost art of cloth painting.

Description: an ancient story

The story depicted in the 9th century.

In the Menologium (or calendar) of Basil II, Philip and the eunuch sit in a chariot drawn

by four horses, while on the right, the deacon stands at a marble altar in a ciborium (figs. 3-4).



Fig. 3 Manuscript, 800-899, psalter, illumination, Pantokratoros Monastery, Mount Athos, Menologium (or calendar) of Basil II, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Shelfmark Vat. Gr. 1613, Philip and the eunuch sit in a chariot drawn by four horses, while on the right, the deacon stands at an altar in a ciborium.



Fig. 4 Following the pictorial tradition, Rembrandt reproduced the chariot, the horses, and the gaze of the white horse orientated towards the viewer, reversing the details of the present painting.

Description: an ancient story

The story depicted in the 16th century.

The biblical tableaux vivants:

Odilia Bonebakker reminds us that the “Bible illustrations were influential sources. Print Bibles, which usually had no text, were more or less ecumenical. By mid-century, thanks to pictorial precedents, the Baptism of the Eunuch joined the repertoire of Netherlandish religious plays [...]. The castrated moor and Philip in the works of the apostles” was described in the programme of the biblical tableaux vivants in the city of Oudenaarde. The characters circulated around the city. Seventy per cent of the Old and New Testament subjects enacted in the plays were represented in print Bibles during the same period.”⁴

First appearances in the XVI^e century:

Odilia Bonebakker points out that “Heemskerck and de Vos boldly and precisely illustrated the text. Maarten van Heemskerck made the first sixteen drawings, [...], including the Baptism of the Eunuch (fig. 5).

They were his last works, published by Philips Galle in 1582. n 1546- 47.

Gary Schwartz stresses that “The most conscientious attempts to visualize the story as it is told are found in prints dating from the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, by Maerten van Heemskerck and Jan Luyken.”⁵ Heemskerck’s design is focused on accurately depicting the textual narrative. In the first engraving, an angel visits an awestruck Philip in his study and orders him to go to the Ethiopian eunuch, while the eunuch’s chariot appears in the background. In the second picture, Philip runs beside the chariot over a bridge in the lefthand side of the background. In the middle ground, Philip explains the text in the chariot, which is drawn by one horse and rider. In the foreground, he baptizes the clothed eunuch at the water’s edge, and above, the Holy Spirit takes Philip away. Although it seems that Rembrandt always tended to respect the unity of time and space in his works, it may be that he made an exception when following the illustrations by Maerten Heemskerck.



Fig. 5 Philips Galle, after Maerten van Heemskerck, The Angel Orders Saint Philip to Accompany the Ethiopian Eunuch, The Baptism of the Eunuch by Saint Philip, 1575, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1974.33.21 and 1974.33.22.

4. Odilia Bonebakker, Denomination and Iconography: The Baptism of the Eunuch in Netherlandish Art, 1520-1750. p. 22

5. Gary Schwartz: *A Rembrandt invention: A new Baptism of the eunuch*, The primavera Pers, Leiden, 2020, p. 13

The rediscovery

The continuity in the details.

Rembrandt usually follows the three unities in his work: time, place and action; however, in the painting, ca 1630, it seems that Rembrandt re-transcribed part of the scene represented by M. Heemskerck, where the angel instructs

Philip to convert and baptize the eunuch (fig. 6). These figures could be represented by the two tiny characters on the top left-hand side of the picture.



Fig. 6 Detail of The Baptism of the Eunuch by Saint Philip, 1575 Philips Galle, after Maerten van Heemskerck, *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt and the detail representing the scene.

The rediscovery: continuity

They are faithfully reproduced in Vliet's print of 1631 (fig. 7) and again appear in Rembrandt's 1641 engraving (fig. 8). The fact that Rembrandt included these tiny characters

twice ten years apart shows how keen he was to remain as close as possible to the spirit of the text, which had been so well-illustrated by Heemskerck (fig. 9).



Fig. 7 The similar tiny characters and bridge in Vliet's print of 1631, tiny characters and bridge in the present painting.



Fig. 8 Detail of Rembrandt's 1641 print with the tiny characters depicted again.



Fig. 9 Philips Galle, after Maerten van Heemskerck, *The Angel Orders Saint Philip to Accompany the Ethiopian Eunuch*, *The Baptism of the Eunuch by Saint Philip* 1575, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1974.33.21 and 1974.33.22.

The rediscovery: influences

Pieter Lastman's influence.

Volker Manuth points out: "The choice of subject matter is closely related to Rembrandt's teacher Pieter Lastman (1583-1633), with whom he studied for six months in 1625, and who represented the Baptism of the eunuch between 1608 and 1623 in at least four

paintings. It was Lastman to whom Rembrandt owed the introduction of black people as members of the eunuch's entourage from Ethiopia wearing exotic garments and turbans (figs. 10 -11)."



Fig. 10 *The Baptism of the Eunuch* by P. Lastman of the Foundation Custodia, 1615-1620 - (63.5 x 98.8 cm).

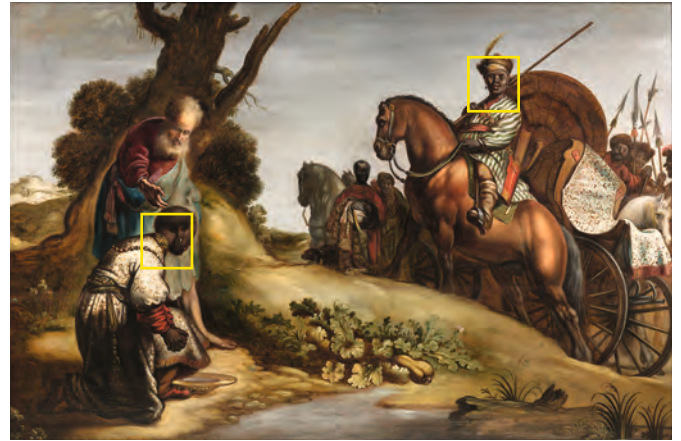


Fig. 11 *The Baptism of the Eunuch* ca. 1630 by Rembrandt.

Peter Paul Rubens' influence.

Rembrandt was also influenced by The *Adoration of the Magi*, by Paul Rubens (1617-1618); he probably borrowed the figures

from Vorsterman's engraving after Rubens' *Adoration of Magi*, 1621 (figs. 12-13-14-15-16).



Fig. 12 *Adoration of the Magi* 1621 by Paul Rubens.



Fig. 13 *Adoration of the Magi* 1621 by Vorsterman after Rubens.



Fig. 14 *The Baptism of the Eunuch* ca. 1630 by Rembrandt.



Fig. 15 Details of Rubens' painting 1621, Vorsterman's print 1621 print and Rembrandt's painting ca.1630.



Fig. 16 Details of Rubens' painting 1621, Vorsterman's print 1621 print and Rembrandt's painting ca.1630.

The rediscovery: testimonial clumsiness

Rembrandt's habitual clumsy details.

The awkward foreshortening of Philip's arm is found in many of Rembrandt's, including the engraving of *the Baptism of the Eunuch* in 1641. It remains problematic in the painting

Christ Appearing to Magdalena at the Tomb, 1638, where the foreshortening is even worse (figs. 17-18-19-20).



Fig. 17 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630.



Fig. 18 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 and details of the arms of *Christ Appearing to Magdalena at the Tomb*, 1638.



Fig. 20 *Christ Appearing to Magdalena at the Tomb*, 1638, Royal collection of United Kingdom.

The clumsy hands by Rembrandt reoccur as leitmotifs throughout his work: from the early version of 1626 to the present painting and his engraving of 1641 (the servant holding the turban in his hands) and to *David and Jonathan*, Rembrandt, 1642.



Fig. 19 Details of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 and the engraving *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1641.

The rediscovery: one of Rembrandt's favourite subjects

The Baptisms of the Eunuch by Rembrandt.

“The story of Philip, the deacon, and the chamberlain of the Ethiopian queen Candace, counts among Rembrandt's favorite subjects taken from the Bible (Acts 8, 28-39).

Between 1626 and 1641 he depicted the scene of conversion in painted and drawn versions as well as in an etching”(figs. 21-22-23-24-25).
Volker Manuth.



Fig. 21 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, 1626.



Fig. 22 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630.



Fig. 23 Drawing, ca. 1630, Munich.



Fig. 24 Drawing, 1640, Louvre.



Fig. 25 Etching, 1641, Custodia Fondation.

The rediscovery: the old man and St. Philip

The old man, the origin of the deacon Philip.



Fig. 26 Rembrandt, *The Seated Old Man*, ca. 1630, National Museum, Stockholm, *the Head of an Old Man in a Cap*, ca. 1630, Oil on panel, 24.3 × 20.3 cm, Kingston, Ontario, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, 2003 (46-031), *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 (detail), *Bust of a Bearded Old Man*, 1633, The Leiden Collection, New York.

The appearance of Philip's face is based on Rembrandt's earlier drawing and oiled sketch from 1630 (fig. 26).

The same model was used for the deacon Philip and *the Seated Old Man in a Cap* ca 1630 as well as *the Head of an Old Man in a Cap* by Rembrandt from the same period, ca. 1630 (fig. 27). Gary Schwartz's book, *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch*, 2020 mentions that "Ernst van de Wetering goes so far as to caption *the Head of the Old Man*, Study for the lost baptism of the eunuch."⁶

Ernst van de Wetering.

"There is probably another face of the same painting: a rapidly painted head, done in broad strokes, of an old man bending

forward (Fig. 28)".⁷ Ernst van de Wetering "The resemblance goes further than the outer appearance of the model. It extends to the facial structure and the means used by the artist to depict it." Gary Schwartz, *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch*, 2020, p. 55.

Ernst van de Wetering agreed with RRP that Rembrandt's painting style changed from one period to another. However, he insisted that Rembrandt also used a range of styles within the same period. For example, around 1630, he painted with great precision *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem*, and in a rough style *the Old Man in a Cap* and Philip baptizing the eunuch.⁸



Fig. 27 *Old Man with Outspread Arms* 1628 and *Peter and John at the Temple Gate* 1629 Rembrandt.

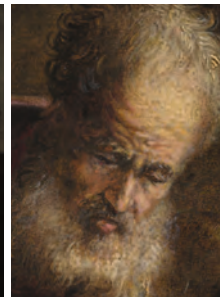


Fig. 28 Detail of *the Old Man in a Cap*, detail of Philip of the painting, detail of Philip of the print copy by Jan Gillisz van Vliet, 1631, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

6. Ernst van de Wetering, *A corpus of Rembrandt paintings*, vol. 4, *The self-portraits*, Dordrecht, 2005 (Springer), p. 628.

7. Ernst van de Wetering, *Rembrandt: A Life in 180 Paintings*, p. 46 Local World, 2008

8. Ernst van de Wetering, *Corpus VI*, Chapter I p. 65. cites J. Bruyn: "backed with impressive argumentation sourced from contemporary texts from Rhetoric in an argument that makes the range of styles within the same period entirely acceptable." This fragment is quoted from Bruyn's speech written for the presentation of Volume IV of *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* in March 2005.

The rediscovery: Vliet's etching

Philip's hand that baptizes the eunuch in Vliet and Rembrandt's is very similar regardless of the technique used.

That shows a stylistic continuity in the hands treatments (fig. 29).



Fig. 29 Philip's hand detail in the painting ca. 1630, in Vliet's print, in the etching *the Baptism of the Eunuch* by Rembrandt 1641 and in Christ's hand in *Christ Preaching* c. 1643-49.

Similarities between the painting and Vliet's reproduction.

The similarities between *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 and Vliet's reproduction of it in his print of 1631 are striking.

"Mostly attributions of paintings to Rembrandt are based exclusively on stylistic evidence because of the lack of primary sources. His Baptism of the eunuch is a remarkable exception.

From the inscription on an etching dated 1631 by Johannes Gillis van Vliet, who closely

collaborated with Rembrandt turning many of his inventions into prints, we know that Van Vliet also based his print of *the Baptism of the eunuch* on a design by Rembrandt, whose name is given as 'inventor' (RH.v. Rijn inv. JG.v. Vliet fec.1631)." Volker Manuth.

According to Ernst van de Wetering, Van Vliet made "an exceptionally ambitious reproduction print of the painting that Rembrandt was proud of" (fig. 30). Ernst van de Wetering, Rembrandt: *A Life in 180 Paintings*, p. 46 Local World BV, 2008 Local. The motifs in Van Vliet's etching are rearranged vertically, offering no obstacle to the inscription "Rembrandt invent".

"What is obviously the essential factor here is the sum total of the motifs and not the way they are set out in the composition."

Gary Schwartz, *A Rembrandt Invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch*, 2020, p. 53. ⁹

For his first significant engraving of Rembrandt, Vliet chose to work from a model made by the master himself, not from a copy made by his workshop. Similarly, Rembrandt did not provide a copy made by his pupils to get his baptism of the eunuch engraved by Vliet, the best engraver in Leiden.

There is no doubt that Rembrandt gave a painted model by his hand.



Fig. 30 *The baptism of the Eunuch* (592 x 491 mm). "RH.v.Rijn inv. JG.v. Vliet fec.1631".

