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## **Van Dyck's 'Fashion of the Time'** The impact on Rembrandt and his Circle

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# 1. Introduction

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Within the field of art history there is a constant search for the evolution of art. In art historic literature they constantly mention growth, maturation, and ageing, as if art is a biologically living thing. Art historians have constantly searched for the essential aspects of an artist's art, trying to establish a defining element: 'this makes it a Rubens'. It are these defining elements within an artist's art that are compared to the art of others in order to establish an artistic connection. Otto Pächt describes this in his *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis* (1977), explaining that comparing artwork *A* with artwork *B* in the form of '*A differs from B in certain aspects*' is something completely different from '*Something caused A to be replaced by specifically different B*', the latter clearly describing a change or perhaps 'progress in art'.

These elements are often used within art theories to establish – so to speak – a 'family tree' from which these other artistic branches have grown. Some branches are more direct than others like students from certain masters, or fathers to sons or daughters, for they often have a direct line along which they have been impacted. They either directly follow the line of their education or either are able to study their examples.

Other branches are less direct, but not necessarily less impactful. Influences that have come from abroad and have been developed over time, interpreted, and used in an own fashion. Aspects of art that may have been completely new to the artist, to which they have been introduced or those they have simply found out themselves.

Within the art historical field, the connection made between Rubens and Rembrandt is one of these branches. Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669) are two artists from two completely different backgrounds, two completely separate generations, and from two different 'countries' split by religions, war, and governance.<sup>1</sup> Within art historical literature these artists have been compared on many levels, searching for connections on many aspects of their art. Often based on the desire for a talented young artist to compare himself to the greatest artists of his own time. In the case of Rembrandt and Rubens, this would be Rembrandt aspiring to become the new Rubens. For Rubens enjoyed a considerable amount of fame throughout his life and why would any upcoming artist not desire to be as famous as him?<sup>2</sup>

It seems that this narrative has been an important aspect of the comparison made between these two artists, which intriguingly leaves out another – perhaps even more famous – artist: Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641).

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<sup>1</sup> Technically during their lives, they lived in duchies that were part of the Holy Roman Empire, only after 1648 do we speak of the 'Dutch republic' and the Habsburgian Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> Saerlander 2014, p.13; <https://www.rubenshuis.be/nl/pagina/ziin-leven-24-VII-2019>; Schwartz 2018, pp.71-73; Schama 2019, pp.57-67.

In art historical research the comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt is hardly made, especially around the field of painting the impact of Van Dyck on Rembrandt is rarely discussed. This in itself is interesting, for Rembrandt's friend and colleague, Jan Lievens (1607-1674) knew Van Dyck personally – having been depicted in *the Iconographie* (1632). Both artists, Rembrandt and Van Dyck, worked for Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau around the same time. They were considered great talents of their time, born only seven years apart. They made a very high number of self-portraits, both artists were portraitists instead of history painters, and they made their own etchings. Etchings of which in technique comparisons can be made. All these aspects make these artists so interesting to compare and give enough ground to presume that one at least impacted the other. However, in art historical literature it is mainly Rubens that gets connected to Rembrandt, and not Van Dyck. How did this come to be? What made art historians compare the generation older Rubens with the young talent from Holland?

The focus in this thesis will be on Van Dyck's *Fashion of the Time* and the impact it had on art of the artist Rembrandt and his artistic circle. In order to get further insight into Van Dyck's impact the following aspects will have to be discussed.

1. Rubens and van Rijn: A generation apart.

The given narrative in art historical literature is that Rembrandt seems to take Rubens as his prime example, either as an inspiration for great artistry or as the rival to beat. Questioning Rubens' effect on the young artist would open up room for adding other inspirations on the artist Rembrandt, and especially opens up the potential 'mindset' of Rembrandt seeing Van Dyck as a form of 'artistic rival' or inspiration. Was Rubens truly Rembrandt's focus, even though he was a generation older or is it possible that Rembrandt did in fact take more interest in what contemporaries were doing? Where does this comparison with Rubens come from?

2. Van Dyck and van Rijn: Talents of their time.

In art historic literature, an artistic connection between Van Dyck and Rembrandt does exist. Although, this connection comes through the medium of etching. Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641), like Rembrandt, was a great artistic talent. Directly connected to the artistic 'family tree' of Rubens, having been his employee. However, unlike with Rubens, Van Dyck does not share a political nor academically motivated connection to Rembrandt. Would it be possible to create a valid comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt?

### 3. Van Dyck and van Rijn: *The fashion of the time.*

When we look up the definition of 'fashion' in a monolingual dictionary it says that fashion is a style that is popular at a particular time, especially in clothes, hair, make-up, etc. Whilst *to follow a fashion* is to do that which is popular at the time.<sup>3</sup> How does this work for Van Dyck and Rembrandt, what is the *fashion of the time*, and around what time? Are these *fashions of the time* truly different, or are they the same?

### 4. Van Rijn: Changing fashion

Peace, war, and changing commerce can lead to great changes within society. This is also the case for the Dutch republic of the seventeenth century. How does this affect the *fashion of the time*, and how does this affect Rembrandt's circle? It is interesting to see how Rembrandt's circle deal with the lasting artistic legacy of van Dyck. Rembrandt's students, Govert Flinck (1616-1660), Nicolaes Maes (1634-1693), and Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680), seem to embrace this new fashion. Even Jan Lievens (1607-1674), Rembrandt's colleague and friend from Leiden, takes time to study this new style.

### 5. Van Rijn: *Following the fashion of the time.*

How did Rembrandt implement the *fashion of the time* into his works? According to current literature, Rembrandt seems to have been the stubborn artist, unwilling to follow contemporary fashion doing his own thing. Has this truly been the case or has Rembrandt in fact been more strongly affected by his colleague from the south than literature suggests?<sup>4</sup> Especially later in his career, financial problems may have been an incentive to follow the fashion of the time after all. Portraits like *Portrait of a lady with a lap dog* (c.1665) and *the equestrian portrait of Frederick Rihel* (c.1663) seem to suggest he may have looked more towards Van Dyck's examples. Did Rembrandt get inspired by his talented colleague from Flanders or did it make him consciously decide to explore different paths?

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<sup>3</sup> Cambridge 2008, p.513.

<sup>4</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.21-38.

## 2. Rubens and van Rijn: A generation apart

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One of the most iconic artists of the seventeenth century is Sir Peter Paul Rubens. An artist whose studio was one of the most celebrated of its time and whose art was spread across the globe.<sup>5</sup> In art historical literature Rubens is often seen as the artist that most other artists tried to emulate. Rembrandt on the other hand is usually described as the common man, a painter of the people. A great talent and artist who went his own way and refused to go with the time or step away from his own artistic vision. These divergent art historic narratives have affected the Rembrandt literature. According to some historians, Rembrandt took Rubens as his prime example and as an inspiration for great artistry, according to others Rembrandt saw Rubens as his rival to beat. However, where does this comparison come from?

To answer this question, we will first have to look at the history of these artists, the history surrounding these artists, and the way the histories of these artists have been interpreted. In order to establish the grounds for this comparison.

### 2.1 Rubens: The pinnacle of ambition.

One of the most famous artists ever, known throughout the world is Sir Peter Paul Rubens. Rubens is the artist that enjoyed a considerable amount of fame throughout his life. His father was an Antwerpian advocate, Jan Rubens, and his mother, Maria Pypelinckx was also part of a prominent family in the city. Although, Rubens's youth was slightly more challenging than anticipated – for his protestant father had an affair with Anna of Saxony, resulting in: a bastard daughter, a feud with William of Orange and the rest of the Nassau family, which led to the displacement of the Rubens family from Antwerp to Siegen, Cologne, and back – he nonetheless ended up being a registered artist of the city of Antwerp in 1598, after which he would spend ten years in Italy.<sup>6</sup>

When Rubens began working in Antwerp in 1608, the religious struggles, and the constant threat of war, had had a great impact on the city of his youth. Under Archduke Albert VII of Austria (1559-1621) and his wife, the Infanta Clara Eugenia Isabella (1566-1633), stability was brought to the Habsburgian-Netherlands. In 1609 they named Rubens their court painter, for his skills, and potentially due to his connections.<sup>7</sup> With his paintings Rubens seems to have become a genuine *propagator fidei* and soon his artworks were to be found all over the Habsburgian empire and its courts.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the clearest example of Rubens' fame – at least among the educated

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<sup>5</sup> Slive 1995, p.98.

<sup>6</sup> Saerlander 2014, p.13; <https://www.rubenshuis.be/nl/pagina/zijn-leven-24-VII-2019>; Schwartz 2018, pp.71-73; Schama 2019, pp.57-67.

<sup>7</sup> Saerlander 2014, p.13; he worked in the court of Mantua, before returning to Antwerp, functioning both as artist and diplomat.

<sup>8</sup> Saerlander 2014, pp.30-31; promotor of the faith.

elite of the Dutch Republic – comes from Constantijn Huygens in the description of *his Youth* (c.1629-1631). Huygens was an important figure in the Dutch Republic, being the direct advisor of the stadtholder, and directly involved with the stadtholder's art commissions. In *his Youth* he writes the following: '*Maar een van de zeven wereldwonderen is voor mij de vorst, de Apelles onder de schilders, Peter Paul Rubens. [...] hij is een schilder 'die thuis is in alle wetenschappen'. Door hem voor de staatsdienst in te zetten, hebben de Spaanse landsheren laten zien dat deze man voor meer was geboren dan alleen de schildersezal.*'<sup>9</sup> This description of Rubens can only be interpreted in the sense of the '*ut picture poesis*' and is thus more or less a description not just from Huygens, but the way Rubens was perceived in his own time.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.2 Van Rijn: An artist in the making.

Born a generation later than the famous Rubens was the young artist from Holland. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669) was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1606 in Leiden in the Weddesteeg. His father was Harmen Gerritszoon van Rijn, who was a miller and his mother, Cornelia Willemsdochter van Zuytbrouck was the daughter of a baker.<sup>11</sup> The family was registered as living in the neighbourhood of 'noord-Rapenburg'. The family made their living by producing malt for the local brewing industry and made an extra income from renting out houses built on their property, potentially to foreign students.<sup>12</sup> They were doing pretty well for a family at the time, by 1622 Rembrandt's father owned capital assets worth up to 9,000 guilders. In a city as Leiden, which had suffered greatly after the Spanish siege in 1573-1574, the van Rijn family could well be considered as up and coming.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the city of Leiden became a great melting pot of internationals from all social classes, due to the university and overall migration from the south. From 1575 onwards, there was a massive influx of 300-400 students from all across Europe, which drastically increased the population. By 1620, Leiden had 47,000 inhabitants, making it the second largest city in the Republic.<sup>14</sup>

In this city, Rembrandt received a formal education.<sup>15</sup> On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1620 at the age of fourteen, Rembrandt got registered at the University of Leiden to study 'litterarum' or the artes. A

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<sup>9</sup> Heesakkers 2008, p.79; 'but to me, one of the seven miracles of the world is that prince, the Apelles amongst the painters, P.P. Rubens [...] he is a painter 'at home in all the sciences. By letting him work for the state, the Spanish lords have truly shown this man was born for more than the [easel] brush.'

<sup>10</sup> Vlieghe 1987, p.192.

<sup>11</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.15.

<sup>12</sup> Zoeteman 2011, p.295; pp.317-318; a lot of students rented from locals; in 1622 76% of the population was in fact a student.

<sup>13</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.15.

<sup>14</sup> see: Album studiosorum Academiae lugduno batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV; Sluijter 2004, p.72; Brown *et al.* 2019, p.15.

<sup>15</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-16; Zoeteman 2011, pp.29-35; p.220; He was sent to the local Latin school to learn, which was not necessarily a requirement to be able to go to the university of Leiden. Rembrandt must have started at the Latin school around 1613, where he would have learned the core subjects of grammar, rhetoric and dialectics. He was also taught geography, physics, history, mathematics, Bible studies, and etiquette. Students also read and translated Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, compiled letters, wrote poems, and recited classical dramas.

subject he studied for at least two years.<sup>16</sup> The *artes* consisted of logic, physics, mathematics, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and by 1613 even Eastern languages and Arabic were taught.<sup>17</sup>

Around 1622, around the age of 16, Rembrandt decided to leave University and pursue an artistic career. First, Rembrandt spent time with Jacob Isaaczoon van Swanenburg (1571-1638).<sup>18</sup> At the time, van Swanenburg was one of the few known history painters in Leiden. He was the son of Isaac Claeszoon van Swanenburg (1537-1614), who had been one of the most prominent artists in Leiden for decades and also the teacher to his own son.<sup>19</sup> Van Swanenburg had only been back for a few years having spent a very long time in Italy of which 18 years in Naples.<sup>20</sup>

Undoubtedly, it is through the experience of van Swanenburg with the Neapolitan school of art that Rembrandt first got introduced to Italian influences, especially those of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), who was known for his naturalism and his striking use of *chiaroscuro*.<sup>21</sup> Van Swanenburg – in comparison to other Netherlandish artists at the time – had a fluent technique, making much use of *impasto* and combined dark pigments, contrasting touches of colour, and *chiaroscuro* in a very Italian way. It is here that Rembrandt may have been first introduced to fluid brushstrokes and *chiaroscuro*.<sup>22</sup>

After his time with van Swanenburg, Rembrandt would spend six months with Pieter Lastman (1583-1633).<sup>23</sup> Lastman was also an artist in the Italian tradition. He travelled to Italy and stayed in Rome for a while where he became a personal friend of artists like Adam Elsheimer (1578-1610), Rubens, and Jan Pynas (1582-1631).<sup>24</sup> In the Netherlands, he had been a student of Gerrit Pieterszoon, where he spent some years to learn the artistic basics, after which he travelled to Italy. Here it seems he got inspired by artists like Veronese and his northern European contemporaries, like Elsheimer.<sup>25</sup> Around 1607, Lastman returned to Amsterdam and quickly established a reputation as a good artist. In his art he showed his knowledge of Italian styles by making use of Italian architecture and elements seen in art by Caravaggio, Raphael, Titian, and Mantegna (c.1431-1506).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.16; Sluijter 2004, p.18; Zoeteman 2011, p.117, *tabel 16*; At the time of Rembrandt's studies at the Leiden university it had four major faculties: theology, law, medicine, and *artes*, which they taught to a great variety of students from both national and international backgrounds.

<sup>17</sup> Sluijter 2004, pp.126-127; Zoeteman 2001, p.29; pp.232-234; The *artes* faculty – also sometimes known as philosophy – could be seen as the continuation of the Latin school and for some meant to be a preparation for one of the other faculties or a direct step to an academic career.

<sup>18</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-16; Orlers 1641, p.375.

<sup>19</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.16.

<sup>20</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.16-17; Orlers 1641, p.375; Houbraken 1728, pp.36-37.

<sup>21</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.17.

<sup>22</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.17-18.

<sup>23</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.18-20; Orlers 1641, p.375; Broos 2000, pp.2-5; Zoeteman 2011, p.53; pp.57-58.

<sup>24</sup> Seifert 2011, pp.36-45.

<sup>25</sup> Seifert 2011, pp.28-38.

<sup>26</sup> Seifert 2011, pp.38-47.

Around 1632, Rembrandt would move to Amsterdam again where he first lived in Van Uylenburgh's house at the Breestraat. Hendrick van Uylenburgh (1587-1661) was a member of the Guild of St. Luke in Amsterdam and would from then on function as Rembrandt's benefactor and business agent till around 1634.<sup>27</sup> It is likely to assume that Rembrandt became part of the Guild somewhere early 1634, for on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1634 he signed the marriage contract with Saskia van Uylenburgh, for which Johannes Silvius (1564-1638), Saskia's legal representative, signed in her name.<sup>28</sup> This marriage with Saskia must have meant a social ascent in Dutch society for Rembrandt. She was the daughter of a respected and wealthy family from Friesland and through her he got into touch with a vast variety of new contacts.<sup>29</sup>

However, Rembrandt's reputation 'as upcoming artist of great talent' was already established, before he left for Amsterdam. Something, which becomes clear by Huygens description in *his Youth*. Huygens wrote this book between 1629 and 1631, in the time Rembrandt worked in Leiden together with Lievens. Huygens has nothing but praise for the two upcoming talents, and he is certain they will soon surpass '*die genieën*' – those geniuses – which is everybody's expectation of them.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.3 Rubens and van Rijn: The earliest comparison by Huygens.

The writings by Huygens are often taken as the first sign of the Rubens and Rembrandt comparison. Although, Huygens himself does not make such a direct connection. Huygens was – in reputation – probably the greatest art connoisseur in the Dutch republic at the time. Therefore, Huygens having a lot of praise for the two upcoming talents was the greatest thing that could happen to them. With his reference to '*die genieën*' – those geniuses – he makes a reference to all great artists of the past, both Italian like Titian, and Veronese as well as Flemish.<sup>31</sup> He mentioned the greatness of their skills, their own inventions, qualities, and creativity. Even going as far as to say that they would surpass the old and would have created their own art, due to their nature, not due to their education.<sup>32</sup>

He specifically mentions their ordinary upbringing and lack of nobility, even though Huygens and Rembrandt both are alumni of the same university. This could be interpreted as an argument he uses to strengthen how great these two young artists truly are. For their greatness comes from

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<sup>27</sup> Since Rembrandt came from Leiden it is logical that Rembrandt would have been an 'onvrije' artist in Amsterdam. Rembrandt would not have been able to sell his artworks directly between at least c.1631-1634. Becoming a member of the Guild of St. Luke in Amsterdam around 1634. This must have made Van Uylenburgh a necessary middleman.

<sup>28</sup> Montias 2002, p.123; <http://remdoc.huygens.knaw.nl/#/document/remdoc/e15009> (02-12-2020), this date could be debated for there is a drawing stating 'the artist's bride of three days' dated 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1633. There is, however, no proof of registration at that time already.

<sup>29</sup> Slive 1995, p.87; Rembrandt is described as a miller's son, which often is associated with a low-standing in society (see writings by Huygens, Heesackers 2008, p.84; Vlieghe 1987, p.192); However, even without Saskia, Rembrandt's reputation and social contacts must not be underestimated. As an artist and Leiden university Alumnus Rembrandt would have had significant contacts of his own. However, due to his wife it may have been easier to frequent in 'higher society'. Especially due to his family connection to the Van Uylenburghs.

<sup>30</sup> Heesackers 2008, p.84; McNamara 2015, pp.73-74.

<sup>31</sup> Heesackers 2008, p.84; McNamara 2015, pp.73-74.

<sup>32</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.72-75; Heesackers 2008, pp.84-90.

humble origins having grown out to '*homo universalis*' by their own inventions and not because they have followed great examples, which makes for a great – be it romanticised – origin story. However, it has also the underlining of a political statement in which he showcases some of the finest artists of the Dutch republic. The very first Republic at the time, which was not really based on previous examples. A state established by commoners, not nobles. Almost making it metaphorical. Therefore, Huygens writings must be interpreted in the philosophical and political atmosphere of the time.<sup>33</sup>

The moment Huygens brings Rembrandt and Rubens in closer comparison is when he mentions his hope that they will write down an inventory of their works and how they created their compositions.<sup>34</sup> It is in this passage that one could interpret Huygens comparing Rembrandt – and Lievens – somewhat directly to Rubens. Since Huygens appreciates Rubens for his '*omnibus litteris eruditum*' and also describes him as a '*homo universalis*'. However, the use of this terminology is in no way exclusive and was used for many famous artists at the time. These aspects within art were simply important. There is an argument to be made for it to be read as 'the new surpassing the old' and modern thoughts that noble origin and quality is not in the blood, something to which Huygens refers with his writings as well.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, putting a direct link on Rembrandt and Rubens through Huygens may be a bit strong, which makes the writings by Huygens a very tricky source for a comparison. What Huygens exactly tried to imply is not easily taken from his text. He does not make a direct link, in a time when making a direct link is often unnecessary. Therefore, interpretation can go either way. However, in the case of Rubens and Rembrandt it is very important to think of the context in which Huygens has been interpreted throughout the years and the effect it has had on traditional comparisons.

#### 2.4 Van Rijn: Filling in the gaps of Jan Orlers.

In case of Rembrandt's history, Huygens *his Youth* is not the only source which people should interpret very diligently. Another example is the book *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden in Hollandt* by Jan Orlers of 1641. If you look at the Rembrandt literature, Orlers book seems to be the most thorough description of Rembrandt's life within Rembrandt's lifetime, but the single page description clearly lacks detail, nor is the intention of the author taken into account. The author Orlers was a 'Schepenen' for Leiden from 1619-1630, after which he became one of the four 'Burgemeesteren' for the years 1631 and 1632, which would make his source somewhat reliable. Around this time, Rembrandt must have still been in living memory.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Heesakkers 2008, pp.84–90; McNamara 2015, pp.72-75; Rutgers *et al.* 2014, p.16; p.18.

<sup>34</sup> Heesakkers 2008, p.85; McNamara 2015, pp.73-74.

<sup>35</sup> Heesakkers 2008, p.84; Vlieghe 1987, p.192.

<sup>36</sup> Schepenen are a form of city ministers, whilst Burgemeester (plural: Burgemeesteren) is a mayor.

In his book Orlers describes several artists from Leiden, who he seems to have ordered chronologically.<sup>37</sup> Although their histories are all different, they all still seem to carry a level of ‘generic romanticism’. It can be said that Orlers’ writings both contain a level of reality as well as unrealistic details, whilst at the same time also omitting factual knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Based on his personal experience of being an alumnus of the university in Leiden, he would have been able to go into far more detail and provide the reader with a more accurate history of Rembrandt. If only it had been his interest to do so. To this day, it is possible to roughly establish who Rembrandt’s professors may have been and which lectures he may have followed, which suggest that Orlers job was anything but thorough.<sup>39</sup>

It is within Rembrandt’s academical upbringing where we see the very first interpretation of historical facts. In art historic literature there seems to be the believe that Rembrandt was a drop out or that he lacked interest in studying, which may come from a rather harsh interpretation of Orlers writings. For the citation is as follows: *‘zijne Ouders hem ter Scholen bestedet hebbende omme metter tijdt te doen leeren de Latijnsche Tale ende daer naer te brengen tot de Leytsche Academie / op dat hy tot zijne Jaren ghecomen wezende de Stadt ende tgemeene besten met zijn wetenschap zoude mogen dienen ende helpen bevorderen / en heeft daer toe gants geen lust ofte genegenheit gehad / dewijle zijne natuyricke beweginghen alleen streekten tot de Schilder ende Teycken Conste.’*<sup>40</sup> In sentence order the question has to be posed, whether Rembrandt was in fact disinclined to study or – probably more logically – disinclined to become a public servant. The entire assumption that Rembrandt was unwilling to study may simply be a misinterpretation of Orlers’s text, especially since we’ve got proof, he studied at least two years longer than previously thought.<sup>41</sup>

Another misinterpretation of historical facts comes from Rembrandt’s heritage. According to Sandrart and Roger de Piles (1635-1709), Rembrandt associated himself with people of the

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<sup>37</sup> Orlers 1641, pp.373-376; <https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/artists/record?query=joris-van-schooten&start=0> (24-11-2020); He describes their artistic inclinations, but only for Joris van Schoten, the son of Flemish immigrants according to the RKD, Pieter Pieterz de Neyn, and Rembrandt van Rijn, he also makes mention of their education. Van Schoten – apparently – had more interest in drawing figures in his books, instead of actual homework. De Neyn clearly was scientifically interested, but the financial background of his parents did not allow for him to study, so he firstly learned the sculpting profession of his father, and in Rembrandt’s case he seems to be the only artist that attended university and changed his focus to art.

<sup>38</sup> See the Index of the Album studiosorum Academiae lugduno batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV for the name Orlers.

<sup>39</sup> Zoeteman 2011, pp.16-20; pp.29-30; [https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/molh003nieu04\\_01/molh003nieu04\\_01\\_0320.php](https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/molh003nieu04_01/molh003nieu04_01_0320.php) (24-11-2020); Sluijter 2004, pp.306-314; Sabar 2008, pp.371-378; We know that the rector of Rembrandt’s year was Reiner Bontius (c.1576-1623), who was a medical practitioner. Based on the way registration for the university functioned, Rembrandt must have personally met him in 1620 when he visited his home to register to the faculty. Bontius himself had studied firstly as a ‘litterarum’ student at the university of Leiden, with a focus on philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy. Only later he would switch to the faculty of medicine. Other potentially professors to Rembrandt were the following: Franck Pietersz. Burgersdijk (1590-1635), an extraordinarius philosophy professor; Pieter van der Cun (c.1586-1638), a professor of ancient languages including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Aramaic (Syrian); Thomas van Erpe (1584-1624), a professor focussed on oriental languages with both Hebrew and Arabic in his portfolio; and Gerrit Jansz. Vos (1577-1649), who became the professor for rhetoric and chronology by 1622; Another option would be Daniël Heinsius (1580-1655), who also taught around then.

<sup>40</sup> An error, which seems to be made across most of the Rembrandt related literature; translation: ‘His parents having send him to school in order to learn the Latin language and with time to study at the Leidse academy (the university)/ so that he, at time having come of age, would be able to use his science for the betterment of the city and the common good/ having had no desire or inclination for that/ for at time his natural instinct had stretched towards painting and drawing.’

<sup>41</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-20;

<https://www.erfgoedleiden.nl/collecties/archieven/archievenoverzicht/details/NL-LdnRAL-0501A/path/1.2.2.7.1.5.2.1.2> (see: Index and source: 4022, p.41, 25-11-2020).

commons. Something which both authors – known Rembrandt critics – described as a sign of his personal simple heritage.<sup>42</sup> This narrative of Rembrandt's simple heritage is an aspect within the art historic literature that keeps coming back. Often leading to the suggestion that Rembrandt's studies at university were a bit of an abnormality, due to him being of 'different' social standing and university only was for the upper middle class.<sup>43</sup> However, are these assumptions really true?

According to research around the Leiden university, the university was a place for study for a wide variety of social atmospheres, where only a minority of students had the intention of receiving an actual degree. Public lectures in the academical buildings were free and only the private lectures at a professor's home would cost the student money.<sup>44</sup> The average study time for a student from Leiden in the early modern period was 3.9 years or – when you included the Latin school – 6.5 years.<sup>45</sup> Besides, that the university lists clearly seem to show that anyone with the money and the brains was allowed. It was the *rector magnificus*, who made the decision whether someone got accepted. By the time Rembrandt enrolls there seems to be no 'snobbism' in regards to applicants being of better social standing, just of the sufficient financial means. It was, however, common for parents when they were from Leiden to apply their children to university due to its privileges and benefits. The presumption that this would have been the only motivation in Rembrandt's case is baseless. Not just due to a pre-education in the Latin school, but mostly because someone younger than twenty only received 50% of the tax exemptions, whilst Rembrandt could not get apprenticed or work anywhere.<sup>46</sup>

When we look at comparable study paths – like those of Constantijn and Maurits Huygens, who applied in Leiden in 1616 – Rembrandt's study path does not seem to be abnormal. The Huygens brothers received two years of lessons by their uncle, then applied to university in 1616 and left there within a year. Apparently, students with a good pre-education would not have needed to spend a long time at university. Rembrandt's pre-education of the Latin school and two years in university may simply have meant he was a graduate, who did not do a PhD.<sup>47</sup> At the end of 1622, Rembrandt would potentially have had an education of 6-9 years, including his time in the Latin school, which makes that Rembrandt studied enough to have been considered a university graduate. This does not resonate with the general description of Rembrandt being a university drop-out and a simple commoner. In fact, his graduate status would have allowed him to accept a reputable position in the public service of the city of Leiden.

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<sup>42</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.21; Slive 1953, p.93.

<sup>43</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-16; Orlers 1641, p.375; Zoeteman 2011, p.70.

<sup>44</sup> Zoeteman 2011, pp.130-131; pp.136-142; pp.144-148; Israel 1995, pp.900-902.

<sup>45</sup> Zoeteman 2011, p.70; p.76.

<sup>46</sup> see: Album studiosorum Academiae lugduno batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV; Zoeteman, pp.32-35; p.61; p.64; p.98; p.122; The city duties exemption only dates from 1631.

<sup>47</sup> Zoeteman 2011, p.72; There is no reason for Orlers to have been aware of Rembrandt's graduation. Only PhD's received official recognition.

