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Well-Cooked Turnips Make Good Stew: Investigating Rembrandt's Approach Toward Copies (1625-35)

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John Cabot University

Department of Humanistic Studies

Bachelor of Arts in Humanistic Studies

“Well-Cooked Turnips Make Good Stew:” Investigating Rembrandt’s Approach Toward Copies (1625-35)

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Fall 2024

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my family, friends and Rome.

Abstract

This thesis takes a new look at Rembrandt and his studio's approach toward copies within the decade of 1625-35. It traces the development of Rembrandt's practice from copying his teachers, to drawing close inspiration from his contemporaries, to then being copied by his students. Rembrandt also utilized successful elements of his own compositions in other paintings and possibly created second versions of his canvases. Reasons for Rembrandt's practice of copying are proposed, such as expanding and capitalizing on the sitter's profile. Copies made to emulate and improve the original can, in some cases, be used to reveal Rembrandt's ability to paint in both a rough and a smooth manner.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Good, The Bad and the Ugly	9
3. Two Sides of the Same Coin; Rembrandt's Rough and Smooth Self Portraiture	37
4. Like Father, Like Son	58
5. Conclusion	75
Bibliography	78

List of Figures

Figure 1 Portrait of Constantijn Huygens (1641), Van Mierevelt, Oil on Panel, Huygens museum Hofwijck, Voorburb.....	8
Figure 2 The Stoning of St Stephen, Adam Elsheimer (1610), Oil on Tinned Copper, Scottish National Gallery	14
Figure 3 The Stoning of St Stephen, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1625), Musee des Beaux Arts De Lyon	14
Figure 4 Balaam and the Ass, Pieter Lastman, (1622) Oil on Panel, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.	16
Figure 5 Balaam and the Ass,, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1627), Oil on Panel, Musée Cognacq-Jay	16
Figure 6 The Raising of Lazarus, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (Ca1632), Etching, The Metropolitan Museum, New York.....	20
Figure 7 Raising of Lazarus, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1630-2), Oil on Panel, Los Angeles County Museum.....	23
Figure 8 The Raising of Lazarus, Jan Lievens, (1631-2), Oil on Canvas, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery	23
Figure 9 The Osteology Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz, Thomas de Keyser or Nicolaes Eliaszon Pickenoy, (1619), oil on canvas, 135 x 186 cm (Amsterdam Historical Museum)	31
Figure 10 Portrait of Constantin Huygens and his clerk? Thomas de Keyser, (1627), The National Gallery	31
Figure 11 Sacrifice of Isaac, Rembrandt van Rijn (1635), Oil on Panel, Hermitage Museum	35
Figure 12 Sacrifice of Isaac Goveart Flinck, (1635), Private Collection.....	35
Figure 13 (Left) Self Portrait with Dishevelled Hair (Ca. late 1620s) Oil on panel, 23.4 x 17.2 cm Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Kunst	41

Figure 14 (right) Self Portraits With Dishevelled Hair, (Ca. 1628) Oil on panel, 22.6 x 18.7 cm Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.....	41
Figure 15 “Self Portrait” with Gorget, After Rembrandt (ca. 1629), panel, 37.9 x 28.9 cm, The Hague, Mauritshuis right: Infrared Reflectography: computer assembly, overall (front) and detail, 1998, Adri Verburg.....	41
Figure 16 Self Portrait with a steel Gorget (Ca. 1629) Oil on panel, 38.2 x 36.1 cm Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum.....	45
Figure 17 Self Portrait with a Steel Gorget (1629) Oil on panel, 37.9 x 28.9 cm The Hague, Mauritshuis	45
Figure 18 Self Portrait Looking into a Mirror, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1629) Japanese Museum of Art,	48
Figure 19 Self Portrait Looking into a Mirror, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1629) Indianapolis Museum of Art,	48
Figure 20 (left) Rembrandt, Self Portrait in Oriental Costume with Poodle, (1631-1633), panel, 66.5 x 52 cm, Paris Musée du Petit Palais (right): Isaac de Jouderville or Studio of Rembrandt after Rembrandt, “Self Portrait” of Rembrandt in Oriental Costume, (1631-1633), panel, 70.8 x 50.5 cm, New York, The Leiden Collection.....	51
Figure 21 Flight into Egypt, Lucas Van Der Leyden, (CA.1506), The Metropolitan Museum, New York.....	54
Figure 22 Rembrandt Flight into Egypt, (1626), print, The British Museum.....	54
Figure 23 Reproduced, Portrait of Prince Maurits, (Ca. 1613-20) Van Mierevelt	57
Figure 24 Portrait of Prince Maurits, Van Mierevelt, (Ca.1613-20), Rijksmuseum	57

Figure 25 (Left:) Old Man With a Gold Chain, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1631), Oil on Panel, Art Institute of Chicago.....	59
Figure 26 (Right:) Bust of an Old Man With a Gold Chain, Workshop of Rembrandt, Possibly Gerrit Dou, (1631-33), Oil on Canvas, Private Collection	59
Figure 27 close up of Material, Young Woman Holding a Parrot, Gerrit Dou, (1660-65)	65
Figure 28 Close Up Gerrit Dou Scholar in Prayer (1670)	65
Figure 29 Bust of an Old Man, Rembrandt Van Rijn Etching (1630).....	66
Figure 30 Old Man With a Gold Chain, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1631) Oil on Panel, Chicago Art Institute	68
Figure 31 Portrait of Constantin Huygens, Jan Lievens, (1629).....	68
Figure 32 Gerrit Dou, Astronomer (Heraclitus?),(ca. 1628), oil on panel, 38.5 x 31 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. 1012	70
Figure 33 Man In Oriental Costume, Jan Lievens, Oil on Canvas, (1629-31), Gallery Sansoucci	70
Figure 34 Rembrandt's Father, Jan G van Vilet, Etching, (ca.1630)	71

List of Tables

Table 1 Total Copies in Corpus I.....	29
Table 2 Total copies from Corpus I (1626-31).....	29
Table 3 Total copies from Corpus I (1626-31).....	29

List of Abbreviations

RRP	Rembrandt Research Project
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
Corpus I	Bruyn, J., Haak, B., Levie, S.H., Thiel, P.J.J. & Wetering, E. van de. <i>A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings I: 1625-1631</i> . Translated from Dutch by D. Cook-Radmoore. Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982.
Corpus II	Bruyn, J., Haak, B., Levie, S.H., Thiel, P.J.J. & Wetering, E. van de. <i>A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings II: 1631-1634</i> . Translated from Dutch by D. Cook-Radmoore. Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986.
Corpus IV	Wetering, E. van de (ed.), <i>A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings IV: The Self-portraits</i> , Translated from Dutch by J. Killian, K. Kist and M. Pearson, M. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2005, 318-34.
Corpus VI	Wetering, E. van de (ed.) Wetering, <i>Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Volume VI:</i>

*Rembrandt's Paintings Revisited. A
Complete Survey.* Translated from Dutch
by M. Pearson, M. Berlin: Springer
Verlag, 2015.

The Leiden Collection

The Leiden Collection Catalogue, 4th ed. Edited
by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady
with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York,
2023–.

1. Introduction

Rembrandt Harmenszoon Van Rijn was born in Leiden on July 15, 1606, and died in 1669. Rembrandt, as he is known, is one of the most famous and accomplished Dutch artists of the 17th Century. He changed style across his life, beginning with a fine, detailed smooth-mannered application of paint, to intensely rendered figures with thicker brushwork and a mastery of light and shadow that are immediately recognizable and have been popularly adored for over three centuries. During his life he enjoyed years of critical and commercial success, but also years of obscurity and poverty in the beginning and end of his life. From the early 1630s onwards in Amsterdam, he was perhaps the most sought-after painter of historical subjects and portraits. Around 1629, he was still learning his trade as an artist. He moved from Leiden to Amsterdam around 1631, at which point he fully established himself as a popular artist. Rembrandt's Leiden days, and the beginning of his time in Amsterdam, was a moment of change. This thesis addresses an abiding question about his output during that period, through the discussion of multiple copies and versions of his compositions, such as, Self Portrait with a Steel Gorget, (1629) The Raising of Lazarus (1631-32) and Old Man with a Gold Chain (1631), have been reappraised.

Before the 1960s, many copies were thought to have been created outside of Rembrandt's studio. Now, using technical imaging and elemental analysis, it is clear many copies were completed inside Rembrandt's studio. However, in some cases it remains unclear whether such copies are by Rembrandt himself or other members of his studio such as Gerrit Dou.¹ This thesis will examine the use of quantitative scientific analysis and documentary evidence about copies, to

¹ Corpus II, 45-91.

argue that Rembrandt probably painted multiple versions of the same composition between 1625-35. Recent analytic tools, such as cross-section analysis, support this claim. By establishing the history of multiple versions of some compositions, we better understand his context and painters' practices in the seventeenth-century. The idea that Rembrandt copied his own paintings should cause us to question long held assumptions about artists, such as the myth of the "genius" who paints only originals. Fusilli writes of the myth of Rembrandt, "none ever, like Rembrandt, knew how to improve an accident into a beauty, or give importance to a trifle. If ever he had a master, he had no followers; Holland was not made to comprehend his power."² This persistent, romantic 19th-century notion of genius misrepresents the mindset of 17th-century painters.

Art historians tend to idealize "great masters" like Rembrandt by imagining that they worked always and only to further their conceptual and technical mastery of painting. By doing so, they make their own subject matter seem loftier and purer. To think about Rembrandt as a commercial artist, one who calculates sales and paints to maximize profit, reduces art to something more commonplace and commodified. This bias is one reason why apparent copies are not discussed. They imply that the painter was less interested in artistic progress and innovation than in taking advantage of an existing market. Copies are also not discussed because without suitable technical and scientific analysis, it is either unknown as to whether the copy was created much later or completed in the time or studio of Rembrandt.

Seventeenth-century Dutch painters were competitive artistically and commercially. Painters worried about careers and profits, the everyday exigencies of making a living. Making copies would have been a means of profiting from a successful composition. Compositions were successful because of both the sitter and the quality of the depiction of the sitter. It was common

² John Burnet, *Rembrandt and his works* (Skyline, 2017).

to make copies, and predecessors such as Michiel Janszoon van Mierevelt did this with his repeated portraits and exclusive etchings of Prince Maurits around ten years earlier. Art historians have often neglected to think how copies for painters were commodities as well as acts of artistic refinement. Painting portraits before the age of mass media was a form of public communication for promoting reputations, persons, styles, and ideas. Rembrandt's repeated copies of self-portraits could serve as what we might call "branding," or what Norman Mailer calls "advertisements for myself."³ The choice of subject matter could also promulgate a painter's ideological or political allegiances, such as being loyal to the court and gallery rooms of the *Stadtholder*, the most powerful official in the Dutch Republic.

In researching such a highly acclaimed artist as Rembrandt, a great majority of scholarship is devoted to the analysis and attribution of works to the artist. Perhaps the temptation is too sweet to cast one's own judgement on his works? Haverkamp-Bergmann suggests the connoisseur's goal today is twofold, "in the case of Rembrandt's oeuvre to purify, and in that of his pupils to reconstruct."⁴ Copies can both purify an existing composition by improving it and also reconstruct an original through a student's hand. Considering copies satisfy both aspects of the Rembrandtian connoisseur's goal, it is strange that they seem to lack importance and remain on the periphery of scholarship. The Rembrandt Research Project (RRP), a committee of the most prominent Rembrandt scholars of the 20th century, were tasked with creating a catalogue of authentic works by Rembrandt. Throughout the corpora they have created, they include copies as a subheading, as part of evidence of the original work by Rembrandt. Beginning in the 1960s, The RRP reduced

³ Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself*, London: Penguin Books, 2018.

⁴ Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, "The State of Research in Northern Baroque Art," *The Art Bulletin* 69 (4), 1987: 516.

Rembrandt's oeuvre from around 600 in 1900 to around 300 today.⁵ Dr Ernst van de Wetering, the youngest member of the group, began to depart from the "extravagant mythologization" of the artist.⁶ Van de Wetering in Corpus VI reconstructs the idea of "*satellites*" which are "paintings by pupils that are variants based on works by Rembrandt-and their relation to the "*principaels*" on which they were based."⁷ While this does clarify variants, this still leaves copies to the presumed extremities of Rembrandt's "workshop," a term Liedtke calls "a peculiar thing."⁸ Copies are again not focused on because they evade van de Wetering's defining criteria. Copies are not "variants" or "principaels." There are very few highly exacting copies in existence. Van de Wetering does touch on the conundrum of dealing with both the prototype and copy stating,

"In our own time we are often confronted with this dilemma when dealing with possibly dubious old paintings in Rembrandt's style such as 19 (Indianapolis Self-Portrait), 36 (Bust of an Old Man) and 251, all cases where in which both the prototypes and copies after them have survived. Is it a literal copy after a lost original or a non-autograph creation by somebody from his workshop or after all, a "*principael*" by Rembrandt himself?"⁹ Van de Wetering offers useful options for consideration, however, forgets to address the possibility that Rembrandt might have painted copies, not just "principaels."

The title, "Well Cooked Turnips, Make Good Stew" at first glance may seem trivial or unnecessary just as a highly exacting copy might seem on the surface. However, with further inquiry they both provide great inference on the other. Karel van Mander, the seventeenth-century Dutch art historian of great repute actually recommended the aforementioned Dutch aphorism to

⁵ Sylvia Hochfield, "Rembrandt: Myth, Legend, Truth," ARTnews.com, July 1, 2006, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/rembrandt-myth-legend-truth-146/>.

⁶ Hochfield, "Rembrandt: Myth, Legend, Truth."

⁷ Corpus VI.

⁸ Walter Liedtke, "Rembrandt's 'Workshop' Revisited," *Oud Holland*, vol. 117, no. 1/2, 2004: 48.

⁹ Corpus VI.

painters.¹⁰ Alpers explains in her book, “Rembrandt and Enterprise”, that *Rapen*, which while meaning “turnips”, also means “pickings or stolen goods.”¹¹ Van Mander is saying to painters to utilize successful works and elements of successful paintings. A copy ascribes to that very spirit of utilizing successful compositions.

Rembrandt’s teachers installed van Mander’s painterly credo in Rembrandt’s early history and *Tronie* paintings. A *Tronie* is a genre of head study which was very popular in the Dutch seventeenth century. Samuel van Hoogstraten determined the human face to be a “mirror of the mind.”¹² History paintings generally depict narratives, either religious, mythological or historical. This thesis will narrow the focus on his early career from 1625-35, a ten-year period of great change for Rembrandt and his studio. These dates mark the first two books in the Corpora, Corpus I and II of the RRP. Copies in Corpus I and II will be investigated to look at overall trends, such as medium and artist attribution of works copied from Rembrandt. The researched data provided in this thesis roughly measures the phenomenon of copies. There are restrictions to how much we can infer; however it marks the beginning of giving more importance and possibilities to the copies of Rembrandt, which will hopefully inspire further research to come.