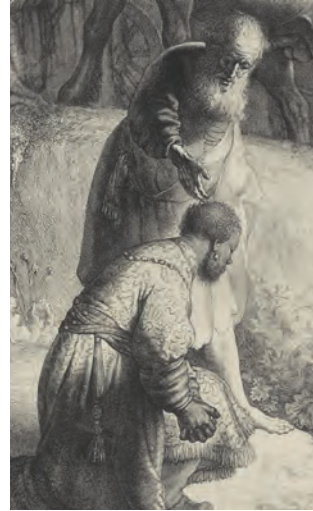
9. Bruyn, op. cit. (note 32), p. 38. See also Schuckman, Royal- ton-Kisch and Hinterding, op. cit. (note 28), p. 45.

The rediscovery: from the painting to Vliet's etching

“ It is an exceptionally ambitious reproduction print of a painting that Rembrandt was apparently very proud of. ”, *Rembrandt, A Life in 180 Paintings*, Published by Local World BV, April 2008, p.46.

A change of composition using a drawing provided by Rembrandt in 1630:

“In his impressive print after Rembrandt’s Baptism of the eunuch Van Vliet turned the horizontal composition of Rembrandt’s painting into a vertical one by moving the main group of Philip and the eunuch to the center of his etching (fig. 31).



It is likely that he did this in collaboration with Rembrandt, who might even have provided a design of the vertical composition in a drawing.”
Volker Manuth.



Fig. 31 Philip and the Eunuch in *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt and in Van Vliet's print 1631 and the entourage of the Eunuch in *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt and in Van Vliet's print 1631.



Fig. 32 Rembrandt, *The baptism of the eunuch*, ca. 1630
Black chalk on paper.

The relation between drawing and print:

“In a broadish format, an evocative drawing in Munich places the three main figures in a central column left of center, with the chariot moved in counterbalance to the right (fig. 32). Hints at members of the eunuch’s cortege can be detected left and right; a clump of gourds is suggested in the lower right. [...] I agree with those who date the drawing about 1630 before the print was made. It was then Rembrandt created not only the drawing but a large painting of the baptism of the eunuch, the “invention” copied by van Vliet.”¹⁰

10. Gary Schwartz, *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch*, 2020, p. 32.

The rediscovery: the intermediary drawing

Vliet's vertical print composition follows the indications of the intermediary drawing provided by Rembrandt.

In the drawing, the faces of the eunuch's entourage are not inclined toward the baptism scene; they are only roughly sketched. The facial expressions remain indistinct. This could explain Vliet's difficulty in making coherent gazes, his iconographical anomalies, and his profanity. In the drawing, Rembrandt

shows Vliet how to recompose his original image vertically (fig. 33). The six members of the eunuch's entourage are all looking in the wrong direction, utterly oblivious of the important ceremony taking place below them. They seem unaware of their duty to protect their master and ensure his safety. (fig. 34)



Fig. 33 Rembrandt, *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630, Munich drawing ca. 1630, simulation of the composition change with the painting's motifs in Vliet's print 1631.

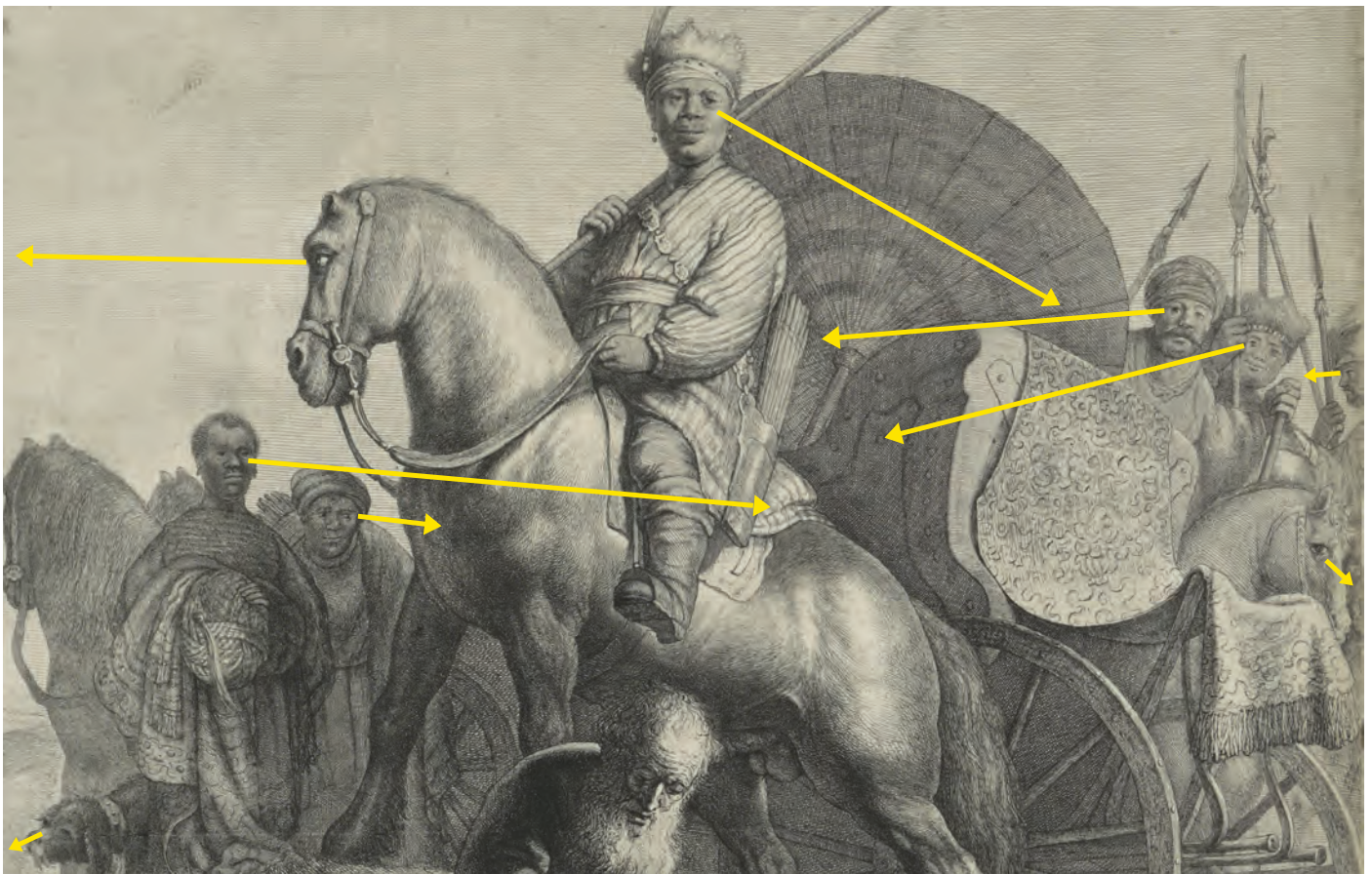


Fig. 34 Fully convergente in the present painting, ca.1630, The eunuch's entourage is wholly disconnected from the baptism scene in Vliet's. The commanding horseman is no longer looking at the viewer as he is in the painting; he seems to be lost in thought.

The rediscovery: the “jeux de regards”

The engraving is well executed and faithful to the sketch provided by Rembrandt, which explains how the engraver was able to change the horizontal composition to a vertical one. However, Rembrandt did not provide a precise drawing of the attitudes of the figures in the upper part of the image.

They needed to be able to lower their gazes or heads, as do figures in many of Rembrandt's vertical paintings. This peculiar pictorial inconsistency is caused by two opposing compositional vectors, which has never been seen in Rembrandt's œuvre.

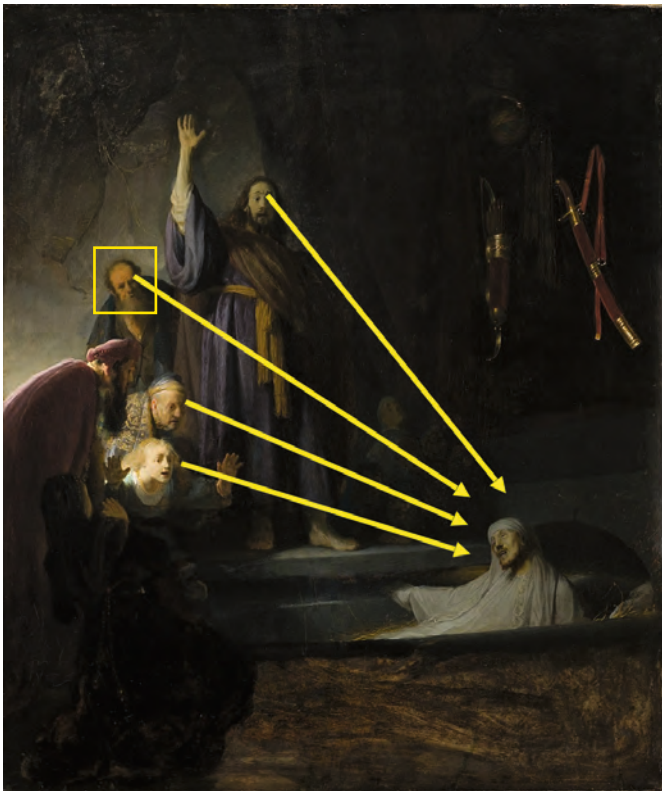


Fig. 35 *The Raising of Lazarus* 1630-1632, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

According to Gary Schwartz, “Van Vliet could have traced them (the figures from the painting) for his reworked composition. This possibility is enhanced by a peculiarity of his print – that the auxiliary figures are all

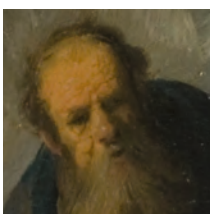


Fig. 36 Detail example from *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1630-1632, that shows how Rembrandt leans the head and gaze of an upper background figure looking at the down forefront scene.

looking in the wrong direction. The gazes of the rider and the rest of the entourage make perfect sense in the horizontal painting and perfect nonsense in van Vliet's vertical print. In tracing the figures, he would have copied the heads and poses as he found them, without taking account of the change in the relative position of Philip and the eunuch to the eunuch's company.” (fig. 37).

All the reproductions after Vliet contain the same gazes anomaly (see copies in “Copies of *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630”) sometimes aggravated in a probable attempt to correct it.

Rembrandt demonstrates a systematic consistency in his orientation of characters' gazes, notwithstanding the complexity of the composition : *the Raising of Lazarus* is an example of Rembrandt's vertical composition in which the faces and eyes are turned vertically downwards to follow the scene intensively (figs. 35-36). It is what Rembrandt would have done in a vertical composition for *the Baptism of the Eunuch*.



Fig. 37 Details of the entourage looking at the scene or at the viewer in the present painting ca. 1630 and the lost gazes of Vliet's print.

“The print was produced - without doubt commissioned by Rembrandt himself - by the graphic artist Jan Gilliszoon van Vliet. It would certainly have contributed to Rembrandt's fame.” *Rembrandt, A Life in 180 Paintings*, Published by Local World BV, April 2008, p.46.

The rediscovery: Visscher's etching

Visscher used various influences including the composition and “jeux de regards”.

Gary Schwartz concludes: “Accepting the consequences of these observations entails leaving behind the idea that there is another lost painting by Rembrandt after which van Vliet made his etching, a hypothetical painting said to have been the model for the painting in the Kremer collection. This may be counter-intuitive, but the arguments for regarding the present painting as van Vliet’s model are not to be denied.”¹¹

Visscher’s engraving in a mirror image of the painting:

The painting is the direct model of Visscher’s print, for the composition and “jeu des regards”, and an explicit model of Vliet’s print for the design of the characters reproduced later by Visscher. (fig. 38)

Unlike Vliet’s print, they are all focused on protecting the eunuch, as Rembrandt depicted in the present painting.

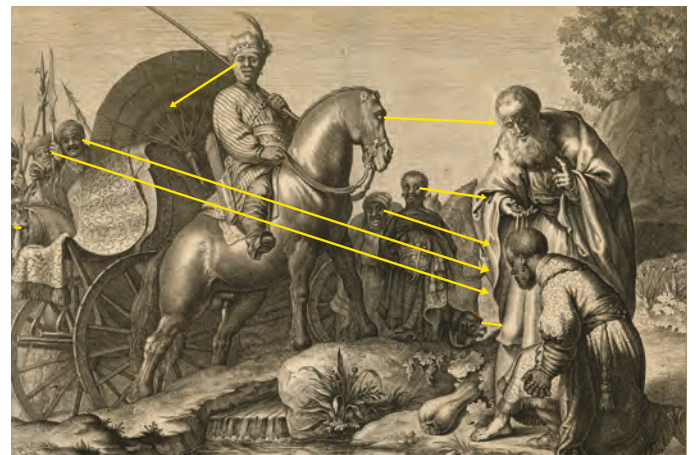


Fig. 38 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, oil on oak panel ca. 1630 and an engraving by Visscher 1631-1633 (37.9 x 51.5 cm). Vienna, Albertina, HB76.4, fol. 76, Inscription Rembrandt invent. CI Visscher Excudebat.

The gesture of Visscher’s Baptism.

Visscher arranged his scenario to achieve a meaningful double page version by sacrificing the transitional landscape we find in the painting. Had he not done so, the characters would have been too small. However, although this pragmatic choice does not call into question the utility of the intermediary landscape in the painting, it fails to protect Visscher from generating disproportionate figures (fig. 39).



Fig. 39 Engraving by C. J. Visscher.

