

# Rembrandt



SIXTYNINE ETCHINGS

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ETCHINGS BY  
REMBRANDT  
VAN RIJN



Auckland City Art Gallery

September 1958

## FOREWORD

REMBRANDT is one of the greatest etchers the world has ever seen. This is an exhibition of a portion of his considerable *oeuvre* in this medium.

We are most grateful to Mr Harold Wright of Messrs Colnaghi, London, who has arranged the exhibition for us at very short notice.

Mr Ross Fraser, of the gallery staff, has compiled the catalogue and written the introduction.

P. A. TOMORY

*September 1958*

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN WE SURVEY the history of printmaking one name springs to mind beside whose luminosity all others remain pale and indistinct. It is the name of Rembrandt.

Rembrandt Harmenez van Rijn, born at Leyden of humble, though not poor, parents, early showed little likelihood of fulfilling their wish for him to become a scholar: his inherent gifts lay conspicuously in the direction of drawing and painting. He was accordingly allowed to enter the studio, first of Jacob van Swanenburgh, then of Pierre Lastman in Amsterdam, both of whom had spent some time in Italy, Lastman under the influence of Adam Elsheimer.

At this time Rembrandt took the opposite position to that school of thought which considered the classical tradition should be the leading strings of every young painter. Right at the outset he seems to have found himself as the painter (and etcher) supremely observant of life around him — man in a tangible world — later, his predicament and tragedy.

In spite of his apparent lack of interest in Italy, however, Rembrandt owes his discovery of *chiaroscuro*, eventually to become his characteristic, to Italian influences. Caravaggio had impressed Dutch painters in Italy with his innovations in the rendering of light, and the work of Rembrandt's Leyden period shows how he was then influenced by these new discoveries.

Etchings exist dated by Rembrandt from 1628 onwards, although today it is generally admitted that he had commenced to etch before then. At the beginning his knowledge of the medium appears to be at odds with the manner in which he was obviously striving to express himself — the weight and swing of brush or chalk he used in fields he had already begun to make his own. In his search toward complete freedom of expression in etching he still felt the constraint of an as yet imperfectly assimilated technique. In the earliest works we find

the continuous outline, a feature of his contemporary and associate, the prodigy Jan Lievens, whose mannered flowing contours were closer to the conventional taste of the times. Thus, during the earlier part of the sixteen thirties, Rembrandt tended to restrict himself to pure etched line — either making sparse, open, slightly tentative sketches, or building a series of rather flat tones by means of careful cross-hatching.

By the sixteen forties, however, the use of dry-point becomes a significant factor in his style. Moreover, wider realisation of the tonal orchestration is part, during this decade, of the passage to the vigour and breadth evident in the masterly works of the sixteen fifties. These with their open loops of shading and unconventional forms seem to spring unconceptualised from the very depth of Rembrandt's experience, bearing as they do the unconscious stamp of true knowledge united with feeling.

Rembrandt died in 1669, a sick and lonely man, obscure in the midst of his legend. That need not concern us. In these, his etchings we have preserved the impress of his very being — that reality outside time which is revealed when all irrelevancies have fallen away.

# THE CATALOGUE

*Measurements in this catalogue are given in millimetres, height before width.*

*The following abbreviations have been used:*

B *The Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings compiled by Adam Bartsch, Vienna, 1797, later revised by Dmitri Rovinski in his Rembrandt Catalogue, St Petersburg, 1890*

H *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings, chronologically arranged, by A. M. Hind (2 vols, London, 1923)*

*Also referred to is Ludwig Munz's 'The Etchings of Rembrandt,' 2 vols, Phaidon, 1952*

## 1 WOMAN WITH A GOURD (about 1628-29)

102:45 B 168; H 80

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

## 2 THE BATTLE (about 1629-30)

103:83 B 117 III; H 100 III

Plate reduced from original state (108:83); the shaded upper part of the sky polished out