However, Rembrandt apparently did not have the desire to become a civil servant for the city of Leiden and seemed to have no aptitude to do another degree, probably due to his inclination for art. His parents hence registered him with the studio of van Swanenburg, somewhere around 1622.<sup>48</sup>

Besides leaving out valuable details, which makes sense for the purpose of his text. Orlers also presents us with some problems, due to his lack of real detail. Orlers describes Rembrandt's artistic skill as a bit of a surprise: *'ende also hy gheduyrende den zelven tijt / zoo feel toegenomen hadde / dat de const lief-hebberen daerinne ten hoogsten verwondert waeren / ende datmen genoehsaem konde sien / da thy metter tijdt een uytnemende Schilder soude warden.'*<sup>49</sup> To which he adds Rembrandt only spent *'ontrent de drie jaeren'* in van Swanenburg's studio. This had led to quite some debate in the art historic field, around Rembrandt's exact artistic education. Van der Wetering seems to firmly hold on to three years with van Swanenburg, whilst Vogelaar suggests less than two. According to Vogelaar, Rembrandt worked as an independent artist in Leiden, around about 1624 in collaboration with Jan Lievens (1607-1674).<sup>50</sup> However, basing this on Orlers is really tricky. Orlers description of Rembrandt's talent can be placed directly in the same narrative Huygens uses in *his Youth*. A book Orlers must undoubtedly have known. Whether Orlers description bears facts or is instead an unresearched, but plausible explanation for Rembrandt's somewhat unconventional educational path can only be debated.

The same problem repeats itself around his description of Rembrandt's time with Lastman *'ontrent zes maenden gheweest zijnde / soo heft hy goet gevonden alleen ende op hem zelven de Schilder Conste te oeffenen'*.<sup>51</sup> The exact number of months Rembrandt spent with Lastman, before returning to Leiden to work with Lievens, is simply unknown. Orlers description leaves it completely open, whether Rembrandt returned to Leiden in 1624 or 1625, which is still heavily debated.<sup>52</sup> Based on the approximate total time period with these two artists – which can range from 2.5 – 3.5 years – it is likely that Rembrandt was not in Amsterdam much earlier than around

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<sup>48</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-16; Orlers 1641, p.375; Zoeteman 2011, p.70.

<sup>49</sup> Orlers 1641, p.375; translation: 'because he during the same time/ had increased so much/ that those interested in art were enormously amazed/ and because they could see with content/ that he would become an excellent artist.'

<sup>50</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.15-20;

<https://www.erfgoedleiden.nl/collecties/archieven/archievenoverzicht/details/NL-LdnRAL-0501A/path/1.2.2.7.1.5.2.1.2> (see: Index and source: 4022, p.41, 25-11-2020); translation: 'around three years'; We do know that Rembrandt's last entry at the Leiden university was in 1622, at the age of 15. This means it was before his birthday of the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, for registrations were often taken in February. We can therefore assume that Rembrandt decided to leave university after that entry year. The poll-tax assessment of 1622 in Leiden was also executed around October/November that year, during which Rembrandt was registered as living with his parents. It is therefore logical to assume that Rembrandt either did not move in with van Swanenburg or that Rembrandt had not moved in with van Swanenburg yet. Based on studio practises where the pupils would live with their master, one should assume that Rembrandt was still a student of the university and only joined van Swanenburg after October/November that year. This could still mean that Rembrandt started studying with van Swanenburg somewhere during 1622.

<sup>51</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.18-20; Orlers 1641, p.375; Broos 2000, pp.2-5; Zoeteman 2011, p.53; pp.57-58; translation: 'being around six months/ so he (Lastman) has found it alright to have him (Rembrandt) practise the art of painting for himself.'

<sup>52</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.17-18; pp.37-39.

the end of the first quarter of 1625. For Rembrandt could not have studied with van Swanenburg next to his studies, according to the treatise of the university.<sup>53</sup>

However, the start of his return to Leiden could also have been impacted by the bubonic plague which was ravaging the Dutch republic during the same period (1623-1625). As personal pandemic experiences show, this would have had quite an impact on Rembrandt's life too. Leiden itself suffered greatly from the plague in 1624 as the recorded spike in burials from July till end November shows.<sup>54</sup> This almost certainly would have affected Rembrandt's time with van Swanenburg, as well as his time at university, and would have limited any possibility for him to leave for Amsterdam at the end of 1624. Tragically, Rembrandt's sister Machtelt died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1625, likely due to the plague. For those living with plague victims – Machtelt lived with her parents – this would have meant that they needed to quarantine themselves as well. It is therefore possible Rembrandt would have decided to return home and assist his parents with the care for his sister and/or to be present at his sister's funeral. It is however also just as likely that the Plague would have made it impossible for Rembrandt to return to Amsterdam.<sup>55</sup>

Based on his university time and with the broader impact of the plague, it would be permissible to assume that Rembrandt spend c.1622 till early 1625 with van Swanenburg. After which he would make his way to Lastman were he would only stay during the year 1625, who then gave him the possibility of 'further self-studying the arts'.<sup>56</sup> Based on some of how some of his early works are dated, it is likely that at the end of 1625 Rembrandt returned to Leiden to join Lievens, perhaps even around his sister's death.<sup>57</sup>

This mainly suggests that Rembrandt's artistic education may have been unconventional. Usually, artistic students became masters after four to five years. In order to officially become a painter in the lower countries of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century, a student had to be apprenticed to a master recognized by the local guild.<sup>58</sup> The exact length of such an apprenticeship seems to vary. In 1501 it took an average of nine years, whilst in 1579 it took roughly eleven years for an apprentice to become a master in his own name.<sup>59</sup> During the first four years the student would often be boarded with the teacher for a fee and was taught drawing and painting, after which later he would function as a journeyman in his master's studio.<sup>60</sup>

Orlors clearly suggests that Rembrandt cut his artistic education with Lastman short. Lastman allowed Rembrandt to further his own studies, which suggests that Rembrandt did not in fact fully

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<sup>53</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.18-20; Orlors 1641, p.375; Broos 2000, pp.2-5; Zoeteman 2011, p.53; pp.57-58.

<sup>54</sup> Curtis 2020, pp.287-288; 2016, p.154, *fig.3*; the curvature of the spike in this figure suggests that the number of plague victims was diminishing by December.

<sup>55</sup> <http://remdoc.huygens.knaw.nl/#/document/remdoc/e4382> (30-11-2020).

<sup>56</sup> Seifert 2011, pp.48-49.

<sup>57</sup> Peeters 2009, pp.149-150; Waiboer 2005, p.81; Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.18-20; pp.37-39; Seifert 2011, pp.48-49; Van der Wetering 2016, pp.15-17; Orlors 1641, p.375; Broos 2000, pp.2-5; Prak 2003, p.242; Working in a studio in Leiden – where they had no Guild of St. Luke – would have made this a possibility for Rembrandt.

<sup>58</sup> Kirby 1999, pp. 5-7.

<sup>59</sup> Peeters 2009, pp.149-150.

<sup>60</sup> Plomp 2006, pp. 31-33.

finish his traineeship. If Rembrandt did indeed leave Lastman's studio in 1625, then Rembrandt's artistic education would not exceed the regular four to five years, but instead only have been a maximum of 3.5 years. Something which would make Rembrandt's education even more irregular.

The fact that Orlers mentions Rembrandt's education the way he did, first of all shows the clear intention his text had. Rembrandt was only part of the glorious history. Therefore, the description of his education would perhaps be better interpreted as him confirming the quality of Rembrandt, perhaps due to being a 'Leidensis' product – having been born and educated in Leiden – or perhaps simply as him being scientific, like Cornelis de Bie's (1627-c.1711) description of Rembrandt in his *Het gulden cabinet*, '(Daer t vier der wetenschap staegh inde hersens brant)<sup>61</sup>. To de Bie Rembrandt's education is an explanation for his better understanding of nature.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, it shows clearly that Orlers did not have all the details of Rembrandt's life nor the intention to fully write Rembrandt's biography down. Something which makes that Orlers source in regard to Rembrandt's life may not contain exact facts.

## 2.5 Rubens and van Rijn: Art academies and the change around art in Europe.

The different art historic interpretations of the texts by Huygens and especially Orlers, clearly seem to support a certain vision of Rembrandt: an artist of simple upbringing with a great talent and fondness for the arts. To a certain extent you could even interpret this vision as Rembrandt being an anti-academical, perhaps even 'anti-elite', man of the common people in which Rembrandt's education seems an anomaly in a potential socio-economic divide.<sup>63</sup> This vision of the figure Rembrandt, which must have come from somewhere. For instead of interpreting Rembrandt's education as an anomaly in a potential socio-economic divide, in which Rembrandt 'humble' origins get contrasted against this academical route. It is also possible to simply see it as a greater quality dividing him from other contemporary artists.

When we look at the Rembrandt and Rubens literature there are several historic events and developments that need to be taken into consideration, especially when we read, re-read, and interpret the art historic literature.

One of the most important development is the founding of art academies. Art academies led to an increase in art theory and educational books, increasing the scientific approach to art. For

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<sup>61</sup> Translation: 'where the fire of science burns firmly in his brain'; clearly suggestion that Rembrandt was clearly a bright man.

<sup>62</sup> De Bie 1661, pp.290-291.

<sup>63</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.21; Spies 2002, pp.340-343; Leuker 1992, p.120; pp.137-138; Cats 1625, p.375; p.534; According to Sandrart and Roger de Piles (1635-1709, Rembrandt would associate himself with people of the commons. Whether or not this is true, we're unable to verify or deny. After the death of Saskia, Rembrandt does hire the widow Geertje Dircks (1600/10-1656?) to take care of his young son Titus (1641-1668). This in itself is not uncommon, Rembrandt would have needed someone to take of his son and also take care of the household. With the death of Saskia, her tasks had to be done by another women, a more senior lady who could delegate tasks to the housemaids and make sure the house was in correct order. It would be logical to assume that this is the reason why he took in Dircks. Her status as widow ensured the fact that it would be considered proper. If Rembrandt had taken in a young unmarried girl this would have created a scandal.

the Lower Countries the *l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* in France, which was founded in 1648, was one of the most important. At art academies artists and students of art started to write down their thoughts on art, often with the conscious idea of teaching the reader. The art academies also concerned themselves with the lives of artists and gave their own interpretations to their individual histories.<sup>64</sup>

For the Rembrandt and Rubens literature, the internal discourses within the *l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* were vital. Around 1671, it was here that the *Poussinist* and *Rubenist* approaches to art were formed and where the later discussions of Rembrandt's art in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century became an important topic.<sup>65</sup> The Rubenists gave the artist Rubens an extra prominent place within the artistic world making him one of the most vital artists within the academical discussion, whilst Rembrandt was later developed in a form of self-made man and anti-hero, their ideal Republican.<sup>66</sup>

It is with this development of their 'characters': the upper society, diplomatic, noble Rubens vs. the common, stubborn, people's man Rembrandt that we see them make their entrance within the political atmosphere. For it is safe to state that Rubens and Rembrandt are highly politized figures, especially around the nineteenth-century in which the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Belgium were founded. Belgium had become independent of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830, after a civil war. An important part of the Belgian independence effort was to promote a new national identity and emphasize their uniqueness. This led to the promotion of a typical 'Belgian/Flemish' culture in which in particular Flemish artists like Jan Van Eyck and Rubens played an important part.<sup>67</sup> The figure Rembrandt, however, was being used by the French academies to validate and encourage changing views on aesthetics, and even promote their own anti-Catholic and anti-Monarchic pro-democratic points of view.<sup>68</sup> Although research has continued since then, these underlying assumptions seem to still fundamentally influence the views on both artists.

Therefore, when it is suggested by art historians that Rubens was Rembrandt's prime example or rival, there is a need to carefully assess that notion and put it into a correct historical narrative. The two artists have seemingly been juxtaposed for different reasons throughout history. Reasons which seem to be more based on the desire to compare the two, than necessarily on relevance of the comparison. It is essential to be critical of the traditional comparisons made between Rubens and Rembrandt by art historians, as well as the interpretation of their personal histories.

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<sup>64</sup> Van Hoogstraten 1678, pp.23-30; p.306; Taylor 2008, pp.155-157; Maës 2015, pp.268-269.

<sup>65</sup> McQueen 2003, pp.83-86.

<sup>66</sup> McQueen 2003, pp.87-90.

<sup>67</sup> Maës 2015, pp.268-275; Schwartz 2018, pp.70-77; Loos *et al.* 1997, pp.16-18; Dewulf 2009, pp.67-69; McQueen 2003, pp.106-110.

<sup>68</sup> McQueen 2003, pp.109-110.

## 2.6 Rubens and van Rijn: Critical comparison of Rembrandt to Rubens.

In order to make comparisons between art and artists, it is important to use a valid method. In art historic research, artworks are often seen as links in a historical chain. Otto Pächt describes this most intricately in his *The Practice of Art History: Reflections on Method*: 'If I say, of two works made at different times, that A differs from B in certain specific respects, this is not at all the same thing as saying that there is a Something that has changed in such a way as to cause A to be replaced by a specifically different B.'<sup>69</sup> It is the latter aspect, which makes for the more interesting comparison.

Based on this technique, it is perhaps not straightforward to compare Rembrandt to Rubens. The comparisons that have been discussed and debated in art historic literature between Rembrandt and Rubens seem very much a debate about 'A differs from B in certain specific respects', whilst there seem little substantive arguments for saying that Rembrandt changed something in such a way to have caused to have Rubens replaced by a specifically different Rembrandt.<sup>70</sup>

In the traditional comparison between Rubens and Rembrandt, we see art historians like Sluiter, Slive, and Schama, who are convinced that the greatest impact of Rubens art on Rembrandt can be perceived in Rembrandt's early career in Amsterdam, with the basis of truth being connected to some comparable compositions.<sup>71</sup> It is their professional opinion that Rembrandt consciously tried to emulate Rubens.<sup>72</sup> However, there are other art historians – like Broos – who think that this connection between Rubens and Rembrandt is exaggerated, pointing out that Rembrandt's inspiration could have come elsewhere. When we look at Rembrandt's career and education there are plenty of artists that may have impacted him in a similar way as Rubens's art might have. Something which already becomes apparent in Rembrandt's Leiden period (1625-1631) and after. Rembrandt also clearly enjoys a different view on art in comparison to Rubens, is that truly a sign of emulation?

Rembrandt's Leiden period was clearly a time of growth and artistic development. His earliest paintings show real signs of his challenge to get to grips with composition and colour.<sup>73</sup> It was presumably in this first studio – potentially shared with Lievens<sup>74</sup> – that Rembrandt made his first known paintings.<sup>75</sup>

Some early works by Rembrandt were the *Allegory of touch* (fig.1, c.1624-1625), *Allegory of Hearing* (fig.2, c.1624-1625), and the *Allegory of Smell* (fig.3, c.1624-1625). They share the clear

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<sup>69</sup> Pächt 1999, pp.105-109: In German: *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis* published in 1977, translated into English edition from 1999.

<sup>70</sup> To paraphrase Pächt's description.

<sup>71</sup> Slive 1953, p.206; McNamara 2015, p.29.

<sup>72</sup> McNamara 2015, p.29.

<sup>73</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.37.

<sup>74</sup> Rembrandt's position in Leiden is unknown, since he would have had only 3-4 years of artistic experience, he may have used Lievens to further study his art.

<sup>75</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.37.

influence by Lastman with the bright and nearly acidic colours. The panels he uses bear close resemblance to *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (fig.4, 1626) and like the *Allegory of Smell* some are monogrammed 'RHF'. According to Brown, due to the change in monogram style by Rembrandt – from 'RF' to 'RHF' – It is logical to assume that these *Senses* were painted after the *Stoning*, but before the *Chace from the Temple*.<sup>76</sup> This is why – like van der Wetering – a Leiden period interpretation has been given to all these paintings.

Around the same time Rembrandt painted *the Stoning of St. Stephanus* (fig.5, 1625), *Balaam and the Donkey* (fig.6, 1626), *Baptism of the Eunuch* (fig.7, 1626), and *the History Piece* (fig.8, 1626).<sup>77</sup> These four artworks – signed and dated – have their foundations in the style by Lastman: *Baptism of the Eunuch* (fig.9, 1623), *Balaam and the Donkey* (fig.10, 1622), and *Coriolanus and the Roman Wives* (fig.11, 1625). However, the impact of Lastman – besides the figures and themes – is not too strong. According to Pächt, Rembrandt sacrificed the objective clarity Lastman's works had in the interest of the overall effect of the composition. In the process he created scenes in which actors, actions, moments, setting, and light are all welded into a unity that fills our visual field.<sup>78</sup> Rembrandt revolutionized Lastman's compositions by placing his figures differently and by applying a vastly different use of the effects of light. Light had become a dynamic factor, functioning as the strongest dramatic influence in the scenes. These artistic aspects were clearly of Italian origin, heavily influenced by the art and style of Caravaggio.<sup>79</sup>

In Leiden Rembrandt clearly started focussing his studies on Caravaggio, probably through Lievens and the 'Utrechtse Caravagisti'. Rembrandt made several *tronie* paintings and prints. The *Bust of a Man wearing a Gorget and Plumet Beret* (fig.12, c.1626) must have been one of the earliest. The depicted man reminds us of a *Landsknecht* – a type of dress seen with Swiss or German mercenaries.<sup>80</sup> It is in this painting that Rembrandt shows his better understanding of the use of light in order to create atmosphere, three-dimensionality, and depth. The painting reminds us of a style used by Dirck van Baburen one of the 'Utrechtse Caravagisti' in his *Boy with the Jew's Harp* (fig.13, 1621). Even though, Rembrandt achieves the visual effects with a coarser style of painting.<sup>81</sup>

According to Brown, it is around 1627 that Rembrandt starts to mute his colours more and that he steps away from the bright, light hues which were typical for Lastman. Around this time there is a more 'monochromatic style' seen with other artists, which does suggest this change may

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<sup>76</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.37-39.

<sup>77</sup> Seifert 2011, pp.48-49; Whether or not Rembrandt actually painted these works whilst working in Lastman's studio is debated. According to Broos, their stylistic similarities must have meant direct contact. However, where Lastman mostly worked on canvas, Rembrandt's works are on wooden panels. It is therefore that van der Wetering seems fonder of a Leiden period interpretation. According to Seifert, Rembrandt's direct contact with the *Baptism of the Eunuch* and *Balaam and the Donkey* by Lastman would be more difficult to explain if Rembrandt would have been in Amsterdam late 1624 or early 1625. I would agree with van der Wetering based on the Caravaggistic influence Pächt mentioned, which Rembrandt most likely got into contact with due to his direct contact with Lievens, who had studied with the 'Utrechtse Caravagisti'. Lievens also worked on panels in Leiden.

<sup>78</sup> Pächt 1999, p.112.

<sup>79</sup> Pächt 1999, p.112.

<sup>80</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.37-39.

<sup>81</sup> Bull *et al.* 2006, pp.42-43.

have been due to exterior factors – like plague or war, which restricted the trade of minerals for pigments – or it may simply have been Rembrandt experimenting.<sup>82</sup> Around this time Rembrandt really starts to focus more on his use of *chiaroscuro* of which the small version of *Flight into Egypt* (fig.14, 1627) is a prime example.<sup>83</sup>

The scene of the *Flight into Egypt* was one Rembrandt seemed to find interesting. He depicted it several times throughout his career in several ways (fig.15, 1647). The same subject was depicted by both Lastman, and Elsheimer, (figs. 16 & 17, 1608 & 1609) both seem to have been a direct inspiration for Rembrandt's own versions over the years. These paintings show Rembrandt's strong *chiaroscuro* in nocturnal scenes, often with an unidentified light source shining in, with which Rembrandt gives the figures long shadows. With the composition of Rembrandt in 1627 clearly inspired by Lastman.<sup>84</sup>

The interest for *chiaroscuro* may partially have been impacted by his time with Lievens. Lievens is a great artist in his own name and – unlike Rembrandt – he started his artistic career at the early age of eight with Joris van Schooten and later continued his education at Lastman. He was only a year younger than Rembrandt, but would have had at least seven years more experience than Rembrandt in the artistic field. Between 1620-1624 Lievens had spent time in Utrecht studying the 'Utrechtse Caravaggisti' like Gerrit van Honthorst, Dirck van Baburen, and Hendrick ter Brugghen.<sup>85</sup> Since the art by Lievens and Rembrandt seems to have been so closely linked between the period c.1626-1630 – and due to descriptions by Huygens – it seems logical to assume that the two worked together and may even have shared a studio.<sup>86</sup> It would therefore be likely to assume that Rembrandt's first contact with the 'Utrechtse Caravaggisti' may in fact have come through Lievens's intense study of that subject.

Another clear example of Lievens impact on the early Rembrandt is in the scene of *Samson and Delilah* (fig.18, 1628), which Lievens had painted some years earlier (fig.19, c.1625-1626), a third version (fig.20, c.1626-1627) is a grisaille attributed to Rembrandt or Lievens, which makes it either a study for his later picture or the version of Lievens which served as example. The three pictures all show the same moment in the narrative of this Biblical story, the moment Samson's hair is about to be cut. The painting by Rubens of the same subject (fig.21, c.1609-1610) – probably known to Lievens in form of the print by Jacob Matham (fig.22, 1613) – was probably the inspiration for his composition.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, for the other version the print by Cornelis Massys (fig.23, 1549) may have potentially been used as inspiration to further develop the composition of Rubens.<sup>88</sup> The scenes all show close similarities, in which the hairs get cut by a

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<sup>82</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.40; or it may have been both.

<sup>83</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.40.

<sup>84</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.170-171.

<sup>85</sup> Runia *et al.* 2019, p.28; p.37.

<sup>86</sup> Büttner 2019, p.50; Based on the fact that Rembrandt may actually have lacked experience, it would have been in his interest to work alongside the more experienced Lievens.

<sup>87</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.190-191.

<sup>88</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.192-193.

Philistine instead of Delilah, which seems to have been the invention by Rubens.<sup>89</sup> However, the others versions clearly show interest in the desire to do things differently and further development as an artist. The question lies in whether this invention came through Rembrandt or was in fact by the hand of Lievens.

This shows that the connection between Rembrandt and Lievens cannot be underestimated. Trouble with attributing some of the works to either Lievens or Rembrandt is already an issue around 1632, *Simeon and Hannah in the Temple* (fig.24, 1627) for example used to be attributed to both artists together. This does seem to strongly connect Rembrandt and Lievens – potentially even to the same studio – till around 1628.<sup>90</sup> With the Guild of St. Luke in Leiden dating back to 1615, it would be possible for Rembrandt after his return to Leiden, without having formally finished his education with Lastman to have continued his studies with Lievens.<sup>91</sup>

It is also around 1628 that Rembrandt starts making his first independent self-portraits or *tronies*. The *Self-Portrait* (fig.25, c.1628) probably being one of the earliest works in which Rembrandt seems to showcase his developing skills with *chiaroscuro* and portraying details, soon followed by the *Self-Portrait with a Gorget* (fig.26, c.1629) in which Rembrandt seems to make more *chiaroscuro* studies.<sup>92</sup> It is in these early self-portraits, both the paintings and etchings, that Rembrandt seems to explore the wide range of expressions and emotions trying to best depict them. However, it also seems the first notion of Rembrandt's method of displaying himself and establishing himself as an artist.<sup>93</sup> Between the years 1628 and 1631, the abundant number of self-images produced by Rembrandt show such a remarkable change in countenance that many art historians believe this has to do with Rembrandt striving to emulate Rubens, between the late 1620s and early 1630s. However, this should probably be more connected to Rembrandt's desire to showcase himself to his potential clientele.<sup>94</sup>

Self-portraiture is something Rembrandt does throughout his entire career. The *Corpus* has roughly attributed 90 self-portraits to Rembrandt. The number has varied over the years because of different views on authenticity. The total output of self-portraits by Rembrandt was long thought to be c. 50 paintings, c.30 etchings and 5-10 drawings by the end of his career.<sup>95</sup> In the majority of these self-portraits Rembrandt must have studied himself in the mirror quite closely and copied his reflected image. The number of self-portraits suggests that Rembrandt was an artist concerned with the '*self-image*' in a manner unique for painters in the age in which he lived.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.190-191.

<sup>90</sup> Büttner 2019, p.50; Currently the attribution is in favour of Rembrandt.

<sup>91</sup> Prak 2012, p.122; Guild law would not have allowed Rembrandt to be an independent artist.

<sup>92</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.42-45; pp.91-93; One could even wonder whether 1628 is the year Rembrandt truly starts his own studio.

<sup>93</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.42-45; pp.91-93.

<sup>94</sup> Gerson 1969, pp.7-23; Chapman 1990, pp.62-67; Schwartz 2006, pp.151-152; Mcnamara 2015, p.29.

<sup>95</sup> *Corpus Rembrandt*, vol.4, p.XXV.

<sup>96</sup> *Corpus Rembrandt*, vol.4, p.XXV; Rubens had only created 7 self-portraits throughout his career.

The concept of self-portraiture was certainly no longer something new. Artists like Jan van Eyck, Albrecht Dürer, and Titian had all done it before him. Even Van Dyck made a fair number of self-portraits at the English court. It is often interpreted as the heightened self-consciousness of the artist, something which is very visible with for example an artist like Dürer.<sup>97</sup> Like Dürer, Rembrandt must have been drawn to self-portrayal by both temperament and circumstances that underlined the changing role of the artist, depicting their 'self-image' or the image they wanted to convey.<sup>98</sup>

For Rembrandt's 'self-imagery' seems to take flight around the late 1620s. In some self-images Rembrandt presents himself as a bare headed youth, eager and curious. While in others Rembrandt is already painting himself in a larger format, half-length and costumed as a man of the upper class, which seems to suggest it becomes important to depict himself as a man of class. A short Latin sentence by Aernout van Buchell, a student of Law in Leiden and an art enthusiast, does make clear that Rembrandt was certainly up and coming: *Molitoris etiam Leidensis filius magni fit, sed ante tempus*.<sup>99</sup> This clearly shows a great contrast in use of portraiture between Rubens and Rembrandt. Rubens only made seven painted portraits, whilst Rembrandt made many. Where for Rubens it were simply portraits, for Rembrandt it was a study in itself.

Rembrandt's *tronie* studies clearly show his interest in the conveying of emotions and the inner movements of an individual. An aspect of his art, which can be better understood through the correspondence with Huygens.<sup>100</sup> In a letter dated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 1639, Rembrandt writes to Huygens in regard to the *Passion series*.<sup>101</sup> In the letters he writes the following: '*Dees selvij twe stuckens sijn door stuijdiose vlijt nu meede afgedaen soodat ick nu oock geneegen ben om die selvijge te leveren om sijn Hoocheijt daer meede te vermaekn want deesen twee sijnt daer die meeste ende die naetureelste beweeghelickheijt in geopserveert*'.<sup>102</sup> It is this *naetureelste beweeghelickheijt*, which is constantly discussed in regard to Rembrandt, but what does it mean and where does it come from?

According to van der Wetering, this '*beweeghelickheijt*' – which in Dutch translates to movement – is in fact not a direct sense of physical movement, but far more the inner movements of the figures. In the same letter Rembrandt mentions: '*[...] dat met grooten verschricking des wachters.*', which is a reference to the emotional state of figures in the painting.<sup>103</sup> Van der

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<sup>97</sup> Chapman 2013, pp.196-197.

<sup>98</sup> Chapman 2013, p.202.

<sup>99</sup> Slive 1953, pp.8-9; Latin translation: Son of Leiden and a miller is great, and before time'; Mcnamara 2015, p.29.

<sup>100</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.245-246.

<sup>101</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4458; Rembrandt had now officially finished, and sent, Huygens the paintings of *The Entombment of Christ* and *The Resurrection of Christ*.

<sup>102</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.245-246; Document/Remdoc/e4458; translation: '*and as a result of my diligent zeal, these two pieces have now been completed as well, and therefore I am now ready to deliver them and thus afford pleasure to His Highness, for in these two pictures the deepest and most lifelike emotion has been observed [and rendered].*'

<sup>103</sup> Translation: '*to the great consternation of His guards*'; Van der Wetering 2016, p.245.