11. Gary Schwartz, *A Rembrandt invention: A new baptism of the eunuch*, 2020, p. 69.

The rediscovery: Visscher's baptism interpretation

The print is a mosaic of elements borrowed from the Scriptures, the present painting by Rembrandt, ca. 1630, Vliet's print and the painting of Abraham Blommaert, *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1620-25. (fig. 40)

Visscher has borrowed the neo-Michelangelo-Platonist- Aristotelian hand gesture shown in the painting of Abraham Blommaert, in which Philip raises his left index finger while the right hand baptizes with abundant water. This device is very different from the one used in present painting by Rembrandt,

where the right hand baptizes by means of the intense light emanating from the Holy Spirit, reflecting a ray by refraction onto the eunuch. (There is a painted copy of Visscher's print on p. 59).

Obviously, Visscher used the composition of present painting without respecting the proportions.



Fig. 40 Abraham Blommaert, *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1620-25, the present painting ca. 1630, Vliet's print 1631 and Visscher's Print.

The rediscovery: Rembrandt's 1641 etching

Ten years after the present painting...

Continuity in Rembrandt's Baptism of the Eunuch:

We know that Rembrandt is an exploratory painter constantly evolving from one year to the next. However, as far as the engraving of 1641 is concerned, i.e., about ten years after

the execution of the present painting, there is a continuity with changes from 1631 to 1641, a kind of mirror image with movements of some characters. It's as if the 1641 engraving was a new sequence of the same scene 10 years later. (figs. 41-42-43).



Fig. 41 The painting ca. 1630 and the engraving of 1641 by Rembrandt.



Fig. 42 Details of the painting ca. 1630 and the engraving of 1641 by Rembrandt.



Fig. 43 Details of the painting ca. 1630 and the engraving of 1641 by Rembrandt.

The rediscovery: strong connections between two paintings

The painting of *David presenting Goliath's head*, 1627 and *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca 1630 by Rembrandt are closely related.

The painting of *David presenting Goliath's head*, 1627 by Rembrandt, KunstMuseum (fig. 44), and the present painting (fig. 45) share a close organization of the space. The sense of the reading of the story is the same, from the left to the right side. Both paintings are orientated in the same way, and the light comes from the right-hand side.

The principal characters are there, playing

different roles with a similar attitude: King Saul is bending his head as Philip does (fig. 46), David is kneeling as the eunuch does (fig. 47). In both paintings, there is a dominant horseman (fig. 48) and a lancer in the same position on the right edge, partly cut in the present painting (fig. 49). An other connivance to note is their presence in the same auction catalog in 1798 (Christies' auction p. 37).

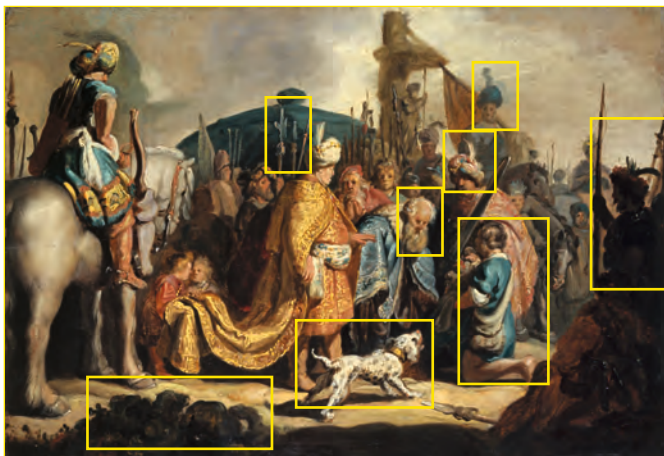


Fig. 44 *David presenting Goliath's head before Saul* 1627 by Rembrandt, oil on oak panel, 27,4 x 39,7cm, Kuntsmuseum, Basel.

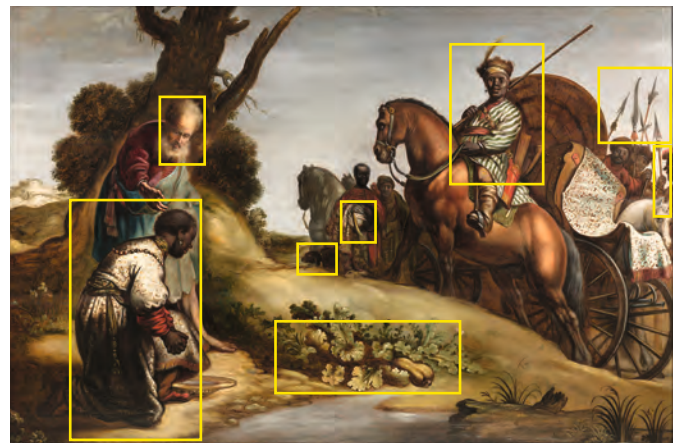


Fig. 45 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca 1630 by Rembrandt, oil on oak panel, 64,8 x 95,3 cm.



Fig. 46 Detail of the heads of Saul and Philip.

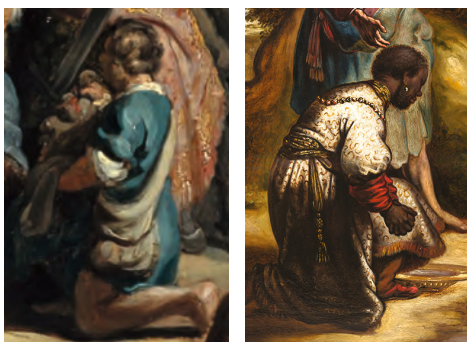


Fig. 47 Details of David and the Eunuch.



Fig. 48 Details of the commanding horsemen.



Fig. 49 Details of the entire and the cut off lance bearer character.

The illustrated story



On the left, beneath the old city of Jerusalem and its ruins, we can make out the silhouette of a seated man who seems to be in the act of writing. A strange creature has appeared before him: an angel, perhaps, with folded wings, who is issuing a command to the man, who we guess must be the deacon Philip, a famous interpreter of theology. The angel tells him to leave his books and translations, to go speak to a traveler of rank, who is struggling to understand a metaphorical passage from the Bible. Over bridges, along winding roads and paths, the two of them have come, to arrive at the place in the foreground of our vision: to the bank of a quietly flowing river, where a curious scene is taking place.



In front of a tall dead tree, against which a young oak leans, is an old man, the apostle Philip. He has a white beard and is dressed in a simple blue tunic with a red belt, and he is bent, with one, glowing hand raised, over a high-ranking dignitary, a black man who is elegantly dressed, calm and serene, kneeling on the ground.

The illustrated story



The wise apostle is caught in the act of performing this baptism, reflecting onto the Ethiopian's head the divine light which he has received in the palm of his hand. On the Ethiopian's ear, a large pearl gleams; at his feet is a golden dish filled to the brim with clear water.

At a distance, the Ethiopian's servant, dressed in a burgundy cloak with golden fastenings, carries on his arm his master's mantle, of precious cloth, with wide sleeves of gold-patterned brocade; in his hands he holds a turban in the Persian style. He has a questioning, anxious expression in his eyes.



The illustrated story



At the servant's side stands a man in a simple tunic with a bonnet on his head, and a shoulder carrier loaded with arrows with feathered flights. This man looks fearful, as if he hardly dares to look at the extraordinary ceremony which is taking place.

On the righthand side, a proud warrior on horseback wears a scarf wrapped around his head, which is fastened with an amber band and surmounted by a tall golden feather; he has a sparkling pearl in either ear. On his hip hangs an arrow holder made of tooled scarlet leather, ornamented with gold, and attached to a long, elaborate chain. This officer fixes us with his watchful, threatening gaze. He seems prepared, if necessary, to leap to his master's defence.



The illustrated story

Behind this man are two horses, looking into the distance, harnessed to a stationary chariot, on which a rich fabric is spread in the shade of a large parasol.



Directly behind this are three horsemen armed with lances; of their horses, only one, white horse, is visible, its ears pricked up: it stares back at us, the intruders on the scene. Two of the horsemen are gazing in astonishment at the unfolding baptism. A third horseman, wearing a helmet, and seen in profile, is on guard, staring straight in front of him; his head is cut in half by the picture's frame.

The illustrated story

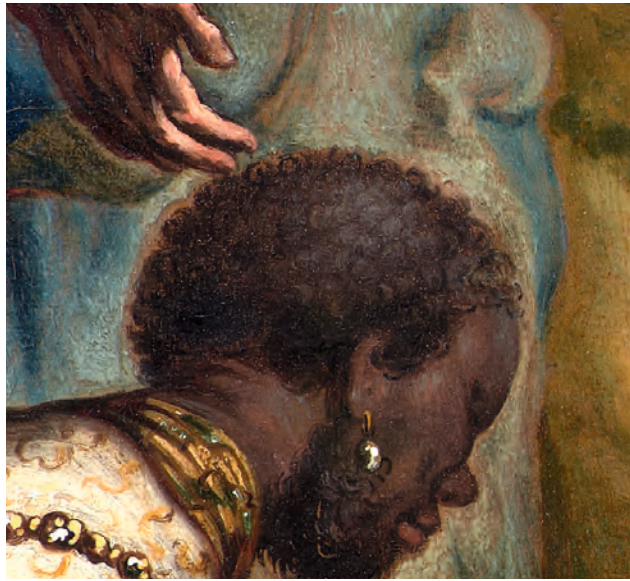


In the background, we notice a worried-looking dog, crouching between the legs of the chariot's draughthorses, its muzzle turned towards its master.



Standing on the other side of the river, we are the only witnesses to this spectacle. The servant, the cavalry officer and the white horse are all watching us, wondering perhaps what has attracted our attention, since they cannot see what we can: the discreet mark of God's intervention. Not all observers of the painting notice it: its discovery requires our close attention. It is a form of initiation into a kind of miracle, to which the young Rembrandt invites those who have eyes to see.

The illustrated story



We know that the artists usually paid more attention to one another's work than to the Bible, but here Rembrandt seems to have been influenced by the exegetes, and possibly by Erasmus in particular, in his depiction of a highly complex gesture and a strikingly noble human attitude. The eunuch receives the Holy Spirit light on his head instead of - the more conventional - water as a new interpretation of the baptism (washing the soul rather than the skin).



Now we are no longer mere spectators: we have entered the painting we are looking at, our presence signaled by the gazes of the servant, the cavalry officer and the white horse.

A unique and subtle interpretation

In his 50-millimetre illuminated circle, Rembrandt subtly introduced a focal point that sets him apart from his predecessors in the interpretation of *The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch*, in the New Testament (Acts 8:26-39).

Neglecting the golden bowl at his feet, Philip does not perform the baptism by pouring water from it over the eunuch's head. Instead, he opens his hand to receive a ray of light, emanating from the Holy Spirit in the heavens

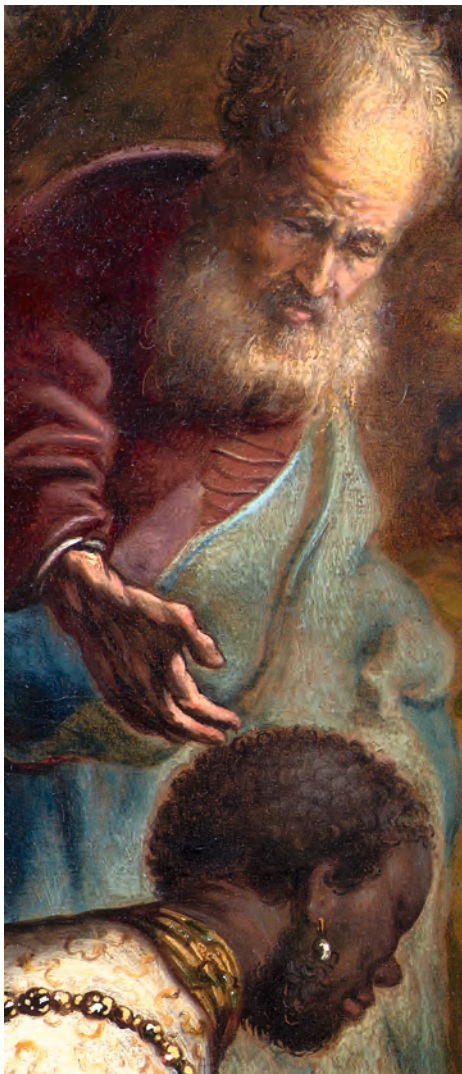


Fig. 50 Detail of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca 1630 by Rembrandt, that shows a ray of divine light onto the head of the eunuch, with a typical “houding” effect around his hair.

above, and reflects it onto the eunuch's dark hair. This tiny detail in the picture reveals a discreet representation of an enigmatic miracle (fig. 50).¹²

This is not pareidolia, but an actual, tiny patch of light, less than 0.5 cm in size, which is not noticeable at first glance. The sudden and extraordinary appearance of a halo of light around Philip and the eunuch provokes astonishment among the eunuch's entourage. Their surprise in turn attracts the viewers' attention and directs it towards the spiritual event that is taking place: a discreet and enigmatic miracle, performed by a divine ray of light. This tiny halo seems to be a “visual exegesis”, symbolizing God's presence, and with it the allegorical significance of a spiritual light that cleans the soul, without whitening the skin.¹³

The viewer thus becomes a virtual actor in the scene. By sharing this ‘fertile moment’ of Rembrandt's own creation, viewers are encouraged to accept his representation of a divine experience because they are emotionally involved and immersed in this biblical landscape.

Through his pure respect of the pictorial tradition, Rembrandt makes a brilliant demonstration of the true essence of the Scripture, differentiating himself from his predecessors and expressing his own superior inventiveness.