The second chapter further reveals how Rembrandt took inspiration from his antecedents, as well as himself, through utilizing such “pickings” by copying his own successful Self-Portraits. Rembrandt also competes with his contemporaries, drawing inspiration from them and his own previously successful compositions such as Judas Repentant (1629).

¹⁰ Karel van Mander and W. Waterschoot, *Ter Liefde Der Const: Uit Het Schilder-Boeck (1608) van Karel van Mander* (Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff, 1983).

¹¹ Svetlana Alpers, *Rembrandt’s Enterprise: The Studio and the Market* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 74.

¹² Thijs Weststeijn, Beverley Jackson, and Lynne Richards. *The Visible World: Samuel van Hoogstraten’s Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2008. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n0b8>).

Rembrandt does this in some cases to both expand his popular image as an artist and also to reveal his talent in painting in multiple styles. In doing so, Rembrandt's agency as an artist is strengthened because by creating a second version of the same composition, the painting is extended across two versions through such an act. To quote a famous maxim by Rembrandt, "A painting is finished when the artist says it's finished."¹³ Copies give Rembrandt the agency to extend the presence of the painting across multiple versions.

A general definition of the Baroque was self-awareness. By, creating two versions of the same composition, Rembrandt is able to reveal his ability to paint multiple styles, further emphasizing his skill as an artist. Walter Benjamin comments on both the student copying and the master's increasing publicity: "In principle, the work of art has always been reproducible...Such copying was also done by pupils as an artistic exercise, by masters in order to give works wider circulation."¹⁴ In practice however, it is my contention that copies of the seventeenth century are reproducible, but also discernible in some way through visual or scientific analysis. What remains the same across compositions are the visual elements such as, figure, pose, clothing etc. Revealing elements, however, often remain below the surface, such as *pentimenti* or the hatching style. These elements are important to consider when discussing copies and originals on which they are based.

Copies and their originals often have very different functions. An original can be a rougher attempt to successfully capture a likeness of the sitter. The function of the copy, whether done by a student or master, is to "reproduce" the original, to extend and emulate the composition. Also, copies can function to be smoother-styled compositions. It is clear students in Rembrandt's workshop did make copies of Rembrandt's work, but Rembrandt arguably also painted copies, at

¹³ Parkstone International, "A Painting Is Finished When the Artist Says It's Finished" - Rembrandt - Parkstone Art." 2014, Parkstone Art. October 16, 2014. <https://parkstone.international/2014/10/16/a-painting-is-finished-when-the-artist-says-its-finished-rembrandt/>

¹⁴Walter, Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". London, Penguin Books, 1935.

least before achieving the height of success he reached in Amsterdam by 1635. The third chapter explores a figure who appears in many compositions, who was previously known as, “Rembrandt’s Father.” Rembrandt and his contemporaries, create multiple versions of “Rembrandt’s Father” again, partly to expand and capitalize on the image of the sitter, who was already in the Royal Collection of the Stadtholder. Such a study can impact the present day, as it attempts to consider the overall larger effect of copying early works by Rembrandt. As Liedtke remarks, “It may not be essential in a broad view to know whether a picture was painted by Fabritius or Flinck, or even by Rembrandt or Bol, but it is important to realize that Rembrandt’s achievement was a part of a larger social phenomenon.”¹⁵ This larger social phenomenon is one that, openly embraces copies as an important practice for both the master and student within the Dutch Seventeenth Century.

¹⁵ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005



Figure 1 Portrait of Constantijn Huygens (1641), Van Mierevelt, Oil on Panel, Huygens Museum Hofwijck, Voorburg.

2. The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

Rembrandt was born in Leiden. In the seventeenth century, Leiden was the second largest town after Amsterdam in the province of Holland and had a rich textile industry. Leiden was also Holland's centre of religion and scholarship.¹⁶ Rembrandt was the fifth of six boys of Harmen Gerritszoon van Rijn and Neeltgen Willemsdochter van Zuijtbrouck.¹⁷ His father was a miller and was named the chairman of the neighbourhood where the family lived.¹⁸ Many scholars compare Rembrandt to Jan Lievens, a fellow painter from Leiden. The diplomat Constantijn Huygens knew both Lievens and Rembrandt and acted as an intermediary and artistic advisor to Frederik, The Prince of Orange, who became the ruling sovereign in 1625. Princess Amalia, Frederik's wife, wanted the new court to be highly cultured in line with other monarchies.¹⁹ Art Historian, Benjamin Binstock describes Huygens as the “*northern incarnation of the ideal Renaissance courtier described in Baldassare Castiglione's treatise.*”²⁰ Castiglione wrote, “*Il Cortigiano*”, The Book of the Courtier, in 1528 on how to be the ideal courtier. Castiglione wrote on various topics, including art.

“...there was no lack of other celebrated painters belonging to other illustrious families. In fact, from painting, which is in itself a most worthy and noble art...To be sure, anyone who does not esteem the art of painting seems to me to be quite wrong-headed. For when all is said and done,

16 The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Leiden | History, University & Canals | Britannica.” Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024, www.britannica.com/place/Leiden.

17 Lionello, Puppi, *I Diamanti dell'arte*. Firenze: Sadea Editore, 1969,3.

18 Puppi, *I Diamanti dell'arte*, 3.

19 Saskia, Beranek, “Strategies of Display in the Galleries of Amalia van Solms.” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 9:2 (Summer 2017) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2017.9.2.4

20 Constantijn Huygens, Excerpt from the autobiography of Constantijn Huygens, 1629-1631, translated by Benjamin Binstock.

the very fabric of the universe, which we can contemplate in the vast spaces of heaven, so resplendent with their shining stars, in the earth at its centre, girdled by the seas, varied with mountains, rivers and valleys, and adorned with so many different varieties of trees, lovely flowers and grasses, can be said to be a great and noble painting, composed by Nature and the hand of God. And, in my opinion, whoever can imitate it deserves the highest praise.”²¹

Castiglione, firstly, discusses how many artists came from wealthy families as was the case of Rembrandt. Secondly, he gives importance to art and *mimesis* of the real world. Huygens would do the same with portrait painting, which Rembrandt and others, such as Michiel van Mierevelt, would excel at:

“[Portrait painters] do not perhaps deserve much admiration because they concentrate all their efforts on a single part of the human body [the face]. Still, they have a noble and indispensable profession. I know no greater pleasure than to contemplate the painted facial characteristics of someone about whose life I have read or heard. It doesn’t matter to me if it concerns a good or a bad person. I can suffice by naming Michiel van Mierevelt, ‘facile princeps’ in this genre.”²²

In fact, in 1607 Prince Maurits commissioned Van Mierevelt to depict him wearing his golden suit of armour. Van Mierevelt produced copies of the prince’s portrait in various sizes. Van Mierevelt also started working with an engraver from Delft called Jan Mulder to create an etching of the prince’s portrait which could only be reproduced by Van Mierevelt. Copying portraits in the Dutch Art Market was an accepted practice and done by the most successful portrait painters of the day.

21 Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. and with an introduction by George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967; revised 1976), pp. 96–8. Copyright © George Bull, 1967, 96–8

22 Constantijn Huygens, quotation from the part of his unpublished autobiography in Latin, *De vita propria sermonum inter liberos* (1677) translated in Dutch by C.L. Heesakkers and published as *Mijn Jeugd* (My Childhood) in 1987.

It is apparent by January 1628 that Rembrandt at twenty-two was known for his natural talent as an artist. Alan Chong, in his introductory essay for an exhibition at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on the early Rembrandt, reveals a diary entry from a lawyer, Arnold Buchelius, “a miller’s son in Leiden is esteemed highly, [at painting] although prematurely.”²³ Huygens, perhaps favouring the bold divinations of appreciating a genius or *princeps* rather than a careful calculated student of the arts, refers to Rembrandt and Jan Lievens as, “my two youths, one was the son of a common embroiderer, the other a miller’s son, although certainly not of the same grain. Who could help but marvel that two such prodigies of talent and skill should spring up from such rustic roots?”²⁴ Rembrandt before gaining success is seen by Huygens as a young, rough prodigy with great talent. Although Rembrandt is seen as a prodigy, his family and background were not completely humble and as common as suggested. Arthur Wheelock Jr, previously the curator of the Northern Baroque in the National Gallery in Washington DC, comments that Rembrandt’s image is carefully crafted by himself and those in support of him.²⁵

In fact, Rembrandt was well-educated. When Rembrandt was young, he attended a Latin school, which was founded a few hundred years before. The Latin school was run by a Professor of Law who taught privileged boys who were from upper and middle classes from the age of seven to fourteen. Latin education was typically in preparation for university. Jan Jansz Orlers was the mayor of Leiden and wrote about Rembrandt and Lievens. Orlers wrote in 1641 that Rembrandt’s parents had sent him to school to learn Latin, so that he would be able to attend the “*leytsche Academie*.”²⁶ Rembrandt at fourteen years old in 1620, began attending the University of Leiden.²⁷

²³ Arthur K Wheelock Jr et al, *Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt*. W Books, 2000.

²⁴ Huygens, Excerpt of autobiography of Constantijn Huygens.

²⁵ Wheelock Jr, *Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt* 2000.

²⁶ Jan Jansz Orlers, “Beschrijvinge der Stadt Leyden.” Leiden, 1641.

²⁷ Puppi, *I Diamanti dell’arte*, 3.

The admissions entry states in Latin, “Rembrandt Harmensz. from Leiden, student of the arts, 14 years old, lives with his parents.”²⁸ This is a very good education to which only a few had access.

Realizing his talent for the arts in 1621, Rembrandt was apprenticed to Jacob Van Swanenburg for three years. Swanenburg was born in Leiden to a father who was a painter and artisan craftsman of stained-glass windows and other objects. The father Isaac had a certain amount of influence being Leiden’s mayor multiple times. Swanenburg was a leading artist of history painting in Leiden. Swanenburg is said to have gone to Italy in the 1590s, as many artists from the Dutch Republic would do.²⁹ In accordance with the rules of the Guild of Saint Luke, “Rembrandt’s first apprenticeship lasted three years with Swanenburg.”³⁰ As was the case for many other Dutch cities, it was required for artists to be a part of the guild, which is an association of craftsmen and merchants to build greater strength and protection for the group. Broadly speaking, being a part of the guild allowed artists to sell paintings. This is important because it reveals Rembrandt’s training and education as a student within the traditional confines of becoming an artist by following the national rules of the guilds and becoming a student of a successful, but not revolutionary, history painter.

After Swanenburg, Rembrandt for a brief period was taught by Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam. There was a precedent for such a decision because Lastman had previously taught Jan Lievens: “Lievens at 10 years old, went to Amsterdam in 1617 and stayed in Lastman’s studio until 1621.”³¹ This once again reveals perhaps not the move of an isolated genius, but Rembrandt following his contemporary, Jan Lievens. Lastman was very important for Rembrandt and

²⁸ Link between Rembrandt and the University.” Leiden University, www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/dossiers/rembrandt-and-leiden-university/link-between-rembrandt-and-the-university.

²⁹Arnold Houbraken, Rembrandt biography in “De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen” (1718), courtesy of the Digital library for Dutch literature

³⁰ Houbraken,1718

³¹ Houbraken,1718

Lievens' artistic development and career. Lastman was born in Amsterdam and was a widely praised history painter. Theodore Rodenburg (ca.1574–1644) described him together with Jan Pynas (1581–1631) as a leader of the new generation of Amsterdam history painters. Out of this new generation, many had visited Italy and were influenced by Adam Elsheimer (1578–1610), who, “entirely counter to the prevailing mannerist fashion, produced small-scale history paintings with great attention to detail and realism.”³²

Adam Elsheimer was a German artist living and working in Rome. Rembrandt's first signed painting, The Stoning of St Stephen (1625) seems to be in direct reference and a variation of Elsheimer's composition of the same name. As Corpus I of the RRP states, The Stoning of St Stephen is “one of Rembrandt's first recognizable and signed works.”³³ This painting reveals Rembrandt as a student in practice closely imitating, if not copying, Elsheimer's compositional structure. It is interesting the Corpus suggests this work as recognizably by Rembrandt, presumably in terms of style as it is utilizing the compositional structure of Elsheimer. Some scholars detect various self-portraits of Rembrandt throughout the figure's faces.³⁴ Rembrandt, as a student, is synthesizing the practice of portraiture and history painting, both genres seamlessly blend into one another. This is important because Rembrandt later on will use his successful *Tronie* portraits and incorporate them into his history paintings.

³² Piet Bakker, “Pieter Lastman.” In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/artists/pieter-lastman/> (accessed November 14, 2024).

³³ Corpus I, 68.

³⁴ Wallace, Robert (1968). *The World of Rembrandt: 1606-1669*. New York: Time-Life Books. 38.



Figure 2 *The Stoning of St Stephen*, Adam Elsheimer (1610), Oil on Tinned Copper, Scottish National Gallery



Figure 3 *The Stoning of St Stephen*, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1625), Musee des Beaux Arts De Lyon

Rembrandt continues to experiment with compositions of Lastman's, such as Bileam's Ass Balking at the Angel (1626), which Lastman had produced in 1622. Famous and successful painters were amongst Lastman's milieu. Some, such as Pieter Isaacsz, had royal positions as court painters. Isaacsz, painted *schuttersstukken* (civic guardsmen portraits). Rembrandt would go on to produce *schuttersstukken*, such as one of his most famous paintings, The Nightwatch (1642).³⁵ Rembrandt produced variations of works by Lastman and his contemporaries. As Liedtke states, "Rembrandt made a lasting impression on his disciples but also Rembrandt himself as a disciple had a considerable effect from his master's ideas."³⁶ These examples reveal, using van de Wetering's terminology, Rembrandt as a student producing "satellites" of Lastman's and other artists' "principaels."

³⁵ G Schaep, Tom van der Molen (translator), "The Paintings in the Three Civic Guard Halls in Amsterdam, 1653." *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 5:1 (Winter 2013) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2013.5.1.7

³⁶ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005.