Wetering suggests that *The Resurrection of Christ* (fig.27, c.1639) is a great example of Rembrandt's idea of art. On the one hand the painting depicts a message of strong emotions, in form of panic-stricken movements. On the other hand, these movements are supported by the inner emotions of the figures.<sup>104</sup> It is in this time period up to 1642 that these still movements in Rembrandt's paintings and the conveying of inner emotions are so strong.<sup>105</sup>

Probably the most important aspect in Rembrandt's works is the emotional effect. The significance of '*beweegelijkheid*' becomes apparent in Huygens book *Youth* and also in the correspondence of Rembrandt with Huygens. This concept of '*beweegelijkheid*' seems to connect to the contemporary writings by Franciscus Junius in his *De Pictura Veterum*. A treatise that must have been known to both Huygens and Rembrandt and a subject which they would then most likely have discussed.<sup>106</sup> This *De Pictura Veterum* was the most contemporary art publication in the Dutch republic around the 1630s. Although the publication was not published before 1637, Huygens would have known it through the Earl of Arundel and he might have known Junius personally. Subsequently, Huygens may have shown it to Rembrandt, perhaps even before it was published in the Netherlands. However, due to the time a treatise took to be published, it is likely that it was simply a more common subject already.<sup>107</sup>

In his work, Junius combines ancient rhetorics and the Philostrati's ideas on evocative description to arrive at a coherent theory of artistic efficacy. His theory centres on the notion of 'empathy' or *tegenwoordigheid*. It conjoins the artist, artwork, and beholder in a single experience. A central idea is that the beholder's imagination takes the work of art as a starting point for constructing a mental image. Painterly elements, such as pigments and brushwork, line and colour fade away to make place for an illusion that involves other senses.<sup>108</sup> The aim is that the beholder had the feeling the scene was transpiring before their very eyes and truly live it, whilst being a direct part of it. The artist, whilst creating the work, had to psychologically place himself into the situation. Depicting the scene as a story unfolding before his own eyes. Rembrandt's approach seems to have been exactly this. His type of *beweegelijkheid* directly connects to this type of *tegenwoordigheid*.<sup>109</sup>

In his art Rembrandt strove for the strongest 'empathy' and 'true-to-life', an endeavour which was perfectly in line with the views on rhetoric of Cicero, Quintilian, Horace, and Junius.<sup>110</sup> By mentioning this '*beweegelijkheid*' Rembrandt shows that he was a well-educated artist, painting according to the thought of the time. Following the philosophical fashions in his art.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, p.245.

<sup>105</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, p.245.

<sup>106</sup> Heesakkers 2008, p.79; pp.84-85; Mcnamara 2015, pp.25-27; pp.85-87; Weststeijn 2016, pp.11-12; Huygens also owned a copy of *De Pictura Veterum*.

<sup>107</sup> Weststeijn 2016, pp.11-12; [https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10864064\\_00102.html](https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10864064_00102.html) (seen 21.02.2021).

<sup>108</sup> Weststeijn 2016, p.9.

<sup>109</sup> Weststeijn 2016, p.12.

<sup>110</sup> Sluijter 2014, p.69.

<sup>111</sup> Sluijter 2014, p.73.

Another great example of *beweegelijkheid* is the painting *The Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch* better known as *The Night Watch* ('*De Nachtwacht*', fig.28, 1642). One of Rembrandt's greater commissions after the *Passion* series for Frederik Hendrik, painted for the militia company led by Captain Frans Banning Cocq. Currently probably seen as the most famous commission Rembrandt ever made *The Night Watch* was a commission by a local civic guard for the great hall of the Kloveniersdoelen, the headquarters of their militia guild.<sup>112</sup>

This headquarters had only been built around 1638 and the militias had decided that several portraits were to be made to decorate the rooms. They wrote out several commissions attracting some of the most outstanding artists active in Amsterdam at the time: Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688), Nicolaes Eliasz. Pickenoy (1588-1656), Jacob Backer (1608-1651), Bartolomeus van der Helst (1613-1670), Govert Flinck (1615-1660), and Rembrandt. Rembrandt was therefore one out of six painters commissioned to paint for the Kloveniersdoelen. It was Govert Flinck – Rembrandt's former pupil – who received two commissions, also painting the portrait of *De Doelheren* (fig.29, 1642).<sup>113</sup>

With *the Night Watch* Rembrandt transforms the traditional way of depicting group portraits in Amsterdam making it into a dynamic and unified composition. His strong use of *chiaroscuro* giving the painting a somewhat nocturnal effect. Rembrandt's depiction, its liveliness and dynamic, transforms a meeting of little significance into a great historical spectacle. His use of light and shadow is powerfully contrasted, clearly visible in form of the main protagonists Banninck Cocq and van Ruytenburch. Both figures – one light and the other dark – stand in direct contrast, whilst at the same time their body language clearly conveying a form of dialogue and constant movement.<sup>114</sup>

It is this way of depicting that Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) mentions in his treatise *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt* (1678). In his treatise van Hoogstraten writes down several lessons an upcoming artist should take into consideration, but he explicitly mentions Rembrandt's *Night Watch*.<sup>115</sup>

According to van Hoogstraten an important lesson is reality '*a perfect painting is like a mirror of nature which makes things which do not actually exist appear to exist, and thus deceives in a permissible, pleasurable, and praiseworthy manner*'.<sup>116</sup> It creates a 'virtual reality', as if the figures are all players on a stage during a theatre piece. In his treatise van Hoogstraten

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<sup>112</sup> Slive 1995, pp.102-103; The popular title *The Night Watch* is a product of the perception history of the painting around the early nineteenth-century, and has nothing to do with the original concept of the painting.

<sup>113</sup> Hijmans *et al.* 1976, pp.50-51; Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.7: Govert Flinck was a pupil of Rembrandt between c.1633-1635, during Rembrandt's time with van Uylenburgh. Jacob Backer was also connected to them, whether he was just connected or a pupil or discipuli – like Flinck – is unclear.

<sup>114</sup> Slive 1995, pp.102-104.

<sup>115</sup> Slive 1995, pp.102-104.

<sup>116</sup> Van Hoogstraten 1678, *Euterpe*, pp.24-25; pp.260-261.

accentuates the importance of reality in the sense of naturality. Depicting the object in its natural state of being, something which could be achieved by giving it 'zwier'.<sup>117</sup>

The exact meaning of *zwier* is not explained by van Hoogstraten. In literature it is often taken as a synonym for Dutch words connected to movement. Weststeijn describes that the origin of the word may come from the movement of a snake, a similar explanation is given by Karel van Mander, in connection to Rembrandt's *Night Watch*.<sup>118</sup> However, people remain unconvinced that this meaning of the word is correct. Van Hoogstraten's word *zwier* may simply have been borrowed from a different language, potentially because it was most fitting.

It seems that the use of the term *zwier* has to do with the liveliness of the figures, which evidently has to do with motion. However, a picture is still, yet you can depict the suggestion of motion. This aspect of art is something we see a lot with Rembrandt, for instance in his picture *Titus at his desk* (fig.30, 1655). If we look at the ink pot this clearly gives the idea of being in motion, for it contains a certain momentum. It is this type of momentum that we can also experience, whilst watching the *Night Watch*. One can experience a form of anticipation of what is about to happen with the militia group of captain Frans Banninck Cocq. For the *Night Watch* van Hoogstraten uses the term *zwierige sprong*, where *sprong* is the '*wellkunstige, maer in schijn ongemeakte plaetsing uwer beelden*',<sup>119</sup> so a careful placing of figures although it seems arbitrary in combination with this *zwier* or momentum like motion. Creating a picture that feels 'alive' in a way, but stands still.<sup>120</sup> Perhaps the best comparison for the word *zwier*, would be to the German word *Schwung*, which seems to suggest the 'power of motion' or momentum. Which seems to be a strong aspect of Rembrandt's works and their strong sense of reality. It is this aspect of Rembrandt's art, which is still admired by many contemporary art historians today. For it adds to the liveliness of his works.<sup>121</sup>

Clearly *beweegelijkheid* and *tegenwoordigheid* were important elements in Rembrandt's works at the height of his career, which he would have implemented in order to emulate another artist's art. Something typical for his own pieces that would replace the work of his predecessors. Rembrandt clearly implemented *beweegelijkheid* and *tegenwoordigheid* in his most important works. Potentially the most important commission Rembrandt ever received in his early years was the commission by Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau to create five paintings of *the Passion* (c.1633-1646), for the Stadtholder's Gallery, the art collection in The Hague.<sup>122</sup> These paintings, simply referred to as *The Passion series*, is a series of five paintings: *The Descent*

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<sup>117</sup> Van Hoogstraten 1678, p.306; Van der Wetering 2016, pp.244-246.

<sup>118</sup> Weststeijn 2013 *et al.*, p.101; *De compagnie van kapitein Frans Banninck Cocq en luitenant Willem van Ruytenburgh maakt zich gereed om uit te marcheren*.

<sup>119</sup> Translation: the craftily, but suggested spontaneous placement of the figures.

<sup>120</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, pp.98-101.

<sup>121</sup> Hijmans *et al.* 1976, pp.58-59; Since van Hoogstraten was active in Vienna whilst he wrote parts of his treatise, it could be likely that he made use of his experience with the German language.

<sup>122</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.26-27; Rembrandt probably received the commission as he was still active in Leiden, where he mainly painted small history pieces.

from the Cross (fig.31, c.1633), *The Raising of the Cross* (fig.32, c.1633), *The Ascension of Christ* (fig.33, 1636), *The Entombment of Christ* (fig.34, c.1636-39), and *The Resurrection of Christ*.<sup>123</sup>

Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau was the most important military figure in the Republic at the time and certainly the most reputable nobleman. Through the art expertise of Huygens, he was also the most prestigious nobleman in the Dutch republic handing out commissions. As stadtholder, Frederik Hendrik was in a way the '*Primus Inter Pares*' and as head of the army he was *de facto* head of state, although he was not the king or direct part of government.<sup>124</sup> For Rembrandt fulfilling commissions for Frederik Hendrik was an interesting prospect. If Frederik Hendrik had achieved his complete military ambition, he would have been able to become *de facto* king of the 'Seventeen provinces', either by becoming truly king or either by retaining his function as stadtholder. As such he had already been collecting an art collection of Netherlandish painters, which seem to strengthen the argument for this ambition.<sup>125</sup>

This commission was a great opportunity for Rembrandt. It could have propelled him to the greatest heights. It was his first – known – commission by true nobility, which could have set him on course for other prestigious projects, perhaps even a formal role as court painter.<sup>126</sup> Even the location for which Rembrandt got the commission could have been considered the most prestigious. The Binnenhof was the administrative hub of the United Provinces. The governing bodies of both Holland and the United Provinces were located there. It contained the Hof van Holland, the States of Holland, and the States General convened in the Great Hall.<sup>127</sup> The *Passion series* was most likely intended for the Stadtholder's quarters, which were in the northwest corner of the Binnenhof, located in the 'Mauritstoren'. For Frederik Hendrik these quarters were a visual signifier of his power and prestige. They functioned not as his military base, but as his own court. Combining his diplomatic and administrative centre with those of a private residence.<sup>128</sup> The paintings in Frederik Hendrik's collection seem to reflect his broader political agenda. According to McNamara, his desire to unify both the Southern and Northern Netherlands becomes apparent in his artistic choices, as it was clear from his military actions. It was in this collection that all 'greats' from the 'unified Netherlands' – meaning artists from both the Southern and Northern Netherlands – were displayed in close proximity. Rubens, Rembrandt, Honthorst, Van Balen, Van Dyck, Lievens, all were present in this vastly Netherlandish orientated collection.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, it would have been important to Rembrandt to make these artworks a representation of his art.

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<sup>123</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.25-27; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.2, p.91.

<sup>124</sup> 'First among equals.'

<sup>125</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.21-22; Vlieghe 1987, p.192.

<sup>126</sup> Schama 2019, pp.457-459.

<sup>127</sup> McNamara 2015, p.17.

<sup>128</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.17-25.

<sup>129</sup> McNamara 2015, pp.19-23.

*The Passion series* is automatically connected to Rembrandt's 'presumed' wish to emulate Rubens, in order to please Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau, who commissioned the works.<sup>130</sup> According to McNamara and most others, it is the painting *The Descent from the Cross* by Rembrandt which bears the strongest resemblance to the *Descent from the Cross* by Rubens (fig.35, 1611), due to the similarity in composition.<sup>131</sup> They think that Rembrandt must have known the painting through the print by Lucas Vostermans (fig.36, c.1620) and subsequently used it to emulate Rubens.<sup>132</sup>

However, this desire by Rembrandt to emulate Rubens can easily be disputed. According to Ben Broos, Rembrandt did not take his inspiration for the *Descent* from Rubens at all. He identified two small woodcuts by Albrecht Altdorfer (c.1480-1538) of c.1513 as potential pictorial sources for Rembrandt's *Descent* and *The Raising of the Cross*. These two prints used to be attributed to Dürer, which Rembrandt might have possessed as such. However, Altdorfer made this series of 40 woodcuts, *Fall and Redemption of Mankind*, without inscriptions around 1513. A Rembrandt drawing (fig.37) in the Albertina of *The Raising of the Cross* also has clear similarities to the woodcut by Altdorfer (fig.38) and Broos compares *The Descent from the Cross* by Rembrandt to a woodcut by Altdorfer with the same subject (fig.39).<sup>133</sup> Broos also mentions that Rembrandt must have looked at Altdorfer for other compositions. For instance, Rembrandt's *Calvary* drawing (fig.40) has strong similarities with Altdorfer's *Crucifixion* (fig.41).<sup>134</sup> According to Broos, these pictures once more show that Rembrandt mainly turned to fifteenth and sixteenth century masters for his inspiration in the 1630s.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, one could also compare *The Resurrection* (fig. 42, 1612) by Pieter Lastman to both Rembrandt's *Resurrection* and *Ascension*. Broos is convinced that pointing the *Descent* and *Raising of the Cross* out as instances of Rembrandt competing with Rubens to prove his worth for Frederik Hendrik is far-fetched and he is convinced that the connection between Rubens and Rembrandt is 'romanticized'.<sup>136</sup>

Applying the *Reflections on Method* by Pächt, this is clearly the case of a comparison in which one artwork differs from the other, however, this does not connect Rembrandt's artworks into an artistic development connecting him to Rubens.<sup>137</sup> For these prior examples clearly show that a direct comparison to works by Rubens is not necessary. On top of that, the fact that Rubens's work was so monumental and Rembrandt's work so small, comparing the two on anything else but composition, would be massively illogical. However, it also undermines the entire notion that Rembrandt may have emulated Rubens's work directly. The monumentality of Rubens's work is

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<sup>130</sup> Gerson 1969, pp.7-23; Chapman 1990, pp.62-67; Schwartz 2006, pp.151-152; McNamara 2015, pp.25-30; A long list of scholars connects the *Passion series* by Rembrandt to Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*; From Rembrandt's letters it is at least clear that Rembrandt knew the surroundings in which his paintings were to be hung; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.2, p.91.

<sup>131</sup> Corpus Rubenianum, vol.VI, pp.162-170.

<sup>132</sup> Gerson 1969, pp.7-23; Chapman 1990, pp.62-67; Schwartz 2006, pp.151-152; McNamara 2015, pp.29-30.

<sup>133</sup> Broos 1970, pp.100-106.

<sup>134</sup> Like Rembrandt's *Calvary*, also some Crucifixion figures by Rubens look similar to Altdorfer's.

<sup>135</sup> Broos 1970, p.104; for instance, *Susanna and the Elders* (c.1647, fig.18) took direct inspiration from Lastman's composition.

<sup>136</sup> Broos 1970, p.106; Golahny 2006, p.113, Golahny clearly states Rembrandt took his inspiration from all kinds of artists.

<sup>137</sup> Pächt 1999, pp.105-109.

an aspect in itself. Rembrandt's work does not achieve a similar effect in any way, which means that Rembrandt's work has not been changed in such a way in order to replace Rubens's painting. Rubens's painting would outshine any artistic ambition Rembrandt may have had with his own. Therefore, if ever the work would be placed in direct comparison to Rubens's painting, Rembrandt would never have achieved his goal of presenting the better work. Based on Pächt, these works seem to share little in form of an historical link, except for the fact that they may have shared an original compositional example.

Since literature suggests that Rembrandt never left the Netherlands, which means he never saw the Rubens's works in situ, only in form of an etching. Yet the reputation of these works must have been known. Would an artist really risk making a direct link to such a monumental work, whilst himself creating an artwork with a vastly different effect? Would you want to be put directly into that comparison, for your work would always be the lesser of the two?

The difference in composition and *tegenwoordigheydt* and *beweechgelickheijt* can also be seen in another comparison between Rubens and Rembrandt. Namely, Rembrandt's painting of *The Blinding of Samson* (fig.43, 1636) which is often seen as an emulation of Rubens.<sup>138</sup> Within art historical literature, however, instead of connecting this work to Rubens's *Samson and Delilah* (fig.44, c.1609-1610) of the same subject, it gets connected to his *Prometheus* (fig.45, 1618). Something which is intriguing, for again this figure is not originally made by Rubens nor is the composition similar. The figure of *Prometheus* by Rubens was originally an emulation of an invention by Titian. A version Rembrandt could have known through a famous engraving by Cornelis Cort of *Tityus* (fig.46). The painting by Rubens was in the collection of Sir Dudley Carleton (1573-1632), the English ambassador to The Hague till 1625. Whether Rembrandt ever saw the painting by Rubens is unclear, however, this could be deemed unlikely, especially since Rembrandt would have been with Lastman around this time.<sup>139</sup>

Through the picture by Cornelis Cort, Rembrandt could definitely have gotten into contact with the figure, however, one could wonder whether he linked this figure to Rubens or to Titian. Based on the fact that Cort depicts Titian's figure and Rembrandt himself had a great interest for Titian, seeing it as a figure in the style of Titian would make most sense.<sup>140</sup> However, *The Blinding of Samson* is seen as the climax of Rembrandt's depiction of violent emotions. According to Sluijter, he builds on the teachings of his master Pieter Lastman, jettisoning conventional gestures and poses with which emotions were usually expressed and renouncing all grace in movement and attitude.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Sluijter 2014, p.73; Schama 2019, pp.433-435.

<sup>139</sup> Sluijter 2014, pp.74-75.

<sup>140</sup> Sluijter 2014, pp.74-75; Schama 2019, pp.433-435.

<sup>141</sup> Sluijter 2014, p.73.

Based on the writings by Junius and van Hoogstraten, the picture could be placed in the context of *tegenwoordigheydt* and *beweeghgelickheijt*.<sup>142</sup> The pain and agony seen with the figure of Simson is even worse than that of the figure of Prometheus. Instead of grace there is pure pain. In shape the figures are very comparable in composition for being figures falling backwards, but the emotion they evoke is different. *Prometheus* is in a way accepting of his fate, whilst Rembrandt depicts a man, struggling for his freedom and his life. *Prometheus* had *grâce et vehemence*, something which was a vital aspect of contemporary art theory. The body of *Prometheus* is that of a hero, chained, suffering horrifying pain and terror but with graceful movements of the body and limbs. Even if you would connect Rembrandt's figure to Rubens's *Prometheus* It is clear that the two figures have nothing in common in regards to their *grâce et vehemence*. Based on the underlying philosophy within art theory – with Junius writings playing an important role – it seems that Rembrandt does not follow that same philosophy to the taste of contemporary art lovers in some of his works.<sup>143</sup> In a way the underlying philosophy in the approach to the works seems different. Where Rubens depicts *grâce et vehemence*, Rembrandt depicts a realistic, but gruesome scene.

Similar to the situation with the *Passion series*, there are again a variety of examples Rembrandt may have used to create his painting. Once again, Rembrandt's figure would have existed as such without Rubens's specific example. There is nothing that connects Rembrandt's *Samson* to a direct emulation of Rubens's *Prometheus*, for the types of emotions conveyed are so far apart. Yes, we've got two figures in a death struggle, but in a very different way. Connecting Rembrandt's work in comparison to the *Prometheus* by Rubens is not really worthwhile, for again they share no real historical link, except for an Italian origin of a figure.<sup>144</sup>

On top of that, the comparisons made between Rubens and Rembrandt are mostly only done within the atmosphere of history paintings. However, based on the number of paintings painted by Rembrandt provided by the Rembrandt Research Group of his history pieces and portraits, it should become clear that Rembrandt was not a history painter, but a portraitist like Van Dyck.<sup>145</sup> Interestingly enough, Rembrandt's *the Blinding of Samson* actually seems to come closer to Van Dyck's *Capture of Samson* (fig.47, c. 1628-1630), especially compared in moment and 'emotionally'.<sup>146</sup> Both works share a similar level of emotional strength, movement and level of

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<sup>142</sup> Weststeijn 2010, pp.265-270; translation of these terms is somewhat testing *tegenwoordigheydt* could be seen as 'active presence' or reality, whilst *beweeghgelickheijt* would be a level of movement, potentially even a level of momentum.

<sup>143</sup> Schama 2019, pp.435-437.

<sup>144</sup> Pächt 1999, p.105-109.

<sup>145</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, pp.61-68; see their figures 1,2,3,4, and 5; De Piles 1706, pp.7-10; 303-306.

<sup>146</sup> Van Dyck's *Capture of Samson* may have been taken from oil sketches attributed to Rubens, however, these would most likely never have been seen by Rembrandt; see Manuth 1990, pp.176-178; we do not know whether Rembrandt ever saw this picture by van Dyck, for it was in the possession of Archduke Leopold William of Austria (1614-1662), For provenance see source: <https://www.khm.at/en/objectdb/detail/645/?offset=0&lv=list> (seen source: 01.12.2020).

violence. Although, Van Dyck clearly stays in the tradition of Rubens with his *grâce et vehemence* in which Samson is still pretty much a heroic figure.<sup>147</sup>

If you would suggest an artist would try to emulate the most progressive or famous artist within his 'genre' then based on the art treatises during and after Rembrandt's life he would have focussed on the most prominent portraitist of his time, namely Anthony Van Dyck.<sup>148</sup> Van Dyck was only seven years older than Rembrandt and the risen star of his time dictating an artistic fashion in the United Kingdom, whilst Rubens was 29-years Rembrandt's senior, reaching the end of his career by 1628 clearly suffering from gout.<sup>149</sup> Yet still the comparison between two contemporary artists, both focussed on portraiture – namely Rembrandt and Van Dyck – is not made, but the comparison between two artists focussed on different subjects and a generation apart is. This is likely a result from the strong impact French art academical research of the seventeenth century and beyond has had on the figures of Rubens and Rembrandt, whilst potentially less so on Van Dyck, who clearly has taken his place within the art history of the United Kingdom.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Sluijter 2015, pp.45-47; This of course is logical, for Van Dyck stands in the direct educative line to Rubens, whilst Rembrandt clearly found his own route in this.

<sup>148</sup> De Piles 1706, pp.7-10; 303-306; Hoogstraten 1678, pp.23-30; p.306.

<sup>149</sup> Huet 2014, 00.269-272; In a letter to Jan Gaspar Gevaerts Rubens explains how he has been feeling sick of gout.

<sup>150</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.205; Van Beneden *et al* 2011, p.65; Wunder 2017, pp.111-113; Gordenker 1999, p.97.

### 3. Van Dyck and van Rijn: Talents of their time.

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Based on these historic facts and the method used by Pächt, it becomes clear that the artistic comparisons made between Rubens and Rembrandt are not particularly valid. These examples do not go further than a simple comparison of figures and the desire of any artists to strive to be better than his forebears, but then forcefully connected through a political and academical desire to compare the two. In the end, the made comparisons mostly proof that Rembrandt and Rubens shared an interest for the same Italian examples, but in this their connection is in no way unique.

In art historic literature, an artistic connection between Van Dyck and Rembrandt does exist. Although, this connection comes through the medium of etching. Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641), like Rembrandt, was a great artistic talent. Directly connected to the artistic 'family tree' of Rubens, having been his employee. However, unlike with Rubens, Van Dyck does share a political nor academically motivated connection to Rembrandt. Would it be possible to create a valid comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt?

In order to establish the ground for this comparison, we will first have to look at the history of Van Dyck, and the history of Van Dyck and van Rijn in relation to each other. For if a valid Van Dyck and Rembrandt comparison is to be made, a logical connection has to be established.

#### 3.1 Van Dyck: The Flemish talent.

Van Dyck was born in Antwerp on the 22th of March, 1599. His father, Frans Van Dyck, was a silk merchant in Antwerp. His mother, Maria Cuypers, was descent from one of the patrician families of the city. Frans Van Dyck was a prosperous man at the time of his son's birth.<sup>151</sup> Maria Cuypers was his second wife, having had some children from his first wife, who died during childbirth in 1589. In 1607 – five weeks after the purchase of their second house – Van Dyck's mother passed away, which meant a great change for the 'Van Dyck family'. For this left Frans with nine children, between the ages of one to sixteen.<sup>152</sup>

Van Dyck's education is partially uncertain, especially his early years are unknown. There are several second-hand biographies providing us with several hypotheses, but none of them give many certainties.<sup>153</sup> It is certain that Van Dyck enrolled with Hendrik Van Balen (1575-1632) in

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<sup>151</sup> Van Dyck's father bought a large house behind the cathedral, where the family moved to in December 1599, only to buy the adjacent house eight years later. the 'Het kasteel Van Rijssel', located in the Korte Nieuwstraat (1599) and 'De stad Van Ghent' (1607); Eaker 2016, pp.26-28.

<sup>152</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2103, pp.23-24.

<sup>153</sup> Houbraken 1721, pp.182-184; Vergara *et al.* 2103, pp.23-24; Cust 1902, pp.4-5; For instance, Houbraken mentions that Van Dyck's father may have had been painterly trained and had given his son the first training. A fact which can neither be confirmed, nor denied, for although his father was a merchant, Van Dyck's grandfather had also been active as a painter for some years. It would not be illogical to assume that fathers had taught their sons at least some of the drawing basics. His granddad could not have taught Van Dyck for Antoon van Dyck 'the Elder' passed away in 1580.

1609, when he was roughly ten years old.<sup>154</sup> Van Balen was a typical painter of the Flemish school and had been a pupil of Adam van Noort (1561-1641) together with Rubens.<sup>155</sup>

Van Balen was mainly specialised in small cabinet pictures, often painted on a copper support. He painted mostly allegorical and mythological scenes, but was not a stranger to religious subjects either. Early in his career van Van Balen made some larger altarpieces, in which Van Noort's influence was clearly visible. However, later in his career – around the time Van Dyck would have been in his studio – his focus was more on the smaller scale works. Portraiture and history paintings with large figures are rare in Van Balen's later oeuvre. It is therefore assumed that Van Dyck mainly enjoyed a technical education at Van Balen, and the skills associated with these two genres – history and portraiture – from Rubens.<sup>156</sup>

We do not know the exact time Van Dyck spent at Van Balen, but an estimation can be made based on the Guild ledgers of Antwerp. Although, the Guild ledgers only register new students, new masters, and financial business, we can still deduce who were in Van Balen's studio and when. Between 1602-1607 Van Balen has six students of which two have become masters in their own name. They became masters after four to five years.<sup>157</sup> It would be logical to assume that Van Dyck therefore – being an untrained apprentice – spent at least four years with Van Balen, before he would become a journeyman, this means that Van Dyck would become a journeyman around 1613.<sup>158</sup>

Although, it is difficult to give certainty with the information we know.<sup>159</sup> It would be logical to assume Van Dyck would have left Van Balen's studio when he was fourteen years old.<sup>160</sup> At the age of fourteen, Van Dyck would have joined Rubens as a journeyman.

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<sup>154</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.24; Eaker 2016, pp.26-28; Rombouts *et al.* 1872, p.457.

<sup>155</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.24; Eaker 2016, pp.26-28; Rubens and Van Balen were great friends throughout their lives.

<sup>156</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.24; Eaker 2016, pp.26-28.

<sup>157</sup> Kirby 1999, pp. 5-7; Peeters 2009, pp.149-150; Plomp 2006, pp. 31-33.