12. Rembrandt used to depict real-life situations with real actors or natural experiments. In fact, the reflection of light from Philip's hand to the eunuch's head is not a miracle but a natural phenomenon. In physics, refraction from light is the change in direction of a wave passing from one medium to another. For instance, the zenithal light (the Holy Spirit) falls into the medium (Philip's hand), which redirects the (divine) ray to the eunuch's head.

13. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 73.16. Cited by Kaplan 1985, p. 23. Jerome, *Epistulae* 69.6.7-8. Odilia Bonebakker, p. 37, Thesis, Denomination and Iconography: the baptism of the eunuch in Netherland art. Chapter Two: The Theological Interpretation of the Subject.

Rembrandt scholars attribution



Prof. emeritus, Dr. Ernst van de Wetering

Prof. emeritus, Dr. Volker Manuth

Gary Schwartz

Ger Luijten



Rembrandt scholars attribution

A condition for the attribution of the lost painting that was thought likely in 2008 and verified in 2019.



Ernst van de Wetering (9 March 1938 - 11 August 2021)
Dutch art historian. He became one of the world's foremost specialists on Rembrandt. From 1968, chairman of the Rembrandt Research Project. Art historian Amsterdam's Central Research Laboratory for Restoration, Professor of history of art at the University of Amsterdam. As of 2015, the Rembrandt Research Project had published six volumes on Rembrandt's work, the known Rembrandts, and the techniques used. He was the co-author of the A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Volume I-V.

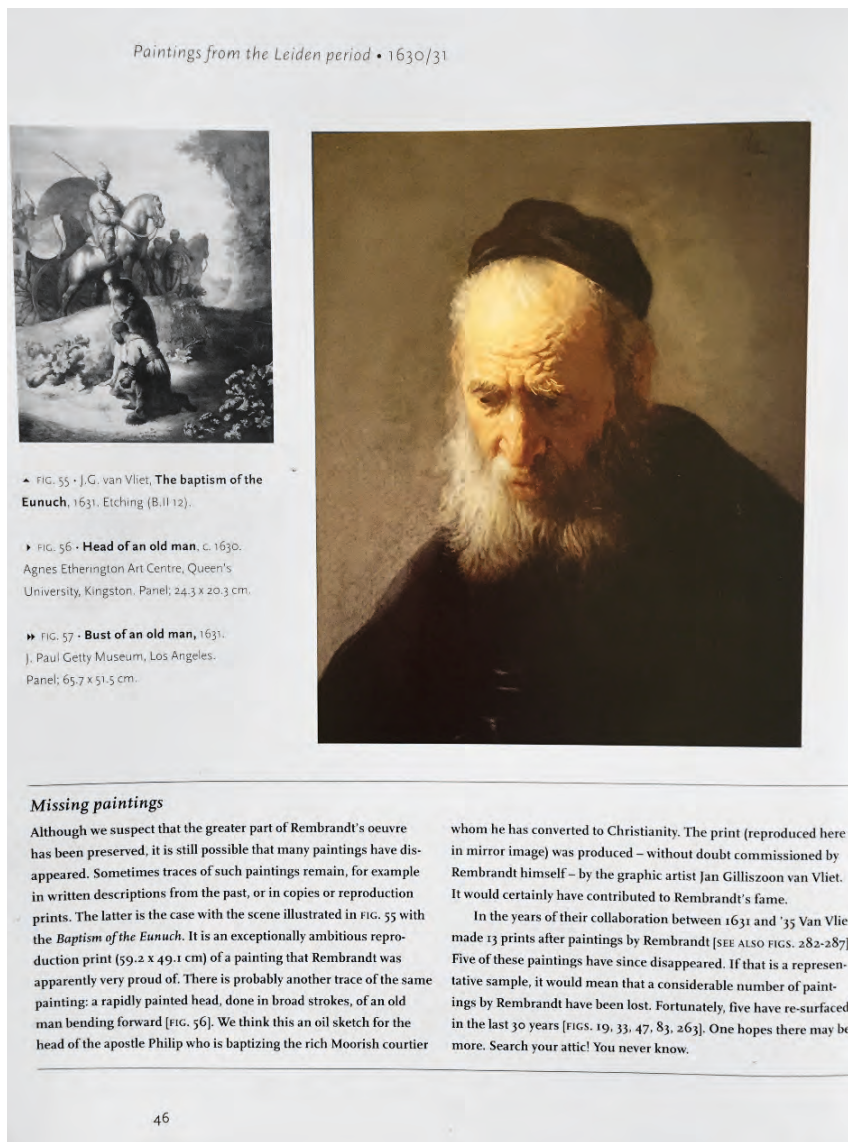


Fig. 51 Picture of the text A Life in 180 Paintings: The baptism of the eunuch, 1631 by Vliet, Head of an old man with a cap ca. 1630 by Rembrandt, and detail of Philip of the present painting ca. 1630

Ernst van de Wetering's hypothesis in direct relation with the painting, *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630:

“Missing paintings: Although we suspect that the greater part of Rembrandt's oeuvre has been preserved, it is still possible



that many paintings have disappeared. Sometimes traces of such paintings remain, for example in written

descriptions from the past, or in copies or reproduction prints. The latter is the case with the scene illustrated in fig.55 with the Baptism of the Eunuch. It is an exceptionally ambitious reproduction print (59.2 x 49.1 cm) of a painting that Rembrandt was apparently very proud of. There is probably another trace of the same painting: a rapidly painted head, done in broad strokes, of an old man bending forward” (fig. 51).

Rembrandt scholars attribution



Fig. 52 A striking resemblance between the motifs of the painting and those of Vliet's print.

"We think this is an oil sketch for the head of the apostle Philip who is baptizing the rich Moorish courtier whom he was converted to Christianity. The print (reproduced here in mirror image) was produced - without doubt commissioned by Rembrandt himself - by the graphic artist Jan G. van Vliet. It would certainly have contributed to Rembrandt's fame. In the years of their collaboration between 1631 and '35 Van Vliet made 13 prints after paintings by Rembrandt. Five of these paintings have since disappeared. If that is a representative sample, it would

mean that a considerable number of paintings by Rembrandt have been lost. Fortunately, five have re-surfaced in the last 30 years (Figs. 19, 33, 47, 83, 263). One hopes there may be more. Search your attic! You never know." *Rembrandt, A Life in 180 Paintings*, p. 46 Local World BV, 2008 Local.

Following his observation, a direct link was established between *the Old Man in a Cap* by Rembrandt 1630 and Philip of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt.

On September 17th, 2019, in Amsterdam, the final judgment of Ernst van de Wetering was based on striking similarities of design and style between the elements mentioned in his previous writing from 2008.

Specifically, the close resemblance between the Head of the Old Man and Philip, as well as the figures of Philip baptizing the eunuch in the painting and Vliet's print (fig. 52-53). Unfortunately, the examination had to be abruptly halted due to a health issue and could not continue any further.

All that remains is the text he wrote regarding the lost painting of *the Baptism of the Eunuch* in *Rembrandt: A Life in 180 Paintings*, p. 46, and his mail dated of the 5th September 2019 in which he asked the current owner "will you bring your Rembrandt to Leiden?" (for the exhibition *Young Rembrandt - Rising star in Leiden*, 2 Nov. 2019-9 Feb. 2020).¹⁴

Ernst van de Wetering claims: "Van Vliet's indication on the print after *the Head of the Old Man in a Cap*, that Rembrandt was the 'inventor' of the image concerned, should in my view be accepted as sound evidence that this painting and the other paintings copied by Van Vliet must have been from Rembrandt's hand."¹⁵



Fig. 53 Detail of *the Old Man in a Cap* by Rembrandt, print copy detail by Van Vliet, detail of Philip of the painting, print copy detail by Van Vliet, 1631, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

14. Ernst van de Wetering, meeting with the current owner on September 17, Weesperzijde 97H, Amsterdam (mail September 5. 2019)

15. Ernst van de Wetering, *Corpus VI*, Chapter I, What is a Rembrandt? A personal account, p. 41

Rembrandt scholars attribution

One of the most impressive rediscoveries of a highly important and significant painting by Rembrandt.



Prof. Dr. Volker Manuth, leading Rembrandt specialist and co-author of the corpus: “The Complete Paintings” (2019), Taschen. He studied art history, philosophy and classical archaeology in Kiel, Bonn, and Berlin. In 1987, he completed his PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin with a thesis on the iconography of Rembrandt’s Old Testament subjects. Since 2003, he has been a Professor of Art History at Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario and at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Member the Vereniging Rembrandt.



The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca.1630 by Rembrandt, oil on oak panel, 64,8 x 95,3 cm, Private collection.

Volker Manuth attributes *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630, to Rembrandt van Rijn. (Summary and conclusion, *The rediscovery of the Baptism of the Eunuch*, May 30. 2023, Nijmegen, the Netherlands).

“Rembrandt is considered and rightly accepted to be one of the most influential and congenial artists of the seventeenth century in Europe. His baptism of the eunuch (oil on oak panel, 64,8 x 95,3 cm, Private collection) must be considered one of the most impressive rediscoveries of highly important and significant painting. [...] Mostly attributions of paintings to Rembrandt are based exclusively on stylistic

evidence because of the lack of primary sources. His Baptism of the Eunuch is a remarkable exception. [...] In addition to the above mentioned reasons to attribute the Baptism of the eunuch to Rembrandt painted around 1630 (minor workshop assistance cannot be excluded totally).”¹⁶

Summary and conclusion, *The rediscovery of the Baptism of the Eunuch*, May 30. 2023, Nijmegen.

16. The restorer Regina Costa Pinto excludes any hand other than those of some previous restorers. P. 45 and Michel van de Laar also restorer sees “largely the work of a single hand” P. 46

Rembrandt scholars attribution

A new Baptism of the eunuch by Rembrandt.



Gary Schwartz, a New York American, graduated from Johns Hopkins University (1961-1965). Dutch art historian and Rembrandt's specialist, he has been studying and publishing on him for fifty years. Founding director and webmaster of CODART, an international council for museum curators of Dutch and Flemish art. Curator of the exhibitions in Kunstmuseum Basel and Postdam Museum Barberini and co-author of the catalogues '*Rembrandt's Orient: West meets East in Dutch art of the 17th century.*' 2009. Among his eighteen published books on Rembrandt alone: *Meet Rembrandt: life and work of the master painter* 2020, *The Night Watch: A Rijksmuseum dossier* 2020.

Gary Schwartz attributes *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630, to Rembrandt van Rijn. (Report to the present owner October 7, 2023, Maarssen, Netherlands).

"It was instructive as well as a pleasure to have the opportunity to look under ideal conditions at your painting of *The baptism of the eunuch* and to discuss it with you. This renewed investigation and the demonstration you gave concerning your findings bring me to make some remarks. In your impressive PowerPoint, certain observations in my book took on added weight. That is, the fact that van Vliet's print was the first of his reproductions of Rembrandt's inventions, so that you cannot say he was departing from an established practice by changing the format from horizontal to vertical; the correspondence of the borders of the print to the sawed-off right edge of the panel; and the logic of the composition with regard to the gazes of the figures and animals. **Of this, I had written that they "make perfect sense in the horizontal painting and perfect nonsense in van Vliet's vertical print".**

These points were touched on in our discussions while I was writing the book, some of them based on your own extensive research and fine insights. The comparisons you make with other work by Rembrandt strengthen these considerations. I was also charmed by Ger Luijten's discovery of the minuscule background detail of an earlier moment in the story. Being able to reconsider things in front of the painting itself inclines me to ameliorate the tone of my "provisional conclusion."

I would now say that there is more reason to attribute it to Rembrandt than to be sceptical and that the burden of (dis)proof is on those who would dismiss the evidence in its favour."

Gary Schwartz report, October 7, 2023, Maarssen, Netherlands.

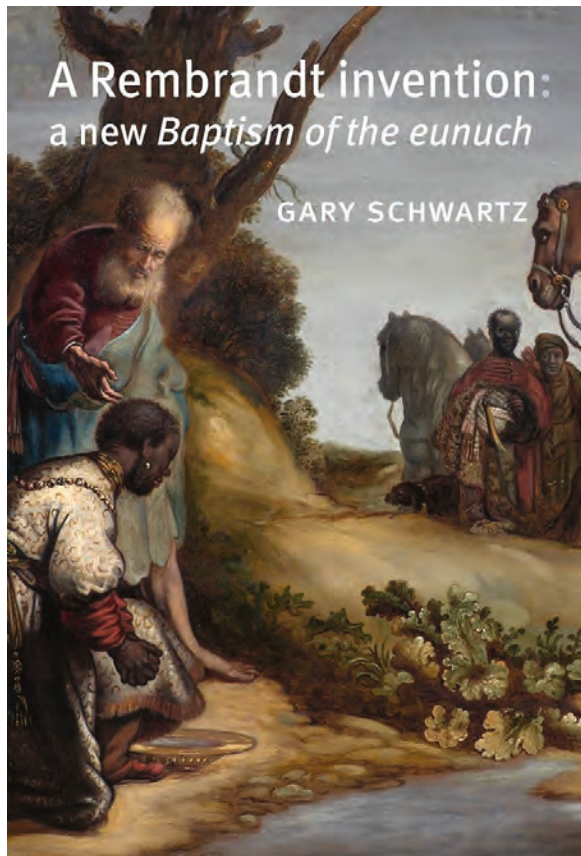


Fig. 54 *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch* in 2020 (Primavera Press, Leiden).