Figure 4 Balaam and the Ass, Pieter Lastman (1622), Oil on Panel, Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Figure 5 Balaam and the Ass, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1627), Oil on Panel, Musée Cognacq-Jay

The Balaam and the Ass compositions are extremely similar. A central male figure, wearing a red mantle and head covering with his arm raised, holds a club while mounted on a donkey on the verge of bucking. Meanwhile, the angel in white holds a sword drawn back in a moment of tension. In the background, figures are witnessing the event under a blue and clouded sky. Rembrandt's composition seems to be narrower, which heightens tension through the pressure of the vertical axis of the angel directly above the ass. There is a triangular, interlocking of forms and gaze between the titular figures, creating greater pressure. Rembrandt does not seem to be exactly copying Lastman's composition but produced a variation which implies more tension and therefore, in my opinion, improves the composition. The Corpus describes this interaction rather vaguely as a "discussion" with Lastman.³⁷ It seems that from this discussion Rembrandt intends to copy and change the composition.

Rembrandt is learning how to produce variations of successful compositions by imitating those by already well-established and successful artists. In Rembrandt's inventory of his possessions drawn up in 1656, there are two albums of sketches by Lastman: one in pen and the other in red chalk.³⁸ This, alongside the practicing of compositions by Lastman and his circle, reveals how important the artist and was to Rembrandt throughout his life. Rembrandt adhered strictly to not only the traditional canon of the History of Art through allusions to the Italian Renaissance, but also the political and artistic elite in Leiden through a strong, well-rounded education and personal connection to successful local artists.

This makes for the physical creation of highly similar compositions of pre-existing, successful compositions. However, does this adhere to van de Wetering's idea of a "variation" or is it more favourable to describe Rembrandt as copying his masters? It seems that Rembrandt is

³⁷ Corpus I, Preface XVII

³⁸ Benesch The Drawings of Rembrandt, 30 May 2021, rembrandtcatalogue.net/catalogue-benesch-451-500/.

doing both by copying his masters and producing slight variations in order to improve the outcome of the composition. This technique of copying and producing a slight change is vital because it reveals the intent and reasoning behind why Rembrandt might paint a copy not just of his masters' work, but his own, namely, in order to emulate it and improve it.

After the apprenticeship with Lastman, Orlers states Rembrandt, "decided to practice the art of painting entirely on his own."³⁹ According to the accomplished art historian, Christopher White, however, Rembrandt opened a studio in Leiden with Lievens.⁴⁰ Rembrandt and Lievens shared a strong competitive relationship. According to the late 17th century Dutch biographer Arnold Houbraken, Jan's father was Lieven Hendriksze, an embroider. This is a more traditional background for an artist. Lievens, known by his second name, left for Amsterdam earlier than Rembrandt. Young Rembrandt in a biographical way, can be seen to follow in the footsteps of his Leiden contemporary. In an artistic sense, Rembrandt and Lievens were level pegging and "symbiotic" as Wetering states.⁴¹ Perry Chapman writes a great biography of Rembrandt's early career through the lens of the Leiden collection.⁴² Chapman writes, *'to say that from the outset Rembrandt and Lievens were close colleagues does not fully capture the nature of their friendship...'* Liedtke continues on this same vein, *"It appears that the work of no other colleague of Rembrandt ever came close to his own as that of Lievens did in 1630 and 1631."*⁴³

It has been suggested that Lievens and Rembrandt did not expressly copy each other but often produced *variations* of the same compositions. One example is The Raising of Lazarus (1630-32), a subject which was painted by both Jan Lievens and Rembrandt. Both compositions

³⁹ Orlers, 1641

⁴⁰ Christopher White et al. *Art in the Making. Rembrandt*, London: National Gallery Company Ltd, 1988, 51.

⁴¹ E. van de Wetering, "De symbiose van Lievens en Rembrandt," in *Rembrandt en Lievens in Leiden: Een jong en edel schildersduo*, ed. Christiaan Vogelaar (Exh. cat. Leiden, Museum de Lakenhal) (Zwolle, 1991), 39–47.

⁴² H. Perry Chapman, "Rembrandt and The Leiden Collection." In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023.

⁴³ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005.

of The Raising of Lazarus are highly dramatic with darkened, subdued tones which might have been more characteristic of interpretation for the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of which Harmen, Rembrandt's father was a member. The Dutch Royal family were also traditionally a part of the DRC. Considering Harmen's position as chairman of his neighbourhood, it is fitting that he is a part of the religion held by the establishment and monarchy.

Rembrandt actually owned Lieven's painting, which perhaps shows his admiration towards his friend and contemporary.⁴⁴ X-radiographs, which are used in painting analysis to look through the surface of the painting into the underlayers of the work, reveal the difference in working method between Lievens and Rembrandt.⁴⁵ Rembrandt's natural *sprezzatura* is apparent. This is evident through the various *pentimenti* as seen in the Raising of St Lazarus radiograph because to change the composition whilst painting it, shows it was not already pre-determined, revealing the attitude of a natural prodigy. Van Mander reinforces this view of Rembrandt, "drawing fluently by hand on their panels what they have already seen painted in their mind's eye."⁴⁶ Whereas in Lievens' composition radiograph, White asserts "there seems to be no changes made during the course of the execution."⁴⁷ Rembrandt's *pentimenti* reinforce the idea of Rembrandt's *sprezzatura* and in doing so might reject the idea of careful copying. However, Rembrandt practiced the composition by creating other variants, such as an etching of The Raising of Lazarus, which is highly detailed and differs in composition. Rembrandt must have taken great care creating this composition and practiced creating the composition by creating other variants.

⁴⁴ Richard Rand, Joseph Fronek, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. *The Raising of Lazarus by Rembrandt*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991.

⁴⁵ White, *Art in the Making Rembrandt*, 1998, 63.

⁴⁶ White, *Art in the Making Rembrandt*, 1998, 44.

⁴⁷ White, *Art in the Making Rembrandt*, 1998, 63



Figure 6 *The Raising of Lazarus*, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (Ca1632), Etching, *The Metropolitan Museum, New York*

Rembrandt's depiction is not the production of a random spark of genius, but the active consideration and addition to the historical canon. The Raising of Lazarus is a popular Catholic subject which was prevalent in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque, such as Sebastian Del Piombo's Raising of St Lazarus (ca.1517-19) and Caravaggio's canvas of the same name (1609). Rembrandt, unlike Lievens, is referred to by his first name, which harks back to such Italian Renaissance Old Masters such as, Tiziano, Raffaello, and Michelangelo. Despite the fact that Rembrandt never went to Italy, unlike many of his contemporaries, he was aware of such artists and their work, and the act of naming the greats on a first name basis. Lastman's connections and influence from Elsheimer contributed to Rembrandt's history paintings. Rembrandt's mother was Catholic, which was a more popular religion in the South of the Netherlands. Looking at Lievens' and Rembrandt's paintings together, the same figures and poses appear across the paintings. For example, the bystanders in the Raising of Lazarus, the shocked woman and the man inspecting the miracle are found in both.

Not only is Rembrandt embedded within the historical canon of religious history painting, but he is also engaged in competition with Lievens. Although they are not expressly copying each other, they are painting very similar compositions, making such depictions not dramatic acts of *sprezzatura*, but variations of the same composition vying for a superior production. This statement of intent and competition is important to emphasize because it places Rembrandt nearer toward copying his own work. What was before, an act of copying and producing variations of his teachers, is now in a similar vein applicable to someone with whom he might have shared a studio.

Corpus I of the RRP discusses the various versions across media of The Raising of Lazarus and how they relate to each other. Some scholars such as, Saxl, suggest Rembrandt's drawing

of The Raising of Lazarus is a copy after Lievens' etching.⁴⁸ Saxl thereby asserts that Rembrandt copied Lievens and makes a convincing argument in doing so. This would make sense considering Lievens went to Amsterdam and began training with Lastman earlier than Rembrandt. There are other drawings which reveal Rembrandt copying works, such as a quick sketch of Raphael's portrait of Baldassare Castiglione, which when it was auctioned in sale of Lucas van Uffelen's collection in Amsterdam, was dated to 1639.⁴⁹ Although this is later than the period in discussion, it shows Rembrandt's awareness of the Italian Renaissance and in relation to Huygens. In fact, it was Lievens who won the portrait commission of Huygens in 1628-29. The final painting composition of Rembrandt's Raising of Lazarus seems not to be a copy of Lievens but carries with it similarities or *Rapen* to how Rembrandt imitated Lastman's Balaam and the Ass. Rembrandt once again created a tighter, triangular interlocking of figures along the vertical axis.

⁴⁸ Corpus I, 305.

⁴⁹ Rembrandt van Rijn (Leiden 1606-Amsterdam 1669)-Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione, after Raphael, with Notes." www.rct.uk, www.rct.uk/collection/852072/portrait-of-baldassare-castiglione-after-raphael-with-notes.



Figure 8 The Raising of Lazarus, Jan Lievens, (1631-2), Oil on Canvas, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery



Figure 7 Raising of Lazarus, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1630-2), Oil on Panel, Los Angeles County Museum

Rembrandt did not just pick previous compositional structures, but also reutilized figures. Figures from previous compositions become the *Rapen* (pickings) he used. The Corpus says that Rembrandt borrows elements for The Raising of Lazarus from the previous composition, Judas Repentant (1629), “...*These include details such as the type and execution of the old men on the left who appear in both works, leaning forwards and illuminated obliquely from behind.*”⁵⁰ Rembrandt follows the aphorism, “Well-Cooked Turnips Make Good Stews.” The history painting Judas Repentant achieved great success and was well-regarded at the time. Huygens determined the painting of Judas Repentant as, the finest of all his works.⁵¹ Therefore, it seems perfectly reasonable to assert Rembrandt did in fact utilize elements from a well-regarded composition. Rembrandt in his output can be seen copying his own work, just not as obviously as making a prototype and a copy.

Baker discusses Judas Repentant and its copies for an article in the well-known, art historical periodical, The Burlington Magazine. Baker mentions the version in Corpus I as belonging to Lord Moyne and the existence of at least five copies.⁵² Baker also discusses a debate regarding two works both assumed to be by Rembrandt containing small differences, such as colour and gaze in the figures. There is a copy listed by Isaac De Jourdeville, who was born in Leiden like Rembrandt, Lievens and Dou.⁵³ Jourdeville’s parents had an Inn where Prince Maurits stayed when visiting in 1618.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Corpus I, 303.

⁵¹ Corpus I, 193.

⁵² Collins Baker, C. H.. “Rembrandt’s Thirty Pieces of Silver.” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 75, no. 440 (1939): 179–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/867865>. 179-180.

⁵³ Corpus I, 195

⁵⁴ Piet Bakker, “Pieter Lastman.” 2023.

Rembrandt's Raising of Lazarus is also copied. The Rembrandt Research Project (RRP) has questioned whether this copy is even from the 17th century at all. In Corpus 1 of the RRP it states, "*it certainly does not emanate from Rembrandt's entourage.*"⁵⁵ There is some debate since Abraham Bredius, a highly regarded Rembrandt scholar, does not affirm the RRP's view and believes the copy was the original and the other version, a copy.⁵⁶ This reveals the difficulty of accurate connoisseurship without up-to-date, scientific analysis. What it does show is that whilst Rembrandt drew inspiration from his teachers such as Lastman, he is now looking to and with his contemporaries, such as Lievens. Rembrandt also drew inspiration from his own previously successful compositions, coming yet closer to copying himself in order to emulate and improve his compositions. Without further scientific analysis, it cannot be asserted that any copy of The Raising of Lazarus is a work of Rembrandt or the studio, however it can be presumed that whilst Rembrandt is gaining inspiration, so are his students, Isaac De Jourdeville and Gerrit Dou in possibly copying works, such as Judas Repentant and The Raising of Lazarus.

Rembrandt's students certainly created copies and variants of Rembrandt's work. Looking at the data from Corpus I (1625-31), there are forty-two considered authentic works by Rembrandt.⁵⁷ There are around fifty considered copies of these original paintings. This is roughly a ratio of 1: 1 original to copy. The known copies stated in the Corpus, are not evenly distributed across the original paintings. There are no stated copies of the first seven authenticated Rembrandt works. It can be assumed that when these were produced, Rembrandt was still a student in training rather than having students of his own and, as argued above, he was not producing copies, but producing variations of pre-existing works by his masters.

⁵⁵ Corpus I, 306.

⁵⁶ Corpus I, 306-7.

⁵⁷ Corpus I.

Around 1627-8 Rembrandt began to accept students, among them Gerrit Dou (1613-1675) and a few years later in 1630, Isaac De Jourdeville (1612-45).⁵⁸ This roughly fits with the data seen from copies apparent in Corpus I with the first copy being from the Bust of a Man with a Gorget Cap dated 1627 and the rough increase in copies per year. Gerrit Dou is mentioned as a possible painter making copies of Bust of an Old Man with A Fur Cap (1630) and Saint Peter in Prison (1631). This is a small number works. However, Dou throughout his career was known to take a long time producing paintings and later on as an independent artist would charge high prices for doing so.⁵⁹ Copies tend to exactly recreate the original. Presumably, it might have been easier for Dou as a student to copy pre-existing paintings rather than require live models for a long amount of time. Orlers writes that Dou, “*after working from a very young age with a copper engraver and a glass painter as well as being a part of the glaziers’ guild for three years, before becoming an apprentice Rembrandt in 1628.*”⁶⁰ Peter Schatborn writes on the students’ process stating, “*From such flat models the artists in training graduated to casts after statues and finally to the live model. The handling of composition was also learned from copying previous works of art.*”⁶¹

It must be assumed that some paintings no longer exist or are yet to be discovered. This number of autograph works equates to Rembrandt painting just under eight paintings a year, which is fewer than one a month. For a young, energetic, ambitious and aspiring full-time professional artist, this seems to be a very small output. However, this does not include any etchings and drawings of which Rembrandt is known to have produced. Like Rembrandt’s output, the known

⁵⁸ Piet Bakker, “Gerrit Dou and His Collectors in the Golden Age.” In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/essays/gerrit-dou-and-his-collectors-in-the-golden-age/> (accessed November 22, 2024).

⁵⁹ Bakker, “Gerrit Dou and His Collectors in the Golden Age.”

⁶⁰ Orlers, 1641.

⁶¹ Peter Schatborn, *Dutch Figure Drawings from the Seventeenth Century* Internet Archive, 2023, archive.org/details/dutchfiguredrawi0000scha. Accessed 7 Dec. 2024.

output of copies represents a very low level of copies produced, especially if many are later reproductions and only some by Rembrandt's early students.