<sup>158</sup> Vander Auwera, 2008, p.30; Van Balen must have had at least four to five members in his studio between 1602-1608, two of which would have been 'discipuli', journeymen contributing to workshop production and producing paintings or parts of them in the style of their master; Often the words 'discipel' and 'pupil' are used in combination, which leaves room for interpretation. For a 'discipel' might not necessarily be a 'pupil', it might simply mean a 'follower of'; Vergara *et al.* 2013, pp.24-26; [https://archive.org/stream/deliggerenenand00lukagoog/deliggerenenand00lukagoog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/deliggerenenand00lukagoog/deliggerenenand00lukagoog_djvu.txt) (10-10-2020); Prak 2003, p.244; Rombouts 1878, p.14.

<sup>159</sup> Rombouts *et al.* 1872, pp.454-460; p.531; Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.3-5; It is known that Van Balen takes on six new members to his studio in 1609. That year Van Balen had moved to a new studio and became dean of the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp, which probably made it possible for him to grow his studio. It would be logical to assume several things: First of all, that Hendrick van Erpe would have started working as a journeyman for his brother, saving himself tuition fees and earning money for his family directly – Rombouts *et al.* 1872 only mentions them being registered as students of Van Balen; the brothers van Erpe (Herp) are registered by Jan Moretus II as working together '*Op d'Ou Coremert*' (op de oude Korenmarkt, at the old Cornmarket the area their workshop was), Martin assumes incorrectly that Hendrick van Espe died in 1616 – Second, that Van Balen would have made use as his position of dean to fully fill his studio with new talent. Whether Adriaenssen and Saligen would have still been there at 1609 could be debated, for either they would have become journeymen in Van Balen's studio or continued their study elsewhere, since their four years as an apprentice was over. Francois Lippeloo would have been in his third year as an apprentice. The new incoming members were: Heynrick Ingelants, who became a master the same year and hence must thus have been a journeyman, Gilliam Neeffs and Francois Denteer, who never got registered as independent painters, Fernande Schuermans, who became a master in 1616, Antony van Dyck, who became a master in 1618, and Johannes Driescheren, who became a master in 1620. This means that Van Balen at least registered three new apprentices at the start of their education, namely Schuermans, Van Dyck, and Driescheren. In 1614 these three apprentices have all reached the end of their regular apprenticeship. One could assume that Van Dyck has by then already made room for the new apprentice Hercules Vaseur.

<sup>160</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp. 3-5; Rombouts *et al.* 1872, p.506; p.531.

Rubens was potentially the most important artist for Van Dyck during his tuition. Rubens knew Van Dyck's father personally. The absence of any registrational documentation that would confirm Van Dyck's registration in another studio may actually be used as proof that he joined Rubens's studio, which has everything to do with Rubens's status as a court painter. As a court painter he was exempted from having to register his pupils and journeymen with the local guild, which means no administrative documentation for Van Dyck would exist. Besides, Rubens does mention Van Dyck in his personal correspondence as 'discipuli' a few years later. This means that Van Dyck was contributing to workshop production and produced paintings or parts of them in the style of Rubens.<sup>161</sup>

The impact of Rubens on Van Dyck's early art is of course apparent. The two worked together for a few years and Van Dyck's close interaction with Rubens may have been the influence on Van Dyck's interest for Italian art, for Rubens was known to be a great Titian enthusiast.<sup>162</sup> Yet Van Dyck may have been inspired by other contemporary artists too.

In an anecdote, Houbraken puts Van Dyck in comparison to Frans Hals. In this anecdote he puts Hals in the role of *Protopogenes* and Van Dyck in the role of *Apelles*, an artist who in classical writing had surpassed all the painters that preceded him.<sup>163</sup>

Van Dyck would become an independent artist at the early age of 18 in the year 1618. It being the first time he officially gets registered in the Guild of St. Luke of Antwerp. As an independent artist Van Dyck kept on working in assistance to Rubens in his studio where, in collaboration with Rubens, he would work on several projects.<sup>164</sup> Since – between 1613-1621 – Van Dyck painted in a surprising variety of styles, it is not illogical to assume that as an inexperienced artist he was still learning the ropes. Some of his works were made in a sketchy manner, whilst others were more fluid and finished. The physiognomy of the figures also varies greatly, from crude to elegant. His painting style sometimes showed great independence and sometimes great dependence on Rubens.<sup>165</sup>

Around 1621, Van Dyck would leave for Italy where he would work for roughly six years.<sup>166</sup> His trip to Italy had a massive impact on his artistic development. During his six-year sojourn, he slowly established himself as a painter of independent inventions. According to David Jaffé, this becomes clearly visible in his compositional manner. Instead of using Rubens's formulae – where there was a tendency to stack figures precariously up and across the plane – Van Dyck

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<sup>161</sup> Vander Auwera, 2008, p.30; Vergara *et al.* 2013, pp.24-26; Rubens and Frans Van Dyck likely came up with a solution to make sure the young boy's talent would not go to waste in spite of his father's financial difficulties. [https://archive.org/stream/deliggerenenand00lukagoog/deliggerenenand00lukagoog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/deliggerenenand00lukagoog/deliggerenenand00lukagoog_djvu.txt) (10-10-2020); Prak 2003, p.244.

<sup>162</sup> Gruber *et al.* 2017, p.273.

<sup>163</sup> Houbraken 1721, pp.90-92; Houbraken also describes how Van Dyck wanted Hals to join him in England, which – whether or not true – seems to suggest Van Dyck had great interest in Hals' art.

<sup>164</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.26; It is therefore that most of Van Dyck's early works are connected to Rubens.

<sup>165</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.30.

<sup>166</sup> Cust 1911, pp.118-122; Van Dyck arrived in Genoa, Italy, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1621. In 1622, he spent eight months in Rome and made short trips to Florence, Venice, Padua, Mantua, Bologna, and Milan before going back to Genoa at the end of 1622. The following years he would spend most of his time in the city of Genoa, with some longer periods working in Palermo and Rome.

starts to better grasp spatial placement and starts using a more confident modelling in *chiaroscuro*.<sup>167</sup>

His compositions evolved into more volumetric scenes, with clearer depth and space. Something which becomes clear in history pieces like *The Continnence of Scipio* (fig.48, 1621) and *The Capture of Samson* <sup>168</sup>, but also in portrait paintings like the *Genoese Noblewoman* (fig.49, c.1625-1627), the *Portrait of a Woman (Marchese Durazzo)* (fig.50, c.1622-1625), and in *the portrait of the Lomellini's* (fig.51, c.1625-1627), portraits which Van Dyck all painted during his stay in Genoa.

In his paintings, Van Dyck clearly starts painting in a style that reminds us of Titian. The reason for Van Dyck to be in Italy was to try and study Italian artists and some of the treasures of antiquity. The most important document we have in regard to Van Dyck's studies, during his period in Italy, is his own sketchbook from around that time. This *Italian Sketchbook* tells us a lot about Van Dyck's interests. It contains a variety of sketches Van Dyck made during his travels around Italy. The sketchbook contained 124 leaves – some of which are now missing, with double numbered pages. Some of the drawings are made from life, but the majority are copies after history paintings by the greatest sixteenth-century, and contemporary, Italian painters. The second half of the sketchbook has copies after portraits by Titian, which would function as an inspiration for years to come. On one of the last pages, Van Dyck recorded his encounter in Palermo on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1624, with Sofonisba Anguissola, who was 96 years old at the time. He made a sketch of her and described how she – nearly blind of old age – had given him advise on how to work with the light.<sup>169</sup>

However, the majority of sketches confirm Van Dyck's clear interest in Titian, Giorgione, Giovanni Batista Moroni, Veronese, Parmigianino, Caravaggio, and Caracci. Although his interest mostly seems to go out to Titian.<sup>170</sup> Titian (c.1488/90-1576) is described by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) in his *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (1550) as an artist that excelled most in portraiture. According to Vasari, Titian made a number of the most beautiful portraits from nature. His quality exceeding those of his predecessors and of his contemporaries.<sup>171</sup> According to Vasari, Titian was able to convey a sense of realism and beauty in his art. He even claimed he did not just use colour to depict a person's appearance, but their soul. His use of colour and methods of depicting were a massive source of inspiration for many artists, in his own time and beyond. His use of architecture and curtains in his paintings were some of the many aspects of his works that were to be used by many other artists.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Jaffé 2001, p.614.

<sup>168</sup> Jaffé 2001, p.614; *The Capture of Samson* is dated c.1628-1630, which was directly after his return from Italy.

<sup>169</sup> Cust 1902, p.5; Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.16-17.

<sup>170</sup> Cust 1902, p.5; Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.16-17; Jaffé 2001, pp.164-165.

<sup>171</sup> Vasari 1550, vol. III, pp.806-809; see: <https://archive.org/details/levitedepiue03vasa1568/page/n923/mode/2up> (20-02-20).

<sup>172</sup> Freedman 1995, pp.30-33; 77-80; Humfrey in: Humfrey *et al.* 2000, p.27.

According to Jaffé, In Italy Van Dyck seemed to have been mostly impressed by the way in which *chiaroscuro* could be manipulated to achieve both volume and other more subtle effects. This becomes clear in the way he renders of the light and dark patterns in his drawings after Italian examples and in his equally focused copies after engravings in which linear modelling and black and white contrasts are paramount.<sup>173</sup> It is these inspirations that he takes back to Antwerp.

When he returned to Antwerp in 1627 as a fully established master, full of ambition and desire to make a lasting career for himself. Back in Antwerp he quickly established a clientele with the local Antwerp citizens, nobility, and churches. For the last six years he had been studying all type of art forms he had seen in and around Italy, and put his new acquired skills to good use. It only took Van Dyck roughly three years to become the court painter of the Infanta Isabella, the governess of the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>174</sup>

Van Dyck combined his skills as a portraitist with compositional clarity and pious emotionalism in his art, in which a prominent northern Italian renaissance portraiture influence could be seen.<sup>175</sup> During this period, Van Dyck also began to engage with printmaking in order to further spread his works. Around this time, he worked on his *Iconographie*, established close contacts with London and The Hague, and established his international reputation as a portraitist.<sup>176</sup>

In 1632, Van Dyck left for the United Kingdom. Unlike twelve years earlier – when he visited the Earl of Arundel – Van Dyck now arrived as an artist of considerable fame. His time in Italy and Antwerp had made him accustomed to patronage of the highest level.<sup>177</sup> Having returned to the United Kingdom, effectively on invitation of King Charles I, his career was pretty much made. In Van Dyck, King Charles and Queen Henrietta had found an artist, who perfectly matched their political needs and aspirations, as well as their artistic sensitivities. Van Dyck managed to imbue their portraits with a tenderness and warmth of expression that conveyed ideals of peace and harmony, displaying the philosophy of their divine rule.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Jaffé 2001, p.622.

<sup>174</sup> Walsh 1994, pp.227-229.

<sup>175</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, p.103.

<sup>176</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, p.103.

<sup>177</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>178</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, p.151; Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

### 3.2 Van Dyck and van Rijn: An artistic connection on paper.

Rembrandt got into direct contact with the etching techniques by Van Dyck through Lievens. It was the *Iconographie* by Van Dyck that had a direct impact on the preparatory method Lievens used for his own etchings.<sup>179</sup> Rembrandt must have learned these techniques when Lievens returned to Amsterdam in 1644. Rembrandt and Lievens were the only painter-etchers of their generation who used the genre as an instrument for personal expression, producing etchings of their own designs that were valued by collectors for their craftsmanship.<sup>180</sup> According to Dickey, it was Van Dyck's unconventional, spontaneous, brilliant etched portraits that were the only works of their kind comparable in quality to Rembrandt's achievements in the genre and Van Dyck's approach to etching a direct inspiration for Rembrandt and Lievens to treat printmaking as a fine art, which seems to underline the all-combining nature of these artists.<sup>181</sup>

The *Iconographie* was a series of prints Van Dyck had produced after his own works. The sitters ranged from intimate friends and fellow artists to military commanders and noblewomen. Van Dyck produced the works over a longer period of time, seventeen prints by his own hand, whilst the others were produced by a range of famous Flemish and Dutch printmakers, like Lukas Vorstermans the Elder and Paulus Pontius. The exact reason for Van Dyck to create this series is still largely unknown. He simply may have desired to further his own fame as a portraitist or perhaps he may have desired to depict the great artists and connoisseurs of his own time.<sup>182</sup>

The first part was published in 1632, which is right around the time Van Dyck left for or arrived in the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, no version of this publication is known to us.<sup>183</sup> However, the *Iconographie* is a great source for evidence of contacts and collegial associations. For many of the individuals portrayed were close acquaintances to Van Dyck.<sup>184</sup>

The first known printed version of the *Iconographie* dates from 1645-1646, which was published after Van Dyck's by Gillis Hendricx.<sup>185</sup> Whether this was in the format that Van Dyck had envisioned can, however, be debated. In London, Van Dyck would still work on the *Iconographie* keeping a close eye on the process, by keeping in direct contact with his etchers in Antwerp.

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<sup>179</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.296-297; According to Dickey, we can conclude that Lievens' production of history, landscape, and portrait paintings, as well as prints and drawings, can be seen as a synthesis of Flemish and Dutch pictorial ideas and a direct response by the artist to the styles of Van Dyck and Rubens.

<sup>180</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.296-297.

<sup>181</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.296-297.

<sup>182</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.135-136; Spicer 1994, p.327; Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.290-291; Unsurprisingly, most of those portrayed were associated with the court, such as Gerard van Honthorst and Constantijn Huygens. The latter being the best documented, because Huygens made a note that he had sat model on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 1632, for whilst he was posing a tree fell on his house. The portrait itself is unfortunately lost, but it presumably was the example for Pontius's print.

<sup>183</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.135-136.

<sup>184</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.290-291; His work in Holland gave Van Dyck the chance to make some connections with Dutch contemporaries, whilst at the same time may have added to the spread of his own reputation amongst his colleagues there. Potentially not just as an artist, but also as a printmaker. Seventeen etchings by his own hand were published separately from the official edition issued in 1645. These evocative and mostly unfinished prints produced in the early 1630s were very much sought after by connoisseurs and collectors right after when they were created.

<sup>185</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.135-136.

Although, he never managed to completely finish the project being so busy for Charles I and the rest of the English court.<sup>186</sup>

Although Rembrandt never tried something as ambitious as the *Iconographie*. He did make a lot of different etchings throughout his artistic career. Between 1628-1631 Rembrandt made a variety of prints, ranging from self-portraits or *tronies* to depictions of beggars and vagabonds.<sup>187</sup> In this early period Rembrandt seems to use etching as a method to experiment. The different tools burin, drypoint, and use of the ink made it possible for Rembrandt to experiment with different pictorial effects.<sup>188</sup> The different types of paper – Chinese, Japanese, or European – gave different diffuse effects leading to new expressive avenues for Rembrandt to explore.<sup>189</sup>

In the form of *tronies* Rembrandt studied the different ways of depicting facial expressions as well as the use of light in a composition.<sup>190</sup> The etchings he made were really small, some not bigger than a modern-day post stamp, which suggests Rembrandt made use of leftover bits from larger copper plates in order to make these studies, which also seem to suggest the more educational purpose of these prints.<sup>191</sup>

The medium of etching was usually used by painters as a way to get known as an artist. Not for the prints themselves. Prime examples for this were Titian and Rubens.<sup>192</sup> Both these artists used their print production to spread their fame around the known world. Prints after their paintings got spread far and wide making sure they got great publicity. Prints were easily produced, for in comparison to paintings they were cheap and easily spread.<sup>193</sup> It seems that the prints Rembrandt made between 1628-1631 weren't made for this purpose, but for the effect of self-expression and study. It is only between 1631-1635, when Rembrandt started working together with Jan Gillisz. van Vliet (1605-1685), that the production of prints seemed mostly focussed on spreading Rembrandt's name and fame.<sup>194</sup> According to Schwartz, Rembrandt would produce over 300 prints throughout his career, often being printed in several states. Even after 1640, Rembrandt would still produce six plates on average per year.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Spicer 1994, pp.327-329; Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.135-136.

<sup>187</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.100-124.

<sup>188</sup> Schwartz 1994, p.13.

<sup>189</sup> Schwartz 1994, p.13; Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.291-293.

<sup>190</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.100-103; These *tronies* are often described as self-portraits for Rembrandt would depict himself in these studies functioning as his own model. However, the essence of these etchings was not the self-portrait, but the study of the subject.

<sup>191</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.100-103.

<sup>192</sup> Rutgers *et al.* 2014, pp.115-117.

<sup>193</sup> Rutgers *et al.* 2014, pp.115-117.

<sup>194</sup> Rutgers *et al.* 2014, pp.115-117; De Marchi *et al.* 1994, p.457; By 1635 Rembrandt owned his own printing press and would produce his own prints as the individual artwork.

<sup>195</sup> Schwartz 1994, p.13; Rutgers *et al.* 2014, p.115; pp.121-124; An interesting aspect of Rembrandt's prints is the fact that we have a lot of different 'states', different versions that vary in appearance. This has everything to do with the wear on the plate and the constant re-working of worn plates, but also with the different types of paper he used throughout the years. These prints were often produced years apart showing that Rembrandt re-used and re-produced prints. The fact that Rembrandt constantly re-worked the plate may partially be due to the popularity, exclusivity and collectability of these works. In the seventeenth – and later in the eighteenth and nineteenth century – there is an up-and-coming interest for collecting prints of Rembrandt's etchings and it is this collectability of his prints that Rembrandt would certainly have put to his advantage.

### 3.3 Van Dyck and van Rijn: An artistic connection with paint.

Besides their shared interest for the etching medium, it also seems that Van Dyck and Rembrandt shared their interests within the medium of paints. Both Van Dyck and Rembrandt were impressed by the way in which *chiaroscuro* could be manipulated to achieve both volume and other more subtle effects. Both searching a way to render the light and dark patterns in their drawings after Italian examples.<sup>196</sup>

One of the most important artists for Van Dyck and Rembrandt was Titian. Both artists closely studied his works. It is known that Van Dyck owned the painting of the *Portrait of Vendramin Family* (fig.52, early 1540s) and *Perseus and Andromeda* (fig.53, c.1554-1556) and at least half of the works in his *Italian Sketchbook* were drawings after works of Titian.<sup>197</sup> In his own time Van Dyck was even considered an artist that was better than Titian himself, *Autem Titiani Imprimis Aemulus*. One of the most important elements was the natural depiction of fabrics and skin.<sup>198</sup> According to de Bie another important facet of Van Dyck's art was the use of light and colour, in order to get the desired effect of this naturalism.<sup>199</sup> According to Gritsay, Van Dyck sought to expand the tradition limits of his genre in his art, especially within his portraits. He tried to fill the images with movement, passion, and a level of dramatic action.<sup>200</sup> His use of colour, which seems to radiate some inner light, in which the influence of Venetian painting and specifically Titian can be perceived.<sup>201</sup>

Like for Van Dyck, Titian also seemed an important artist to Rembrandt. According to Chapman, Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait at the Age of 34* (fig.54, 1640) in the National Gallery of London, was a picture with which Rembrandt rivalled the Italian virtuoso ideal and transformed it into an imaginary Netherlandish idiom.<sup>202</sup> The painting seemed to have been inspired on both Raphael's *Portrait of Count Baldassare Castiglione* (fig.55, 1515-1516), after which Rembrandt made a similar drawing (fig.56), and Titian's *Portrait of a Man* (fig.57, c.1510) which both were in Amsterdam in 1639.<sup>203</sup> According to Chapman, Rembrandt seems to strive to unite Raphael's *disegno* with Titian's *colore*.<sup>204</sup>

Both Van Dyck and Rembrandt were also interested in depicting realism, as well as filling their images with movement, passion, and a level of dramatic action.<sup>205</sup> Van Dyck's better grasp of

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<sup>196</sup> Jaffé 2001, p.622.

<sup>197</sup> Brown 1990, p.705; Cust 1902, p.5; Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.16-17.

<sup>198</sup> Barnes 2004, p.420; De Bie 1661, pp.74-78.

<sup>199</sup> De Bie 1661, pp.74-78.

<sup>200</sup> Van Beneden *et al.* 2011, pp.62-63.

<sup>201</sup> Van Beneden *et al.* 2011, pp.62-63.

<sup>202</sup> Chapman 2013, pp.202-203.

<sup>203</sup> Rembrandt's drawing of the *Castiglione* seems to have a slightly different baret, and facial posture. It looks more like his own *Self-Portrait at the age of 34*; Schama 2019, pp.481-481.

<sup>204</sup> Chapman 2013, p.203.

<sup>205</sup> Van Beneden *et al.* 2011, pp.62-63; Weststeijn 2010, pp.265-270.

spatial placement and use of a more confident modelling in *chiaroscuro* seem to make an elegant connection to the *tegenwoordigheydt* and *beweechgelickheijt* Rembrandt tried to convey in his works.<sup>206</sup>

However, Rembrandt's focus on conveying the most natural depiction, also expressed itself in a way of depicting 'ugliness'.<sup>207</sup> As an artist of the seventeenth century there was the constant struggle of depicting something in its natural state or depicting it in an idealised, more classical, beauty or *heroism*. From Rembrandt's oeuvre it becomes clear that it is a natural reality that he tries to depict, whilst Van Dyck usually depicts idealised beauty. Rembrandt's figures always convey a sense of humanity or mortality, whilst Van Dyck's figures are usually noble demi-gods, that seem unable to die. Where Rembrandt depicts suffering from a human perspective, not from the sense of a hero. Van Dyck seems to work from a more heroic perspective.<sup>208</sup> In this Rembrandt seems to make a different development than Van Dyck. Yet for these differences, there are clear comparisons that can be made.

### 3.4 Pächt's Reflections on Method: Comparing Van Dyck and van Rijn.

It is in this context of comparison that the painting of *the Blinding of Samson* by Rembrandt can again be taken as an interesting example. For with this painting, Rembrandt clearly stepped away from educated artistic perception. For if we compare Rembrandt's thoughts and actual product with the ideas of Huygens, a clear difference in philosophy can be perceived. In his *Youth* Huygens describes the following: '*Beautiful subjects can still impress with a less elegant presentation, but presentation can never make what is ugly into something graceful.*'<sup>209</sup>

To Huygens subjects had to have *grâce et vehemence*, which is best illustrated in the artistic example of the same subject by Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1640). Van Dyck's *Capture of Samson* seems to convey the *grâce et vehemence* that Huygens seems to praise, but also a level of '*beweechgelickheijt*'. In the painting there is a clearly distressed Samson, depicted as a heroic man with the body of a demi-god. His eyes fixed on the beautiful Delilah, who has clearly betrayed him. His hair and her used scissors next to her on the floor. In his eyes a clear desperation with his body conveying a broad range of emotions not easily interpreted. His eyes fixed on Delilah his expression seems to convey sadness, whilst the hand on her leg suggests a level of intimacy. Her outstretched hand and also her fist clenching her cloths suggest a level of longing, both emotionally and sexually. The soldiers with Samson convey a level of stopped physical motion. The faces of the soldiers hardly visible, but one, whose face shows some state of anticipation or frenzy, his eyes wide open. This interplay of emotions, stopped movement or momentum, are all elements within Van Dyck's painting.

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<sup>206</sup> Jaffé 2001, p.614; Van Beneden *et al.* 2011, pp.62-63; Weststeijn 2010, pp.265-270.

<sup>207</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, p.248.

<sup>208</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.248-249.

<sup>209</sup> Heesakkers 2008, pp.80-81.

If we compare Rembrandt's *the Blinding of Samson* with Van Dyck's *Capture*, we can actually see that Rembrandt does a lot with the scene. His figures are all very realistic, Samson himself is a normal man in a struggle for his life. The figures all show a level of *beweechgelickheijt*: the soldiers capturing Samson, Samson's struggle, and the flight Delilah seems to take away from the scene. Showing little to no remorse. However, most noticeable, and most significantly, Rembrandt changes the perspective of the scene: the viewer is standing amongst the soldiers, instead of as an external observer. With this Rembrandt brings in the aspects of *tegenwoordigheydt* directly into this painting. The viewer is part of the story, they're directly in it. From their view point things are partially obscured, one soldier blocking the exit as well as parts of Samson's body with his spear. The infalling light heightens the drama of the struggle that unfolds, as the overwhelmed Samson has his eyes cut out by the soldiers that are partially still storming in. It is this addition of the element of *tegenwoordigheydt* with which Rembrandt adds something specific.

Based on Pächt, Rembrandt's changes could clearly be seen as an artistic development past Van Dyck. In which this specific element in Rembrandt's work replaces the work by Van Dyck.<sup>210</sup> This way Rembrandt's work could be placed within an historical link to Van Dyck's work. For clearly Rembrandt's work could not have existed without the developments made by Van Dyck. This in itself does not make the work by Rembrandt an emulation of Van Dyck directly. It is highly unlikely Rembrandt ever saw Van Dyck's work.<sup>211</sup> It is a good example of how Rembrandt may have artistically been closer to Van Dyck's artistic developments as to those of Rubens, with Van Dyck being the step in between. In which case Van Dyck may in fact be a missing link within this 'historical chain'.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Pächt 1999, pp.105-109; *a Something that has changed in such a way as to cause A to be replaced by a specifically different B.*

<sup>211</sup> Manuth 1990, pp.176-178; There are two oil sketches attributed to Rubens, which are of interest for this scene too, but Rembrandt will never have seen these.

<sup>212</sup> Pächt 1999, p.112; Besides, this example comes forth from the Samson comparisons between Rembrandt and Rubens, which are not too strong in general.

## 4. Van Dyck and van Rijn: *The fashion of the Time.*

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Since it has become clear that a direct comparison between Rembrandt and Rubens seems to bear little validity, there seems hardly reason to assume that Rubens played the suggested vital role within the artistic life of Rembrandt. However, with the possibility of shifting the Rubens and Rembrandt comparison to a Van Dyck and Rembrandt comparison, this now opens up the possibility to discuss how this may have impacted Rembrandt and his circle.

Just with comparing the two artists some interesting similarities come up. Firstly, both artists are of exceptional talent, something which was confirmed by many authors in their own time.<sup>213</sup> Secondly, the artists share a lot of artistic interests.<sup>214</sup> Thirdly, both Van Dyck and Rembrandt reached the peak of their careers around the same time period. Van Dyck was at the height of his career in the United Kingdom c.1632-1641, which ended with his death. Whilst Rembrandt's career took flight between 1631-1640, when he started working in Amsterdam for van Uylenburgh and afterwards independently.<sup>215</sup> Both dictating the *fashion of the time* in their own atmosphere.<sup>216</sup> However, how does this work for Van Dyck and Rembrandt, what is the *fashion of the time*, and when? How are they different, or are they the same?

### 4.1 Van Dyck and van Rijn: Two fashions.

When we look up the definition of 'fashion' in a monolingual dictionary it gives several important entries: *fashion: to follow a fashion*. The definition of *fashion* is a style that is popular at a particular time, especially in clothes, hair, make-up, etc. Whilst *to follow a fashion* is to do that which is popular at the time.<sup>217</sup> The *fashion of the time* in this case is the artistic style that is popular at that time. An artistic style which genuinely is also directly connected to the ongoing *fashion* of the time, which leads to the *following of that fashion* by other artists by it being the most interesting on the artistic market.<sup>218</sup>

What we see is that Rembrandt is most successful artist between 1631-1640 in Amsterdam, whilst Van Dyck seems to reach prominence slightly earlier after his return from Italy in c.1627.<sup>219</sup> Both artists known for doing something new and exciting.

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<sup>213</sup> Heesakkers 2008, pp.84-85; De Bie 1661, pp.290-291; Houbraken 1721, pp.182-184.

<sup>214</sup> Both artists have a great interest in the artist Titian.

<sup>215</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.61; Slive 1995, pp.98-99; Prak 2012, p.122; Spicer 1994, pp.327-329; Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.135-136; p.151; Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>216</sup> Rutgers *et al.* 2014, p.10.

<sup>217</sup> Cambridge 2008, p.513.

<sup>218</sup> *Fashion* in the sense of the dictionary meaning.

<sup>219</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.85.