The manner in which the sky is shaded in state I (giving in some ways the impression of rays breaking through the darkness) in conjunction with the figure of a man falling from his horse, leads Munz to suppose the subject to be the conversion of Saul  
Duplicate in British Museum ex A. G. Thiermann collection

## 3 STROLLING MUSICIANS (about 1629-31)

139:116 B 119 I; H 142 I

Probably the only original state

## 4 BEGGAR LEANING ON HIS STICK (1630)

92:67 B 172 V; H 16 V

Plate reduced from the original state (92:77) particularly on the left

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

## 5 BUST OF BALD-HEADED MAN (1630)

69:58 B 292; H 23 III

(Rembrandt's father?)

Bust added to the original plate which was the head alone; in this state plate reduced from original size (118:97)

**6** MAN IN BROAD-BRIMMED HAT WITH RUFFED  
COLLAR (1630?)

78:64 B 311; H 158

Collection: J. Barnard, 1794

**7** BEARDED MAN WITH HIGH FUR CAP (1630)

102:85 B 321 II; H 22 II

Plate slightly reduced from original (105:87)

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**8** REMBRANDT'S MOTHER AT A TABLE (about 1630-31)

146:129 B 343 II; H 52 II

In this state the too light part under the seat darkened by diagonal shading. Triple cross-hatching in the shadows in the background; accidental black spot on the tip of the nose

**9** DIANA BATHING (about 1631)

177:158 B 201 only; H 42 only

The preparatory study for this plate, in chalk, in reverse, is in the British Museum

**10** BEARDED MAN IN A FUR CAP AND ROBE (1631)

146:123 B 263 IV; H 53 IV

Plate reduced on right from original state (146:130)

Munz states that the model for this is not the so-called 'Rembrandt's Father' but the man who appears in reverse in a portrait in Vienna, wrongfully called 'Rembrandt's Father'

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**11** REMBRANDT'S MOTHER (1631)

94:66 B 349 II; H 50 II

Of all the etchings by Rembrandt reworked by Vliet, this shows the greatest amount of Rembrandt's work

**12** REMBRANDT WITH FLAT CAP AND SCARF (1633)

132:103 B 17 III; H 108 II

Plate reduced from original (146:118) and signature added; the facial expression altered (the moustache now droops)

Collection: H. Weber, 1856

**13 THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS (1633)**

530:410 B 81 IV; H 103 III

Collection: Pierre Remy, 1749

**14 REMBRANDT WITH A SABRE (1633)**

124:102 B 18 II; H 109 II

Plate reduced from the original (124:108) so that on the left the 'R' of the signature is only partly visible

**15 ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS (1634)**

262:219 B 44 III; H 120 III

Final completion of the first unfinished state

The composition of this etching had a considerable influence on Dutch artists. Rembrandt himself was inspired in it by more than one prototype. Artists such as Stradanus (the figure composition), Francesco Bassano, Moses van Uytenbrouck (landscape and details of foreground) may all be said to have influenced him to a greater or less degree. The figure of the shepherd in the foreground may ultimately be derived from a figure in Raphael's Heliodorus fresco

**16 CHRIST AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL (1657)**

121:106 B 70 IV; H 294 III

**17 CAESAR'S PENCE (1634)**

73:103 B 68 I; H 124 I

This etching is based in reverse on Rembrandt's own picture of 1629. Duplicate in the British Museum

**18 THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS (1634)**

(the smaller plate)

102:72 B 88 only; H 121 only

Collection: G. Bjorklund

**19 WOMAN READING (1634)**

123:98 B 345 III; H 113 III

Plate reduced from the original (123:100)

**20 CHRIST CLEANSING THE TEMPLE (1635)**

135:167 B 69 II; H 126 II

A prototype of this subject seems to have been one



of Jacopo Bassano's handlings of the same theme (most especially as regards the architectural background). Munz considers the figures on the group left of Christ to be derived from a prototype based on Michelangelo's drawing of *The Purification of the Temple*. The figure of Christ himself, Munz says, is taken from Durer's 'Little Passion' series