Gary Schwartz published *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch* in 2020 (Primavera Press, Leiden). “His book is the most completely illustrated study of the baptism of the eunuch yet to appear [...] The occasion to take this closer look was the emergence of an unpublished painting of the ‘Baptism of the Eunuch’ with all the hallmarks of a Rembrandt creation. The inclusion of the painting in the exhibition ‘Young Rembrandt: Rising Star’ in Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden gives occasion to Gary Schwartz to review the iconography of the baptism of the eunuch and present the new painting”(fig.54). Princeton University Library 2020. After Ger Luijten, he was the second to recognise it as a work of Rembrandt and attributed the lost painting provisionally to “Rembrandt and workshop” in January 2020 (p. 77). Gary Schwartz re-inspected the painting on October 7, 2023, after its latest restoration and additional scientific analysis.

After his careful inspection, he changed his “tentative conclusion” to a conclusive one and attributed the painting to Rembrandt. October 7, 2023, Maarssen, Netherlands.

On September 14, 2020 Ger Luijten recognized the lost painting of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630, by Rembrandt (“Attestation de dépôt du tableau de Rembrandt van Rijn” to the Fondation Custodia)



Ger Luijten (1956 - 19 December 2022), Dutch art historian. In 1987, he was the Museum curator at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen; in 1990, he was curator of Rijksprentenkabinet of the Rijksmuseum. In 2001, Head of Rijksprentenkabinet. in 2010-2022, director of Fondation Custodia, Paris. Member of the supervisory boards of the RKD and the Vereniging Rembrandt and on the editorial boards of several scholarly journals. Organization of several remarkable exhibitions, Drawings for Paintings in the Age of Rembrandt (2016). One of the first scholars to recognize the lost painting of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt from a comparative analysis with Vliet’s and Visscher’s prints.

Provenance



First appearance

Sales catalogues

List of known owners of the painting



Proof of the painting's presence in France around 1641.

Around November 1641, Claude Vignon, French painter, member of the Académie Royale, probably acquired the painting from the art dealer François Langlois after his visit to Rembrandt (figs. 55-56).¹⁷ There is a faithful painted copy made by Vignon's circle around 1641 (fig. 57), which attests to its presence in France during this period.¹⁸ In note 2, it is

stated, according to P. Mariette, that Langlois went to Holland, where he bought paintings, prints and drawings for Charles I, King of England, who often gave him commissions for his collection (fig. 55). After the King's death on January 30, 1649, the painting could have been sold during the collection's dispersal in Amsterdam before 1695. (ongoing research)

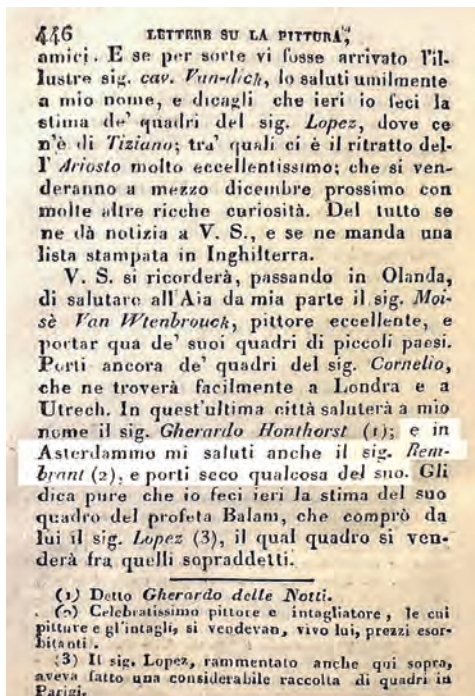
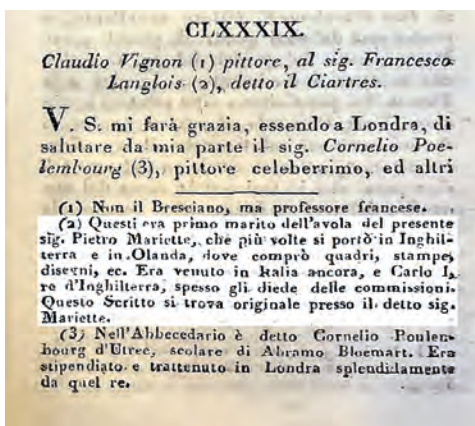


Fig. 55 C. Vignon's letter to F. Langlois (extract), Nov. 1641.



Fig. 56 F. Langlois' portrait by A. van Dick, 1625 - 1635.



Fig. 57 Copy by C. Vignon's circle around 1641.

17. Langlois' visit to Rembrandt is mentioned in a letter of mission by C. Vignon on November 22, 1641. (see Bottari, 1764, raccolta dilettere sulla pittura scultura e architettura CLXXXIX, n. Bottari, 1822, vo. 4, p. 445-446). In footnote 2, it is stated, according to P. Mariette, that F. Langlois went to Holland, where he bought paintings, prints and drawings for Charles I, King of England, who often gave him commissions for his collection.

18. Copy of the painting, oil on panel, size 57 x 45 cm, executed by Claude Vignon's entourage around 1641, copy of large detail of *the Baptism of the Eunuch* by Rembrandt, ca. 1630, sold by Millon auction house, Paris, September 18, 2020, lot 328, (see p.21).

Provenance: catalogues

Catalogus of Naamlyst van Schilderyen by Gerard Hoet published by Pieter Gerard van Baalen.

April 6, 1695, Amsterdam, Van Schilderyen, Verkogt den, Lot 48, sold for 46 gilders *De Moormans Dooping*, Van Rembrandt (fig. 58).

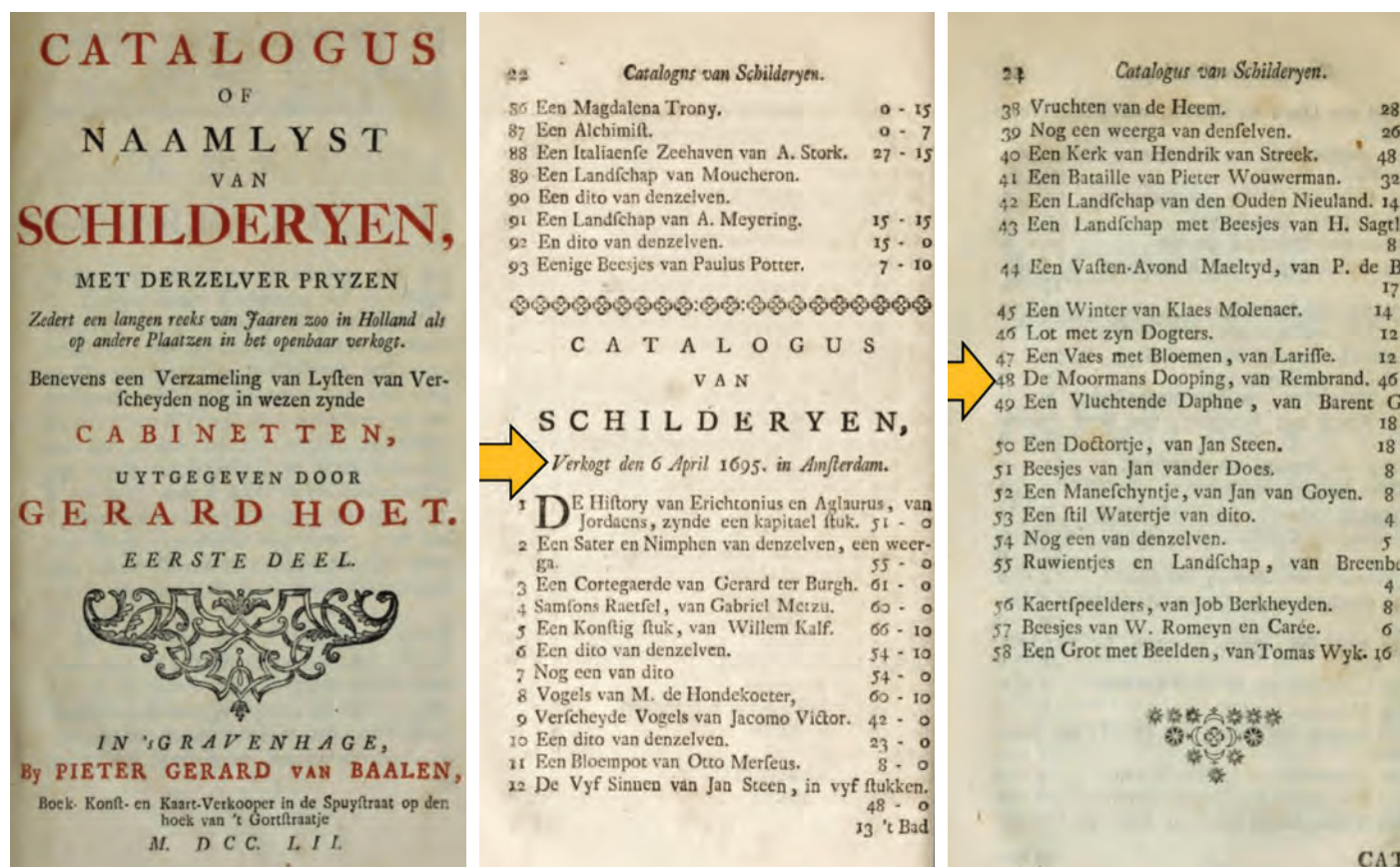


Fig. 58 Catalogus Schilderyen, Amsterdam, April 6. 1695, lot 48 *De Moormans Dooping* van Rembrandt.

Opinion: Based on its engraved reproductions (vertical by van Vliet in 1631 and horizontal by Visscher between 1631 and 35), the probability that this painting is the present painting ca.1631 is relatively high. The reference to Rembrandt's model is inscribed in the image itself (RH. V. Rijn inv. JG. V. Vliet fec.1631), and the resemblance of the figures of Philip and the eunuch is indisputable. This relationship has been established by both Gary Schwartz in his book, *A Rembrandt invention: A new Baptism of the eunuch*, 2020 and certificate on October 7. 2023, and Volker Manuth in his Summary and conclusion, *The rediscovery of the Baptism of the Eunuch* in May. 30. 2023.

On the other hand, it is doubtful that the painting mentioned in the catalogue 1695 is concerned with the 1626 painting in Utrecht, given that the figures bear no resemblance to any other figures in the whole of Rembrandt's work nor with the reproductions by Vliet and Visscher or other artists, nor is it mentioned in any literature preceding its emergence.

Provenance: catalogues

Auctions, 1798 Christie's catalogue, mentioning Rembrandt's paintings of *Philip baptising the eunuch*.

Auction on Saturday, June 9. 1798, Lot 66, Philip baptising the eunuch by Rembrandt (fig. 59).

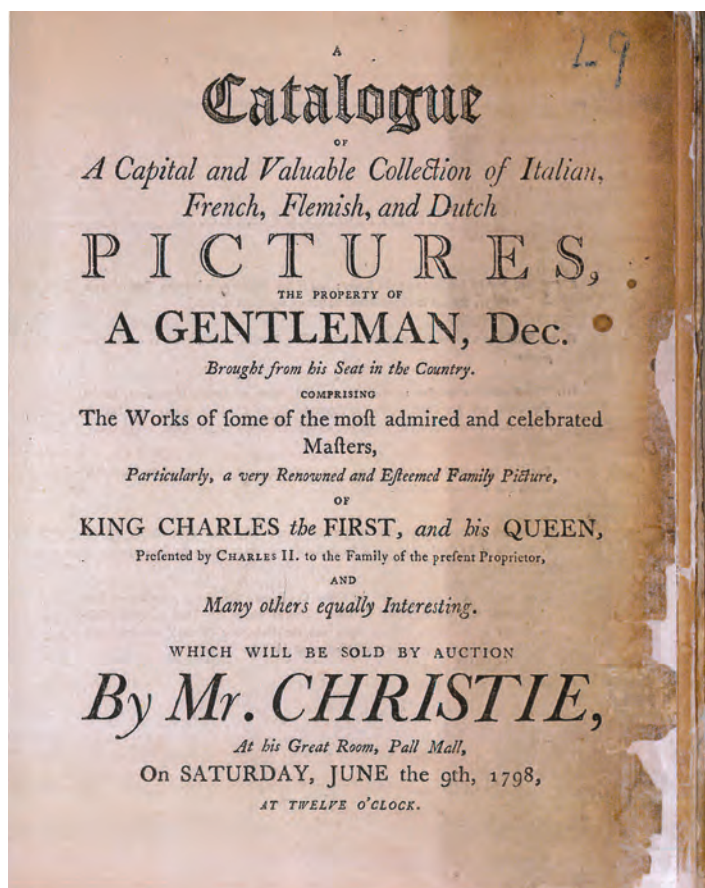


Fig. 59 Christie's catalogue, London, June 9. 1798, *Philip Baptising the eunuch* by Rembrandt.

As in the 1695 catalogue, the measurements are not mentioned, but the probability is high because there are the engravings by Vliet from 1631 and Visscher from 1631-1635 (in the same format), which testify to the existence of the painting by a precise inscription at the bottom of the images that they were executed from an invention of Rembrandt and by the presence of the same eight figures and animals of great similarity. *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, 1626 never left Holland. RKD only mentions the travel from Nijmegen for Utrecht in 1976. As for the painting in the Kremer collection, it is an anonymous copy engraving after Vliet or of one of his painted vertical pastiches.

The painting was sold by Christie's on June 9th 1798 along with the Charles 1st collection (figs. 59-60).