#### 4.1.1 Van Dyck's art: A noble fashion

In the seventeenth century royal portraits were constantly needed. Portraits were often exchanged with or gifted to foreign monarchs, as gifts and signs of friendship. Besides that, portraits were signs of prestige that showed the power of the sovereign and were often hung in places of representation.<sup>220</sup> In the United Kingdom – which was influenced by the continent – the identity of the painter, the aesthetic quality, and the inventiveness in the product had become matters of importance. Conveying power had become more subtle in the day-to-day politics and it was for the artist to provide the idealised imagery that would bolster the reputation of a sovereign, underlining their right to rule and philosophies of self-regulation of the passions.<sup>221</sup>

Van Dyck painted Charles I and Henrietta Maria and their two Eldest Children ('The Greate Peece') (fig.58, 1632), Charles I and Henrietta Maria (fig.59, 1632), Queen Henrietta Maria (fig.60, 1632), and Charles I on Horseback with M. de St Antoine (fig.61, 1633). All of these pictures are clear representations of the power of the sovereign.<sup>222</sup>

In '*The Greate Peece*' – which was one of the largest works ever painted by Van Dyck – the political message Charles tries to have conveyed is his personal authority and the longevity of the Stuart dynasty. The inheritance of the crown safely secured with the young Charles II standing beside him, the tokens of his office on the table on his right, and his wife and daughter on his left. All as symbols of the rule of the Stuart dynasty. At the same time, little subtleties: like the little prince touching his father's knee and the queen's affectionate but respectful glance emphasises the personal links of affection in the family.<sup>223</sup>

*Charles I on Horseback with M. de St Antoine* is another prime example of presenting the sovereign as a great leader. Seigneur St Antoine – the figure to his right – was the king's equerry and riding-master. St Antoine had the reputation of a celebrated horseman and was sent by Henry IV of France to teach 'riding the great horse'. In this painting Van Dyck depicts Charles I in complete control of the large animal, which he effortlessly commands to make a *passage*, a particular refined dressage movement. The message in this painting is completely clear: Charles I is a good, admired leader, who is in total control of his empire.<sup>224</sup>

Idealisation was an essential part of Van Dyck's royal portraits. He managed to give his royal patrons an idealised – yet seemingly realistic beauty – which in reality they did not possess. The portrait of *Queen Henrietta Maria* is a prime example of this. Henrietta – who was described to be a small woman, with projecting front teeth<sup>225</sup> – was made by Van Dyck into a true beauty. This completely in line with the attitudes of the court masque, which was a form of elite entertainment

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<sup>220</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>221</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>222</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>223</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.65-66.

<sup>224</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.74.

<sup>225</sup> Unfortunately, not the traits of an ideal beauty; Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.72.

that combined music, dance, drama, and poetry with elaborate and expensive fantasy costumes. In this portrait he managed to diminish the swarthy complexion and refined her rather heavy features. Although, she was barely five feet, by painting her in a monotone attire he managed to give her a form of height in her portrait. The tribulations she went through and the costs of constant childbirths would not doubt have had their toll on her. However, in his images, Van Dyck always managed to give her a near eternal beauty. Something, which must have greatly contrasted with reality.<sup>226</sup>

Van Dyck's role as court painter to Charles did not exclude him from painting other prominent nobles and courtiers. His work was in great demand and his clients reflected the diversity of the royal court, with both Scottish and English aristocrats desiring his portraits. Besides, the cultural variety the court was also filled with religious diversity with both Catholics and Protestants. It seems that in their 'desires' these nobles did not really care about the religious background of Van Dyck, for in fact some of the most fanatic Protestants were his greatest patrons, like Philip, Lord Wharton, and Robert Rich, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Warwick, as well as Thomas Howard, the Earl of Arundel.<sup>227</sup>

Most of these people were important, politically active people, whom Van Dyck depicted. In this courtly atmosphere of idealisation and depictions of power, it was Van Dyck who introduced a new way of representing sitters. Depicting them in private and even fictive roles, as shepherds, poets, and soldiers, often with an appropriate fantastical costume, especially in female portraiture. English costumes – which had generally been looser and plainer than the dresses of the continent – were easily 'upgraded' by adding luminosity and movement to shimmering satins. Van Dyck removed fashionable and status-indicating elements, such as lace collars and cuffs and also showing loosened bodices and billowing sleeves that gave a form of informality to the entire outfit.<sup>228</sup> He did this in such a fluid and accomplished way that his additions are not always easily recognized and his portraits have often been interpreted as renderings of actual dresses.<sup>229</sup>

Symbolic attire had not been an unknown thing in art, but this form of spontaneity and liveliness in outfits was a completely new thing. The portraits Van Dyck made were fairly distinct from those in Italy and Flanders, because he was constantly combining new elements from locally produced images, creating his own representations that suited the expectations of his clientele.<sup>230</sup> In his portraits Van Dyck seemed to be able to convey a form of 'grandeur and relaxation'. His figures seem to emanate the innate authority and virtues of the sitter. The emphasis always being on the inner qualities of the individual, rather than their real outward appearance, and with their clothing

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<sup>226</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.72.

<sup>227</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.85.

<sup>228</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.85-87.

<sup>229</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.214-215.

<sup>230</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.85.

as an element to emphasise these inner qualities.<sup>231</sup> Van Dyck deliberately and freely changed the actual physical appearance of a sitter on every level. Whether this was to make the production process easier or to give the sitter a form of timelessness is unknown. However, it seems that with this type of dress Van Dyck tried to evoke his patrons' interests and their sense of aesthetics. He managed to do this effortlessly, and entirely convincing.<sup>232</sup> Male portraits like *Lucius Carys, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Falkland* (fig.62, c.1638-1640), *Sir Thomas Killigrew and Lord Crofts* (fig.63, 1638), *Philip Herbert, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke* (fig.64, c.1634), and *'Mrs. Howard'* (fig.65, c.1638-1639). This fairly distinct style by Van Dyck amassed great popularity among the aristocracy.<sup>233</sup>

Unfortunately, in 1641, after a short sickbed Van Dyck would pass away at the age of 42. According to Houbraken, who in his treaty *De groote schouburgh der nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (1718) has nothing but praise for Van Dyck, mentions the following reason for this 'short sickbed'. '*Hy had zig (dus is my in Engelant door verscheiden geloofwaardige menschen verhaalt) aan de vlam van Kupidoo's fakkel gezenngt, en de Hulpmeesters, om dien brand te koelen, hadden zyn levensvuur met een uitgeblust, zoo dat geen verwarmen aan hem was.*'<sup>234</sup> It is clear that Houbraken suggests that the incorrect treatment of a sexual transmitted infection caused Van Dyck's fatality. Sexual transmitted infections at the time were often – incorrectly – medicated with mixtures containing mercury, which may have led to Van Dyck's early death.<sup>235</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Van Rijn's art: A commoner's fashion

In the Dutch republic things were a lot of different. The Dutch republic was no longer under direct influence of ecclesiastical power of the catholic church, nor did it possess a very prominent nobility. This new republic society was first of all structured around mostly citizens, normal commoners, who may have aspired to nobility but where in fact not. Artist were mainly active working on commissions for rich merchants and a stadtholder, who aspired to be king.<sup>236</sup> They lived in a society which had been at war with the Habsburg empire from 1568, which ended in 1648, only knowing twelve years of relative peace from 1609-1621. For 80-years, the country was 'technically' divided in two warring factions: the mainly protestant northern Netherlands, known as the 'United Provinces' or 'Dutch republic', who fought for their independence from the catholic Habsburg rule, whilst the mainly catholic southern Netherlands were still under Habsburg control.<sup>237</sup> This change of societal structure clearly had an effect on the type of commissions and

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<sup>231</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, pp.85-87.

<sup>232</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.213-216; pp.222-223.

<sup>233</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.85.

<sup>234</sup> Houbraken 1721, pp.187-188; translation: He had burned himself (such has been told to me by several trustworthy people in England) with Cupid's torch, and the healer, in order to quench the fire, extinguished his life's flame, which made it impossible to warm him.

<sup>235</sup> Hearn *et al.* 2009, p.85; Burg 2012, pp.330-335.

<sup>236</sup> Belkin 1998, pp.203-226.

<sup>237</sup> Hautekeete 2005, pp.59-60; Montias 1987, pp.458-460; Rosenberg 1982, pp.15-20; Israel 1995, pp.155-162; pp.169-171.

the type of art and it is within this society that Rembrandt received his commissions working for the market in Amsterdam.<sup>238</sup>

In Amsterdam Rembrandt had the most successful ten years of his career. During these years, he became quite wealthy in a short time and quickly acquired an international reputation.<sup>239</sup> The level of productivity by Rembrandt in the early 1630s was very high, during a period that he worked directly with Hendrick van Uylenburgh.<sup>240</sup>

Van Uylenburgh was the son of Gerrit van Uylenburgh, who had worked for king Sigismund III in Poland. The Van Uylenburgh family had two branches both originating from Leeuwarden: one Calvinist branch, from which Saskia – Rembrandt's later wife – was descended and the Mennonite branch, from which Hendrick descended. Hendrick's family had left for Poland, during the religious turmoil in the Republic.<sup>241</sup> Hendrick was trained as a painter and fulfilled the role of art merchant for the king. Around 1620, he was active as an agent for the crown to acquire Flemish paintings.<sup>242</sup> It is likely that Van Uylenburgh was the one bringing Rembrandt directly into contact with art by Van Dyck.<sup>243</sup>

Rembrandt clearly shared a very close connection to Van Uylenburgh. In 1631, Rembrandt invests in Van Uylenburgh's company and starts to paint portraits in commission for him.<sup>244</sup> Whilst working for Van Uylenburgh, painting portraits for the patricians of Amsterdam was Rembrandt's main activity and in only a few years he would drastically increase his market across Holland. His rapid rise to a position of a fashionable portraitist in the Netherlands is quite astonishing – for as far as we know – Rembrandt had little experience with portrait commissions, before he came to Amsterdam. He did produce *tronies* of people he knew, but little to no real portrait commissions during his time in Leiden.<sup>245</sup> One of the early portraits Rembrandt made in Amsterdam was the *Portrait of Nicolaes Ruts* (fig.66, 1631). A work still signed with Rembrandt's Leiden monogram and dated 1631. Ruts was an Amsterdam fur trader, who mainly dealt with Russian clients. Rembrandt depicts Ruts in expensive clothing, with high-quality furs, wearing a fur-lined cape. Rembrandt uses the light source to model his head and upper body. Giving the

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<sup>238</sup> De Clippel *et al.* 2006, pp.20-25.

<sup>239</sup> Slive 1995, p.87; The fact that he made and sold prints attributed greatly to his fame. Even as early as 1635 prints by his hand had found their way to Genoa, Italy.

<sup>240</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.61; Runia *et al.* 2019, p.42; Lammertse 2002, p.140-144; Montias 2002, pp.114-115; p.206: Around 1625, Van Uylenburgh may have settled in the former studio of Cornelis van der Voort in the Jodenbreestraat, right opposite of Lastman's studio and next to today's Rembrandthuis. It is around this time, that Rembrandt, active in Lastman's studio as a journeyman, would have met Van Uylenburgh. It would be likely to assume that Lastman and his studio would have visited their new neighbour, especially since Van Uylenburgh was one of the more prominent art merchants in the city within the year. This would make it very likely that Rembrandt managed to have directly been able to study southern Netherlandish art examples.

<sup>241</sup> Lammertse 2002, p.140-141; Runia *et al.* 2019, p.42; Montias 2002, p.121.

<sup>242</sup> Lammertse 2002, pp.140-141; Jordaens describes they're in Utrecht in 1661, therefore Uylenburgh must have brought them with him

<sup>243</sup> Other inspirations for Rembrandt's art in Amsterdam could either have been the art collection of Frederik Hendrik, which Rembrandt must have gotten to know during his time painting the *Passion series* (c.1633-1646) or either the art collections of rich merchants of Amsterdam with their diverse religious and national backgrounds, which Rembrandt could have gotten to know through commissions. (See: McNamara 2015, pp.25-27; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.2, p.91).

<sup>244</sup> Runia *et al.* 2019, p.42; Montias 2002, p.122; This he does first from his studio in Leiden, for by 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1631 Rembrandt still lives in Leiden.

<sup>245</sup> Ekkart 2006, p.39; McNamara 2015, pp.23-25; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.2, pp.3-6.

picture a heightened sense of reality and depth. Clearly showing his skill with *chiaroscuro*.<sup>246</sup> Another portrait was *Portrait of a Man at a Writing Desk* (fig.67, 1631), like the portrait of Ruts this painting also bears the Leiden monogram, although whether or not it was painted in Leiden or Amsterdam is disputed.<sup>247</sup>

The period in Van Uylenburgh's studio was massively productive for Rembrandt, gaining him some lucrative commissions, such as *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (fig.68, 1632). Here Rembrandt sets a portrait setting in a nearly history painterly like setting. Dr. Tulp demonstrates the working of the muscles to his fellow surgeons.<sup>248</sup> The faces of the individual surgeons all contain great detail: the way they're bend over and interacting with or away from the scene gives them all a form of character. Giving the picture a 'lifelikeness', which Rembrandt would be so praised for. The following years Rembrandt would make a variety of portraits with a difference in size and technique. The portraits: *Portrait of Susanna van Collen and her Daughter Anna* (fig.69, c.1632), *Portrait of a Woman* (fig.70, 1632), and *Portrait of Johannes Uytenbogaert* (fig.71, 1633) are great examples of this. Around 1634, Rembrandt's productivity in portraiture seemed to diminish.<sup>249</sup> One could wonder whether this had to do with his own personal ambitions or private life.<sup>250</sup> Around 1635, Govert Flinck (1615-1660), who would have worked with Rembrandt between c.1633-1635, took over Rembrandt's leading position in Van Uylenburgh's studio.<sup>251</sup> After which a period started that's considered the height of his career. According to Rutgers, Rembrandt's way of painting between 1635-1640 was *the fashion of the time* in the Dutch republic.<sup>252</sup>

## 4.2 Van Dyck and van Rijn: Impacting fashion.

It becomes clear that between the period of 1631-1640, these two different artists both propagate their two different *fashions of the time*. Van Dyck amongst the nobility in the United Kingdom and parts of the continent and van Rijn amongst the rich citizens of the Dutch republic. The Dutch republic, however, being a society in which the nobility seemed to have had preference for the style by Van Dyck, yet commissioned an artist like Rembrandt to do the work for them. This seems to suggest there must be more of an underlying connection.

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<sup>246</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.48-49.

<sup>247</sup> Brown disputes whether this painting was also painted in Leiden. It therefore seems that Rembrandt's Leiden monogram, used around 1631, may not be a great indicator of where Rembrandt may have painted the pictures around this time. Rembrandt's use of a monogram may only signify the pride he felt for being from Leiden or the fact that he may have been known as the talent from Leiden. It is still likely, that these portraits were made when Rembrandt had only recently moved to Amsterdam (see: Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.48-49).

<sup>248</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.48-49.

<sup>249</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, p.50.

<sup>250</sup> By 1634 he would have been a member of the Guild of St. Luke, which meant he did not work for someone and therefore may have worked less hard. He also married that year, which may mean his mind simply was otherwise occupied for a while. The commissions by Frederik Hendrik were also still waiting for him, which may mean that Rembrandt now had more time to focus on the most important commissions.

<sup>251</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10; Brown *et al.* 2019, p.55.

<sup>252</sup> Rutgers *et al.* 2014, p.10.

Since clearly Van Dyck impacted Rembrandt's approach to etching, it is interesting to see whether Van Dyck impacted Rembrandt's approach to painting more directly too. Based on what we know, this could have either happened really early in Rembrandt's career or – similar to the etchings – around after 1644. Both Van Dyck and Rembrandt experimented with their way of painting and their constant struggle to depict something as natural as possible. A struggle that was clearly visible at the start of both artists' careers.<sup>253</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Van Dyck and van Rijn: Impacting art at the beginning and the end.

When we look at Van Dyck's early career, it is important to realise that the early Van Dyck took his inspiration from many artists, and that portraiture was an important part of his daily work. Roughly a third of the paintings Van Dyck made during his early years were portraits. Some early portraits by Van Dyck are dated: *The Portrait of a Man* (fig.72, 1618), *Portrait of a Woman* (fig.73, 1618), and *The Portrait of a Sixty-Year-Old Man* (fig.74, 1618). These early portraits all seem to share the same traits. They're portraits set against a dark background, the figures are depicted more statically, and there is a lot of focus on the hands and the faces of the sitters. The style Van Dyck uses in these portraits have more in common with the Netherlandish portrait traditions of Willem Key (1516-1568), Anthonis Mor (1519-1575) and Frans Pourbus the Younger (1569-1622) (figs.75 & 76), who had all been active in Antwerp.<sup>254</sup> Artists like Mor and Key worked in a style rooted in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. They used dignified poses that expressed – in a very straightforward way – the social status of the sitters.<sup>255</sup>

According to Alsteens, the young Van Dyck never fully followed these Netherlandish predecessors in the extreme smooth finish of their works. Only when he picked up and emulated Rubens's manner, something which became especially visible in his works after 1618.<sup>256</sup> If we look at another famous early work by Van Dyck, namely his *Self-Portrait* (fig.77, c.1613-1615). The rough execution is comparable to many of his earlier works, especially *Portrait of a Seventy-Year-Old Man* (fig.78, 1613). This self-portrait's composition – as well as the portrait of the man – is firmly rooted in this Netherlandish portrait tradition and clearly shows Van Dyck's knowledge of these type of portraits.<sup>257</sup> Other examples are *St. Jerome* (fig.79, c.1615-1616) and *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig.80, c.1618). In these paintings we see harsh, dry and roughly applied brushstrokes, which is a clear aspect of the early Van Dyck.<sup>258</sup> In *Christ Carrying the Cross* we are confronted with similar technical peculiarities as in the *St. Jerome*. Van Dyck again uses a broad and rather coarse brushstroke with sinuous outlines, whilst the figures are non-idealised.

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<sup>253</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.37.

<sup>254</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.31; Liedtke 1985, pp.15-17; Van Wamel 2014, pp.49-55; These three artists had in common that they all worked for the Habsburg court and mostly made pictures for Spanish nobles following Spanish tastes.

<sup>255</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.8-9.

<sup>256</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, pp.8-9.

<sup>257</sup> Alsteens *et al.* 2016, p.58.

<sup>258</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, p.96; Based on the technical peculiarities and the clumsiness in the model the works have been dated this early. The *St. Jerome* has even been suggested to be of even earlier date c.1614-1615.

Besides that, it also seems that Van Dyck still has trouble getting the anatomy of the figures completely accurate. The picture shows Van Dyck' interest in rendering the intensity and pathos of a story.<sup>259</sup> The picture showing the clear influence of Rubens makes it likely that Van Dyck either painted it, whilst he was still working as a journeyman for Rubens or it may have been one of his earliest commissions.<sup>260</sup>

Whether the rough execution the young Van Dyck used really had to do with the lack of technique, the lack of desire of making it smoother or simply with the fact that he painted quickly in order to have the highest production. Therefore, the assumption of Alsteens that Van Dyck did not follow these Netherlandish predecessors may only partially be true, for the lack of smoothness may simply have had an economical reason. In order for Van Dyck to paint for quick results. Besides, Van Dyck's clients were not Habsburgian monarchs or nobles, which is why they would have come to a talented artist without an official guild registration or perhaps to the independent painting 'discipuli' of a famous artist.<sup>261</sup>

It is during this early period, that Van Dyck painted his *Apostle series*, which is often dated c.1615-1616.<sup>262</sup> Although, these dates are debated due to the question whether Van Dyck could have produced these works independently.<sup>263</sup> Van Dyck was probably active in *Den Dom van Ceulen* from around 1613.<sup>264</sup> This is most likely true, for not only does Jan Brueghel the Younger confirm that Van Dyck worked there. Jan Moretus II also makes note of an 'Noch eenen naest, onvrij' in the 'byde minnebroeders' in his notes of 1616, when he's the Dean of the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp.<sup>265</sup>

Since, the Dominican nuns rented *Den Dom van Ceulen* from April 1621, which is around the only other time period It is suggested that Van Dyck may have worked there. It is therefore, more likely that he actually rented *Den Dom van Ceulen* very early on.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, pp.149-151; This painting can be connected to the early Van Dyck with certainty. He painted it for the church of the Dominicans in Antwerp and got paid 150 guilders for it by Jan van der Broeck, the chapel master of the Brotherhood of the Rosary. This painting was part of a cycle of fifteen paintings around the *Mysteries of the Rosary*, for which several prominent received commissions. In fact, Van Dyck was paid the same amount as Rubens, only his former teacher Van Balen was paid more, namely 216.

<sup>260</sup> Vergara *et al.* 2013, pp.149-151.

<sup>261</sup> Guild law would not allow Van Dyck to work independently, It is therefore logical to assume he worked as a student of an artist, that allowed him to sell those works.

<sup>262</sup> Lammertse 2002, pp.140-143.

<sup>263</sup> Roland 1983, pp.23-36; Roland 1984, pp.211-233; Lammertse 2002, pp.140-146; Van der Stighelen 1994, pp.16-46.

<sup>264</sup> According to the lawsuits from 1617 and 1618, concerning the division of his grandmother's property Van Dyck was living and working independently from his family since 1615 in the Lange Minderbroederstraat (now the Mutsaert Straat) in Antwerp, which makes it possible he already moved there around 1613.

<sup>265</sup> Kockx 1878, p.10; translation: 'another one, next to, not free'; at the minnebroeders; 'Byde minnebroeders' is the area of the current day Mutsaertstraat, where the *Den Dom van Ceulen* was situated. At that time – not being a master – Van Dyck would have been considered 'onvrij' and would have been active in that area. Therefore, by process of elimination – and based on the fact of the unlikelihood of another artist in that area, in the same situation – this entry by Moretus II will probably refer to Van Dyck. Had any artist been active there, Moretus II would have made note of it and we can connect Van Dyck to that area at that time in the function of an 'onvrij' artist.

<sup>266</sup> Van der Stighelen 1994, pp.26-28; The fact that the rents for *Den Dom van Ceulen* are not mentioned in his father's finances makes that it is likely that Van Dyck would have paid the costs himself. Based on the fact that he would have been under a guardian, this would make sense too.

Of this *Apostle series*, Van Dyck produced two versions early in his career. According to the lawsuit by Guiliam Verhagen, he had commissioned one series as early as 1615-1616. However, he received the commission around 1621. According to several depositions by other artists, the series Verhagen owned was in fact not the original commissioned series, this series was sold to someone else.<sup>267</sup>

Lammertse mentions the deposition by Jacob Jordaens of July the 11<sup>th</sup> 1661, in which he testifies to have seen the originals in the possession of Hendrick van Uylenburgh around 1622, having seen them again in Utrecht 1661. Abraham Snellinck's deposition in 1660 adds that a person known as 'Bontemuts' exported them some 36 years earlier. The fact that we have two somewhat different statements is not illogical for it must be taken into account that these statements were made roughly 40 years after the fact. In a time when not everybody was aware of their actual birthyear.<sup>268</sup> Still it seems to underline the fact that, as early as 1621, there were two *Apostle series* by 'Van Dyck' on the market. An original version, probably owned by Hendrick van Uylenburgh – who may have been the same man as 'Bontemuts' – and a copied version owned by Verhagen.<sup>269</sup>

It is this *Apostle series* that may have been very important for the early artistic development of Rembrandt's career. It is one of the few artworks that we can with potential certainty place in Amsterdam at the same time of Rembrandt, as well as, in connection to someone Rembrandt would have known intimately.

It is unfortunate, that the original series owned by van Uylenburgh is probably not known to us, which means we can only speculate about its roughness and coarseness. However, this would make sense. Due to the lawsuits, it can be taken for granted that Van Dyck did paint this early series just before or at the early start of his collaboration with Rubens, and that this series made its way to the Netherlands.

This series was probably an early attempt of Van Dyck to have a hand at Rubens's figures, but like more works at the time deviated from this great master. Clearly seen in Van Dyck's *Head of a Young Man* (fig.81, c.1617-1618) and in his *St. Jerome* (c.1615-1616), which was one of Van Dyck's earliest large-format religious compositions. In his *St. Jerome* Van Dyck clearly takes the body pose of the figure from Rubens, but unlike Rubens decides not to idealise the Saint with a heroic body. This naturalistic approach seen with Van Dyck is more comparable to

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<sup>267</sup> Van der Stighelen 1994, p.46: document 23, SAA, N.4265, fol 164r (5 September 1660); Lammertse 2002, p.140; Verhagen's lawsuit was about the question of their originality and he was convinced they were the originals. However, written testimony by other artists already disputed this, amongst others by Jacob Jordaens and Justus van Egmont.

<sup>268</sup> Lammertse 2002, pp.140-141; Roland 1983, pp.26-30; According to Margaret Roland, the originality of Verhagen's series can be debated. She also wonders about the exact number of *Apostle* paintings Van Dyck may have made and whether some of them may have been copies of later date. However, based on the number of *Apostle* series discussed comparing those specific artworks stylistically becomes difficult. The Julius Böhler collection mentioned is simply a conglomerate of different parts of *Apostle* series.

<sup>269</sup> Lammertse 2002, pp.140-141.

Caravaggio.<sup>270</sup> Also, Van Dyck's more rough and open early style of painting creates a sketchier impression with an apparently more spontaneous use of brushwork, something which also reminds of Frans Hals. In his early paintings he also uses earthier colours to depict his figures.<sup>271</sup> According to Van der Stighelen, Van Dyck's in his early days is not known for using set templates, but fully experiments with his options. His early focus is mainly on the use of paint. Paint in itself is an important factor to Van Dyck, using it to add to the level of expression. He uses the paint in its materiality and he does not shy away from clearly showing his brush work.<sup>272</sup> It is only after his more prominent contacts with Rubens, that Van Dyck starts to emulate Rubens' technique.<sup>273</sup> It is in this 'pre-Rubens' style comparable to the *St. Jerome* that we must place this original *Apostle series* that van Uylenburgh acquired. An early Van Dyck style that is clearly rougher than his later style in the United Kingdom, a style in which he seems to start experiment with Venetian art.<sup>274</sup> According to Schnackenburg, it is this early rough style by Van Dyck, which even motivated fellow Flemish artist Jordaens to use more *impasto* in his works and was an element in his works around the 1620s, that clearly also inspired Lievens.<sup>275</sup> It is this aspect of Van Dyck's early style, which must be taken into consideration when we think about Rembrandt's style. For it seems that Rembrandt like Van Dyck a decade before him starts to concern himself with the use of paint and how it affects the depiction of a scene.<sup>276</sup> Like Van Dyck, Rembrandt also focusses his studies on exactly the same artists: Titian and Caravaggio. Clearly taking similar inspirations Van Dyck took from their art.

For van der Wetering, Rembrandt's development of the use of paint becomes clear in the comparison between Rembrandt's *History Piece* (1626), which is more in the tradition of Lastman and his *Judas Repentant, returning the pieces of Silver* (fig.82, 1629). Van der Wetering suggest that looking at the pictures is literally a difference of 'night and day' in regards to the change in style. According to van der Wetering, it is a clear example of Rembrandt's tremendous revolution in the both the use of colour, the suggestion of light and space, and the drastic change in the way paint is used. It shows clearly Rembrandt's intense thought process around the art of painting.<sup>277</sup> In the *Judas* Rembrandt starts to incorporate the use of colour to depict light and space, becoming more aware of how the use of paint and colour attributes to the pictorial effect.<sup>278</sup> Rembrandt's *Judas Repentant* clearly shows the slow familiarity of the artist with Italian artists like Caravaggio.<sup>279</sup> Besides, Rembrandt seems to concern himself with the exact conundrum and experiments with how to best get the desired effects out of paints as Van Dyck. Is this

<sup>270</sup> Schnackenburg *et al.* 2002, pp.108-109; p.342.

<sup>271</sup> [http://www.liechtensteincollections.at/en/pages/artbase\\_main.asp?module=browse&action=m\\_work&lang=en&sid=87294&oid=W-1472004121953420196](http://www.liechtensteincollections.at/en/pages/artbase_main.asp?module=browse&action=m_work&lang=en&sid=87294&oid=W-1472004121953420196) (28.04.2021); Schnackenburg *et al.* 2002, pp.108-109.

<sup>272</sup> Van der Stighelen 1998, p.14.

<sup>273</sup> Van der Stighelen 1998, pp.14-15.

<sup>274</sup> Schnackenburg *et al.* 2002, pp.110-111.

<sup>275</sup> Schnackenburg *et al.* 2002, pp.110-111.

<sup>276</sup> Brown *et al.* 2019, pp.17-18.

<sup>277</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.223-227.

<sup>278</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.223-227; *Corpus Rembrandt I*, A15 *Judas Repentant*, pp.177-181.