**21 THE STONING OF STEPHEN (1635)**

95:85 B 97 II; H 125 only

A drawing by Lastman may be the prototype for this etching

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**22 THE PANCAKE WOMAN (1635)**

109:79 B 124 II; H 141 II

This print was perhaps inspired by, though not based on, Jan van de Velde's etching. The pancake woman is also the subject of some drawings by Rembrandt

**23 JAN UYTENBOGAERT (1635)**

244:187 B 279 VI; H 128 V

This plate was originally rectangular, but was cut down from its first state to an octagon. It is a portrait of Jan Uytenbogaert, preacher of the sect of Arminian Remonstrants and chief spokesman of the latter in their struggle with the strict Calvinists. Rembrandt had painted his portrait in 1633, but did not make use of this for the etching. The poem on the etching is by Hugo Grotius, the well-known Dutch statesman and philosopher  
Beugo Collection, 1827

**24 ORIENTAL HEAD (1635)**

The original plate is in Gottingen University Library

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**25 OLD MAN WITH FUR CAP, EYES CLOSED (1635)**

112:100 B 290 only; H 130 only

**26 THE GREAT JEWISH BRIDE (1635)**

220:168 B 340 IV; H 127 IV

A preliminary study for this etching is at Stockholm  
Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**27 CHRIST SHOWN TO THE PEOPLE (1636)**

(from state II onwards) (the large upright plate)

550:446 B 771 V; H 143 IV

Among other studies for this work there is a monochrome preparatory study, in oils, in the National Gallery, dated 1634

Collection: Pierry Remy, 1749

**28 ABRAHAM DISMISSING HAGAR (1637)**

126:97 B 30 only; H 149 only

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**29 MAN IN A MEZETIN CAP (1637)**

95:83 B 313 only; H 150 only

**30 YOUNG MAN IN VELVET CAP WITH BOOKS BESIDE HIM (1637)**

96:83 B 268 II; H 151 II

This may be a portrait of Ferdinand Bol

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**31 JOSEPH INTERPRETING DREAMS (1638)**

108:81 B 37 III; H 160 III

Rembrandt's composition derives from Lucas van Leyden's engraving (B 19)

**32 REMBRANDT LEANING ON A STONE SILL (1639)**

207:164 B 21 I; H 168 I

The pose of this half length self portrait is derived from Raphael's portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (now in the Louvre), after which Rembrandt had made a sketch at an Amsterdam auction sale in 1639

Collection: D.L. unidentified

**33 THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN (1639)**

409:315 B 99 II; H 161 III

Considerable use has been made in this plate of the drypoint. The main source of inspiration for the etching suggests itself to Munz as Durer's woodcut of the Birth of the Virgin. The scriptural source for Rembrandt's etching is not one of the gospels, but the so-called Apocrypha of the New Testament and Legends

**34 OLD MAN LIFTING HIS HAND TO HIS CAP**  
(about 1640)

134:114 B 259 I; H 169

Duke of Buccleuch and Cambridge University  
duplicates

**35 PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE** (about 1640-41)  
(the large oblong plate)

213:290 B 49 III; H 162 III

There is a study in reverse for the prophetess  
Hannah at Dresden

**36 THREE ORIENTALS** (or 'Jacob and Laban')  
(1641)

144:113 B 118 II; H 183 II

Blanc believed that Jacob and Laban were  
represented here

**37 THE SCHOOLMASTER** (1641)

94:63 B128 II; H 192 II

Collections: T. W. Holburne and Ch. Delanglade

**38 MAN DRAWING FROM A CAST** (1641)

93:64 B 130 I; H 191 I

Collections: F. Kalle and G. Bjorklund

**39 THE CARD PLAYER** (1641)

90:81 B 136 I; H 190 I

**40 LANDSCAPE WITH MILL SAIL SEEN ABOVE A  
COTTAGE** (1641)

125:320 B 226 only; H 178 only

Prototypes for this kind of 'panorama' view are  
Jan de Velde's etchings

**41 MAN WITH CRUCIFIX AND CHAIN** (1641)

154:102 B 261 III; H 189 III

The intentional contrast between body and head  
(ascribed by Munz to the different degree of biting  
of these parts) contributes greatly to the subtlety  
of this print. A self portrait by G. Eeckhoult (dated  
1647) resembles considerably the model in this  
etching. (See also Nos. 38 and 39 in the present  
exhibition)