Looking at the medium of these copied works in Table 1, twenty-five out of those fifty, are on panel as seen in light blue. This means the majority of copies are on panel during Rembrandt's early career. Seven out of those forty-six are known to be on canvas. That equates to around fifteen percent of copies being on canvas, which is a small proportion. There is a lot of uncertainty as data on copies is limited due to several factors, such as the lack of scholarship, the timespan since these works and the limited documentation of such works. However, one can conclude that the majority of copied works were on panel while Rembrandt was in Leiden. This is in line with Rembrandt's own use of panel, which he utilized throughout his whole Leiden period. Infact, it is also in line with the known works of Lastman, Lievens and Dou, who all preferred the use of panel.

In the data collected, there is only one canvas copy of any Rembrandt original, whereas there are multiple panel copies. Perhaps this suggests one artist is using canvas and others using panel? Could Rembrandt or one of his students in his Leiden period be practicing using canvas? Corpus I does not contain any works by Rembrandt on canvas. In future research, it would be interesting to look more closely at these canvas copies. However, at present, little documentation or images can be found. The first authenticated painting by Rembrandt on canvas is in Corpus II, No.A44 of a Portrait of a Man at a Writing Desk (1631) which has no stated copies in the Corpus.⁶²

Some history paintings have multiple copies, such as Simeon in the Temple (1627-28) and S.Peter in Prison (1631) with four to five copies. Also, David Playing the Harp to Saul (1629/30) has three copies. The increase in copies in the period of 1629-31 roughly corroborates with these paintings being copied multiple times. However, it is difficult without further inquiry to see

⁶² (Data from Corpus II)

whether most of these copies can be dated contemporaneously to the originals. The paintings previously mentioned are all history paintings, which suggest the importance for students to practice this genre, such as Rembrandt did when he was a student. Rembrandt's Self-Portraits also get copied multiple times. In graph 10 and 11, one can see that copies of Rembrandt roughly increase as the years advance, supporting his gaining popularity and recognition. This data can only offer us overarching patterns, preferences and inferences without being too reliant on exact qualitative measures of paintings.

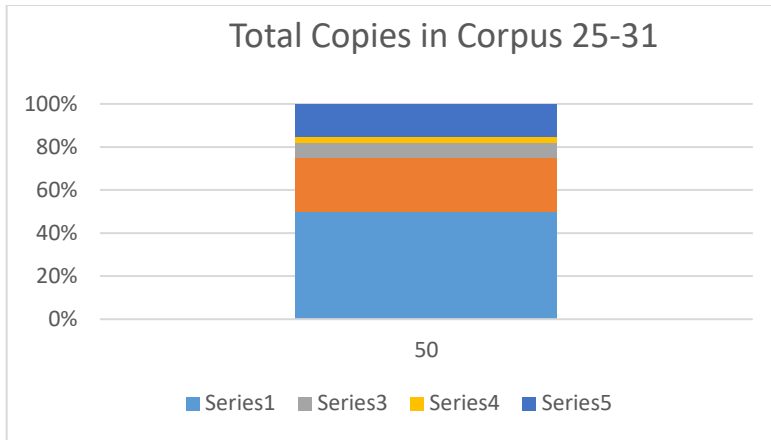


Table 1 Total Copies in Corpus I

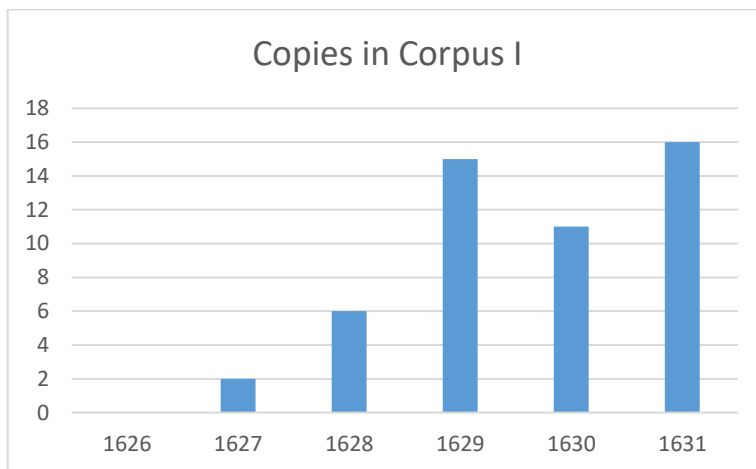


Table 2 Total copies from Corpus I (1626-31)

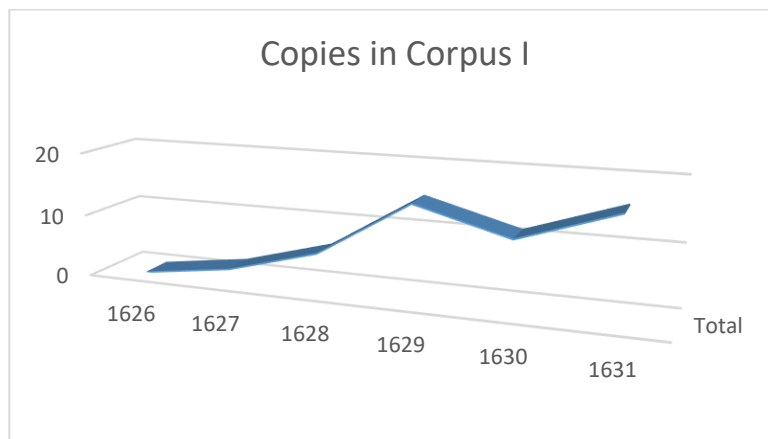


Table 3 Total copies from Corpus I (1626-31)

Samuel Ireland, about one century and a half later, writes of a great anecdote of Rembrandt leaving Leiden: “*Rembrandt when young, fulfilled a picture of great merit conveyed by the advice of his friends to Amsterdam...he became too great a man to return home.*”⁶³ In the autumn of 1631, Rembrandt begins to move from Leiden to Amsterdam and it seems that his student Gerrit Dou, remained in Leiden. Gerrit Dou is thought to have stayed in Leiden for the rest of his career.⁶⁴ According to Bijl, De Jourdeville might have operated as a journeyman for Rembrandt.⁶⁵

Alan Chong describes the contrast between Amsterdam and Leiden as being drastic.⁶⁶ Amsterdam was a bustling city and a great center of trade and commerce, which was undergoing a major economic and artistic boom. It was the largest city in the Dutch Republic and clearly a very attractive place for an artist to sell his paintings. As Sluijter rightly states, the number of painters living in Amsterdam increased dramatically during Rembrandt’s career.⁶⁷ Rembrandt painted portraits and gained commissions. “Upon his move to Amsterdam in 1631/32 Rembrandt initially switched specialties, virtually wholesale, from history to portraiture.”⁶⁸ According to Westermann, the decision to change made complete economic sense. There were very successful native portraitists such as Thomas De Keyser, who had depicted Huygens in 1627, and Nicolaes Elias, known as Pickenoy, who produced portraits for the wealthy patrons of Amsterdam.

⁶³ Samuel Ireland, *A Picturesque Tour through Holland, Brabant, and Part of France, Made in the Autumn of 1789*.

⁶⁴ Ronni Baer, *Gerrit Dou 1613–1675: A Master in the Age of Rembrandt*, Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London, Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

⁶⁵ Martin Bijl, ‘Gerrit Dou as a Pupil of Rembrandt’, in S. S. Dickey (ed.), *Rembrandt and his Circle. Insights and Discoveries*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017, 169—88. 175 and 185.

⁶⁶ Martin Chong et al, *Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt*, 2000.65-80.

⁶⁷ Eric Jan Sluijter, *Art and Competition in the Dutch Golden Age* (three lectures) Erasmus Lectures, Department of the History of Art and Architecture and the Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University, on February 22, March 1 and March 8, 2019. Lecture – “Gerrit Dou and the Art of Deception”, at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (April 7, 2019).

⁶⁸ Mariet Westermann, *Rembrandt*. 2000.



Figure 9 The Osteology Lesson of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz, Thomas de Keyser or Nicolaes Eliaszoon Pickenoy, (1619), oil on canvas, 135 x 186 cm (Amsterdam Historical Museum)



Figure 10 Portrait of Constantin Huygens and his clerk? Thomas de Keyser, (1627), The National Gallery

Looking at Corpus II, when Rembrandt moves to Amsterdam around 1631, across a four-year period there are one-hundred and four authenticated works. Out of these authenticated works there are around forty-six copies in existence.⁶⁹ Therefore, from 1625-31 there are fifty copies and from 1631-34 there are forty-seven, about the same number of copies in both periods. This is interesting because Rembrandt is producing over double the amount of works in his early Amsterdam period from forty-two in Leiden to one hundred and four in Amsterdam. This correlates with Rembrandt's apparent success as a portraitist. In Amsterdam, Rembrandt painted around twenty paintings a year. This is an increase of over one hundred percent from around eight a year in Corpus I. Again, presumably many no longer exist, or have not been documented in the Corpus. However, does this account for the increase in originals being twice as many as the copies produced? Could this mean there are many copies to be re-discovered? Perhaps copying for students, although useful, was not as important as producing variations of successful compositions. Seventeen of the forty-six copies are on canvas, revealing the switch from panel to canvas for students copying his work. This is again in line with the master's use of medium when canvas begins to be used rather than the previous period when no canvas paintings are evident. As in Leiden, the copies are not evenly split.

The majority of works in Corpus II are portraits. Certain portraits are copied multiple times such as Portrait of Nicholas Ruts (1631) and Half-Length Figure of Saskia van Uylenburgh in rich apparel (1634), as well as certain history paintings such as The Rape of Europa (1632). It could be suggested that many private commissions for wealthy patrons were not copied on the grounds of being produced directly for the sitter in the moment. On top of this, it is a period of less practice for Rembrandt and more commissions, therefore, fewer studio copies seem acceptable. Rembrandt

⁶⁹ Data From Corpus II

in this period is moving from Leiden to Amsterdam. Perhaps, it is more of a period of intense striving to acquire success and fame while adjusting to Amsterdam life. Christine Slottviel Kimbriel discusses the uncertainty of “*Rembrandt’s production at this moment of transition, when his focus on, and physical presence in, Leiden was dwindling, while his attention pivoted towards his establishment in Amsterdam.*”⁷⁰

In 1631, Rembrandt stayed and worked at Hendrick Van Ulyenburgh’s house and studio, even giving him a sum of a thousand guilders while still in Leiden, which is five times the annual income of a day laborer, therefore a huge amount.⁷¹ This was presumably an investment or “deposit” for future commissions, as well as to stay at his house and work in his studio. Hendrick Van Ulyenburgh was a painter and art dealer living and working in Amsterdam. Ulyenburgh was wealthy and well-connected. Originally Dutch, Ulyenburgh grew up in Poland with his father and brother both working for the King of Poland. Ulyenburgh was a Mennonite and came from a Mennonite family. Rembrandt got many of his early commissions through the Mennonite community. It is said that the Portrait of Nicholas Ruts, the Mennonite trader, was possibly Rembrandt’s first portrait commission in Amsterdam.⁷² Now in the Frick Collection, it is a very smooth and tight-mannered painting with a fine rendering of fur jacket cuff and a white lace collar. There are four copies of this work listed, however, according to the Corpus, none are oil paintings produced within Rembrandt’s entourage, instead they are later copies after Rembrandt’s death.⁷³

Rembrandt married Saskia van Ulyenburg, who was Hendricke’s cousin, in 1634.⁷⁴ By 1637, Hendricke van Ulyenburgh had actually moved into artist and friend of Lastman, Pieter

⁷⁰ Kimbriel, Christine Slottved, Louis Newman and Kamilla Gora. Double-take: Rembrandt’s c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy. Hamilton Kerr Institute Annual Bulletin No.10, 2024, University of Cambridge. Pg 123-137.

⁷¹ Eric Jan Sluijter, Lecture – “Gerrit Dou and the Art of Deception”, 2017.

⁷² Corpus II.

⁷³ Corpus II, A43, P113.

⁷⁴ Lippi, *I diamanti dell’arte*, 4.

Isaacsz's old house, called "The *Kronenbourg*." Saskia's father, Rombertus, was the mayor (*Burgomaster*) of Leeuwarden.⁷⁵ As a result of his marriage, Rembrandt became the member of the local Guild of Painters and a citizen of Amsterdam. There has been much consideration in this period of students passing off paintings in Rembrandt's name. Liedtke remarks unequivocally, "There is positively no evidence, however, that Uylenburgh employed any other artist in the period between 1631-35 who was capable of painting the pictures by Rembrandt that, a decade ago, were described by the RRP as products of his workshop."⁷⁶

Rembrandt did acquire a number of students, most notably, Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck around 1634.⁷⁷ The data from 1631-34 does not reveal an increase in copies, in fact, it reveals a decrease compared to Rembrandt's own output. Could this mean that students were painting works for Rembrandt? Liedtke disagrees with the 'bold assertion' that students would attempt to pass off works as by Rembrandt, even signing such works with his name. There is an example of Flinck copying Rembrandt's composition of the Sacrifice of Isaac (1635), however it is signed and stated as a Flinck version amended by Rembrandt, therefore not perpetrating as a Rembrandt composition.

⁷⁵ Lippi, *I diamanti dell'arte* 4

⁷⁶ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005

⁷⁷ "Drawings by Rembrandt and His Pupils: Telling the Difference - CODART." CODART, CODART - Dutch and Flemish art in museums worldwide, 2016, www.codart.nl/guide/agenda/drawings-by-rembrandt-and-his-pupils-telling-the-difference/. Accessed 7 Dec. 2024.



Figure 11 Sacrifice of Isaac, Rembrandt van Rijn (1635), Oil on Panel, Hermitage Museum



Figure 12 Sacrifice of Isaac Goveart Flinck, (1635), Private Collection

Looking at the data in the Corpora about copies compared to Rembrandt originals, it can be seen that he began by learning from his teachers and then the surrounding artists of the period through Lastman and his circle of fashionable artists. Rembrandt's work does not get copied, but he is copying other people's paintings by copying and producing slight variations in form. After having closely imitated his elders, Rembrandt remained engaged with his contemporaries, especially Jan Lievens with whom he would share a strong competitive relationship. Some even present strong arguments that Rembrandt copied Lievens. This competitive relationship and the production of works very similar to each other reveals that Rembrandt drew inspiration from figures around him and was not an isolated genius. Rembrandt even utilizes previously successful figures in later compositions, such as those in Judas Repentant being used in The Raising of Lazarus.