<sup>279</sup> Something Rembrandt may have seen with the Utrechtse Caravaggisti and Lievens.

coincidence or is this the skill of an artistic talent recognizing and studying the struggles of a renowned southern-Netherlandish colleague?

One can conclude that it was during this early period that Rembrandt laid the strongest foundations for his art, but one could argue that this may in fact have been partially inspired by non-other than Van Dyck. Around this time Rembrandt would start working closely with the clearly Van Dyck-interested Lievens, which may have made them both study the same subjects and artist. Where for Lievens this led to leaving his home in Holland to study art in Antwerp, for Rembrandt this led more directly to the development of his own way of painting.<sup>280</sup> It is not unlikely that Rembrandt's rough way of painting may find its origin in the rough style Van Dyck used, as it impacted both Jordaens and Lievens too.<sup>281</sup>

Over the years Rembrandt's way of painting would develop towards his late style of the *manière grossière*, an even rougher way of painting. A style that got rougher and coarser as he got older, in which he started making more use of scratching with his brush and applying paint with a palette knife. Making use of this clearly thicker way of applying paint, he would also apply use of loose brushwork, which reminds of the manner of Titian, Hals, and Van Dyck.<sup>282</sup> It was this style with which Rembrandt reached the heights of his career between 1631-1640, dictating the *fashion of the time*.

This style with its use of thick *impasto* is, however, a clear contrast to the smooth style by Van Dyck used at the court of the United Kingdom. The style, which became the *fashion of the time* in the Dutch republic by the 1640s.<sup>283</sup> Probably as a consequence, Rembrandt's appeal to the market seems to change. Where other artists adapt to that situation, Rembrandt seemed to hold on more strongly to his own way. Something that would lead to critique later in his life and after his death.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Vlieghe *et al.* 2001, pp.296-297.

<sup>281</sup> Schnackenburg *et al.* 2002, pp.110-111.

<sup>282</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, pp.133-134.

<sup>283</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.104.

<sup>284</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.10-12.

#### 4.2.2. Van Dyck and van Rijn: Overlap in fashions.

Looking at these two fashions of the time, there seems to be a level of overlap. Both Van Dyck and Rembrandt studied similar challenges within the artistic field. Early in their careers they were both busy with the effects of light, depicting realism, and just overall finding their way in the painterly medium. Their artistic examples, especially within the Italian masters, seem nearly the same. Both share a great interest in Titian, but also study the chiaroscuro of Caravaggio.

If we assume that Rembrandt did in fact have the possibility to study the *Apostle series* by Van Dyck and that around 1625-1630, he studied the 'pre-Rubens' by Van Dyck together with Lievens, then his *fashion of the time* and the style he used is fundamentally connected to the studies of Van Dyck. In the case of Van Dyck, his studies with Rubens would greatly influence his later style and the *fashion of the time*. In a way this would be intriguing, for it would mean that we have two essentially different *fashions of the time*, which in that case would share the same origin, namely the 'pre-Rubens' Van Dyck. The *fashion of the time* developed by Van Dyck would, under influence by Rubens, transform into a style with a smooth finish popular amongst the upper class, whilst the *fashion of the time* by Rembrandt, developed from rough elements seen in Van Dyck's art, would lead to a *fashion of the time* popular amongst the citizenry of the Dutch republic for at least a decade.

For unfortunately for Rembrandt, due to changes within society. Rembrandt's *fashion of the time* would be replaced by that of Van Dyck.

## 5. Van Rijn: Changing fashion.

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This change in *fashion of the time* in the Dutch republic happened gradually and it took several years, but was already ongoing during the late 1630s. Art had already been a growth industry in the Low Countries before the seventeenth century. Back then the focus of the market had always been concentrated on the south, in Flanders and Brabant.<sup>285</sup> The development of the art market in the Dutch republic started to change during the start of the war with Spain in 1581.<sup>286</sup> Instead of commissions by the nobility and clergy, commissions in the Dutch republic would mainly come from the rich merchants.<sup>287</sup> Their tastes dictating the art market. Around the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century the 'upper class' or elite culture in the Dutch republic starts to develop, taking its flight after the treaty of Münster in 1648.<sup>288</sup> After this peace, the social and cultural elite in the Dutch republic grew even wealthier.<sup>289</sup> Peace had made an end to the Spanish-Dutch conflict, which had had a great impact on the maritime trade for decades.<sup>290</sup> It was also the first time in nearly eighty-years that the 'upper class' of the Dutch republic were able to focus on other things than spending their money on winning wars.<sup>291</sup>

According to Franits, it was their new accumulation of wealth that led to a desire for a new lifestyle among the rich. Being as wealthy as they were, they started to model themselves to a lifestyle of the aristocracy. With this 'aristocratization' of the bourgeoisie came the adaptation of particular codes of manners, gestures, dress, and bodily carriage, which led to a new *fashion of the time*, namely a more aristocratic one.<sup>292</sup> In this chapter we will discuss the changes within the Dutch republic, like the aristocratization and the changing market. In order to figure out how this affected Rembrandt and his circle.

### 5.1 Van Rijn and the aristocratization of the bourgeoisie.

The 'aristocratization' of the bourgeoisie in the Dutch republic clearly led to the popularity of the *noble fashion* of Van Dyck, which impacted the type of art demanded in the market. Van Dyck's *noble fashion* must have been known amongst the few aristocratic families that lived in the Dutch republic. The known Netherlandish aristocracy that existed was mainly led by the Orange-Nassau family, which at the time was heavily influenced by the British court. Willem II (1626-1650) & Willem III (1650-1702) were both married to Stuarts.<sup>293</sup> It is most likely that it was Willem II's wife, Mary Henrietta Stuart (1631-1660), Dowager Princess of Orange and co-regent to her

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<sup>285</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-238.

<sup>286</sup> Montias 2002, pp.43-47.

<sup>287</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-239.

<sup>288</sup> Franits 2000, pp.296-298; Israel 1995, pp.610-611.

<sup>289</sup> Franits 2000, pp.295-297.

<sup>290</sup> Franits 2000, p.297.

<sup>291</sup> Franits 2000, p.295.

<sup>292</sup> Franits 2000, p.297.

<sup>293</sup> Huet 1882, pp.300-301; Franits 1995, pp.396-398.

son from 1650, that would dictate fashion amongst the aristocratic minded bourgeoisie. It is likely that partially through her influence this *noble fashion* by Van Dyck made its way into the Dutch republic.<sup>294</sup> Besides the already existing aristocrats in the Dutch republic spreading Van Dyck's fashion. There were also artists returning from abroad, who had studied directly with Van Dyck: Adriaen Hanneman (c.1604-1671), Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen (1593-1661), and Jan Lievens.<sup>295</sup>

It is clear that Lievens was not the only artist in Rembrandt's circle that got directly impacted by Van Dyck's art. Several of Rembrandt's students, who grew out to great fame of their own, implemented this fashion change into their works. The two most successful artists that did this were Flinck and Bol.<sup>296</sup>

#### 5.1.1 Flinck and Bol: Adaptation and fruition

Flinck and Bol both had a direct connection with the artist Rembrandt. Flinck came into contact with Rembrandt when he was already a well-trained painter. His education had started with Lambert Jacobsz in Leeuwarden and from there he had moved to the studio of Van Uylenburgh.<sup>297</sup> According to Dickey, Jacobsz. and Van Uylenburgh had their own business dealings and surely it was due to that and potentially their shared religion that Flinck made his way to Amsterdam.<sup>298</sup> It was in Amsterdam that Flinck got in direct contact with Rembrandt, who at the time still ran Van Uylenburgh's studio. The reason for this must have been the intention of Jacobsz. and Van Uylenburgh to have Flinck take over the studio, with Rembrandt's upcoming independence.<sup>299</sup>

The artist Bol was around twenty years old, when he joined Rembrandt's independent workshop. Like Flinck, Bol had already had his basic education and joined Rembrandt as a discipuli.<sup>300</sup> Originating from Dordrecht, Bol would be one of many pupils of Rembrandt originating from that area, like van Hoogstraten, Maes, and de Gelder.<sup>301</sup> In their art Flinck and Bol seemed to step away from Rembrandt's style. Their 'style change' was described as early as Houbraken. He named the style 'helder schilderen' – *the clear style* – which is described as going back to traditional values, values Rembrandt had rejected. It was a combination of combining grace, elegance, and beauty, with a level of realism. A style going back to more conventional ways of

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<sup>294</sup> Huet 1882, pp.300-301; <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1650-1659/> (30.03.2021); <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1630-1639/> (30.03.2021); Franits 1995, pp.396-398.

<sup>295</sup> Lootsma 2007, pp.224-225; Hanneman had already returned in 1638 and his style was so greatly influenced by Van Dyck that it is presumed he worked in Van Dyck's studio in the United Kingdom, whilst Lievens had studied Van Dyck both in Antwerp and London, implementing elements of it in his own work.

<sup>296</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, pp.61-68.

<sup>297</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10.

<sup>298</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10.

<sup>299</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10.

<sup>300</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10; Strauss *et al.* 1979, p.141.

<sup>301</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10.

arranging, drawing, proportion, lighting, and colouring, based on accepted ideals on how to depict a clearly readable narrative, in accordance with the rules of decorum. Something which in itself was not new, it was exactly what Van Dyck had done.<sup>302</sup> These were the aspects of his art which aristocrats and therefore most of the Dutch elite during the second half of the seventeenth-century desired.<sup>303</sup>

By the early 1640s Flinck was already a household name, leading to his own commissions for the Kloveniersdoelen.<sup>304</sup> By the 1650s, Bol and Flinck were the more renowned artists in Amsterdam. For they received the most prestigious public commission of painting the furnishings for the new Town Hall, a project for which the more famous artists were invited. Flinck had been commissioned the most prestigious project, but his early death led to other artists like Rembrandt, Jordaens, and Lievens to fill in a part of the now open commission.<sup>305</sup> By then it was clear that the *fashion of the time* was clearly dominated by the *noble fashion* and Rembrandt's style was not the dictating fashion anymore. Flinck and Bol's success is often ascribed to their willingness to adapt to the *fashion of the time* and their willingness to step away from Rembrandt's style. Although, this willingness to step away from Rembrandt's style was often later used as a critique on both these artists. According to Dickey, Flinck and Bol were in fact able to adapt to the *fashion of the time* and therefore became very successful artists. However, she defends that the influence of Rembrandt's manner on their works remained apparent throughout their careers in their approach to everything. Rembrandt's impact on their work went all the way from their paints, both in substance and application, to their choice of iconographie in their paintings.<sup>306</sup> Therefore, to Dickey it would not be a question of them rejecting Rembrandt's teachings, but more on how they implemented them into the *fashion of the time*.<sup>307</sup> Yet this may also be an argument to suggest that these two fashions had more in common than is first perceived. Still, it effectively meant that following the *noble fashion* introduced by Van Dyck increased an artist's changes on the market of the Dutch republic after the 1640s.

## 5.2 Van Rijn: Working in the changing market

Besides the aristocratization of the upper class after the 1640s. There had already been a massive surge in migration to the Dutch republic. This had led to cities growing rapidly, which increased the growth of the already growing economy. Between 1582-1609, the population in Leiden tripled due to a massive increase in immigrant from Flanders connected to the trade in textiles. The population in Amsterdam grew from 30.000 to 70.000 in roughly the same number of

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<sup>302</sup> Schama 2019, pp.435-437; Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.29.

<sup>303</sup> Heesakkers 2008, pp.80-81.

<sup>304</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.8-10.

<sup>305</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.14-15.

<sup>306</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.10; pp.21-23.

<sup>307</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, pp.10.

years.<sup>308</sup> This massive increase of often skilled labourers led to great industrious progress for the Dutch republic. This can be seen in a drastic increase in the number of professional artists between 1600-1650, nearly quadrupling in certain cities within this timespan.<sup>309</sup> This growth also had its effect on the art market of the Dutch republic, which expanded due to all the different traders and their connections.<sup>310</sup>

This expanding market also widened the range of product on offer, leading to different genres within art.<sup>311</sup> The increase of artists also led to a high production of artworks. Making owning art far more common, but also creating a drastic difference in quality and price. Artworks could be sold as 'cheaply' as half a guilder, which made it an affordable commodity for a large part of the population. Instead of art being only something for the cultural elite, clergy, or nobility, it became a very common item within the regular household.<sup>312</sup>

Within this market the reason to produce art constantly changed. Instead of producing just on commission. Artists started producing art for an unknown audience often on speculation, simply producing for an open market. In order to make this successful it was a necessity to produce their paintings with consideration for the tastes and expectations of their potential clientele.<sup>313</sup> Producing art for the market was clearly an important issue for artist, even being discussed in contemporary art theory. Franciscus Junius (1589-1677), Philips Angel (c.1618-1664?), and Samuel van Hoogstraten all mentioned the importance of thinking of clientele when producing artworks.<sup>314</sup> For van Hoogstraten, the accumulation of wealth was even part of his theory in form of the 'three fruits of art', the *lucris causa*, or the pursuit of money. Van Hoogstraten believed that an artist must not just enjoy his art and strive for fame, but he must seek substantial reward for the work. Pursuing a form of financial compensation for art therefore was not something negative, but a positive requirement.<sup>315</sup>

This shows that the effect of the open market made artists far less rigid in their choice of subjects. They had more freedom to simply produce works that sold, that followed the taste of the public, instead of just working within their speciality as long as financial gain was the aim.<sup>316</sup>

According to art historic literature, it seems that after the 1640s Rembrandt's production seemed to change. The number of attributed artworks drops. In art historic literature this is often

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<sup>308</sup> Prak 2012, p.37.

<sup>309</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-238.

<sup>310</sup> Slive 1953, pp.217-220; Rasterhoff 2016, p.262; Brusati 1995, pp.2-5.

<sup>311</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-239.

<sup>312</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-239.

<sup>313</sup> Prak 2003, pp.237-239.

<sup>314</sup> Franits 2000, pp.295-296.

<sup>315</sup> Slive 1953, pp.217-220; Rasterhoff 2016, p.262; Brusati 1995, pp.2-5; Weststeijn 2013 *et al.*, pp.42-43; Israel 1995, pp.350-351.

<sup>316</sup> Prak 2003, pp.249-251; Something which makes Roscam Abbing's theory that Rembrandt produced art on leather wallpaper, or gold leather ('Goudleer').

connected to a drop in popularity, often supported with the idea that the *Night Watch* was ill received, but this is known to be false.<sup>317</sup>

Instead, after the 1640s, a great many of artists in Amsterdam responded to the shift in prevailing taste among the elite, adapting to the changes on the market. The evocative shadows and earthly palette, often used by Rembrandt, got replaced with a 'clear' style, with bright colours and graceful forms. A change which had to do with a change in lifestyle of these elite, then with a change of ideology.<sup>318</sup> According to Dickey, Rembrandt stayed away from this change in fashion, but managed to sell his works to the connoisseurs that appreciated the artistic subtleties of his art and the emotional content.<sup>319</sup>

Although these changes could certainly have impacted Rembrandt's production negatively, it does not explain why Rembrandt seems unable to or uninterested to adapt to this, or change his approach to increase his commission or production.

### 5.2.1 Van Rijn: Too rich and then too poor?

In 2009 Bok and van der Molen looked at Rembrandt's production. They compared the amount of produced art by Backer, Bol, Rembrandt, and Flinck in squared centimetres. Their numbers were based on the attributions done by art historians placing these findings in several graphs.<sup>320</sup> Their findings show that Rembrandt's production and that of the other artists was roughly the same between 1641-1645. All these artists roughly produced the same amount of cm<sup>2</sup>, which would suggest Rembrandt's production between 1636 to 1646 is normal, although lower than his time with van Uylenburgh.<sup>321</sup>

Between 1641-1650 we see that Rembrandt's overall output of history paintings roughly stays the same, whilst his portrait production drops drastically in the period 1646-1650, which leaves Rembrandt's overall production far lower than his contemporaries. Since Rembrandt's drop in output does not lead to an increase in production for the other artists, suggests that they all were working at maximum production capacity, except for Rembrandt.<sup>322</sup> Backer, Flinck, and Bol were popular painters too and we can see that their increase in history painting is compensated with a decrease output of portrait paintings and vice versa, which would suggest that they simply could

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<sup>317</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, p.324; Bok *et al.* 2009, pp.62-65; It is clear that after the *Night Watch* Rembrandt's reputation was far from damaged or his artistic style done for. The work was commissioned, accepted, and paid for. Rembrandt remained an artist of great reputation and the idea that his reputation had dropped drastically after 1642 is simply not the case. Also, the notion that the relationship or affair with Dircks would have cost him commissions seems difficult to prove. His private life was probably only known to his private circle. Besides, the moment his relationship crashes in 1648/1649 his production starts increasing again.

<sup>318</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.7.

<sup>319</sup> Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.7.

<sup>320</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, pp.61-68; see their figures 1,2,3,4, and 5.

<sup>321</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; around 1633 Flinck worked for Rembrandt at van Uylenburgh's studio; Flinck's production between 1636-1640 being higher would be because of him running van Uylenburgh's studio; Document/Remdoc/e4545; Rembrandt sells two paintings to Frederik Hendrik for 2400 guilders in 1646. Thus, we must assume that the amount of cm<sup>2</sup> does not directly equal the height of income. Therefore, Rembrandt's artistic reputation may have been more lucrative than that of the others between 1635-1645. Some paintings may have even sold for over a 1000-guilders.

<sup>322</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2,3, and 4.

not produce much more around that time.<sup>323</sup> Rembrandt's overall production was lowest between 1646-1650 with 1649 being the absolute low point, both in painting and etching. Not just being low, but being far lower than his contemporary colleagues.<sup>324</sup> In art historic literature, there is simply no satisfactory explanation for this drastic drop in Rembrandt's production.<sup>325</sup> Surely, he must have started to suffer from his lack of adaptation?

Van der Wetering suggests that the reason for Rembrandt's decline in painting production may simply be due to the fact that Rembrandt did not need the income. He bases the assumption that Rembrandt had a lower production on the Rembrandt's research group's attributions to Rembrandt of c.30 portraits in this time period. According to their findings: Rembrandt hardly painted any portraits and there was little to no stylistic development in his works around this time. It is their view that Rembrandt may simply have been occupied with fundamental aspects of the art of painting. Exploring fundamental artistic questions, like the suggestion of motion in history painting.<sup>326</sup> However, these suggestions are rather unsatisfactory and incomplete. For it is known that by 1649, Rembrandt's overall income is not enough to cover his costs anymore, which would lead or attributed to his insolvency of 1656.<sup>327</sup>

By 1649 Rembrandt had only paid 6000 guilders of the total amount for his house, which must have amounted to higher costs, due to the 5% interest rate and the same year he defaults on all payments, leading to a demand of payments by Thijsz. the official houseowner.<sup>328</sup>

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1653, Thijsz. demands Rembrandt's tax payments in order to actually transfer the '*quijtscheldinge*'. This document does not mention the exact amount Rembrandt has to pay.<sup>329</sup> However, Thijsz. demands of Rembrandt to pay his share of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> penny

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<sup>323</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2.

<sup>324</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2,3, and 4; These findings are based on the research of the Rembrandt research group, and are based on what is considered canon Rembrandt paintings in contemporary time. According to Bok and van der Molen, Rembrandt produces only 50.000 cm<sup>2</sup> of known portraits between 1646-1650, whilst the others produce between 150.000-350.000 cm<sup>2</sup> in portrait paintings. Yet the amount of cm<sup>2</sup> in history paintings produced roughly stays the same. Rembrandt's total production does not exceed c.70.000 cm<sup>2</sup> in this period, whilst the others range from c.210.000-425.000 cm<sup>2</sup> which is at least three times more.

<sup>325</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4570; Zoet in his work praises Rembrandt for his excellent brush work; Document/Remdoc/e4564; Van Hoogstraten praises Rembrandt's realism in a play.

<sup>326</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, p.324.

<sup>327</sup> Giving an exact insight into Rembrandt's finances has always been a challenge. The archival information that exists is only limited and Rembrandt's private affairs have hardly been registered. It is only known that Rembrandt must have been fairly wealthy, but his exact wealth is unknown. What we do know is a part of his debts and costs from after 1649.

<sup>328</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.23; Bosman 2019, pp.24-25; This Thijsz. is still registered as the owner, although according to the contract of 1639 Rembrandt should have received the '*quijtscheldinge*' or deed of the house, after having paid the total amount of 3250 guilders. According to Bosman, Rembrandt never received this document, which meant that Thijsz. was first of all direct owner of the house, but secondly if anything would happen to the house it would be at his risk. However, if Rembrandt were to go bankrupt the house would not be part of any form of debt settlement, for Rembrandt would not be the owner.

<sup>329</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, pp.61-68; see their figures 1,2,3,4, and 5; Document/Remdoc.e4631; Document/Remdoc/e4640;

Document/Remdoc.e4642; Document/Remdoc.e4647; Somehow Thijsz. and Rembrandt decided not to transfer the deed back in 1639, which suggest that perhaps Rembrandt did not pay according to the contract and still managed to organise a solution or perhaps it simply was financially more viable for both parties. Rembrandt's profession was perhaps financially too varied, be it that his production had been good. The reason is simply unknown. Why Thijsz. suddenly decided payment was due is also unknown. However, here there is some room for speculation. Around February, Rembrandt's neighbour Daniel Pinto starts with costly renovations from which becomes clear that they – Pinto and Rembrandt – share the costs. It may be that Thijsz. wanted to make sure that if something happened to the house it would not be his problem.

tax, which based on other document would amount to 243:15:0.<sup>330</sup> The statement of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January shows that Rembrandt would take action within three to four days.<sup>331</sup> It seems that Rembrandt manages to pay the first half of these taxes, because Thijsz. has the bill of debt written down on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February.<sup>332</sup> Rembrandt then officially owes 7000 guilders for the house, 1137:11:0 in interest rate, 40<sup>th</sup> penny tax of 162:10:0, 80<sup>th</sup> penny tax of 81:5:0, and some more costs and taxes amounting to a total of 8470:16:0.<sup>333</sup> Three days later, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, Rembrandt gets the official notification by the notary that payment of the 8470:16:0 is required.<sup>334</sup>

Based on all this – the costs, the contracts, the 5% interest rates, and the taxes – it seems that Rembrandt must have had to pay over 1000 guilders a year between 1639-1649. Slowly paying off an amount of 3250 guilders in ten years. This completely undermines van der Wetering's argument that Rembrandt had the financial capacity to produce less, for paying a 1000+ guilders a year was not enough to pay off his house within the set years.

Naturally, Rembrandt ran a relatively large studio, which was as an extra source of income.<sup>335</sup> It is assumed that young pupils produced little to no saleable works, due to their inexperience and thus mainly had the chance to practice and assist. However, the journeymen would actually produce sellable works in his style.<sup>336</sup> According to Sandrart, Rembrandt roughly made 2000 up to 2500 guilders from selling the works of his students. Even if this amount is exaggerated, just 25-50% of that amount would have been a fortune. Knowing he also charged 100 guilders for tuition, his income must have been substantial in these years. According to Prak, Hermanus Verbeeck – a Guild member and an individual of mid-income – would have had a yearly income of 400 guilders.<sup>337</sup>

In the seventeenth century it was also common to have shares in trading enterprises or have money out on loan.<sup>338</sup> The archives of the VOC (East India Trading Company), WIC (West Indian Trading Company), the trade in the Levant, and the banks of Amsterdam are online accessible. Interestingly enough, where names of Rembrandt's contemporaries like Six, Tulp, Banning-Cocq,

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<sup>330</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4623; Document/Remdoc/e4624: the second summoning states that Rembrandt has spoken to the required notary, and will pay his part; 243 guilders, 15 stuivers, and 0 pennies; The document clearly states that these payments are required for the transfer of the deed, not for anything else, nor does it suggest full payment of the debt is due.

<sup>331</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4623; Document/Remdoc/e4624; clearly the fact that these documents are suddenly being prepared shows that it is expected that Rembrandt will have to pay of this debt soon. However, legally this claim has not been put before him on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January.

<sup>332</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4628.

<sup>333</sup> Document/Remdoc/e4628.

<sup>334</sup> Document/Remdoc.e4629.

<sup>335</sup> All that worked in Rembrandt's studio had to work and produce in his painting style, which was part of the teachings.

<sup>336</sup> Slive 1995, p.98; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.2, p.55; Corpus Rembrandt, vol.3, pp.12-13; The practise of selling student's works was not unusual. According to the rules of the Guild, an apprentice was not allowed to sign his work and whatever he produced belonged to his master.

<sup>337</sup> Slive 1995, p.98; The 2000-2500 guilders income from sales of student paintings is not confirmable, based on what we know of Rembrandt's finances. However, we do not know whether these prices did also include living with the artist, and eventual other costs; Prak 2012, pp.158-161; Frijhoff *et al.* 2000, pp.22-24; Israel 1995, pp.351-352.

<sup>338</sup> Israel 1995, pp.347-350.

and others come up, Rembrandt's name is never mentioned. Therefore, if Rembrandt owned a fortune around 1642, where did he keep it? You would expect to have his name in an official financial document somewhere. Assuming he was rich enough can therefore only be based on what we actually know. Therefore, we would have to focus solely on his production.

Rembrandt's production of c.30 paintings and any remaining studio works did not cover all the costs of that decade, for Rembrandt did not manage to pay off his house.<sup>339</sup> One could even argue, that unless Rembrandt had a financially lucrative enterprise next to his art, he would not have been able to afford working less. It is unlikely based on all the costs that Rembrandt made less than 10.000 guilders in those ten years. For he did make payments on his 'mortgage' and he paid his taxes till 1649. Which does suggest that the change of *fashion of the time* caught up with Rembrandt's production.

### 5.3 Van Rijn: The drop in production

Rembrandt must clearly have suffered from the change in *fashion of the time*, which may have led to exploring different art forms. A theory by Roscam Abbing seems to suggest that Rembrandt may in fact have worked on interior decorations. Although, this work did not keep Rembrandt from going insolvent – if indeed he did this work – it would be a potential explanation for the limited number of works attributed to him during this time.<sup>340</sup> Another option for Rembrandt's production drop would simply be that works were sold abroad and lost over the years, for assuming we have located all his works is too ambitious.<sup>341</sup>

#### 5.3.1 Van Rijn: Working on interiors

Roscam Abbing bases his theory on a passage by Samuel van Hoogstraten in his *Vryheit der Vereenighde Nederlanden* (1648), he describes a palace about which he mentions the following: 'Daar Rembrandt toont fijn konft, hoe vleefigh koloreert dien lachenden Syleen, op gout-gront geamalieert'.<sup>342</sup> In this passage van Hoogstraten mentions a painted Silenus by Rembrandt as decoration on a 'Tapeet' carrier. According to Roscam Abbing, this could be interpreted as Rembrandt having actually produced art on leather wallpaper or gold leather ('Goudleer').<sup>343</sup> According to Roscam Abbing, it is the description by Filippo Baldinucci written around 1687 on Rembrandt's life that seems to support this. He mentions Rembrandt made decorations for an interior of an Amsterdam merchant and magister, which according to Roscam Abbing might actually be referring to gold leather instead of paintings.<sup>344</sup> Based on van Hoogstraten, Roscam

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<sup>339</sup> Since Rembrandt contributed in a ransom of 1200 guilders in 1642, this would mean he must have made a fortune in those years.

<sup>340</sup> The question remains whether we know all the works Rembrandt produced during that time or that we've made miss attributions.

<sup>341</sup> The art dealer and art historian Jan Six XI identified a Rembrandt as lately as 2018, of which experts like van der Wetering – who is the leader of the Rembrandt Research Group – were at first not convinced.

<sup>342</sup> Van Hoogstraten 1648; Roscam Abbing 1999, pp.26-30; translated title: 'Freedom of the United Netherlands'; translation: 'There Rembrandt shows his art, how flesh coloured is his laughing Silenus, on gold-base enamel.'

<sup>343</sup> Roscam Abbing 1999, pp.26-42.

<sup>344</sup> Ford 2014, pp.49-62; Roscam Abbing 1999, pp.30-42.

Abbing suggests that Rembrandt must have made a Silenus scene for a potential palace, but he does not go into further detail.