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**42 CHRIST HEALING THE SICK** (about 1642-45)

278:396 B 74 III; H 236 II

(Impression from the original plate after retouching by Captain W. Baillie)

The original of this, the 'Hundred Guilder Print,' undoubtedly Rembrandt's most famous etching, derives its name from the fact that 100 fl. is said to have been paid for it at a time when Rembrandt was still alive. Rembrandt probably worked on this plate over several years and made many preliminary studies and not a few modifications. He took the greatest pains over the expression of Jesus' face; the first preserved state shows the features already completely reworked (from an earlier state which must have been in existence) and there is a considerable distance again between this first and the second preserved state

**43 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS** (1642) (small plate)

150:115 B 72 I; H 188 I

The composition may have been inspired by the engraving after Rubens's picture at Berlin. The figure of Christ was originally smaller

**44 PHILOSOPHER MEDITATING** (1642)

150:173 B 105 II; H 201 II

Munz points out the cardinal's hat hanging on the stair rail and the lion, hardly visible, lying in the dark foreground, right, and titles this work 'St Jerome in a dark chamber'

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**45 VIEW OF AMSTERDAM** (1642)

112:153 B 210 only; H 176 only

This etching probably gives a view from a point N.E. of the Anthoi's Poort, beyond the old Blauwhoofd bastion

**46 LANDSCAPE WITH ARTIST SKETCHING** (about 1642)

129:208 B 219 only; H 213 only

**47 ABRAHAM AND ISAAC** (1645)

157:130 B 34 only; H 214 only

Lucas van Leyden's woodcut (B 3) may possibly have inspired this etching

**48 ST PETER (1645)**

119:117 B 96 I; H 217

Rembrandt had already represented the penitence of St Peter in the picture at Brussels, showing St Peter in despair, but this etching shows another incident: St Peter trying to give back the keys of the Church

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**49 JAN ASSELYN (CALLED 'CRABBETJE')**

(about 1648)

215:170 B 277 III; H 227 III

Jan Asselyn (about 1610-1652) was a gifted landscape painter who, after staying some time in Italy, coming under the influence of Claude and Pieter de Laer, lived in Amsterdam from about 1645 on. He was small in stature and his deformed hand earned him the nickname 'crabbetje' (i.e. little crab)

**50 THE OBELISK (about 1650)**

83:160 B 227 II; H 243 II

British Museum duplicate and Dr J. B. Burt collection

**51 ST JEROME IN AN ITALIAN LANDSCAPE**

(about 1651-52)

260:207 B 104 II; H 267 II

Munz believes Rembrandt to have been inspired for the whole setting of this scene by Peter Brueghel's *S. Hieronymus in deserto*, engraved by H. Cock (Bastelaer 7). For the lion Rembrandt may have used an etching by W. Hollar after Rubens, dated 1646, showing a lion in a similar pose

**52 PEASANTS TRAVELLING (about 1651-52)**

112:92 B 131 II; H 259 II

The head of a man is faintly etched on the right of the peasant's staff

**53 CLEMENT DE JONGHE (1651)**

206:161 B 272 VI; H 251 VI

Clement de Jonghe was one of the best known publishers of prints in Amsterdam from about 1640 to his death in 1679. The inventory of his prints contains a considerable number of Rembrandt's etchings

**54 DAVID AT PRAYER (1652)**

140:95 B 41 III; H 258 III

This etching is an illustration to the penitential psalm; a similar depiction of the repenting David occurs also in Hans Holbein's woodcuts