3. Two Sides of the Same Coin; Rembrandt's Rough and Smooth Self Portraiture

Self-Portraits by Rembrandt are both *Tronie* Portraits, which are personal studies of the face, and public depictions of the artist. Rembrandt self-portraiture also provides the possibility that Rembrandt, as well as his students, did copies. Wheelock charts Rembrandt's changing depiction in self-portraits.⁷⁸ Rembrandt begins by depicting himself in a rough and coarse almost homeless appearance, which suggests, according to Wheelock, the naturally gifted youth. Later on, Rembrandt depicts himself as an upright, upstanding citizen in a smooth manner. Wheelock touches on the psychological reasoning for such a varied and changing style and then emphasizes the "relationship between technique and artistic purpose."⁷⁹

Two versions of the same Self-Portrait at an Early Age (1628-29) of Rembrandt in three-quarter profile exist. His large mass of curly hair covers the strong, slightly unnatural light source from the right, with shadows falling below and under his eyes. The shadows hide the eyes which creates a feeling of modesty, shyness and mystery. Both reinforce the image of Rembrandt and his talent hidden amongst his shy nature and humble origins. The copy is compositionally similar but different in manner, appearing smoother in appearance. Arguably, Wheelock's theory of going from rough, coarse self-portraits to smoother more refined portraits is evident in the manner of two versions of the same work. Perhaps Rembrandt painted both works illustrating Sluijter's theory of Rembrandt being able to reveal the ability to paint multiple styles through a rough and a smooth

⁷⁸ Wheelock Jr, Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt 2000.

⁷⁹ Wheelock Jr, Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt 2000, 13-23.

manner, (*Handelingen*).⁸⁰ Through the copying of his self-portraits by himself or a student, Rembrandt publicized his image. Gary Swartz comments on the two self-portraits, one hanging in Kassel and the other more recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum.⁸¹ Schwartz goes on to discuss how experts considered the Kassel version a more “*impressionistic painting*” to be by Rembrandt, however now the “*sharper version*” in the Rijksmuseum, Schwartz thinks is more likely to be by Rembrandt.⁸²

Schwartz also discusses another pair of Self Portraits with a Steel Gorget (ca.1629), one in the Mauritshuis Museum and the other in Nuremberg Museum. In the 1990s the Mauritshuis Self-Portrait underwent infrared reflectography and the use of lead underdrawings was detected particularly visible under the sitter’s eye.⁸³ This led to some scholars believing the Mauritshuis Self-Portrait to be a copy by another artist, possibly Gerrit Dou.⁸⁴ While the other work, now presumed the original, Self-Portrait with a Steel Gorget, hangs in the Nuremberg Museum. This caused considerable debate amongst scholars. Simon Schama has strong opinions on this question, so it is worth quoting his text from his book, Rembrandt’s Eyes (1999) in full:

...I remain bemused by rushes to judgement and by the immediate deference to those judgements shown by museum curators. A recent case in point is the unarguably beautiful Mauritshuis 1629 Self Portrait Wearing a Gorget, which has recently been held to be a copy of the original in Nuremberg...on the grounds that underdrawing discovered in the

⁸⁰ Eric Jan, Sluijter. “The ‘Tronie of a Young Officer with a Gorget’ in the Mauritshuis: A Second Version by Rembrandt Himself?” *Oud Holland* 114, no. 2/4 2000: 188–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42712024>.

⁸¹ Gary Schwartz “401 My Ten Favorite Rembrandt Self-Portraits – Gary Schwartz Art Historian.” www.garyschwartzarthistorian.nl, 21 Nov. 2021, www.garyschwartzarthistorian.nl/401-my-ten-favorite-rembrandt-self-portraits/. Accessed 7 Dec. 2024.

⁸² Schwartz, “My Favourite Rembrandt Self Portraits”

⁸³ J. Wadum, ‘Rembrandt under the Skin. The Mauritshuis Portrait of Rembrandt with Gorget in retrospect’; E. Buijsen, ‘Rembrandt’s self-portrait with gorget : an ongoing debate’, *Oud Holland* 114 (2000), pp. 164 – 187.

⁸⁴ Eric Jan, Sluijter. “The ‘Tronie of a Young Officer with a Gorget’ in the Mauritshuis: A Second Version by Rembrandt Himself?”, 2000, 188.

Hague painting is inconsistent with Rembrandt's habitual practice. And so, it is. But inconsistency, of itself, doesn't make for inadmissibility. Supposing that the Hague painting is indeed the work of a pupil, exactly which prodigy in 1629 is meant to have the skill to execute something so stunning? The fourteen-year-old freshly apprenticed Gerard Dou? On the evidence of his early work, this is inconceivable. Isaac De Jourdeville? Almost as implausible. Not a pupil at all, then, but the unquestionably gifted Lievens? But we have Lievens portrait of Rembrandt in a Gorget, and it looks nothing remotely like the Mauritshuis painting. We are left with only two options for assigning authorship: either some unknown pupil, whose astounding technical skill somehow wasn't enough to rescue him from complete oblivion, or else the possibility that both these heads are from Rembrandt's own hand, notwithstanding the underdrawings. For Rembrandt did, in fact, make near identical versions of the same painting: for example, the Munich and Amsterdam tronies of his own face.⁸⁵

Other scholars agree with this hypothesis such as Wheelock, who states, "It is entirely possible, indeed probable, that the elegant portrait of Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis is by Rembrandt himself rather than an unknown follower...although the Mauritshuis is demonstrably a second version of the self-portrait in Nuremberg."⁸⁶

The copying of Rembrandt's Self-portraiture reveals Liedtke's idea of imitation as a form of emulation.⁸⁷ The exact compositions having a rough and a smooth manner reinforces Wheelock's theory of Rembrandt's change in self-portraiture appearance, not just across different paintings, but arguably in the same composition. If both paintings were to be by Rembrandt, this

⁸⁵ Simon Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*. London, Penguin Books, 2014. 703.

⁸⁶ Wheelock Jr, *Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt* 2000, 19.

⁸⁷ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005.

adds a level of sophistication to what Sluijter refers to as “*handling*”, (*Handelingen*), the ability to paint in both a rough and smooth style. Sluijter is not alone in his belief that Rembrandt attempted to reveal his ability to paint multiple styles. Onno Blom discusses this issue at length in his book Young Rembrandt, which is worth quoting at length:

The only little paintings that Rembrandt made on three gilded copper plates, all the same size must have been intended for visitors of this kind-to give them something to talk about and a selection from which to choose. There is no common theme among the facial types...Rather, the connection is precisely the difference between them. The soldier is painted in wide, coarse brushstrokes, the Self-Portrait in softer, more fluid strokes and the old woman in delicate, cautious, meticulous little strokes. Rembrandt showed the ease with which he was able to apply these styles in his paintings: the soldier was painted in the stilus humilis [plain], the self-portrait in the stilus mediocris [medium] and the old woman in the stilus gravis [sublime].⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Onno Blom and Beverley Jackson. *Young Rembrandt a Biography*. New York, NY W. W. Norton & Company Independent Publishing Since, 1923.215.



*Figure 13 (Left) Self Portrait with Dishevelled Hair (Ca. late 1620s)
Oil on panel, 23.4 x 17.2 cm
Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Kunst*

Figure 14 (right) Self Portraits With Dishevelled Hair, (Ca. 1628) Oil on panel, 22.6 x 18.7 cm Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Figure 15 'Self Portrait' with Gorget, After Rembrandt (ca. 1629), panel, 37.9 x 28.9 cm, The Hague, Mauritshuis right: Infrared Reflectography: computer assembly, overall (front) and detail, 1998, Adri Verburg

Self-Portraits as highly exacting copies confirm the ability of the artist to be consistent, a crucial element for other portrait painters, such as Van Mierevelt. He was one of the most successful portrait painters of the day who had a very consistent structure and output. Samuel Ireland suggests Van Mierevelt “*was said to have painted more than ten thousand portraits.*”⁸⁹ Van Mierevelt was popular in both the Royal court of Charles 1st of England and the Dutch Stadtholder. Scholars such as Maaïke Dirkx write on the business and output of Van Mierevelt, revealing the standard practice and business he ran producing portraiture for the wealthy of the Dutch Art Market.⁹⁰ Considering that Rembrandt produced on average twenty paintings a year from 1631-35 in Amsterdam, portraiture must have been a means of gaining success economically.

By making copies of a smooth and rough manner, Rembrandt and his studio reveal consistency and the ability to paint in different styles. David Bomford discusses the “*visual dialogue between rough and smooth paint*” being a “*conscious aesthetic choice.*”⁹¹ Vasari also spoke of “*I modi dello operare*” (the ways of operating) and Yannis Hadjinicolaou describes the various translations such as “*maniera, maneggio*” (manner, handling), which can be described as a performed manner or “*handeling*” of a smooth style to convey refined skill to the Royal Court.⁹² The smooth manner was preferred by the Royal Court, perhaps preferring the mimetic revelation of a smooth mannered painting. This is presumedly due to the public and political role of the painting in the courts for a refined and smooth canvas was seen to be reflecting a refined person.

⁸⁹ Samuel Ireland, “A Picturesque Tour through Holland, Brabant, and Part of France, Made in the Autumn of 1789”

⁹⁰ Maaïke Dirkx, “Michiel van Mierevelt’s Portrait Business.” Rembrandt’s Room, Rembrandt’s Room, 3 Oct. 2013, arthistoriesroom.wordpress.com/2013/10/03/michiel-van-mierevelts-portrait-business/. Accessed 7 Dec. 2024.

⁹¹ D Bomford, Brown, C., Roy, A., Kirby, J., White, R. Art in the Making. Rembrandt, London: National Gallery Company Ltd., 1988, 33.

⁹² Yannis Hadjinicolaou, 2019. Thinking Bodies - Shaping Hands: Handeling in Art and Theory of the Late Rembrandtists. Boston: BRILL. Accessed December 7, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Gerrit Dou, one of Rembrandt's first students, became renowned for painting incredibly delicate, small, complex paintings. This style is closer to Academic art theory which, "...*had its own ideas about the correct handling...it insisted on clear rendering and fine facture that left no trace of the tools used to apply the paint.*"⁹³ Van Mander, known as the "Dutch Vasari", determines between the "*Net and Rouw*" (neat and rough).⁹⁴ Hadjinicolaou disbelieves in the single distinction and definition of an artist's "handling" when categorizing an artist. Artists such as Caravaggio and Michelangelo, and many others moved from a tighter more refined application of paint to a rough, loose approach. Rembrandt did exactly this as Bomford illustrates, "*Rembrandt began his career as one of the Leiden fine painters and ended as a celebrated exponent of the so-called 'rough' manner.*"⁹⁵ Svetlana Alpers argues there was an ancient precedent for smooth and rough, finished and less finished, loose or free styles, which relates to whether a painting is viewed up close or far away. Both versions of Self Portrait with a Steel Gorget are roughly the same size, therefore there does not seem to be any change due to where it would be viewed. Rather, in Sluijter's view it is why both versions of Self Portrait with a Steel Gorget are viewed because by painting both a smooth and rough style, the artist reveals a greater ability to paint in multiple styles.

Wheelock writes in support of this point when discussing the Self-Portrait with a Steel Gorget "*...The greater refinement of the brushwork and the aristocratic appearance of the image is more likely the result of different artistic intent than a different hand...Rembrandt may have painted a second version of this portrait because he wanted to project himself in a more*

⁹³ Hadjinicolaou, 2019. Thinking Bodies - Shaping Hands: Handeling in Art and Theory of the Late Rembrandtists.

⁹⁴ Amy Golahny, "Insights into the Dutch Vasari: Karel van Mander's Life of Titian." Canadian Journal of Netherlandish Studies, 2001.

⁹⁵ Bomford et al. Art in the Making. Rembrandt, 33.

fashionable manner than he had done with the Nuremberg example, perhaps to curry favor, and procure a commission from the court.”⁹⁶

Corpus Vol I mentions a Rembrandt Self-Portrait in the Mauritshuis, “*The Gorget as part of the sitter's clothing recurs in a number of works (nos. A 22, A42, and B4), and still presents an iconographic problem.*”⁹⁷ Simon Schama believes the Gorget gives Rembrandt, “*a bearing of a soldier without the obligations.*”⁹⁸ However, there is no iconographic problem if you associate the *Tronies* and larger sized depictions of Rembrandt in the late 1620s early 1630s with the more well-known portraits of Jansz Jan Van Mierevelt and Gerrit von Horthorst, who were very well-respected portrait painters and often painted military commissions of Maurits and Frederik in armor or a metal Gorget. In 1607, Prince Maurits commissioned Van Mierevelt to depict him wearing his golden suit of armor. Van Mierevelt produced copies of the prince’s portrait in various sizes.

⁹⁶ Wheelock, Arthur K, et al. Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt. W Books, 2000.19.

⁹⁷ Corpus I, 257.

⁹⁸ Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*.



Figure 16 Self Portrait with a steel Gorget (Ca. 1629) Oil on panel, 38.2 x 36.1 cm Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum

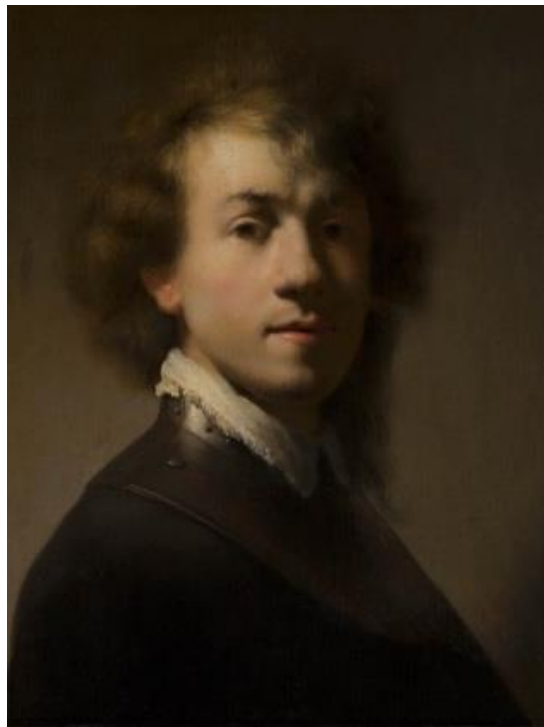


Figure 17 Self Portrait with a Steel Gorget (1629) Oil on panel, 37.9 x 28.9 cm The Hague, Mauritshuis

Another case is Self-Portrait Looking Into a Mirror (1629) of which multiple versions exist, but two copies have the same dating, one in the Japan Museum of Art considered to be the original and the other in the Indianapolis Museum. Lloyd De Witt writes that the Tronie Portrait of Rembrandt's Mother (1629) dendrochronology report indicates that the panel is from the same tree as the Self-Portrait in Indianapolis, which places this second version in a similar time frame to the original.⁹⁹ The contrast between the consistency of the subject and stylistic differences between smooth and rough manner supports what the Corpus surmised, *“It must be surmised that the very careful, smooth manner of painting, shown even more strongly by no. A 22 than by the painting in The Hague, represented in 1629 one aspect of Rembrandt's experiments in painting heads and busts and - especially - self-portraits. This, one can assume, explains the wide stylistic and pictorial variety found in paintings of this kind from the years around 1630.”*¹⁰⁰

Bode states, the change in manner is the same if not greater than the Mauritshuis Self-Portrait with a Steel Gorget, suggesting a more marketable production of copies in the smooth style. The smooth style might suggest again that Gerrit Dou or another artist painted the copy, such as was the case with the Self-Portrait in a Steel Gorget. The stylistic similarities between the two compositions are well-described, again, revealing such consistency across the various compositions of copies. Self-Portrait Looking into a Mirror was copied around five or six times, reinforcing the public image of Rembrandt by the production of multiple self-portraits. There is a sharp *chiaroscuro* across both faces, again an indication of practicing form and expression, but also learning about lighting and the introduction of artificial light sources into compositions and *Tronies*. The same techniques are practiced in Judas Returning the Thirty Pieces of Silver.