Tercampe	—	62 A view of Rotterdam
V. der Heyde	—	63 A view in Holland, very highly finished
Churfurst	—	64 A madona at devotion
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
Terburg	—	69 A conversation
Molinaer	—	70 Man and woman drinking
Teniers	—	71 A landscape with figures
Claude	—	72 A sea port, moon-light

Fig. 60 Auctions, 1798 Christie's catalogue, mentioning Rembrandt painting of *Philip Baptising the Eunuch* and *David Presenting the Head of Goliath to Saul*, 1627 Rembrandt. Kunstmuseum, Basel.

Provenance: catalogues

Christie's sales catalogue with auctioneers' handwriting and catalogues mentioning the sales and the buyer.

Christie's catalogue of sale of October 26, 1973, lot. 86, *St. Philip Baptising the Eunuch* by Rembrandt (figs. 61-62).

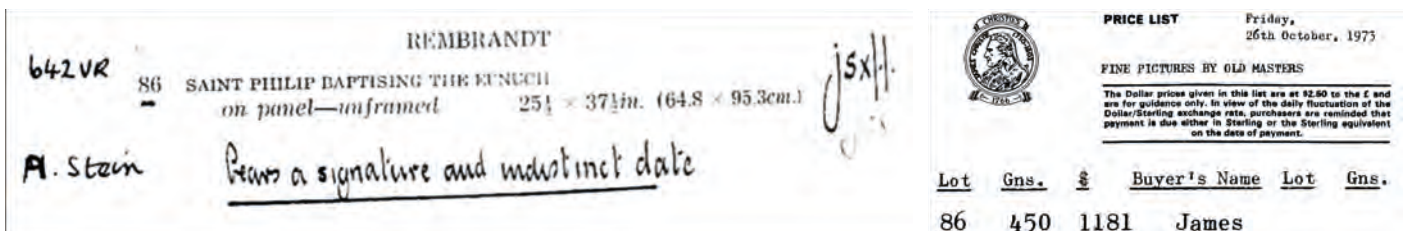
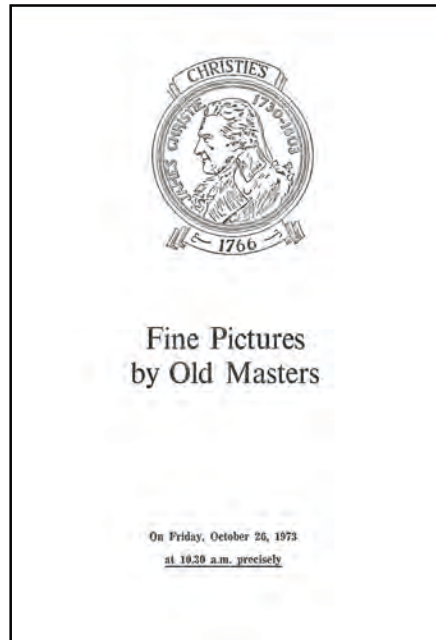
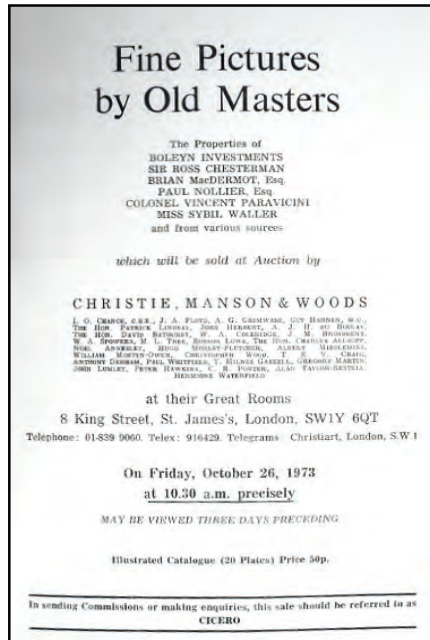


Fig. 61 *Philip Baptising the Eunuch* by Rembrandt is listed in the Christie's catalogue of the sales made on Friday, October 26, 1973, sold by "A. Stein" and purchased by "James" lot. 86.

Christie's sales catalogue with auctioneers' handwriting showing the exact dimensions of the painting with the same lot 86 and

Christie's code 642VR (printed on the former cradle of the present painting¹⁹) and the seller's name: Adolf Stein.



Fig. 62 The back of the painting before restoration, the painting and the new cradle with Christie's code 642VR.

19. It is now in a small transparent pocket inserted in the current frame.

Provenance

List of known owners of the painting

In around November 1641, Claude Vignon (French painter and member of the Académie Royale) likely acquired the painting from the art dealer François Langlois after his visit to Rembrandt.²⁰ There is a faithful painted copy of the baptismal scene made by Vignon's circle circa 1640, which attests to its presence in France (fig. 56 p. 35),

April 6, 1695, in Amsterdam, van Schilderyen, Lot 48, sold for 46 guilders
De Moormans Dooping, Van Rembrandt,

June 9, 1798, with Solomon, Christie's London, Lot 66, sold to "S" for 13 guineas *Philip Baptising the Eunuch* by Rembrandt,

October 26, 1973, with Adolf Stein, Christie's London, sold to James, Lot 86 for 450 guineas *St. Philip Baptising the Eunuch* by Rembrandt. (64.8 x 95.3cm), 1973, auctioneer's handwritten inscriptions on the catalogue: "bears a signature and indistinct date",

Until 1978, owned by Mr Henri Cardelin, 31000, Toulouse,

November 19, 1978, the painting was acquired from Cardelin by Mr. and Mme Marty, Toulouse,

June 1982, it was acquired from the Martys by Dr Léon Coriat, 77760, Boissy aux Cailles,

January 23, 1991 it was acquired from Dr Coriat by the present owner.

(This is an ongoing research)

20. Paola Pacht Bassani, ('Claude Vignon' (1593-1670), Arthena, 1993, 'Vignon et compagnie' p.65)

Technical examination and conservation



Dendrochronology

Reflectography & X-ray, UV fluorescence

Multispectral Imaging

Condition report

Stratigraphy analysis

Technical description of the painting

Technical examination of the signature



Technical examination and conservation



Prof. Dr. Peter Klein, Universität Hamburg. He was awarded the Venia Legendi for wood biology and worked at the Centre Wood Economics and the Institute of Wood Technology and Wood Biology of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institute. Klein specialized in dendrochronology. With his work, he supported the work in the Rembrandt Research Project (RRP) for dating questions.

“A earliest creation date of the painting is possible from 1631 upwards.”

Report on the dendrochronological analysis of *The Baptism of the Eunuch* 22.08 2012.

“In 2012, the panel was submitted for dating to the leading specialist in the dendrochronology of panel paintings, Dr. Peter Klein of Hamburg University. 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.” Gary Schwartz, *“A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the Eunuch”*, 2020 Leiden p. 64-65.

Dendrochronological analysis was performed on all three boards that make up the panel. The research confirmed that the wood originated in the Baltic region.

Conclusion: After studying the growth rings of the three boards, it was possible for Dr Klein to date the support to around 1627 at the latest and suggested an early creation date of about 1631. This corresponds to the painting of *The Baptism of the Eunuch* ca. 1631. Dr. Peter Klein report .

1. “Nevertheless, this kind of analysis is not perhaps always reliable. Different dendrochronological reports of the same painting by Gerrit Dou in the Leiden Collection, New York, are known to have differed by more than ten years.”

Ilona van Tuinen, Head of the Rijksmuseum Print Room.

2. Bearing this precaution in mind, we can thus date this panel at around 1631. Van Vliet’s copy is dated the same year with the inscription “Rembrandt inventor” (RH.v. Rijn inv. JG.v. Vliet fec.1631).” C. Visscher’s print also gives Rembrandt as ‘inventor’ (Rembrant invenit Visscher Excudebat) 1631-1635.

3. “Rembrandt made some thirty paintings on top of other pictures! The fact that *The Baptism of the Eunuch* is painted in another work is not surprising; it is a common practice employed by Rembrandt and other artists of his time. The creation date of a new painting could be done quickly over an older underpainting.” E. v. de Wetering.

4. “It is fine if a still life underneath was executed in the same year of 1631 because Rembrandt could easily have used a siccative to dry the underlying paintings. It wouldn’t have taken more than a week and a half to paint over it after drying.” Michel van de Laar, former Rijksmuseum painting conservator.

Technical examination and conservation



Art in Lab 27. 10. 2022, Reflectography & X-ray, UV fluorescence photography, and Infrared reflectography was performed by Ilenia Cassan and Estelle Itié make the paint layer translucent. This made it possible to detect a still life painted under the present painting, to examine the modifications. The images obtained allow for a meticulous observation of the materials, the surface of the works, the cracks, and the support. These images illustrate the physicochemical analyses.

Infrared reflectography (900-1700nm) and digital X-rays show a still life underneath and details of some features with the reflectography in various contrasts and the last signature (fig. 63). These analysis made it possible to detect a still life painted

under the present painting, to examine the modifications. The images obtained allow for a meticulous observation of the materials, the surface of the works, the cracks, and the support. These images illustrate the physicochemical analyses.

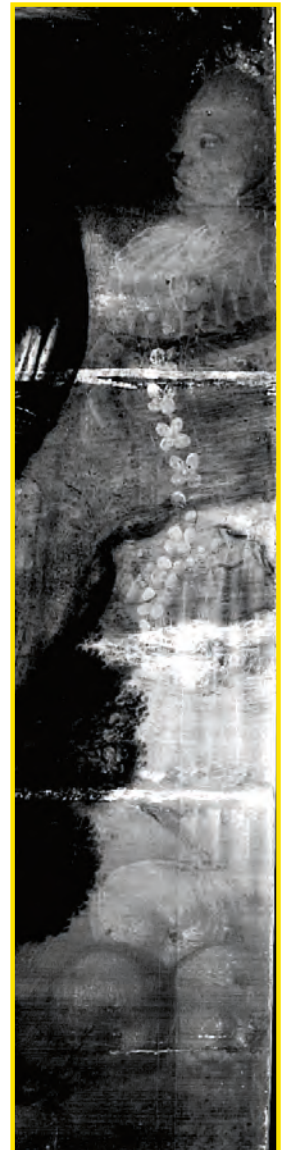
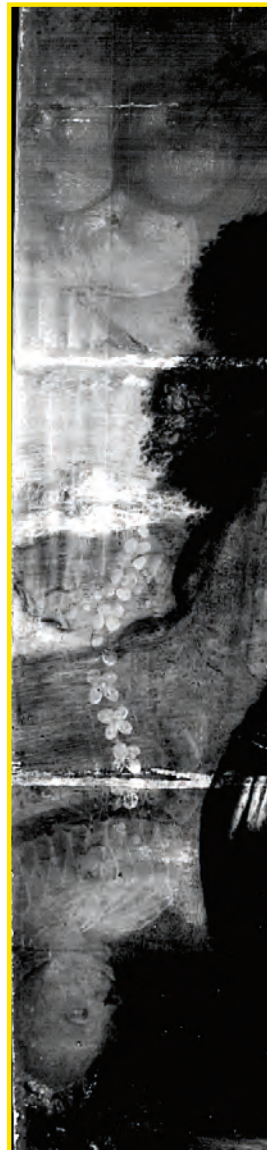
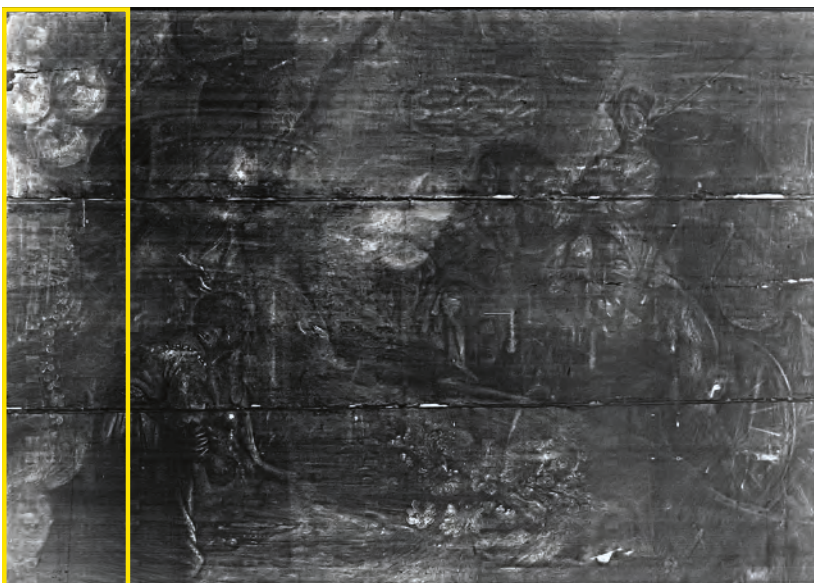


Fig. 63 X-ray and fluorescent analysis, detail of the left side and the same image upside down

Technical examination and conservation

X-rays and reflectography confirm the presence of an impasto wider than the contours of the tunic, which can already be seen with the naked eye. It was later added to the pictorial layer. When we look at the engravings of Vliet and Visscher, we notice a piece of the fringed garment that protrudes from the eunuch's tunic placed exactly at the impasto location in the painting (fig. 64). This unnecessary detail was recovered by Rembrandt who finally decided to withdraw it.