**55 DR FAUSTUS (about 1652-53)**

209:161 B 270 II; H 260 II

This etching has given rise to prodigious flights of imagination in its interpretation, more especially concerning the words on the magic disc which forms the head of the apparition holding in its left hand a mirror to which it points. Although in the seventeenth century the etching was probably called *A practising alchemist*, already in the eighteenth century it acquired the title *Dr Faust* and inspired Goethe in his great tragedy. As Munz writes, '... the representation of Faust as a strange mixture of scientist and magician is intimately connected in European thought with Rembrandt'

**56 THE SUPPER AT EMMANUS (1654) (larger plate)**

209:159 B 87 II; H 282 III

Rembrandt's sources for this etching include the following: Leonardo da Vinci, for Christ's gesture, and Durer's woodcut of the 'Little Passion' series, for the lighting and some details (e.g. the table). Also may be remembered his own painting of 1648

**57 THE STAR OF KINGS (1654)**

94:143 B 113 II; H 254 only

This night-piece is connected with a popular Dutch custom for children on the Feast of Epiphany to carry a star of the kind shown through the streets  
Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**58 ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE (1655)**

156:131 B 35 only; H 283 only

**59 THE LITTLE GOLDSMITH (1655)**

77:57 B 123 II; H 285 II

Collections: Liebach and Bjorklund

**60 JACOB THOMASZ HARINGH (1655)**

(The young Haringh)

197:148 B 275 III; H 288 III

Jacob Thomasz Haringh, a lawyer in Utrecht, was the son of the servant who was entrusted after Rembrandt's bankruptcy with the sale of his goods  
Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**61 ABRAHAM ENTERTAINING ANGELS (1656)**

160:131 B 29 only; H 286 only

Rembrandt's drawing after an Indian miniature of four Orientals seated beneath a tree is one of the sources of the etching. Munz suggests as another source Lucas van Leyden's engraving *Abraham and the Angels* (B 15). This composition shows the three angels promising to Abraham that Sarah (standing inside the door) will also have a son (Isaac)

**62 ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS: NIGHT**

(about 1656-57)

149:196 B 46 VI; H 255 VII

As Munz says, '[this] is Rembrandt's most humble and human representation of this theme, and he has created his particular unity from many a work of art'

**63 JAN LUTMA (1656)**

197:148 B 276 II; H 290 II

Jan Lutma the elder, of whom this is a portrait, was a sculptor and one of the best goldsmiths in Amsterdam; his son, Janus Lutma the younger, was a very fine etcher and probably worked for some time in Rembrandt's atelier, to judge by his earlier etchings

**64 CHRIST AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL (1657)**

(the oblong plate)

125:160 B 70 IV; H 294 III

Plate reduced from original (205:160). The composition is reminiscent of an Italian drawing of the sixteenth century, ascribed to Fra Bartolomeo

**65 ST FRANCIS PRAYING (1657)**

180:224 B 107 II; H 292 II

**66 LIEVEN WILLEMSZ VAN COPPENOL**

(about 1657-58)

341:290 B 283 VI; H 300 VI

Lieven Willemsz van Coppenol (c. 1598-after 1667), a well-known writing master, was probably an old friend of Rembrandt, who also painted him. His apparent love of publicity may be responsible for the pose and later for the many poems in praise of the portrait etchings

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**67 WOMAN BATHING HER FEET AT A BROOK (1658)**

159:80 B 200 only; H 298

**68 ST PETER AND ST PAUL AT THE TEMPLE GATE**

(1659)

179:216 B 94 III; H 301 III

Collection: Prince von Liechtenstein

**69 THE THREE CROSSES (1660-61)**

B 78 IV; H 270 IV

(Original size 387:450; this print trimmed 10 mm. all round)

The present state (the last) is a complete reworking from the earlier ones (state III is dated 1653)

This etching of Christ crucified between the two thieves is, with the *Ecce Homo* of 1655, one of the most monumental works in drypoint

Collection: Lord Derby







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