⁹⁹ Lloyd DeWitt, “Rembrandt’s Mother.” In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/rembrandts-mother/> (accessed December 07, 2024).

¹⁰⁰ Corpus I, 240.

Rembrandt pictures himself with a Gorget, material scarf and wearing a hat which echoes Rubens Self-Portrait (1623). Schama suggests In Rembrandt's Eyes that Rubens, to use Liedtke's words, '*had a considerable effect on Rembrandt's ideas.*'¹⁰¹ Rubens also produced Self- Portraits, such as the one still in the Royal Collection dating to ca.1623. Further revealing what Liedtke calls "*imitation as emulation*", whereby Rembrandt and his studio are copying or making their own version of successful compositions using various media by other well-respected artists.¹⁰² Just as Rembrandt's students often followed Rembrandt, so did Rembrandt in his early period following his famous antecedents.

His mouth is open, which engages the viewer as the artist appears to be aware or shocked simultaneously by himself, as if staring into a mirror and also at the viewers' presence. Rembrandt is responding to traditional depictions of human self-consciousness found in Caravaggio's early works in which he uses a mirror and himself as a model. This kind of Cartesian self-awareness and determinism might have been apparent at the time in the Netherlands considering that Descartes, a contemporary to Rembrandt, spent most of his adult life in the Dutch Republic.

¹⁰¹ Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," 2005.

¹⁰² Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," 2005.



Figure 18 Self Portrait Looking into a Mirror, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1629) Japanese Museum of Art,



Figure 19 Self Portrait Looking into a Mirror, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1629) Indianapolis Museum of Art,

The Corpus determines the second portrait in Indianapolis in its “design” and discusses the brushstroke as “*made to play a minimal part in creating the effect of plasticity, that can be described as unusual.*”¹⁰³ Again it is apparent that it was painted in the smoother, more mannered compositional style. Arguably Rembrandt, as Sluijter suggests for the Hague Self-Portrait, “*produced a specimen of his ability in the field.*”¹⁰⁴ As we saw, it shows the ability to paint in both styles and the consistency to do so across the same composition which is vital for a successful portrait artist.

In its attribution for the Self-Portrait in the Japanese Museum of Art, the Corpus suggests there are a ‘*whole series of similarities in the interpretation of forms and in manner of painting with one other work-the Self-portrait in the Hague.*’ This is before the Mauritshuis Self-Portrait with a Steel Gorget had performed X-radiograph scans and scholars did not yet consider it to be a second student version. The Corpus then goes on to visually analyze the similarities between the Japanese Museum of Modern Art Self-Portrait Looking into a Mirror and the Hague Self-Portrait,

‘The flesh colour, in lit areas, shows at most a slight amount of relief from a short and carefully applied brushstrokes; the pink on the cheek is flat; pink is mixed into the thick flesh colour in the highlights. The latter are located in identical places, such as left under the eye, under and next to the wing of the nose, and along the upper edge of the top lip. The way the subject’s right eye, including the eye pouch and the shadow by the root of the nose, is dealt with is in both cases, very similar.’

¹⁰³ Corpus I, 262.

¹⁰⁴ Eric Jan Sluijter, “The ‘Tronie of a Young Officer with a Gorget’ in the Mauritshuis: A Second Version by Rembrandt Himself?” *Oud Holland* 114, no. 2/4 (2000): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42712024>. 194.

Both self-portraits have a “*markedly close continuous paint surface.*”¹⁰⁵ Now that the Hague Self-Portrait’s attribution is debated, does the Self Portrait Looking into the Mirror share the same fate due to its stylistic similarities? Either both works are then considered copies as they share many similarities, or as this paper argues both works are potentially originals as Rembrandt did in fact, paint copies. In both cases, Rembrandt could be seen to be painting copies to not only make a smoother more aristocratic depiction of the self, but to also reveal the ability to paint in both a rough and a smooth manner.

There is an Isaac De Jourdeville copy of a Rembrandt Self-Portrait in Oriental Costume (1629). There are clear stylistic differences between the two compositions. Rembrandt and De Jourdeville’s works differ greatly in visual style and artistic quality, nonetheless, De Jourdeville clearly repeats Rembrandt’s composition. Harsh criticism has been given to De Jourdeville, calling him, ‘*The extremely minor, even trivial Jourdeville,*’ who contains ‘*such overpowering mediocrity.*’¹⁰⁶ However, it remains that as a student of Rembrandt he may have gone to Amsterdam and worked for Rembrandt. De Jourdeville, who Van De Wetering has written at length about in Corpus II, provides proof of the self-evident assertion that students copied Rembrandt’s self-portraiture. Corpus II compares Rembrandt’s original to Lievens’ portrait of A Man in Oriental Costume (1628-29), which was Lievens’ first commission to be in the Stadtholder.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Corpus I, 234.

¹⁰⁶ Hubertus von Sonnenburg, Walter A. Liedtke, Rembrandt, and John Philip O’Neill. Rembrandt - Not Rembrandt in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Aspects of Connoisseurship: [Issued in Conjunction with the Exhibition ... Held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from October 10, 1995, to January 7, 1996] / 1 Paintings: Problems and Issues. New York: Abrams, 1995.

¹⁰⁷ Alexandra Nina Bauer, “Jan Lievens’ ‘Man Dressed in “Oriental” Clothing’ Holland in Potsdam.” Holland in Potsdam. October 17, 2023. <https://hollandin-potsdam.de/en/2023/10/jan-lievens-man-dressed-in-oriental-clothing/index.html>.



Figure 20 (left) Rembrandt, Self Portrait in Oriental Costume with Poodle, (1631-1633), panel, 66.5 x 52 cm, Paris Musée du Petit Palais (right): Isaac de Jouderville or Studio of Rembrandt after Rembrandt, 'Self Portrait' of Rembrandt in Oriental Costume, (1631-1633), panel, 70.8 x 50.5 cm, New York, The Leiden Collection

Both Self-Portraits and their smoother copied versions fit in well with the court and commissioned paintings Rembrandt produced. Sluijter states from a 1632 inventory that works by Rembrandt were already in the collection of the Stadholder Frederik Henry and Amalia van Solms, possibly including, Simeon in the Temple, Samson and Delilah, The Abduction of Proserpina and Minerva in her Study.¹⁰⁸ In 1632, Rembrandt painted a portrait of Princess Amalia Solms. It seems subdued and turned away in profile, typical of Renaissance style portraits of women in profile in front of a muted background. It could be speculated that perhaps Rembrandt practiced this composition with the production of Portrait of a Young Woman also in profile (1632), now in the Stockholm National Museum. It is considered that the Portrait of Amalia Solms is a pendant portrait to the portrait done by G. von Horthorst of Prince Frederik. This is not a copy, but rather a variation of a similar composition. It is well-documented that the Royal Court commissioned and received over a period of years a Passion Series by Rembrandt. These again are not repetitions, but variations on the same theme in a smooth, courtly style. In the first two pictures dated from 1633, it is suspected Rembrandt includes himself within the history painting's just as he had done in 1626 with the Stoning of St Stephen. In the second painting of the Passion series, Rembrandt includes an old man in the background with his arms raised to his hips, which is markedly similar to an old man *Tronie* of the same date now in the Metropolitan Museum. Again, Rembrandt is utilizing successful figures in compositions, as he did earlier.

The court of Frederik and Amalia was one which wanted to increase its cultural importance. To make the Stadholder in the Hague have a greater collection, it competed with Charles 1st in London, who bought works by Rembrandt and Lievens later on in the 1630s. It is well-documented

¹⁰⁸ Eric Jan Sluijter, Art and Competition in the Dutch Golden Age (three lectures) Erasmus Lectures, Department of the History of Art and Architecture and the Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University.

that a Rembrandt Self-Portrait was in the Royal Collection of Charles 1st. Van der Doort wrote in Charles' inventory, '*Rembrandt, his own picture...in a black cap...golden chain in an oval and a square black frame.*'¹⁰⁹ According to Jason Bailey, Old Master portrait artists were often given gold chains from wealthy patrons.¹¹⁰ Clearly, the reputation and status of Rembrandt as an artist was amplified by self-portraits which act not only to put a face to a name, but also display the skill, style and self-judgement of the artist. Charles 1st's Rembrandt Self-Portrait seems to have no copy versions, perhaps because it went straight to the Royal Collection. Charles the 1st as an example of his artistic interest, bought the Duke of Mantua collection in 1625, and ended up having various portraits by Jan Lievens and Rembrandt in his Royal Collection.¹¹¹

In comparison, "*Frederik and Amalia are inhabiting the stadtholders quarters in 1632...Alexander le Clerq and controlleur Jan Herwouters inventoried the rooms in 1632.*"¹¹² This is the first surviving inventory to record the rooms decorated by Princess Amalia. "*It stands as an early marker of Amalia's ambitions, since in 1632 the couple was still establishing their artistic policies and prestige.*" Amalia is clearly making her mark. This is recognized by Huygens, who wrote in 1642 that their country estate was being prepared to the taste of Amalia and she was responsible for the work going on and the hiring of personnel. Overall, this competition and new decoration calls for the selection of the best artists and paintings that can be afforded by the Royal Court.

¹⁰⁹ Xanthe Brooke, "Britain's First Rembrandt Selfie: "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool | Art UK." Artuk.org, 2 Sept. 2019, artuk.org/discover/stories/britains-first-rembrandt-selfie-portrait-of-the-artist-as-a-young-man-at-the-walker-art-gallery-in-liverpool. Accessed 19 June 2022.

¹¹⁰ Jason Bailey, "How Rembrandt and van Gogh Mastered the Art of the Selfie." Artnome, 13 Jan. 2019, www.artnome.com/news/2018/11/26/how-rembrandt-and-van-gogh-mastered-the-art-of-the-selfie.

¹¹¹ "RKD Gerson Digital. the Art Collection of the Stuarts - Gerson Digital : Britain." Rkdstudies.nl, 2023, gersonbritain.rkdstudies.nl/3-dutch-art-in-british-collections/31-the-art-collection-of-the-stuarts/#fn10_. Accessed 7 Dec. 2024

¹¹² Beranek, "Strategies of Display in the Galleries of Amalia van Solms." *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*.

Rembrandt and Lievens both vied for artistic patronage. It seems Lievens, after meeting Van Dyck, moved to the Royal Court of England, whilst Rembrandt remained in Amsterdam.

Rembrandt's use of Self-Portraits is not completely original in itself, as it is embedded within the practices of his time. There are examples of artists who utilized such practices in their artwork before Rembrandt. One such figure was Lucas Van der Leyden, an important figure to consider precisely because of his use of self-portraiture, which is highlighted by Arthur K Wheelock Jr.¹¹³ Wheelock places great emphasis on Van der Leyden as a key figure in Rembrandt's aspirations for success. Van Der Leyden created an etching of Flight into Egypt in ca.1506, and Rembrandt produced an etching in 1626/7. Both these depictions are compositionally very similar and in the same medium, showing a clear influence on Rembrandt's production.



Figure 21 Flight into Egypt, Lucas Van Der Leyden, (CA.1506), The Metropolitan Museum, New York



Figure 22 Rembrandt Flight into Egypt, (1626), print, The British Museum

¹¹³ Wheelock et al. *Rembrandt Creates Rembrandt*. 2000. 16.

Wheelock highlights the connection between Rembrandt as a gifted youth and Van Der Leyden. Van Mander places high praise on Van De Leyden: “*I do not know one who can compare with the naturally gifted Lucas Van Leijden.*”¹¹⁴ Self-Portraits were useful marketing acts of the successful artist. Artists in fact, such as Lucas Van De Leyden, utilized self-portraiture as a means of marketing and asserting the importance of their own art and persona.

Rembrandt, however, stepped away from the more upstanding morally firm self-portraits of Van Der Leyden and took to a more malleable expression of rough and later smoother mannered depictions. Wheelock places great emphasis on Rembrandt as incredibly self-aware of his own artistic persona at the age of only 24. The ragged self-depictions of Rembrandt echoes Caravaggio’s Self Portrait as Sick Bacchus ca.1595 when he was also around 24 years old. Just as Sick Bacchus as a self-portrait reinforces the image of Caravaggio’s youthly genius, if not mythological associations, so does Rembrandt by drawing his face in his depiction of The Stoning of St Stephen and the Passion Series.

Self-Portraiture holds almost near universal significance across the ages as a way to preserve memory. In the present day there is sharp recognition of the self. The face is a visual signature, from Facial Recognition Technology to designing an online self in virtual reality. In the 17th century, portraiture was very closely tied with Vanitas Painting. The attempt at the preservation of something, such as an individual, reminds us of our own mortality. In fact, *memento mori* imagery was often found on the back of portraiture in the 16th and 17th century.¹¹⁵ Rembrandt was a utilizer of the Self-Portrait, the study of the self. This was internal observation placed outwardly for the public. It allowed the public to put a face to the creation, which also meant

¹¹⁴ Van Mander, *Ter Liefde Der Const: Uit Het Schilder-Boeck (1608)* 105.

¹¹⁵ Cath Pound, 2019. “These Lush 17th-Century Paintings Were Striking Reminders of Mortality.” Artsy. October 28, 2019. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-lush-17th-century-paintings-striking-reminders-mortality>.

the self-portrait was a useful means of marketing and publicity as previously utilized by other Dutch artists, such as Lucas Van Der Leyden. Rembrandt also changed his self-portraiture in his early career from a rough to royal image as a means of self-promotion and playing into the natural genius persona that Rembrandt might have fostered.