“At the front of the part of the mantle of the Eunuch resting on the ground, low impasto placed obliquely to follow the shape of the edge of the garment are visible. They create a slight extra thickness here, wider than if it had been a simple reinforcement of the contour of the pattern. The very light colour of this “impasto” is probably obtained with a pigment reflecting infrared radiation; it is not translucent on infrared reflectography.”
Estelle Itié, Art in Lab.

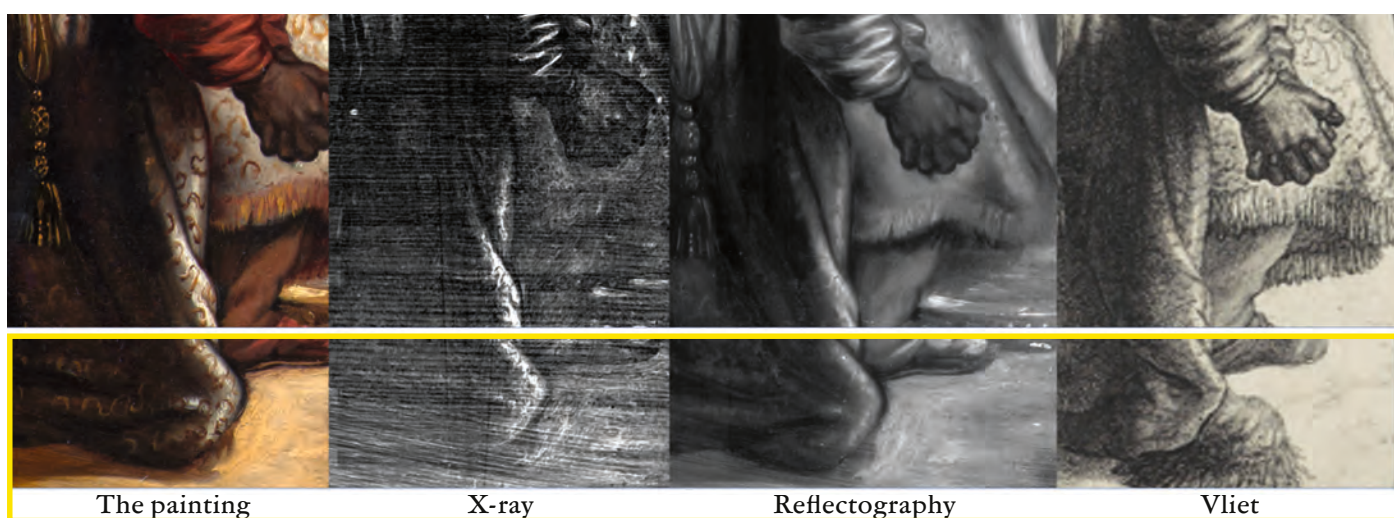


Fig. 64 Traces of the garment piece covered by an impasto.

Conclusion: This analysis confirms the double use of the panel is “so typical of Rembrandt” according G. Schwartz, and reveals an artwork painted upside down over an older image. It also shows “Rembrandt at work” as E. v. de Wetering used to say.



Lumiere Technology, Paris: Multispectral and reflectography analysis of *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt (64,8 X 95,3 cm), June 22. 2012.

Multispectral imaging captures image data within specific wavelength ranges across the electromagnetic spectrum, allowing for the extraction of additional information beyond what the human eye can see. It was used to

investigate a painting by irradiating it with UV, VIS, or IR rays and recording the reflected radiation using a camera sensitive to those wavelengths. This allowed for the fluorescence of pigments and varnishes to be analyzed.

Technical examination and conservation

We could observe the different layers applied by the painter on the wood support and understand his creation process, the history of the painting, the order of working from back to front, the composition changes, the way of applying pigments and brushstrokes, the restoration zones like the joints of the three boards. The manner of applying pigments and brushstrokes, the zones where the painting has been restored, such as the places where the three boards join. (1000 nm), especially revealing:

- the remaining portions of foliage that Rembrandt subsequently covered over to rebalance the composition after the different cuts had been made along all four edges (figs. 65-66).
- a possible signature on the left side of the painting (fig. 66).
- the portion of the Eunuch's garment which is visible in Vliet and Visscher's prints can be seen in the original (fig. 67).



Fig. 65 Foliage traces, pentimenti (false colors).



Fig. 66 Rembrandt 's workshop copy showing a larger image with a plausible initial signature place and existence of original foliage.



Fig. 67 Detail of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca 1630 (negative value) showing the covering of the underlying piece of garment.

Conclusion: Evidence of an original composition by the objective observation of the changes during execution.

Technical examination and conservation



Regina da Costa Pinto Moreira. Restorer of paintings at the Louvre Museum and many of the world's leading museums. She restored the works of the most famous old masters, including Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt's *Bathsheba at her Bath*.

(at work on the restoration of *St. John the Baptist* by Leonardo da Vinci, 1513–1516)

“Restoring *the Baptism of the Eunuch* was to approach a state of equilibrium as closely as possible of this work; artistic balance corresponding to the rendering desired by the painter - in the extent that natural ageing allows it, of course, and material balance between the maintenance of a certain degree of patina and the restoration of readability of all subtleties still present.”

“Finally, the elements gathered by art history and technical studies have allowed a restoration carried out with the greatest caution. Several phases of intervention have been defined, with implementation proposals

that are as adapted as possible to the goals sought in accordance with the painting. However, the actual confrontation at work makes it possible to refine the restoration techniques and to balance them in relation to the reactions of each area; flexibility of intervention has always remained present in my mind, both in the choice of products used and in the gesture and the ‘hand’, according to the aesthetic needs specific to Rembrandt alone, even – and perhaps above all – during cleaning, a fundamental and delicate operation.”

Regina da Costa Pinto Moreira (fig. 68).



Fig. 68 Regina Costa Pinto 2015 during the restoration of *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630.

Conclusion: “This restoration made it possible to observe the absence of style breaks or dissonant touches technically and therefore exclude the participation of other hands except those often clumsy of some previous restorers at the joint of the boards on the mastic [...] This clumsiness of past restorers does not affect the fluidity and general balance this work made by Rembrandt’s free, fast, and safe hand.”

Technical examination and conservation



Michel van de Laar is a freelance paintings conservator. He has been employed at the Rijksmuseum between 1989 and 2014. Michel van de Laar trained at the Academy Anderlecht in Brussels and at the Laboratoire des Etudes des œuvres d'Art par les Méthodes Scientifiques in Louvain-la-Neuve and also spent two years volunteering for Luitsen Kuiper in the Rijksmuseum's Painting Restoration Workshop.

He did work placements at Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London in 1991, 1992 and 1995, respectively. He publishes regularly on restoration, restoration history and workshop practices, also in the Rijksmuseum's bulletin. **Condition report:** "The condition of this painting is stable and very good."

An opinion: "The painting is largely the work of a single hand with notably good renderings of the eunuch, the rider and his horse."

M. van de Laar (fig. 69).



Fig. 69 M. van de Laar applying the protection varnish.



Jonathan Graindorge Lamour. Conservator, "restaurateur du Patrimoine", structural conservation of panel paintings, Museo Nacional del Prado, Institut national du patrimoine (INP). This work was carried out in collaboration with Regina Costa Pinto, restorer of the paint layer, and supervised by Ger Luijten, director of the Fondation Custodia.



Fig. 70 Red hatching: uplifts / Opaque yellow ochre bands: presence of restoration putty.

Technical examination and conservation



Fig. 71 Before restauration.



Fig. 72 Installation of the slats inserted into the cleats.



Fig. 73 complete system on the back of the painting.

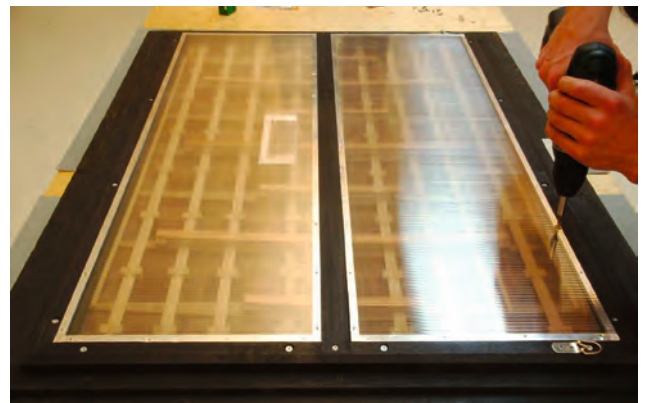


Fig. 74 Installation of transparent protective backing.

Conclusion: Assessment after intervention: “the re-gluing of the joint openings and slits, the filling and the reconstruction of the gaps of the support have allowed restoring a certain cohesion to the panel (fig. 70). The broken and dissociated part from the lower angle senestre has been replaced, completing the composition (fig. 71). The new support structure accompanies the panel movements while limiting the amplitude of curvature variations (figs. 72-73-74).

It secures manipulations of the work, still fragile because of the importance of the wormed areas. The layout of the sheet of the frame allows secure maintenance of the work and an adequate presentation in this very beautiful Dutch frame. The work must be kept in a stable climate.

Technical examination and conservation



Fernando García-García. Profesor titular del Departamento de Dibujo de al Facultad de Belas Artes de al Universidad de Sevilla. Specialist in analyses of the creative process of the Old Masters. He is also an artist.

Furthermore, in the course of this process, the above-mentioned evidence was observed about the certainty that this painting appears to be technically in the same hand as that of *the Old Man in a Cap* by Rembrandt and that it is the model for the engravings rather than a copy of them.



Fig. 75 *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca 1630, Vliet's and Visscher's prints.



Fig. 76 Consequence of the composition transfer in Vliet's print.

This evidence is fully consistent with the inscriptions on the engravings HR v. Rijn inv. JG.v. Vliet fec. 1631, Rembrandt invent. and CI Visscher Excudebat.

For the record, this report was signed in Sevilla on January 23, 2023.

Fernando García-García.

Prof. Fernando García-García simulated a comparison of the riders and horses by drawing the unseen parts of the figures (fig. 75). In the painting the proportions are consistent, because the artist has a complete mental idea of the diorama in three dimensions. However, when a less experienced printmaker draws on a pre-existing two-dimensional image, he tends to do it in a fragmentary way: since he can follow the flat surface of the image, he does not need to have the whole three-dimensional scene conceived in his mind in order to interpret it. The problem is that by working in a fragmentary manner, relationships between the elements that participate in the composition are lost, and inconsistencies and disproportions can occur. This is a typical mistake that is often found in copies. Prof. Fernando García-García also pointed out that the mechanical transfer operated by Vliet had created other incongruities than the disorganized system of glances. The unexpected representation of the horse's genitals right beside Philip's head (fig. 76) is a surprising and strong indication that Vliet made a transfer from a horizontal model.

Conclusion: Technically in the same hand as that of *the Old Man in a Cap* by Rembrandt, (the model for the engravings), *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 should be attributed to Rembrandt van Rijn.

Technical examination and conservation

Institut d'Art
Conservation
et Couleur

Dr. Hermann Khun, study of the pigments (from extracted fragments) and stratigraphy by stereo binocular, microscope by macro photography, U.V. in Mme Brans' workshop February 5th 1985.

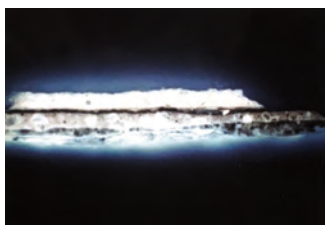


Fig. 77 e.g. sample n° 4, Ultra-violet

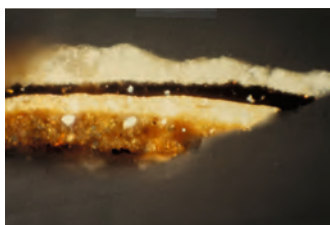


Fig. 78 e.g. Macro samples of the "6" of the date, 9/8/85

Conclusion: "All the samples examined contain pigments already known or used in the 17th century. Large aggregates of lead white, the use of calcium carbonate as a filler, and oil-based mediums with added resins were quite common in the 17th century. The graph of the trace elements also agrees with that of the Dutch paintings." Dr. Hermann Khun (figs. 77-78).

Technical examination of the signature

The painting *St. Philip Baptising the Eunuch* by Rembrandt "bears a signature and indistinct date". (Handwriting of Christie's London auctioneer on the sale catalogue of October 26, 1973). It is likely that there was an older signature present on the lefthand side of the painting. However, it disappeared when the panel was cut off on the sides, especially on the left side. It was not unusual for Rembrandt to sign a finished artwork at a later date.²¹ The reduction of the panel of the Baptism of the

Eunuch, ca. 1630, is in complete concordance with the case mentioned in the *Corpus*.²² This claim is supported by a Rembrandt studio copy of the painting, and by Vliet's copy, which includes the missing part, containing a large portion of foliage. The multispectral analysis reveals underpainted traces of this foliage (fig. 65 p. 44). The current signature is located under the eunuch's right foot in the lower left corner and was likely added after the panel was cut (figs. 79-81).



Fig. 79 Detail of the signature under false colors

21. Paintings made c. 1630 and printed by Vliet in 1631 and signed later: *Simeon in the Temple*, was made by Rembrandt in 1628 and signed in 1633 (according Christopher Brown, Young Rembrandt catalogue exhibition 2019, Leiden, p. 49), *Rembrandt Self-Portrait in Oriental Attire* made in 1631 signed in 1632, (C. Brown and A. van Camp, Young Rembrandt catalogue exhibition 2019, Leiden, p. 274), *St Jerome kneeling in prayer* was painted c. 1631 and engraved by Vliet in 1631, *The Prophetess Hannah* was made in 1631 and engraved by Vliet in 1631, *Lot and his daughters*, also a lost painting which has yet to be found, but we know that it was painted c. 1631, copied by Vliet in 1631, and signed in 1633.