The chance exists that van Hoogstraten actually described a real palace with some artistic freedom. For he mentions a piece of artillery that would have been placed in front of the door of the newly opened hall of peace.<sup>345</sup> This is something specifically added to the bottom of the page, which makes no sense to add in a purely allegorical description. Therefore, one could assume he means a factual palace. One of the most likely 'candidates' would be '*Het Hof van Rijswijk*' or better known '*Het Huis te Nieuburch*' one of the palaces Frederik Hendrik had let build for him and which he left to Amalia von Solms after his death.<sup>346</sup> After his death, she decided not to live there and rented out the place several times. However, in 1697 it was here that the '*Vrede van Rijswijk*' got signed, a moment in history where the great powers of Europe – mentioned in van Hoogstraten's *Vryheit* – did again come together to discuss peace. Besides, this rather 'poetic coincidence' there is more.

Since the palace does no longer exist, the only thing we have are decorations from 1697 in etchings (fig.83 & 84, 1797). When we look at the décor the walls seem to be decorated with elaborate leaf patterns, with putti and also more satyr and centaur like figures. Suggesting that this palace may in fact have had these golden leather decorations as described by van Hoogstraten. Could these be the decorations van Hoogstraten describes?

Whether or not this is so, Rembrandt could have been requested by Frederik Hendrik to produce more than the *Passion series* and in fact could have started producing directly for the interior of the palace of the prince. It is clear from the etchings of the great hall (fig.85), that the decoration had hardly changed by 1697. Above the fire place there still hangs a double *portrait of Frederik Hendrik and Amalia von Solms*, which reminds of the work by Gerrit van Honthorst (fig.86, c.1637-1638) formerly in the possession of Constantijn Huygens. The fact that van Hoogstraten mentions Rembrandt and Silenus, a subject we do not know from Rembrandt. It could well be possible that we miss vital works from this period, perhaps even on a media we would not directly associate with Rembrandt. With his text van Hoogstraten could actually be presenting us with a part of Rembrandt we simply never knew. A versatility that goes beyond etchings and painting on canvas. It would be an explanation for him diminishing his production during the 1640s, dropping portraiture after 1645 altogether and with the death of Frederik Hendrik in 1647 it could give a reason for Rembrandt's lack of money around 1649. For this would then have been the death of his greatest patron, instead of just another rich man.

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<sup>345</sup> Van Hoogstraten 1648.

<sup>346</sup> Poelhekke 1978, pp.141-150.

### 5.3.2 Van Rijn: Working for the international market

Besides producing art work for people with local interests, there was also a thriving international market Rembrandt made use of. International merchants bought art and transported them across the world. Artworks as cargo got transported over land and over sea, the precious cargo sometimes lost in the process.<sup>347</sup>

Through the medium of Flemish merchants there was a direct connection between the trade in art from the Flemish, Dutch and Italian markets.<sup>348</sup> During the sixteenth- and seventeenth century merchants from Antwerp changed their distribution strategies in order to accommodate a successful business. Major Antwerpian firms like, Van Immerseel-de Fourmestraux, Musson-Fourmenois, and Forchondt, developed networks of agents in key foreign trading cities across Europe.<sup>349</sup> Their goal was to distribute art from the Antwerpian market across the entire Habsburgian empire. They were located in cities like Paris, Vienna, Prague, Augsburg, Cadiz, Sevilla, and also Messina.<sup>350</sup>

Whether Rembrandt had been able to make use of this network before 1648 or only after the treaty of Münster is unknown.<sup>351</sup> However, that he did becomes clear from his sale to Antonio Ruffo. Ruffo was the senator of the Spanish Kingdom of Sicily from 1645 and also Prince of Scaletta from 1673. His art collection, which was acquired between 1646-1678 consisted of 364 objects, including the most important artists of the day.<sup>352</sup> It was through the mediation of Cornelis Gijsbrechtsz. van Goor that Rembrandt sold Ruffo several works around 1655, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (fig.87, 1653/c.1662) and *A Man in Armour 'Alexander the Great'* (fig.88, 1655). Although Ruffo was not satisfied with the *Homer*, which Rembrandt after discussion around the price got returned and changed around 1662, he was a great collector of Rembrandt's works. Besides several paintings he also owned at least 189 prints by Rembrandt, even having local artists make art to go with Rembrandt's work.<sup>353</sup> Rembrandt's popularity overseas may also be a reason for our low number of attributions. In case of Ruffo, we have the

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<sup>347</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, p.152; Israel 1995, pp.315-318.

<sup>348</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, pp.169-175; Israel 1995, pp.313-314.

<sup>349</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, pp.169-175.

<sup>350</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, pp.169-175; At the time Messina was a thriving fabrics industry, given a special position within the Habsburg empire.

<sup>351</sup> Franits 2000, pp.296-298; based on De Marchi *et al.* 2014, p.167; pp. 175-183; Engels 1997, p.167 we know that Van Dyck did; One of the leading merchants in Messina was Hector van Achthoven. Van Achthoven knew Van Dyck personally, having commissioned a set of portraits for him and his wife during Van Dyck's stay in Palermo. His wife Maria van Uffelen was a related to Lucas van Uffelen, one of the most important Flemish merchants in Italy, as well as a family with branches in Amsterdam. Based on correspondence with another merchant, Hendrick Dyck, in which he describes a financial transaction with Van Dyck, it is clear that Van Dyck made use of this international trader's network to sell his art as early as 1625. Whether Van Dyck had to make use of this network after he left for the United Kingdom is unclear, however, his works would still be traded across the North Sea and Mediterranean to supply popular demand which seems to suggest he may have.

<sup>352</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, p.159.

<sup>353</sup> De Marchi *et al.* 2014, pp.161-163; According to Gozzano, this interest in Rembrandt as an Italian was quite unique and she deems it most likely that this was due to Ruffo's own background as merchant and connection to Messina; *A Man in Armour* is often also called Achilles instead of Alexander the Great (see Seifert *et al.* 2018, p.96)

documentation of Rembrandt's correspondence. However, this is one of the correspondences of Rembrandt that we have. Cargo and sales contracts have often been lost.

The drop in Rembrandt's production – or at least his drop in the production of paintings – can most likely be ascribed to the introduction of Van Dyck's *noble fashion* in the Dutch republic. Clearly that was what the consumer desired.

## 6. Van Rijn: *Following the fashion of the time*

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By the early 1640s the *noble fashion* of Van Dyck had made its entry as the *fashion of the time* of the Dutch republic and in spite of his early death, Van Dyck's artistic legacy had a lasting impact. Artists of repute in the Dutch republic like Flinck, Maes, Bol, and Lievens made clear use of this style in their artworks, implementing stylistic elements that clearly had their origin with Van Dyck.<sup>354</sup> His *fashion of the time* clearly impacting the production of artists for the market.<sup>355</sup> Literature claims that this stubborn miller's son had no inclination to deviate from his own ideas, staying true to his own style, whether people liked it or not, even throughout all his financial difficulties, but is this true? Did he really stick with his own style in all his paintings, or did he in fact feel the impact of *fashion of the time* in his own art?

### 6.1 Van Rijn: Challenging times

The 1650s of Rembrandt are often described as the continuation of his decline, which culminated in his eventual bankruptcy. His relationship with Hendrickje and his supposed stubborn character further alienating him from potential clients and friends.<sup>356</sup>

However, in comparison to the period of 1646-1650, we see that Rembrandt's production of works on canvas – both in history paintings and portraiture – actually increases again. A significant increase in history paintings for Rembrandt takes place especially after the death of Flinck.<sup>357</sup> Although Rembrandt's production does not reach the levels of Bol and Flinck, his overall attributed works do reach the heights of his early career in Amsterdam.<sup>358</sup> This is certainly proof of several things: Rembrandt's reputation in the later years is certainly still good, for his number of paintings actually increases again. Whether Rembrandt could still be considered a leading figure on the market in Amsterdam could be questioned, it seems that by 1650 Flinck had surpassed him and only after Flinck death would Rembrandt's production drastically increase.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Schama 2019, pp.435-437; Dickey *et al.* 2017, p.29.

<sup>355</sup> Van der Wetering 2016, pp.231-233.

<sup>356</sup> Bikker 2019, pp.140-144.

<sup>357</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2,3, and 4.

<sup>358</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2,3, and 4; If you look at Rembrandt's production in figure 2 it shows that he produces the same amount of cm<sup>2</sup> at the end of his career, as in 1631-1635.

<sup>359</sup> Bok *et al.* 2009, p.64; see their figure 2,3, and 4.

Still Rembrandt managed to somehow consolidate his position on the ever-changing art market, after a time period of having hardly produced any art.

In spite of his increase in works Rembrandt still goes bankrupt in 1656 Rembrandt. The reason for this is unknown and only covered in speculation.<sup>360</sup> The process of his bankruptcy would have taken several years, after which they van Rijn family loses their house and most of their possessions, the art collection and object are auctioned off. The family moves to the Rozengracht 184 in 1658, which they rent for 225 guilders annually.<sup>361</sup> At this address Rembrandt would become an employee of Titus and Hendrickje, who had started their own art business as equal companions. By employing Rembrandt, he was protected from claims by his creditors, for all the income for his paintings would go to the company, not to him personally.<sup>362</sup>

## 6.2 Van Rijn: Complying with fashion

It is during his employment by Titus and Hendrickje that Rembrandt's production peaks again. During which he produces works like *Juno* (fig.89, c.1662), *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog* (fig.90, c.1665), and *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* (fig.91, c.1663). However, his increased production does not necessarily equal increased success. Rembrandt's last known public commission, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis* (fig. 92, c.1661) was not well received. In 1660 Flinck passed away from the Plague and his prestigious commission got redistributed amongst Jordaens, Lievens, and also Rembrandt. However, Rembrandt's painting, in which he depicts Claudius Civilis with clearly just his one-eye, quickly disappeared from public view. From the critique It is clear that the commissioners did not desire something as gruesome as Civilis's one-eye socket to be visible.<sup>363</sup>

Jordaens and Lievens were clearly artists in the tradition of more Flemish painterly traditions, so the reason Rembrandt received this commission would in a way have to either connect him to that or either his art did in fact contain elements which connected closer to Flinck. After all, the commission was supposed to form some form of unity, which means it should have had connecting elements. Whether or not Rembrandt succeeded in achieving this visually is not certain. Rembrandt's painting quickly disappeared from public view, the depiction simply was too gruesome.<sup>364</sup> Clearly, Rembrandt made the same 'mistake' in his *Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis* as he made in his *Blinding of Samson*, both pictures seemed to lack the desired *grâce et*

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<sup>360</sup> Bosman 2012, p.12; Montias 2002, pp.183-185; Document/Remdoc/e4704; Bosman suggests Rembrandt consciously makes the decision to file for bankruptcy out of the desire to marry Hendrickje, whilst his *Cessio Bonorum* suggests that Rembrandt files for bankruptcy based on two reasons due to loss of goods at sea and failed business. The latter is interesting, for there is nothing to be found of Rembrandt's business enterprises, let alone investments in ships or such. Where Rembrandt conducted his business cannot currently be traced with certainty. According to Montias Rembrandt could be connected to the failed enterprise of Marten van den Broeck in 1647, who lost a ship 'de Vergulde Pauw'. This ship's inventory contained several works by old masters and also works by Rembrandt and Lievens. Montias suggests that these paintings may partially have been Rembrandt's and perhaps his contribution to buy shares into this business venture.

<sup>361</sup> Bikker 2019, p.171.

<sup>362</sup> Runia *et al.* 2019, p.48.

<sup>363</sup> Bikker 2019, pp.25-28.

<sup>364</sup> Bikker 2019, pp.25-28.

*vehemence*.<sup>365</sup> The fact, however, that Rembrandt received the commission for the Town Hall, after Flick's death seems to suggest that they had believed Rembrandt up for the task. His use of his *manière grossière* may not have been an issue, nor his loose brushworks.<sup>366</sup>

Although Rembrandt with his *manière grossière* clearly does not seem to follow the cleaner, smoother painting style introduced with the *fashion of the time*. This did not mean his late depictions were completely void of elements from Van Dyck's *noble fashion*. The *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* (c.1663) and *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog* (c.1662-1665) both contain elements of depictions often seen within the style of Van Dyck, which were uncommon within Rembrandt's own oeuvre. It seems that, being caught up by the time, Rembrandt starts to implement aspects of it in his own work.

For the *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog* is a clear example of a lady dressed according to fashion. She wears colourful silks, beautiful jewellery, pearls, and has quite a modern haircut.<sup>367</sup> The picture is interesting within Rembrandt's oeuvre, for it seems to be the only known painting in which Rembrandt makes a lady's portrait dressed in that dress fashion. The way this lady is depicted derives from the standard form created by Van Dyck, which must have been the foundation for this type of depiction. Similar depictions can be seen in paintings like *Queen Henrietta Maria* (fig.93, c.1636-1638), 'Mrs Howard', or his own wife *Mary Ruthven, Lady Van Dyck* (fig.94, c.1640). However, instead of painting her in the smooth and clean style of Van Dyck, Rembrandt paints her with his typical roughness. Depicting the figure like this is, however, a conscious choice.<sup>368</sup> Rembrandt is not simply copying a style, he is making use of his experience and techniques to create a great product. His use of the *manière grossière* interacts differently with the light, giving the work a different feel from those of Van Dyck, which we could expect Rembrandt decided to do on purpose.

The painting could in fact be compared to Van Dyck's works according to the method used by Otto Pächt. Rembrandt seems to emulate the *fashion of the time* by trying to make it better in his own way, instead of simply copying it. His use of the *manière grossière* interacts differently with the light, giving the work a different feel.<sup>369</sup>

Rembrandt's *manière grossière* is an interesting contrast to portraits by Flinck. He had already used the type of dress and pearls in his *Portrait of a Woman* (fig.95, 1654) a decade earlier, as well as Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen in his *Portrait of a young Woman* (fig.97, 1656). Clearly, these artists tried to emulate Van Dyck too, but they clearly did this with a different focus

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<sup>365</sup> Sluijter 2014, p.73; Schama 2019, pp.433-435.

<sup>366</sup> Bikker *et al.*2015, pp.133-134; critique on Rembrandt's *manière grossière* seem to date from 1678 with Houbraken, and even later than that with Roger de Piles. Which may mean this was not such an issue during Rembrandt's lifetime.

<sup>367</sup> Bikker *et al.*2015, p.112.

<sup>368</sup> Bikker *et al.*2015, p.112.

<sup>369</sup> Pächt 1999, p.112.

following a smooth finish. Rembrandt, however, stays true to his own interests and artistic approach. Something which he must have done with reason.

This same aspect we see in the picture of the *Portrait of Frederik Rihel*. This equestrian portrait is the only known equestrian portrait in Rembrandt's oeuvre and also, one of only two known equestrian portraits of a commoner around that time in general.<sup>370</sup> In the picture Rembrandt pays close attention to Rihel's outfit. Using a thicker *impasto* in depicting his clothing, accentuating the effects the light would have had on such a fabric, whilst using a relatively thin paint layer for the background.<sup>371</sup> The equestrian depiction reminds us of the style used by Van Dyck. A potential example may have been the etching by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677) *Portrait of the Earl of Northumberland* (fig.96, 1640), which he had made after Cornelis van Dalen's engraving after the portrait by Van Dyck.<sup>372</sup> Both Rembrandt's and Hollar's depiction display a horse performing the *levade*, which symbolises the riding skills of the rider. It being very difficult and requiring a lot of skill.<sup>373</sup> However, more interesting are the attributes of the gun holster on the horse, the flapping piece of fabric behind his back, and in general the posture of the rider. They are clear attributes that Hollar depicts in his etching and which Rembrandt also implements in his painting. Depictions like this are by the 1660s somewhat more common in the Netherlands. Rembrandt may also have seen *Frederik Hendrik and Maurits as Generals at Nieuwpoort* (fig.97, 1650) by Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, another artist who clearly worked in the tradition of Van Dyck. In this painting the figure of Frederik Hendrik also has a very similar posture to Rihel's, making it very likely that Rembrandt looked at this type of equestrian depictions in order to make his portrait. Once again depicting the *fashion of the time* in his own way.

In 2008 an X-ray research on the *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* made visible a completely different painting. This painting (fig.98) depicted a man in somewhat more classical dress, more associated with the 1650s, but also in the attire of a rider.<sup>374</sup> According to Wieseman, it is logical that this original composition may have been an original, unfinished work by Rembrandt himself. Rembrandt used original segments of the painting in his current work, for the gold bands of the sleeve and doublet at his right shoulder of the underlying figure are used as motifs on Rihel's boot. The painting layers also contained the same quartz used by Rembrandt and his studio.<sup>375</sup> Although Wieseman is careful with connecting the *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* with the original painting underneath, it does open the question whether the original unfinished composition of a standing figure in a landscape wearing a riding coat may in fact have been a portrait of Rihel.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, pp.121-124; Wieseman 2010, pp.96-97.

<sup>371</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.124.

<sup>372</sup> Turner 2015, pp.20-22.

<sup>373</sup> Bikker *et al.* 2015, p.124.

<sup>374</sup> Wieseman 2010, pp.97-104.

<sup>375</sup> Wieseman 2010, pp.104-107.

<sup>376</sup> Wieseman 2010, pp.104-107.

An argument for suggesting that the original unfinished composition is in fact Rihel, is that in both cases we are dealing with a rider. Although the standing figure seems to lack a horse, his clothing does suggest he was a rider. The fact that we know of no other examples where Rembrandt made an equestrian portrait, only in this case with Rihel, may be enough of an argument to suggest the original unfinished composition was also him. Even though both men look alike, with the picture being an X-ray, this is of course tricky to say. For Rihel does seem to be a generic seventeenth century man in general.

Nonetheless, we know of no other examples where Rembrandt took up the theme of a rider in a portrait, which makes this very interesting. If it indeed was Rihel then the original unfinished composition may perhaps not have been to Rihel's liking. At least it would clearly have lacked the level of fashion that Rembrandt's eventual portrait does contain. Rembrandt is not known for changing his works, therefore, perhaps it was his financial situation at his old age and the *fashion of the time* that caught up with him. Leaving him no other option, than to start looking more closely at Van Dyck's original examples. Yet being an artist of his standing, perhaps somewhat proud or stubborn, not simply copying the works by Van Dyck, but trying to make them even better painting them in his own coarse style.<sup>377</sup>

We could consider it out of character of any talented artist to have simply copied an exemplary figure. An artist of Rembrandt's standing would not have settled for less than trying to achieve the production of an artwork that surpassed the artwork that came before.

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<sup>377</sup> If you assume that Rihel's portrait is one of the first works in which Rembrandt so clearly starts implementing elements of Van Dyck's style. Then it is actually not unlikely to date the lady with the lap dog portrait as later date. These late works may derive their origin in the fact that Rembrandt had financial troubles and needed to supply to the market.

## 7. Conclusion

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In this thesis the focus has been on establishing the impact of Van Dyck's *fashion of the time* on Rembrandt and his circle. This has been done by carefully reading existing art historical research on Rembrandt and Van Dyck, and by applying art historical methods by comparing the two.

From existing art historical research, it has become clear that this type of comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt was hardly ever made. Instead, within the art historical field, Rembrandt has constantly been compared to the artist Rubens.

Within this thesis, several arguments have been presented to suggest that the comparison between Rubens and Rembrandt, as it is conducted within art historical literature, seems to be more of a product from both academical and political ambitions. As Otto Pächt describes in his *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis* (1977), art historians are constantly in search for the evolution of art. They see art as a growing, maturing, and ageing living thing. In which there is a constant progress, development or evolution. An artist emulates another, and by doing so, creates something new. Something that replaces the artwork the artist has decided to emulate. Only that could be considered a form of progress.

Whilst applying these methods of Pächt to the Rubens and Rembrandt comparisons, it has become clear that Rembrandt gets compared to Rubens in only the form of comparable figures.<sup>378</sup> Something which becomes very clear in the examples of *the Blinding of Samson* with *Prometheus* and the *Passion series* with *the Descent from the Cross*. It has, however, become clear that the figures of Rubens should in no way have been Rembrandt's only possible example. Based on other comparing other figures, there are plenty of other examples that can be connected to Rembrandt's finished works. In order for Rembrandt to have had a specific connection to Rubens's work, his figures would have to be an emulation in which he tries to specifically add something new. This way we could have placed this comparison in a form of historical link.

Based on the type of comparisons, with subjects often being vastly different or works vastly different in monumentality and theatrical effect, it is logical to assume that this type of historical link does not exist. Something which proves that these figure comparisons only prove two certainties. The certainty that Rembrandt and Rubens looked at the same type of artists and figures, and the certainty that Rembrandt can be put in other valid comparisons, since Rubens is not his prime example.

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<sup>378</sup> Rembrandt takes the figure A in his work from a figure B of Rubens.

Based on these certainties, it has been possible to create a more meaningful and diligent comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt. Within art historical research, the comparisons between Van Dyck and Rembrandt within the etching medium had already been made. Dickey already conducted clear research in which she made a link between the etching techniques of both Lievens and Rembrandt with Van Dyck. However, making a comparison between Rembrandt and Van Dyck in the painterly medium has not been that straightforward.

Although, within this thesis, the first steps of meaningful comparison may have been made. This has been done by making use of a similar example between Van Dyck and Rembrandt, as art historical literature have used between Rubens and Rembrandt. Namely, by comparing Rembrandt's *the Blinding of Samson* with Van Dyck's *the Capture of Samson*.

Instead of just comparing the figures, but looking at the composition as a whole. Van Dyck's composition clearly has high levels of emotions, levels of realism, and all aspects of *beweechgelickheijt*. Like Van Dyck's composition, Rembrandt's work contains these aspects as well. However, it can be seen that Rembrandt adds something completely different. By changing the viewing point of the composition, Rembrandt makes the spectator part of the scene. By doing this he adds a sense of *tegenwoordighejdt* in his painting, an element which the work of Van Dyck does not contain in such a way, if at all.

It is this extra aspect that Rembrandt includes in his work that shows his artistic skill, as well as the development he has already made in his art. When we connect Rembrandt and Van Dyck, by use of this comparison, a historical link of development can be perceived. For it is here that Rembrandt shows that he has already taken a step further within the development of the realism of a scene. By adding this element his work, at least on the level of artistic development, replaces the work he potentially emulates.

It is likely that Rembrandt studied the art of Van Dyck as early as his time with Lastman. It was there that he got into contact with Hendrick van Uylenburgh, who must have owned several of Van Dyck's early works. When Rembrandt returned to Leiden, he started working with Lievens. Lievens was an artist clearly interested in Van Dyck's art, who even left to visit him both in Antwerp and the United Kingdom. Therefore, it would be logical to assume that the art by Van Dyck would have been a subject for these two young talents. It seems, however, that the connection between Van Dyck and Rembrandt runs even deeper than just having studied his southern Netherlandish counterpart.

In the United Kingdom Van Dyck further developed his art, creating an art style which would become the *fashion of the time* amongst the nobility of that country and the continent. This *noble fashion* was known for depicting individuals in fanciful, sometimes unrealistic, bright clothing and enhancing beauty when necessary. Painting his works in a smooth type of finish, that founds its

origin in Italian art.<sup>379</sup> Around the same time, Rembrandt furthered his own studies. Developing an art style which was rougher and coarser, an element he may have picked up studying works by the early Van Dyck, whilst further studying Italian examples like Titian and Caravaggio. Creating an art style which would dictate the market and was the *fashion of the time* in the Dutch republic for nearly a decade.

It is due to the developments surrounding the Dutch republic during the 1630s and 1640s, that a societal shift takes place and the impact of Van Dyck on artists can be best felt. With the aristocratization of the rich citizens of the Dutch republic, it is the *noble fashion* of Van Dyck that gains popularity. The increase in the desire for that type of art is clearly visible, for students that first followed the style of Rembrandt, start to implement changes to their works. The best examples are Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck, these two artists that share a connection to Rembrandt, both decide on adapting to the market. As artists in their own time, they actually reach greater success than Rembrandt did in his lifetime.

The fact that this *noble fashion* becomes so popular in the Dutch republic has a direct negative effect on the number of commissions Rembrandt seems to have. Based on the attributed paintings by the Rembrandt research group, even taking into account that their numbers may be wrong, it still seems that Rembrandt's production during the period of 1642-1649 is lower than his artistic competition. This seems to suggest that Rembrandt is indeed directly impacted by this change of *fashion of the time*.<sup>4</sup>

The financial troubles Rembrandt gets surrounding his house may actually support this assumption. When Rembrandt signs the contract to buy his house, he is – unknowingly – at the height of his career. Financially, he is doing very well and it must have seemed like it was only the beginning. The house he and Saskia buy costs a fortune and in order to be eligible to buy it there must have been enough financial incentive for the seller to accept Rembrandt's offer. Although, this still leaves room to interpret whether or not Rembrandt and Saskia may have overestimated themselves, this situation does still suggest that they were close enough to being, or were expecting to be, financially solid. Whether or not they signed the contract with a level of *hubris* or valid financial stability does not matter. What matters is that Rembrandt could not cover the costs by 1649, after a combination of potentially a failed enterprise as well as a drop in production.

Some years would follow, which would result in his insolvency and a so called 'losing of his own independence'. Working directly for Titus and Hendrickje, Rembrandt's career actually starts to pick up again. This drastically increases after the death of Flinck.

The fact that by then the death of Flinck positively impacts Rembrandt's career seems to be an oddity, when it is assumed that Rembrandt does not adapt to the market. As is known, Flinck

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<sup>379</sup> Something which clearly shows his connection to his Italian studies as well as Rubens.

followed the *fashion of the time*, adapted to the market, and produced artworks closely resembling the *noble fashion* by Van Dyck. It was this that made him so successful. The fact that Rembrandt received a part of the commission from the Town Hall, after Flinck's death does then seem odd. Especially, since the remainder of the commissions have mostly been divided amongst artists like Jordaens and Lievens, who by then have also clearly followed and implemented aspects of Van Dyck's art. Whether Rembrandt received this commission due to his artistic connection to Flinck based on a connection to Van Dyck, or due to his connection of his own style, which Flinck may still have had incorporated, can only be guessed.

The outcome of this commission, however, shows that Rembrandt clearly – in the eyes of the commissioners – lacked the specific elements they sought after. For his painting of *the Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis* got removed and replaced by a touched-up work of Flinck. In art historical literature, the given reason is often that the painting was considered to gruesome, due to Rembrandt revealing the open eye socket of Claudius Civilis.

The fact that the painting got removed so quickly may have had an effect on Rembrandt. By now, Rembrandt had become an artist working for his son and his lover Hendrickje Stoffels, living in an impoverished condition in comparison to his early career.<sup>380</sup> His earlier reputation as a great artist may no longer have protected his works. The fact that his work was so clearly removed from a public place may have been a turning point in Rembrandt's career.

This potential turning point can be perceived in two late works by Rembrandt. These works have been dated as being painted around and after *the Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*. These two portraits: *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog* and the equestrian *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* clearly deviate from Rembrandt's usual way of depicting individuals in his portraiture.

In the *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog* Rembrandt depicts a woman in a modern fashion that is directly connected to the *noble fashion* by Van Dyck. Whether or not Rembrandt based it on Van Dyck directly, Flinck, Bol, Lievens, or potentially an unknown artist does not matter. The original type is clearly indebted to the style of depicting women in portraiture by Van Dyck during his time in the United Kingdom.

The same can be said of the *Portrait of Frederik Rihel*. This equestrian portrait finds its origin in models that remind of the etchings by Hollar of riding noblemen. Etchings after portraits and paintings by Van Dyck. However, by the time Rembrandt paints these paintings, ample examples by then contemporary Netherlandish artists are available. Although, not necessarily in the same context. For this equestrian portrait is only one of two portraits, of which that are known, that depict an equestrian commoner.

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<sup>380</sup> As employee of Titus and Hendrickje, we must assume that Rembrandt was still able to finance a decent lifestyle for the time. Be it, that the finances were no longer in his own name. In order to make sure no debtors could lay their hands on his earnings.