These works question why such Self-Portrait copies were created? Wheelock suggests it is an act of publicity and marketing. Alpers in her book states her intent, '*Here I propose to see him [Rembrandt] not outside but inside his culture, and I do this by considering the circumstances of his work and the making and the marketing of his art.*'¹¹⁶ One-point Alpers might agree with is how self-portraiture places Rembrandt inside his culture. Rembrandt is presumably aware of artists already utilizing such self-portraiture for publicity and Rembrandt and his studio continue such a practice. There is also the transition in style from rough to smooth depictions of the self. Rembrandt and his studio reveal the transition from individual artist to aristocratic court painter capable of painting courtly portraits. An important aspect of Self-Portrait copies seems to be the consistency of replication, while also having the ability to produce a smoothed version. Whether this is by student such as Dou or Rembrandt is open to debate on a case-to-case basis.

Therefore, as Rembrandt is learning and developing his style, he caters to a more aristocratic taste, both in his own work and the copies being presented. Rembrandt possibly did this through copying his own works in different manners, the original being rougher and then a smoother, more finished version, so he could show his ability to paint both styles and seal his transformation from roughened natural prodigy to smooth aristocratic court painter.

¹¹⁶ Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise*, 8.



Figure 23 Portrait of Prince Maurits, Van Mierevelt, (Ca. 1613-20), Museum of Fine Arts Budapest



Figure 24 Portrait of Prince Maurits, Van Mierevelt, (Ca.1613-20), Rijksmuseum

4. Like Father, Like Son

In 1631, Rembrandt left for Amsterdam, around a year after his father died. The last work in Corpus I, marking the transition of Rembrandt's early career in Leiden to Amsterdam is Old Man with a Gold Chain (1631) on panel, in the Art Institute of Chicago. It is presumed by the Corpus that it is painted in Amsterdam. '*Dendrochronological examination reveals that the wood used for the panel comes from the same tree as that found in a panel dated 1633 (BR.338), which points to an Amsterdam provenance.*'¹¹⁷ There is a second version on canvas, which is a highly exacting copy. The canvas bust of an Old Man with a Gold Chain (C.1631-4) was originally known as "Rembrandt's Father." There is some historical documentation that Rembrandt depicted his father: "notices of a picture and an etching, respectively, of Rembrandt's Father occur in two early inventories, those of Sybout van Caedecamp (1644) and of Clement De Jonghe, the print seller and friend of Rembrandt in 1679."¹¹⁸

Henriette Bolton-Rempt, the Lakenhal Museum Director, dispelled the particularly nineteenth-century proposition that Rembrandt's sitters were members of his family.¹¹⁹ Despite the myth being dispelled there was good reasoning behind such inductive thought. The figures that were supposedly seen as Rembrandt's *Moeder* and *Vader* appear in many compositions by Lievens and Rembrandt and his studio. Gerrit Dou produced many compositions of "Rembrandt's Father." One such instance is Dou's Astronomer (Heraclitus?). The sitter, as Henriette Rahusen rightly

¹¹⁷ Corpus I, 396.

¹¹⁸ Blom, *Young Rembrandt a Biography*.

¹¹⁹ Vogelaar, *Rembrandt's Mother*.

indicates, is actually Jan Van Heussen.¹²⁰ Most depictions of Jan Van Heussen are known just as *Tronie* portraits, as “Old Man” which was a very popular composition often repeated. For instance, “More than fifty unsold paintings were listed in the October 1637 inventory of Jacobsz’s estate, including “an Old Man’s face [*Tronie*] by Rembrandt himself...five *Tronies* specified as copies after Rembrandt.”¹²¹



Figure 25 (Left:) *Old Man With a Gold Chain*, Rembrandt Van Rijn, (1631), Oil on Panel, Art Institute of Chicago

Figure 26 (Right:) *Bust of an Old Man With a Gold Chain*, Workshop of Rembrandt, Possibly Gerrit Dou, (1631-33), Oil on Canvas, Private Collection

Both the copy and the original of Old Man with a Gold Chain are compositionally exact, displaying a feathered hat, pearl earring, slight beard, steel Gorget and golden chain. The panel version of Old

¹²⁰ H. Rahusen, “Elderly Man, Leiden School, c.1630.” In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. Available at: <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/an-elderly-man/> (Accessed 4 December 2024).

¹²¹ Willen Pieterz van Leeuwen, 1644, “Een out mans tronie, sijnde’t conterfeysel van de vader van mr. Rembrandt”

Man with a Gold Chain was discovered in 1912 by the art historian Wilhelm Von Bode.¹²² After extensive removing of the varnish by Professor Hauser in Berlin, it was considered original, with the signature being discovered under the frame.¹²³ Bode, in an article on his discovery, says that Rembrandt did not make exact copies. If he did make copies, they would be made as newly conceived repetitions. According to Bode, Rembrandt made these new conceptions out of feelings of nostalgia citing the reproduction of the figure of Saskia seen in the auction after his bankruptcy.¹²⁴ Katharine Scallen writes, “*while Bode was by no means the first writer to make connections between Rembrandt’s life and his art he carried this exercise further than anyone had before, and in doing so drew some rather dubious conclusions.*”¹²⁵ Bode describes Rembrandt’s nostalgia from his late period and life, not envisioning Rembrandt as a commercially ambitious young artist in fierce competition with his contemporaries. Rembrandt gave Uylenburgh 1,000 guilders before arriving in Amsterdam. This is a statement of intent, which shows no sign of nostalgia, but suggests Rembrandt was looking to gain royal and wealthy patronage. Bode also cites the painting The Great Descent from the Cross (1634) with a copy hung in Rembrandt’s living room. This may reveal a longstanding appreciation for the composition and arguably points toward Rembrandt’s reverence and utilization of copied works. In fact, Rembrandt also had in his ownership, before it was sold at his bankruptcy in 1656, both his and Lievens’ versions of The Raising of Lazarus, which suggests Rembrandt’s inspiration and appreciation of his competitor throughout his life.

¹²² Bode, “Der junge Rembrandt und seine Werkstatt: Betrachtungen vor einem Bildnis von Rembrandts Vater im Besitz von Herrn Julius Boehler in München”, in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* Jg. 23, 1912, 210—12.”

¹²³ Bode, “Der junge Rembrandt und seine Werkstatt: Betrachtungen vor einem Bildnis von Rembrandts Vater”

¹²⁴ Bode, “Der junge Rembrandt und seine Werkstatt: Betrachtungen vor einem Bildnis von Rembrandts Vater”

¹²⁵ Catherine B Scallen, “Rembrandt’s Holland. Larry Silver. *Renaissance Lives*. London: Reaktion Books, 2018. 214 Pp. £15.95.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2019): 265–66. <https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2018>. 29.

Bode states copies created in a completely different way “*make it improbable that the faithful repetitions that we have of some of [Rem]Brandt’s paintings are also from his hand.*”¹²⁶ Of course, clear stylistic and qualitative differences reveal different hands. However, copies can extend and emulate the original, they can also reveal the ability to paint multiple styles. This can extend the fame and reputation of the painting and its creator. Bode asserts that the creation of one renders the creation of the other impossible. This is a general stance about Rembrandt’s output and places little focus on the actual paintings being discussed. Bode suggests not trusting a repetition from Rembrandt’s early period as students “*flocked to him*” in Leiden.¹²⁷ Scholars generally agree there were at least two students in Rembrandt’s Leiden period, Dou and De Jourdeville. However, it was not until Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam and had made his name that he had a larger studio and increased numbers of students.

In all scientific analyses, Bode and Hauser seem to be correct. The wood of the panel version is the same as another Portrait of a Woman by Rembrandt in Braunschweig, of which attribution has been debated, but ultimately considered an original work by Van de Wetering in Corpus VI.¹²⁸ This attribution relies on three factors: one, the rendering of Lace and Ruffs, the second, the fact that it is from the same tree as, Old Man With a Gold Chain, and the final reason Wetering states is the “*expanded range of autograph manner that includes a smoother, more highly finished execution.*”¹²⁹

Recently, the canvas copy of Old Man With a Gold Chain underwent scientific and technical analysis at the Hamilton Kerr Institute of the University of Cambridge. Senior painting

¹²⁶ Bode. “Der junge Rembrandt und seine Werkstatt: Betrachtungen vor einem Bildnis von Rembrandts Vater”

¹²⁷ Bode. “Der junge Rembrandt und seine Werkstatt: Betrachtungen vor einem Bildnis von Rembrandts Vater”

¹²⁸ E. van de Wetering, A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Volume VI: Rembrandt’s Paintings Revisited. A Complete Survey. Translated from Dutch by M. Pearson, M. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2015. 524.

¹²⁹ van de Wetering, A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Volume VI: Rembrandt’s Paintings Revisited, 2015, 524.

Conservator, Christine Slottviel Kimbriel, alongside Kamilla Gora have identified the canvas version as the ninth member of a group of eight canvas works dated from 1632/33 identified by Karin Groen, all attributed to Rembrandt, as having the same primary ground layer.¹³⁰ Kimbriel, adding to the research of Karin Groen, described her research and discoveries in her book, Paintings in the Laboratory. Groen identifies clusters of canvases with ground compositions so similar that “*they may be assumed to come from a single batch of primed canvases.*”¹³¹ From this technical scientific observation, the canvas bust of Old Man With a Gold Chain was created within Rembrandt’s studio. Kimbriel reveals the technical nature of the composition as rightfully a copy, for amongst others, two main reasons: a lack of *pentimenti* and its being almost identical to the Chicago composition. Kimbriel remarks that the “*skilled copyist carefully mimicked the appearance of the original, and we therefore cannot expect to find the freedom of expression and pigment choices evident in Dou’s more colourful, mature works.*”¹³² Kimbriel and I go onto suggest that the author is possibly Gerrit Dou. This is a -considered but speculative suggestion following other works considered to be by Dou. Liedtke and Sonnenburg note, “*in his early paintings, of old women and men, which date from about 1630, Dou followed Rembrandt closely.*”¹³³

¹³⁰ Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt’s c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy. 123-137.

¹³¹ K. Groen, ‘Grounds in Rembrandt’s Workshop and in Paintings by his Contemporaries’, in E. van de Wetering (ed.), *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings IV: The Self-portraits*, Translated from Dutch by J. Killian, K. Kist and M. Pearson, M. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2005, 324.

¹³² Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt’s c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy. 130.

¹³³ Hubertus von Sonnenburg, Walter A. Liedtke, Rembrandt, and John Philip O’Neill. *Rembrandt - Not Rembrandt in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Aspects of Connoisseurship: [Issued in Conjunction with the Exhibition ... Held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from October 10, 1995, to January 7, 1996] / 1 Paintings: Problems and Issues*. New York: Abrams, 1995.

Both in recognized Rembrandt and Dou paintings, *pentimenti* are found, for instance in the panel Old Man With a Gold Chain there is evidence of *pentimenti* in the X Radiographs.¹³⁴ In Dou's work *pentimenti* were found in the headdress of Dou's Old Woman Reading a Lectionary.¹³⁵ (Cassel) Kimbriel notes "*parallel hatching*" under the surface of the hat in the copy of an Old Man With a Gold Chain, only visible by infrared.¹³⁶ In another painting considered by Dou, The Astronomer, which also depicts the sitter, Jan van Heussen, "*Dou used careful parallel hatchings to help enliven the astronomer's face.*"¹³⁷ The Astronomer is much smaller than the copy of Old Man With a Gold Chain. Dou was known to paint in a smooth or tight manner, which characterizes his small, highly precise and very detailed panel paintings.

Surh, Tuinen and Twilley have looked at the technical analysis of a number of paintings by Gerrit Dou in the Leiden Collection.¹³⁸ They discuss the use of Dou's hatching, which often remains visible on the panel. Sluijter in 1993 discussed Dou's "*extraordinary manner*" and that Dou does "*tiny, parallel brushstrokes, almost like hatchings.*"¹³⁹ The analysis reveals various examples throughout Dou's career of what they call "*hatching brushwork*", which they define as "*tight parallel lines in the upper layers of paint.*" Dou's use of parallel hatching creates the effect of "*enlivening the texture of aging skin.*"

Looking at Dou's Scholar Sharpening a Quill, ca. 1630–35, another composition of the sitter Jan Van Heussen, one can see the evidence of hatching brushwork on the X-radiograph and

¹³⁴ Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt's c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy, 129.

¹³⁵ Wadum, J. 2002. "Dou Doesn't Paint, Oh No, He Juggles with His Brush: Gerrit Dou, a Rembrandtesque Fijnschilder" in *Art Matters: Netherlands Technical Studies in Art*, 70.

¹³⁶ Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt's c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy 136.

¹³⁷ Rahusen, "Elderly Man, Leiden School, c.1630." In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*.

¹³⁸ Surh, D., Tuinen, I. van, Twilley, J. "Insights from Technical Analysis on a Group of Paintings by Gerrit Dou in the Leiden Collection." in *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 6 (1), 2014, DOI:10.5092/jhna.2014.6.1.3.

¹³⁹ Eric Jan Sluijter. 1993. *De Lof Der Schilderkunst: Over Schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613-1675) En Een Traktaat van Philips Angel Uit 1642*. Hilversum: Verloren.

on the surface of the painting.¹⁴⁰ Wadum mentions Dou's hatching or parallel lines as being seen in the hands and faces to suggest wrinkling. "*Sluijter notices this in opposition of the smoothly blended paint application in the rendering of many other materials.*"¹⁴¹ Therefore, it is significant that there is no mention of parallel hatching on or under the skin of the bust, Old Man With a Gold Chain, especially to reveal such wrinkling and old age. In Surh, Twinen and Twilley it is evident that parallel hatching was also evident on material such as one of Dou's late works, Young Woman Holding a Parrot (1660-65), when perhaps he has the confidence and individuality as a master to reveal such parallel hatchings. Looking at another drawing by Rembrandt, Bust of an Old Man, also of the same sitter Jan van Heussen, one can see parallel hatching, particularly in the lighter areas such as the shoulder and above the ear.

¹⁴⁰ Surh, D., Tuinen, I. van, Twilley, J. "Insights from Technical Analysis on a Group of Paintings by Gerrit Dou in the Leiden Collection." in *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 6 (1), 2014, DOI:10.5092/jhna.2014.6.1.3.

¹⁴¹ Wadum, 2002. "Dou Doesn't Paint, Oh No, He Juggles with His Brush."