22. According to *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, by Rembrandt Research Project, the later addition of a signature is not uncommon. J. Bruyn wrote Volume IV, Chapter V, 'A selection of signatures': *In the case of perfectly authentic paintings, one can imagine two kinds of circumstances that might have given rise to the later addition of a signature. One was, we would assume, alteration - a reduction or overpainting - to a painting so extensive that the original signature was lost and was replaced by an inscription reproduced with greater or lesser skill.*

Technical examination of the signature

Art in Lab:

After conducting reflectography, stratigraphic analysis, and graphical observation by Michel van de Laar, as well as a comparative analysis of "Signatures by Rembrandt" from 1633 and later with the present painting, the convergent conclusions suggest that the signature is possibly authentic.

As shown in a workshop copy, the painting was cut on the left side, where the first signature may have been located (fig. 80). This hypothesis explains why Rembrandt would have signed it a second time, under the right foot of the eunuch, around 1633-163 after the cut. This corroborates the conclusion of the stratigraphical analysis, that the signature and the date were painted later.



Fig. 80 "A": place of the possible previous signature on the left and "B": the present one under the Eunuch's foot.

Stratigraphic analysis:

The analyses of signature and date samples (the upper part of Rembrandt's "b" and the first 6 of the date 16....) of the painting of the "Baptism of the Eunuch", were taken on December 13, 1984, and analysed on February 19, 1985, and August 9, 1985 in Paris. Dr Kühn

concludes twice that the date and signature are distinctly separated from the pictorial layer of the painting. "Treated with a diluted solution of sodium hydroxide. The layer "6" separates easily from the underlying paint and varnish layers and does not adhere to the varnish. These observations suggest that the "6" was added later" It is also the case for the letter b.



Fig. 81 Detail of the signature on *the Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 by Rembrandt (false colors).

Conclusion:

(August 9, 1985) Dr Kuhn stated that the black paint of the signature was painted on top of a varnish layer. This statement is based on his study of cross-sections. Michel van de Laar made the same observation as Ilenia Cassan and Estelle Itié of Art in Lab did on October 27, 2022. The signature shows noticeable homogeneity in the rhythm, length, and continuity of the line on which it stands, and the script. All of these analyses indicate that the signature matches those used by the master in and after 1633.

Exhibitions



Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden: Young Rembrandt-Rising Star, 2019

Kunstmuseum, Basel: Rembrandt's Orient, 2020

Museum Barberini, Potsdam: Rembrandt's Orient, 2021



Exhibitions

Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden: Young Rembrandt-Rising Star, 2019



Invitation to the exhibition.



Exhibition catalogue.

Young Rembrandt-Rising Star, at the Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden. From left to right: *The Baptism of the Eunuch* by Rembrandt 1626, Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht; the present painting reattributed to Rembrandt ca.1630, Private collection; (below in the display case), its print copy ca. 1631-1635

by C. J. Visscher, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; a pastiche by a follower of Rembrandt, Kremer collection, 1635; and print copy of the painting ca. 1630 by J.G van Vliet, 1631 (Museum Het Rembrandthuis), Amsterdam.



Photo of the exhibition.



Photo of the exhibition.



Photo of the exhibition catalogue.

Exhibitions

Kunstmuseum, Basel: Rembrandt's Orient, 2020



Photo of the exhibition.



Exhibition catalogue.

Oil on canvas, 64.8 x 95.3 cm
Private collection

Lit.
Bonebakker 1998, 59
Koffin 2010, vol. 3, 271–307
Amsterdam 2020, 91 (as lost)
Schwartz 2020

* Bonebakker 1998, 59.
† Cf. Koffin 2010; Amsterdam 2020.

‡ Cf. Ponté 2020, 44–57. In 1644 slavery was outlawed in Amsterdam; see *ibid.*, 52.

The phenomenon of conversion is a central element of Christianity. At its birth, Christianity was reserved to people of the Jewish faith. The expansion of the base beyond the Jewish world was a key moment in the history of the faith. Two stories in the book of Acts vie for precedence as being the first conversion of a non-Jew to Christianity. The one that is usually assigned this role is the conversion by Saint Peter of the Roman centurion Cornelius in Acts 10. As important as the theological significance ascribed to that event, it was seldom depicted in art. Instead, the iconography of a conversion of a non-Jew was monopolized, especially in Dutch art, by an earlier event described in Acts 8:26–38.

An angel of the Lord visited Philip, one of the first deacons of the early church. He was told to go to the road descending from Jerusalem to Gaza. When he got there, Philip was instructed to approach a man riding in a chariot. The man was a high official in the court of Ethiopia, identified in some Bible translations as a Black eunuch. He was reading a passage in the book of Isaiah that he was struggling to understand. At his request, Philip explained it to him, apparently as a prediction of the divinity of Christ. Accepting the interpretation, the eunuch asked Philip to baptize him in a body of water they had come to. The two men stepped into the water, Philip performed a baptism, and he then was taken off by the angel.

The iconography that found its way into seventeenth-century art reduces the story to the act of baptism. For unknown reasons, artists never showed the deacon and the eunuch standing in the water together, as Scripture says they did. This peculiarity reveals to us that artists looked more at each other's work for visual inspiration than to the text they were depicting. This is certainly true of Rembrandt's *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, which depends heavily on the example of his master Pieter Lastman (Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe). Rembrandt's earlier depiction of the subject (Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht) from 1626 is also indebted to Lastman.

Religious meanings played less of a role in seventeenth-century Baptisms of the Eunuch than the narrative and emotional facets of the story. One particular feature of the story was particularly appealing: the "whitening" through baptism of the soul of a man whose skin remains black. The iconography was hallmarked by that paradox, which was built into the imagery. To artists it held irresistible attraction. That is surely one of the main reasons for its great popularity as a subject in print and painting.

In the middle of the seventeenth century Rembrandt's *The Baptism of the Eunuch* served as the model for an engraving by Claes Jansz. Visscher II showing the same composition. (The reversal is due to the printing process, by which a composition comes out in mirror image from what is engraved in the plate.) The Latin caption reads: "Here Philip washed the Black Ethiopian, dispels the color not of his skin but of his soul, after having explained the prophecies." The print is inscribed "Rembrandt invent.", meaning that Rembrandt was the author of the model after which the print was made. Rembrandt's art has far more images of Blacks than one would think (see cat. 72): a fair number of whom lived in Rembrandt's immediate environment in Amsterdam: enslaved and indentured household servants as well as free Blacks, seamen, hostel keepers, and others.³ GS



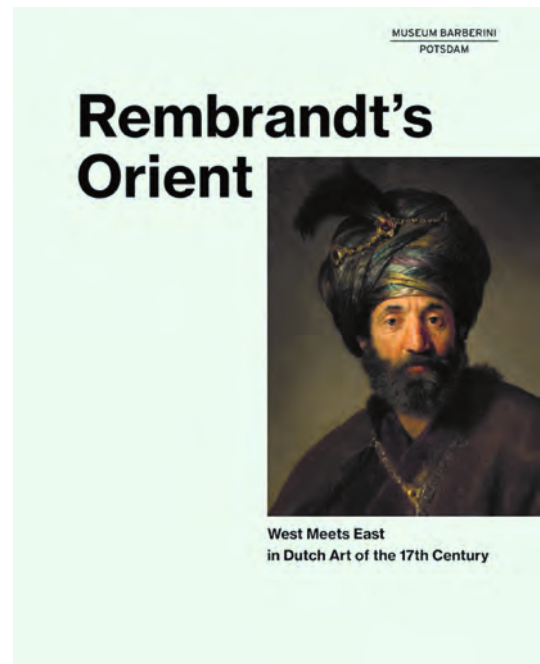
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Exhibitions

Museum Barberini, Potsdam: Rembrandt's Orient, 2021



Photo of the exhibition.



Exhibition catalogue.



Photo of the exhibition.

The baptism of the eunuch, ca 1630 by Rembrandt

2019, Catalogue *Young Rembrandt-Rising Star*, Leiden, *The Baptism of The Eunuch* [cat 53], written by Christiaan Vogelaar. p. 146.

2020, A book written by Gary Schwartz, *A Rembrandt invention: a new Baptism of the eunuch*, (Primavera Press, Leiden). 79 pages.

2020, Catalogue: *Rembrandt's Orient*, Kunstmuseum, Basel, *The Landscape of the Bible: Early Rembrandt and His Influences, The Baptism of The Eunuch*, written by Gary Schwartz, [Cat. 62], p. 216.

2021, Catalogue: *Rembrandt's Orient*, Museum Barberini, Potsdam, 2021, *The Landscape of the Bible: Early Rembrandt and His Influences, The Baptism of The Eunuch*, written by Gary Schwartz [Cat. 62], p. 216.

2023, Volker Manuth report: *The rediscovery of The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca. 1630*, by Rembrandt, Summary and conclusion, *The rediscovery of the Baptism of the Eunuch*.

2023, Gary Schwartz report: in which, the art historian attributes *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630 to Rembrandt.

2023, An interactive knowledge bank, the Art Model System dedicated to *The Baptism of the Eunuch* by Rembrandt, ca. 1630 is available upon request (1500 slides and over 1000 pages on and off line).

Copies after *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630

The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca. 1630,
“a painting that Rembrandt was very proud of.” Ernst van de Wetering.

The work has been frequently reproduced, but no other version matches the quality of the present painting.

The Baptism of the Eunuch, ca. 1630, is thought to have been entirely created by Rembrandt. Christie’s London sale in 1973 mentioned it as a Rembrandt painting that bears a signature and incomplete date (which is common for many other Rembrandt paintings). The painting was rediscovered after undergoing a state-of-the-art restoration, and it was unveiled to the public for the first time at the *Young Rembrandt: Rising Star* exhibition in 2019-2020. The painting was replicated multiple times during the 17th to 19th centuries in various sizes and qualities, confirming its popularity and corroborating Ernst van de Wetering’s statement that it was a “painting that Rembrandt was very proud of.”²³

Copies by Rembrandt’s workshop, followers of his circle and beyond:

Odilia Bonebakker points out: “A recent index of biblical staffage in Netherlandish art reveals that *The Baptism of the Eunuch* was one of the five most common subjects after *the Flight into Egypt*, *Tobias and the Angel*, *the Journey to Emmaus*, and *St. John Preaching in the Wilderness*.”

“The frequency of the Baptism of the Eunuch as staffage in the Northern Netherlands is difficult to measure since notaries usually recorded small historiated landscapes as ‘figures in a landscape’ without specifying the subject. The index was compiled by a Dutch PhD student, Margiet Verhoef. Other themes in staffage included *the Expulsion of Hagar*, *Rebecca at the Well*, *Abraham* and *the Three Angels*, *the Prodigal Son*, and *the Good Samaritan*.”²⁴

23. Ernst van de Wetering, *A Life in 180 Paintings*, p. 46 Local World BV, 2008 Local

24. Thesis: *Denomination and Iconography: The Baptism of the Eunuch in Netherlandish Art, 1520-1750* by Odilia Bonebakker Chapter One: The Iconography and Pictorial Tradition. p. 25 and footnote 70.

Copies after *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630

Two painted copies of the original artwork were found. One of the copies shows the painting before it was cut off, in its presumed original proportions (fig. 82). The other copy shows a coloring close to the original, but it has a vertical format due to the removal of most of the eunuch's entourage.

It is believed to have been reproduced by Claude Vignon's French school around 1640 and shows the great interest Vignon and François Langlois had for Rembrandt's work (fig. 83).



Fig. 82 Rembrandt's workshop copies of the original painting by Rembrandt ca. 1630 before it was cut, and a copy after the cutting on the left and right sides with the foliage on the left partially reduced, RKD archives.



Fig. 83 Vertical copy without a large portion of the eunuch's entourage by Claude Vignon's French school, around 1640.

Copies after *The Baptism of the Eunuch*, ca. 1630

Painted copies after Vliet and Visscher's etched copies.

The subject's popularity led to a plethora of reproductions in both paintings and engravings, often of mediocre quality. Most of these reproductions were based on the painting from around 1630, as well as Vliet and Visscher's reproduction prints of the painting. It is interesting to note that all the reproductions after Rembrandt, deriving from

Vliet's print exhibit the same iconographical errors and clumsy addition made by the engraver during the change of composition from the horizontal modello by Rembrandt.



From RKD archives, detail of a painted copy of Vliet's print.



The Baptism of the Eunuch, a painted copy of Vliet's print by anonymous painter, the Kremer collection.



A painted copy of Vliet's print by an unknown follower of Rembrandt van Rijn, 17th c., oil on panel, 122.3 by 88.8 cm, private collection.



Horizontal painted copy of Vliet's print, from RKD archives.



A painted copy of Visscher's print, From RKD archives.

The frame

A dutch 17th century carved polished fruitwood frame.

On a half-lapped pine back frame with three bands of ripple mouldings separated by a plain frieze and an ogee moulding.

Sight size: 106.4 x 67.6 cm Section: 12.1 cm

“The new support structure accompanies the panel movements while limiting the amplitude of curvature variations. It secures manipulations of the work. The layout of the sheet of the frame allows secure maintenance of the work and an adequate presentation in this Dutch frame.”

J. Graindorge Lamour.