It is clear that in both paintings Rembrandt is indebted to the style of Van Dyck, whether voluntarily or forced due to financial situations. This shows, that although Rembrandt got impacted by Van Dyck's *noble fashion* as early as the 1640s, due to a drop in production. By the 1660s, Van Dyck's *noble fashion* in fact impacts Rembrandt's art directly. Although, this may not have been the case for all his artworks. It is the first time in his career, as far as is known, that Rembrandt deviates from his own ways and adapts to the market. Rembrandt still works in his own typical *manière grossière*, but adapts his figure to modern times. Whether or not this is Rembrandt being deviant to paint smoothly, or whether Rembrandt sees a level of emulation by using this coarser style can only be debated. However, one should assume that an artist puts great thought into why and how he will depict his subject. For no instant, should one believe that an artist like Rembrandt would not have depicted his subject differently, had he believed it would have led to a greater effect. Therefore, depicting his subject thusly, Rembrandt makes a conscious decision and could this perhaps be seen as his attempt to emulate an already popular style.

However, that Rembrandt does indeed adapt to the market seems to become clear in this equestrian portrait. For unlike the *Portrait of a Lady with a Lap Dog*, the *Portrait of Frederik Rihel* also has a hidden story to tell. Based on X-ray pictures, there is clear proof that there is a painting hidden underneath. This original, unfinished painting, also depicts a man in riding gear. Instead of wearing a modern outfit, the figure wears riding clothes of the rich citizenry from the 1650s.

Whether or not this figure is indeed Rihel as well is unknown. The photos are too unclear to create a definitive conclusion. Yet, it is very important to point out that this is only one of two equestrian portraits of commoners that we know during that time period. This does suggest that this is not a common subject within the market. In which case suggesting that Rembrandt saved an unfinished picture with the same subject for over a decade, to then paint the potentially only other equestrian commission on top of that work, seems rather slim. It therefore seems most likely that this picture underneath does depict Rihel.

If it is accepted that this figure dressed in 1650s riding clothes is indeed Rihel, then this underlying painting may tell us the story of how Rembrandt, whilst in the process of making a commission, had to change his work drastically. It would show that Rembrandt, for whatever reason, but due to the *fashion of the time* had to change his work.

This would be a conclusive argument to this thesis. Around the 1640s it meant an increase in production for most of Rembrandt's circle, whilst it meant disaster for Rembrandt, which may have led to his insolvency. By the time Rembrandt's career hits the 1660s, this changed *fashion* impacts him so directly that he even has to make adaptations to some of his works. Something the artist needs to do in order to please his clientele. A clear proof of Van Dyck's *fashion of the time* impacting Rembrandt and his circle.

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Fig.78 Stijn Alsteens, Adam Eaker, An van Camp, Xavier F. Salomon, Bert Watteeuw, *Van Dyck the Anatomy of Portraiture*, New York 2016, p.56, cat.1

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Fig.85 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Rijkstudio online collection, Inv. No. RP-P-OB-76.663 (21.07.2021)  
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Fig.99 acquired from © The National Gallery, London (05.08.2021)

# Abstract

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This MA thesis deals with the question what the impacts of Van Dyck's *fashion of the time* on Rembrandt and his circle have been. The focus is on in whether and in what different ways Van Dyck's *fashion of the time* impacted Rembrandt and his circle, to which the answer is not straightforward. In order to find the answer to this question, a critical reading of art historic literature will be presented and the common comparison of Rembrandt to Rubens discussed. After which, the connection and comparison between Van Dyck and Rembrandt will be presented, and their respective *fashions of the time*. Subsequently, the developments surrounding these *fashions* will be discussed and how they affected Rembrandt and his circle. Conclusively, the specific impact of the *fashion of the time* on Rembrandt will be discussed.

Die vorliegende Abschlussarbeit befasst sich mit der Frage, welchen Einfluss Van Dycks ‚*Mode der Zeit*‘ auf Rembrandt und seinen Kreis hatte. Der Fokus liegt darauf, ob und in welcher Weise Van Dycks ‚*Mode der Zeit*‘ Rembrandt und seinen Kreis beeinflusst hat, worauf die Antwort nicht einfach ist. Um diese Frage zu beantworten, wird eine kritische Lektüre der kunsthistorischen Literatur vorgestellt und der gängige Vergleich von Rembrandt mit Rubens diskutiert. Danach werden die Verbindung und der Vergleich zwischen Van Dyck und Rembrandt und ihre jeweiligen ‚*Moden der Zeit*‘ vorgestellt. Anschließend werden die Entwicklungen rund um diese ‚*Moden*‘ diskutiert und wie sich diese auf Rembrandt und seinen Kreis ausgewirkt haben. Abschließend wird der spezifische Einfluss der ‚*Mode der Zeit*‘ auf Rembrandt definiert.

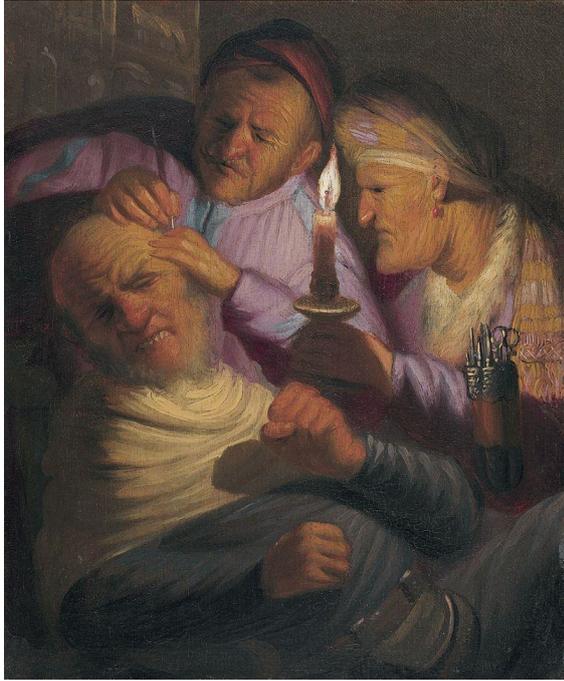


Fig.1 R. van Rijn, Allegory of touch, c.1624-1625, Oil on Panel, 21.5 x 17.7 cm, The Leiden Collection



Fig.2 R. van Rijn, Allegory of Hearing, c.1624-1625, Oil on Panel, 21.6 x 17.8 cm, The Leiden Collection



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Fig.7 R. van Rijn, Baptism of the Eunuch, 1626, Oil on Panel, 64x 47.5 cm, Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht



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Fig.9 P.Lastman, Baptism of the Eunuch, 1623, Oil on Panel, 85 x 115 cm, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe



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Fig.11 P.Lastman, Coriolanus and the Roman Wives, 1625, Oil on Panel, 81 x 132 cm, Trinity College, Dublin



Fig.12 R. van Rijn, Bust of a Man wearing a Gorget and Plumet Beret, c.1626, Oil on Panel, 39.8 x 29.4 cm, Private Collection

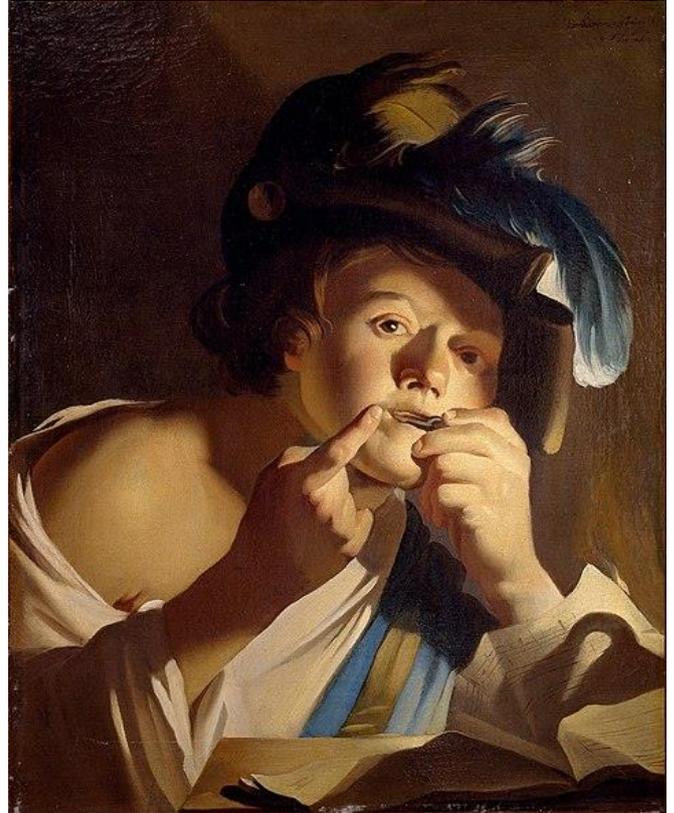


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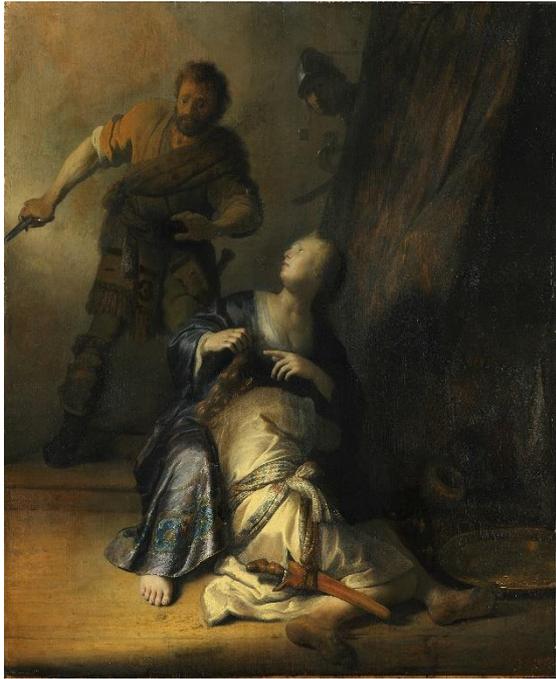


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Fig.20 Attributed to R. van Rijn. Attributed to Lievens, Samson and Delilah, c.1626-1627, Oil on Panel, 27.5 x 23.5 cm, Private Collection



Fig.21 P.P. Rubens, Samson and Delilah, c.1609-1610, Oil on Panel, 185 x 205 cm, National Gallery, London



Fig.22 J. Matham after P.P. Rubens, Samson and Delilah, 1613, engraving, 37.5 x 44.1 cm, Rockoxhuis, Antwerp



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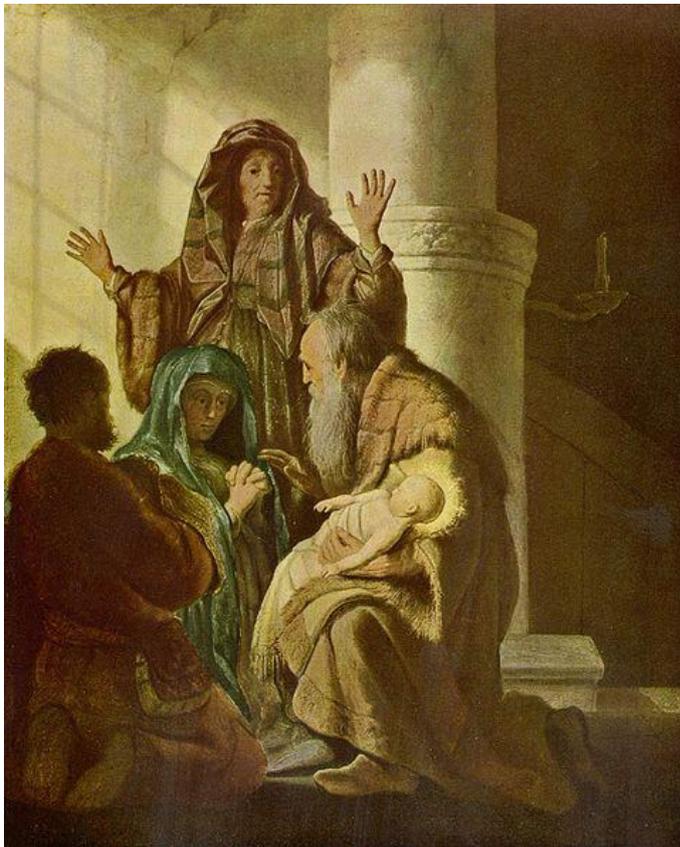


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Fig.30 R. van Rijn, *Titus at his Desk*, 1655, Oil on Canvas, 77 x 63 cm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam

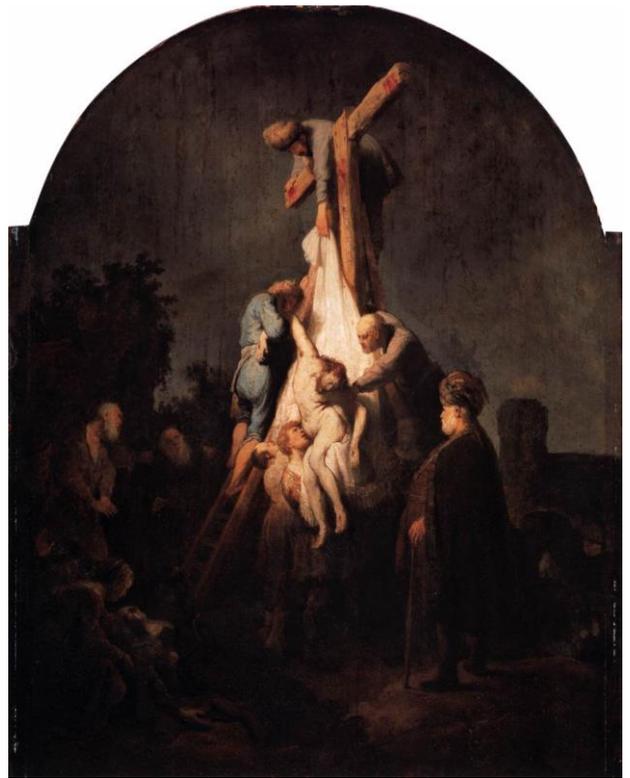


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Fig.42 P. Lastman, *The Resurrection*, 1612, Oil on Panel, 43.5 x 32.4 cm, Getty Museum, Los Angeles USA



Fig.44 P.P. Rubens, *Samson and Delilah*, c.1609/1610, Oil on Panel, 185 x 205 cm, National Gallery, London

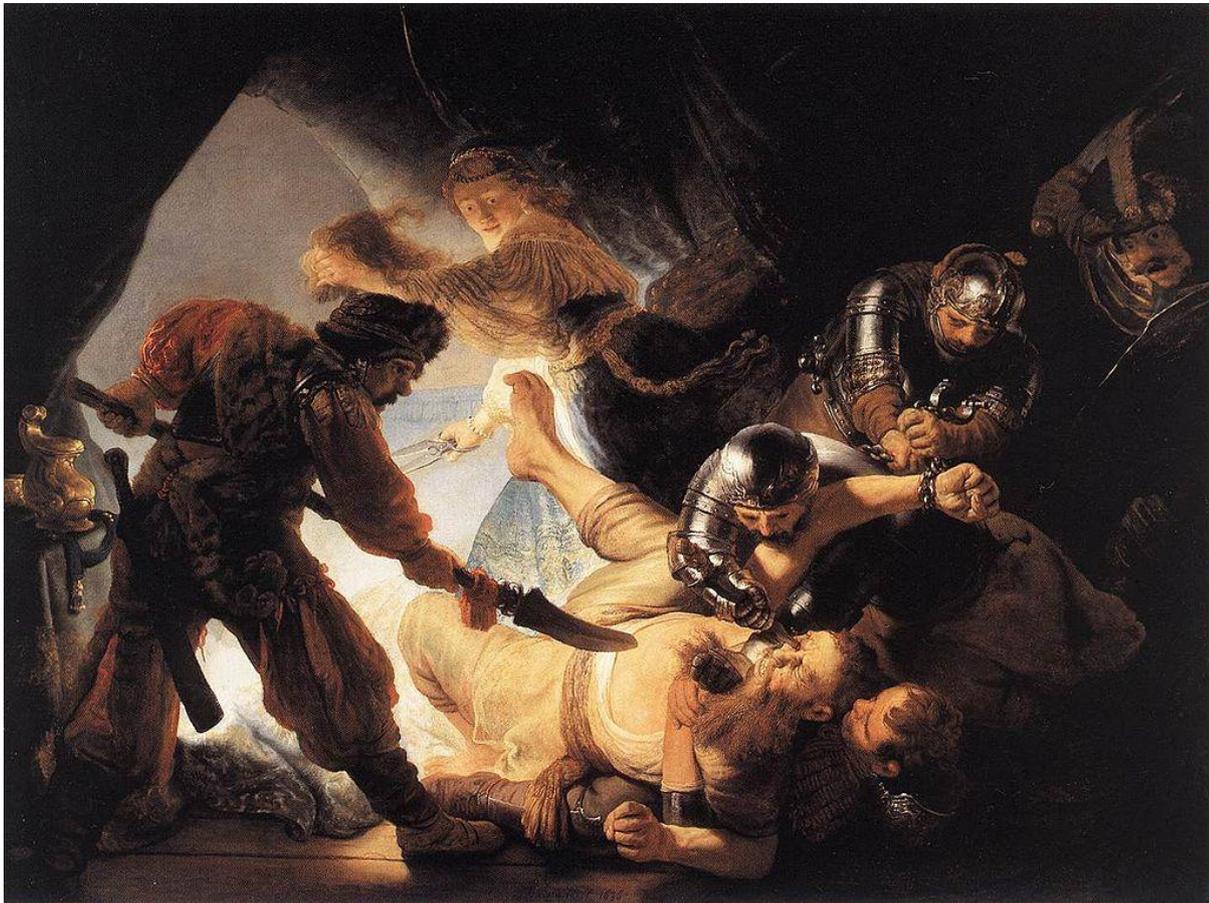


Fig.43 R. van Rijn, *The Blinding of Samson*, 1636, Oil on Canvas, 236 x 302 cm, Städel museum, Frankfurt



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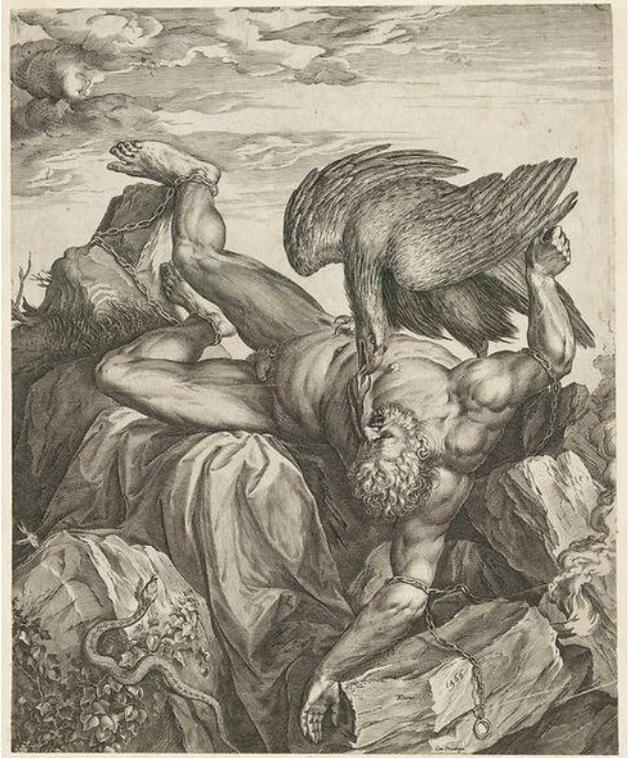


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Fig. 47 A. Van Dyck, *The Capture of Samson*, 1628, Oil on Canvas, 146 x 254 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna



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Fig.66 R. van Rijn, Portrait of Nicolaes Ruts, 1631, Oil on Panel, 116.8 x 87.3 cm, Frick Collection, New York

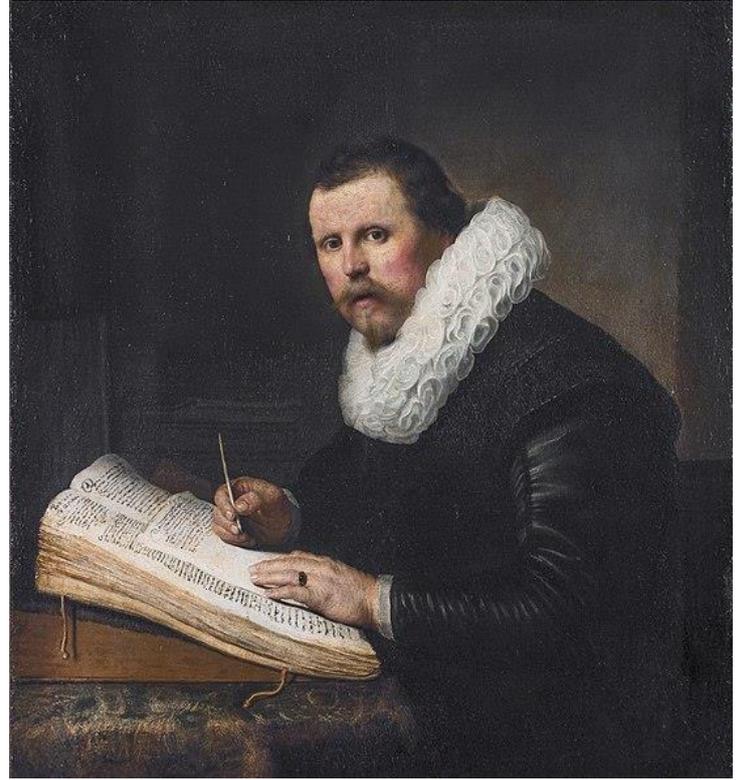


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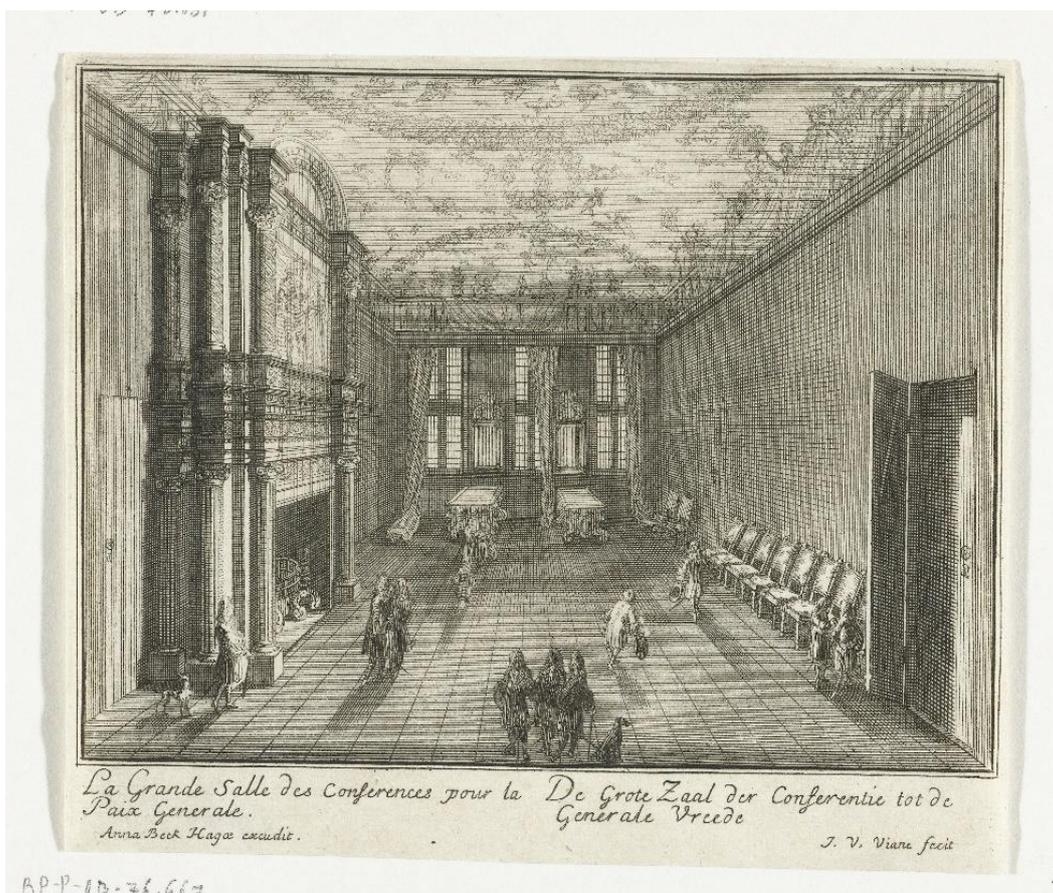


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Fig.95 G. Flinck, *Portrait of a Woman*, 1654, Oil on Canvas, unknown, Private Collection

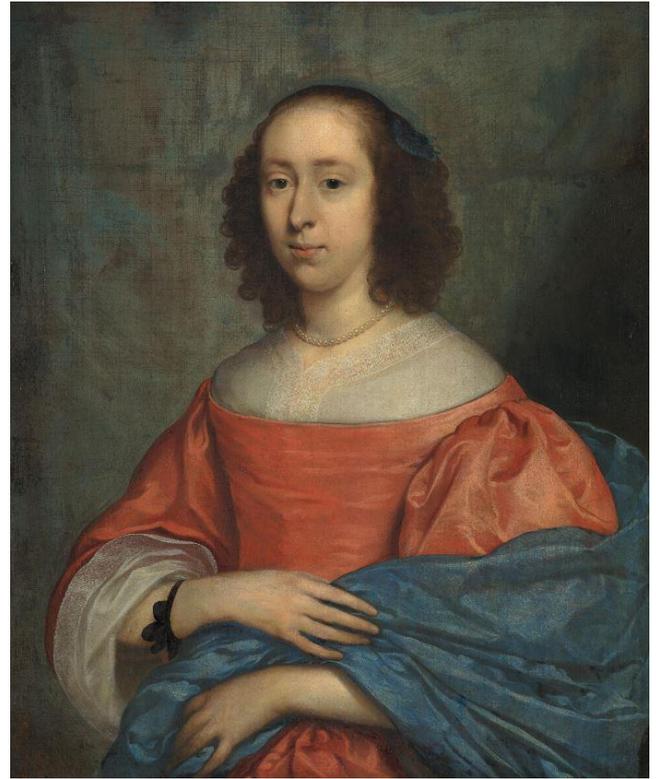


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Fig.97 W. Hollar, *Portrait of the Earl of Northumberland*, 1640, etching, 30.7 x 22.0 cm, the British Museum, London

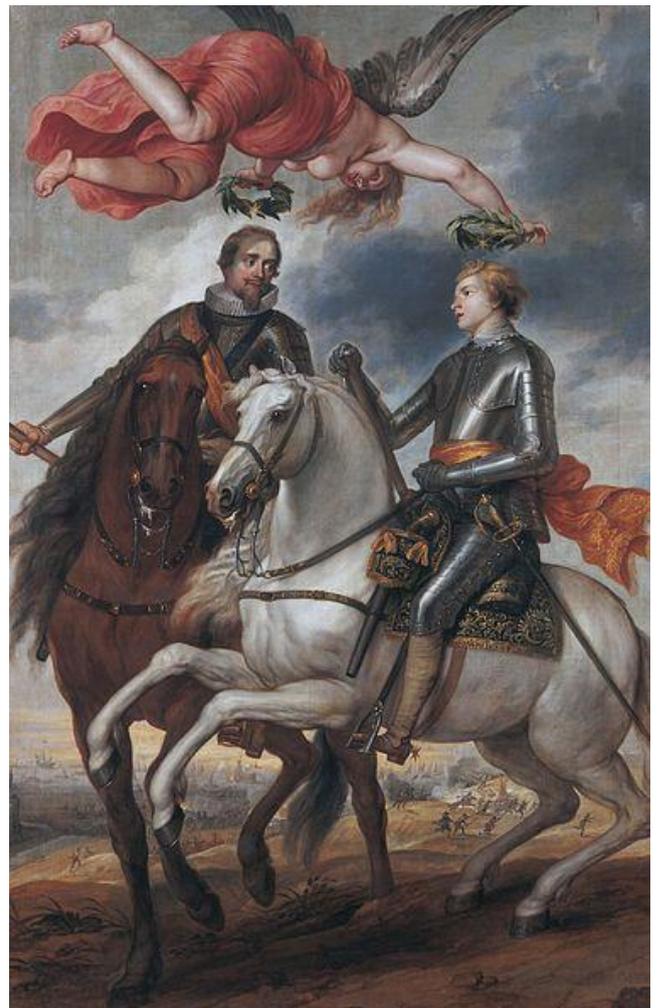


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