Figure 27 Detail of Young Woman Holding a Parrot, Gerrit Dou, (1660-65)



Figure 28 Detail of Gerrit Dou Scholar in Prayer (1670)



Figure 29 *Bust of an Old Man*, Rembrandt Van Rijn Etching (1630)

Liedtke suggests that expensive pigments were ground in the studio as seen in The Artist's Studio (1627) and the depiction of a grinding stone.¹⁴² Christine Slottviel Kimbriel of HKI goes on to say, “Furthermore, it is noteworthy that vermilion – a bright red pigment – has been used for the underpainting of the undergarment (beneath the Gorget), as well as in the gold chain in both versions. These two uses are more idiosyncratic and not a choice that can be readily gleaned purely through visual observation, and it strengthens the argument that the painter of the canvas version was highly conscious of Rembrandt’s own technique and material choices in the Chicago version.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² Selections from the Archive: Walter A. Liedtke "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," recorded on March 8, 2005

¹⁴³ Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt’s c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy.

Van de Wetering calls imitating Rembrandt an “*integral part of Rembrandt's training method.*”¹⁴⁴ It could be the student's imitation, just as it could be the master repeating his practice, Rembrandt himself assuring the highest quality of reproducible painting. According to the scientific analysis, the copy of Old Man with a Gold Chain contains the use of vermilion in the underpainting of the undergarment beneath the Gorget.¹⁴⁵ Apparently, “*Seventeenth century Holland was famous for the manufacture of vermilion.*”¹⁴⁶ It is also worth noting that vermilion was also found in both Rembrandt and Dou's work such as Rembrandt's canvas, Belshazzar's Feast (1635) and also The Young Woman Playing a Clavichord (ca.1665) by Gerrit Dou.

The compositions vary in size. The panel version is half-length, whereas the canvas version is a bust. From close visual analysis there are slight variations. However, without close physical comparison, these observations can only be suggested. The original version is slightly freer, with traces of a copper-like scuffing in the background. The size of the head to the body of the original seems to be slightly out of proportion, which is reminiscent of Jan Lievens, depiction of Constantin Huygens around 1628-29. The canvas version is a tighter, smoother composition with more accurate proportions to human physiognomy. As previously emphasized, successful works were copied. Copies also functioned as a means to improve a composition, such as when Rembrandt was a student. Copies can also vary in style to reveal the same composition in multiple styles. The canvas bust is smaller, and therefore, fitting to the ancient precedent of having a tighter manner because it would be viewed closer up. The panel is larger, which would explain why it is perhaps slightly looser.

¹⁴⁴ Wetering, A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Volume VI: Rembrandt's Paintings Revisited. 2015.55-56.

¹⁴⁵ Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt's c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy.132.

¹⁴⁶ Roy, A., Kirby, J., Art in the Making. Rembrandt.



Figure 30 Old Man With a Gold Chain, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1631) Oil on Panel, Chicago Art Institute



Figure 31 Portrait of Constantin Huygens, Jan Lievens (1629), Rijksmuseum

Presumably the sitter was used multiple times because of the same reason copies were made of compositions, that is the continuity and improvement of depicting the same sitter. On a practical level, it makes sense many artists would use the same model. Huygens refers to a painting owned by Frederik, the Prince of Orange. “*Est apud Principem meum Turcici quasi Ducis effigies, ad Batavi cuiusdamcaput expressa...*” (There is, in my Prince’s house, a portrait of a so-called Turkish potentate, done from the head of some Dutchman or other . . .)¹⁴⁷

Alexandra Nina Bauer charts the history of the canvas, Man Dressed in Oriental Clothing (ca.1629-31) by Jan Lievens, which now resides in the picture gallery of Sansoucci.¹⁴⁸ Lievens, having started working earlier and already encountering Huygens and achieving success around 1628, already had Man in Oriental Costume in the collection of the Prince of Orange through Huygens. Bauer states this is “presumably Lieven’s first commission from the Stadtholder.”¹⁴⁹¹⁵⁰ To be in the collection of the Stadholder is the pinnacle of success in the Dutch Art Market. Therefore, it seems highly plausible copies were made of this figure to capitalize on the market. Just as in their history paintings, Lievens and Rembrandt are once again in competition to produce successful compositions. Rembrandt produced the original panel version and then copied the sitter, producing various *Tronie* pictures of the sitter, whether by the same artist or not, serves as great publicity or “branding” for further commissions. Just as Van Mierevelt had done before by employing an etcher to reproduce etchings of Prince Maurits, so did Rembrandt begin working with the etcher Jan Vilet around 1630 to reproduce etchings such as “Rembrandt’s Father” which has a striking similarity to Lieven’s composition, Old Man in Oriental Costume, perhaps further enhancing the importance of reproducing this figure.

¹⁴⁷ J. Bruyn et al. *Corpus II* (Dordrecht : Martinus Nijhoff, 1986), 156. J. Worp, “Constanyn Huygens over de schilders van zijn tijd,” *Oud Holland* 9 (1893), 128.

¹⁴⁸ Bauer, “Jan Lievens’ ‘Man Dressed in ‘Oriental’ Clothing’ Holland in Potsdam.”

¹⁴⁹ Bauer, “Jan Lievens’ ‘Man Dressed in ‘Oriental’ Clothing’ Holland in Potsdam.”

¹⁵⁰ Bauer, “Jan Lievens’ ‘Man Dressed in ‘Oriental’ Clothing’ Holland in Potsdam.”



Figure 32 Gerrit Dou, Astronomer (Heraclitus?), (ca. 1628), oil on panel, 38.5 x 31 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. 1012



Figure 33 Man In Oriental Costume, Jan Lievens, Oil on Canvas, (1629-31), Gallery Sansoucci



Figure 34 Rembrandt's Father, Jan G van Vilet, Etching, (ca.1630)

Dou is generally considered to have painted on panel. Ronni Baer has suggested that Dou never painted on canvas, as no examples of surviving canvas paintings from his independent career have been identified.¹⁵¹ Kimbriel proposes the painting, Self Portrait at an Easel (1628-9), which has been debated over attribution, exhibits Dou in his studio with canvas in a stretcher. There is also debate as to whether Dou or Rembrandt painted The Young Scholar and His Tutor (1629-1630) on canvas now in the Getty Museum. Kimbriel states that “*the existence of this copy points to the use of canvas supports in Rembrandt’s Leiden workshop slightly earlier than previously suggested.*”¹⁵² Schölzel, contributing to a book on the Leiden *Fijnschilders*, of which Dou was a

¹⁵¹ Baer, 1613–1675: A Master in the Age of Rembrandt, 2000.

¹⁵² Kimbriel, Double-take: Rembrandt’s c.1631 Old Man with a Gold Chain and its highly exacting copy.123.

founding member, says it was typical for the school to work on panel as opposed to canvas.¹⁵³ The canvas, if a copy by Dou, is clearly an atypical if not unique example in its use of canvas. Rembrandt and his students almost exclusively painted on panel during his Leiden period. As previously stated in the charts and data on copies, there are mentions of copies on canvas in Corpus I, but further inquiry would be needed to investigate whether these copies can be dated to the time of Rembrandt.

It is presumed that when Rembrandt left for Amsterdam, Dou stayed in Leiden. The fact that the canvas copy is the ninth member of eight paintings by Rembrandt, all, presumed to be from his Amsterdam period, suggests the painting was created in Amsterdam. Kimbriel and others suggest Rembrandt would have made trips back and forth, noting that, *‘there is growing acceptance of the idea that the transfer of Rembrandt’s studio activities was more gradual and not fully completed until sometime during 1634.*¹⁵⁴ However, there is some debate over his movements. Otto Blom states he moved permanently to Amsterdam in the autumn of 1631, after his loan to Uylenburgh in June 1631, having been back and forth during the first half of the year. (It took one whole day to get from Leiden to Amsterdam back then, involving crossing an open stretch of sea by ferry). Blom states, *‘It seems likely that after the death of his eldest, unfortunate brother Gerrit, who was buried on 23rd September 1631, he [Rembrandt] rarely returned to his native city [Leiden].*¹⁵⁵ Perhaps this is an argument as to why the copy is smaller and made on canvas, increasing its portability to Amsterdam to show Uylenburgh’s wealthy patrons and

¹⁵³ Annegret Laabs, Christoph Schölzel, Christiaan Vogelaar, Ruth Koenig, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal (Leiden), and Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (Dresden). Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister. 2001. The Leiden Fijnschilders from Dresden. Zwolle, [Dresden], Leiden: Waanders ; Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden ; Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal. 16

¹⁵⁴ S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, “Pieter Lastman (1583–1633); een katholiek schilder in de Sint Anthoniebreestraat,” in *De Jonge Rembrandt onder tijdgenoten. Godsdienst en schilderkunst in Leiden en Amsterdam* (Nijmegen, 2006), 53–54.

¹⁵⁵ Blom, *Young Rembrandt a Biography*. 239.

contacts such as Huygens. Vasari spoke of canvas saying, “*it is of little weight and, when rolled up, easy to transport.*”¹⁵⁶ Samuel Van Hoogstraten comments on canvas as, “when well primed, easiest to transport.”¹⁵⁷

Gerrit Dou is known to have painted variations of works by Rembrandt, but no clearly authenticated copies. A painting which some scholars believe to be a variant by Gerrit Dou is, Tobit and Anna (ca.1630), which hangs in the London National Gallery. This attribution has been debated for some time; however, the figure of Anna is in striking resemblance to a portrait of Old woman Reading a Lectionary painted by Dou. Wadum states, “*the qualities of Anna and the Blind Tobit show, in our opinion, all the virtues of the upcoming Fijnschilder, the technique of hatching in the flesh areas is evident and the minute dots of paint in the Headgear of Anna are more characteristic for Dou than for Rembrandt.*” Wadum also states *pentimenti* were found.¹⁵⁸ Christopher Brown declares, “*The entire picture is in fact by a single hand and that hand is Dou’s.*”¹⁵⁹

“*Faint fragments of drawn lines*” are also found in the IRR on Dou’s Tobit and Anna.¹⁶⁰ Dou’s Old woman Reading a Lectionary “*exhibits similar under drawing with parallel lines.*”¹⁶¹ In the margins of the Rembrandt creates Rembrandt catalogue, it is noted that two portraits by Dou of ca.1630-31 in Kassel ‘*also exhibit similar underdrawing.*’¹⁶² One of these portraits which Kimbriel discusses is the same sitter, Jan Van Heussen in a metal Gorget with a feathered cap. Only comparison of details can be made such as height and medium, which both differ; the Dou *Tronie*

¹⁵⁶ Brown, *Art in the Making. Rembrandt*, 1988, 236.

¹⁵⁷ Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*. Rotterdam, 1678.339.

¹⁵⁸ Wadum, “Dou Doesn’t Paint, Oh No, He Juggles with His Brush: Gerrit Dou, a Rembrandtesque Fijnschilder,” 74.

¹⁵⁹ Wadum, 74.

¹⁶⁰ Wadum, “Rembrandt under the Skin,” 116.

¹⁶¹ Wadum, 116.

¹⁶² Wadum, 42, state that two portraits by Dou of ca.1630-31 in Kassel (inv. GK258, GK 259) also exhibit similar underdrawing.

in Kassel is far smaller and on panel and the Bust of Old Man with a Gold Chain is larger and on canvas. However, both are compositionally very similar. It would be very interesting to look at both works together in person. In Wadum's conclusion that Dou does not paint he states, "*The use of underdrawings for Dou is more rule than exception.*" Kimbriel and Gora's scientific analysis finds no lead underdrawings on the Bust of an Old Man With a Gold Chain. Perhaps Rembrandt or Dou could have underdrawn the canvas with chalk? However, the lack of any evidence for lead underdrawings adds weight to the argument that Dou is not the author of the canvas version of Old Man with A Gold Chain.

5. Conclusion

This thesis traces Rembrandt from his days in Leiden to learning from his teachers and contemporaries, such as Lievens. Rembrandt's paintings are grounded and embedded within, not only his local community, but also the history of art. Imitating and producing successful and canonical compositions was a practice carried out in the Southern and Northern Baroque period. Rembrandt's first signed history paintings are imitations and variations of Peter Lastman and his circle of successful artists. Rembrandt followed the compositions and coloring closely, while adding a heightened sense of verticality. Rembrandt and Lievens are close competitors while in Leiden, practicing and imitating each other. Rembrandt drew inspiration not only from this close working practice with Lievens, but also using good *Rapen* from previous compositions executed by himself, such as borrowing elements from the highly praised Judas Repentant in the Raising of Lazarus, which hung side by side with Lievens' composition until nearly the end of Rembrandt's career. From copying elements of previously successful compositions of teachers, contemporaries and also his own compositions, his students followed suit and copied his works, such as his Self-Portraits, partly in order to spread Rembrandt's image as a successful artist. Rembrandt's self-image changes from a rough and ragged prodigy to an upstanding citizen belonging to the aristocratic class. In this transition and production of self-depiction, the ability to paint in both a rough and smooth style is apparent. By varying his style Rembrandt displays his ability and versatility to his patrons, contemporaries and students. To paint copies of Rembrandt's self-portraiture was important because the reproduction acts as a publicity tool. Other figures were also important such as the sitter commonly known as, "Rembrandt's Father"

who was Lieven's first commission for the Royal Stadholder, a very important commission, presumably won through the intermediary and connoisseur, Constantin Huygens for the newly appointed Prince Frederik William of Orange. The sitter, supposedly, "Rembrandt's Father" is actually now known to be Jan Van Heussen of Leiden. Rembrandt and his studio knew the potential value of the commission and replicated the composition just as had been done before by the likes of Van Mierevelt.

Therefore, it can be seen why van Mander would hold copies and the act of copying with such importance in his *Schilder-Boeck* of 1608. Van Mander writes, "Paint, draw, scribble, go ahead and cover lots of paper. Greedily steal arms, legs, bodies, hands, feet. It is not forbidden here... Well-cooked turnips make a good stew"¹⁶³ Rembrandt's close emulation of successful compositions and his imitations and variations of his teachers and contemporaries meant Rembrandt was able to supersede many artists of the time and became one of the most sought-after artists in Amsterdam.

After moving to Amsterdam and gaining commissions through Huygens and Uylenburgh, Rembrandt would no longer need such publicity and commercial opportunism and yet, he continued to return to the depiction of the self, producing powerful variations over time. This continual return is perhaps why Rembrandt is so successful today in the modern "Image Economy." David Joselit in *After Art* describes how discrete objects have lost their power in favor of "Networks of Images."¹⁶⁴ Perhaps this was always the case for the work of Rembrandt, especially considering Rembrandt in the way he re-used successful elements of previous compositions. On top of this, the fact that copies were made of successful compositions.

¹⁶³ Lloyd DeWitt, *Evolution and Ambition in The Career of Jan Lievens (1607-1674)* (Ph.D. diss. University of Chicago, 2006).

¹⁶⁴ D. Joselit, *After Art* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013) 88 and 94.

Rembrandt created a network of images, including such copies, that continue to exert their force and influence today.

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