



# Rembrandt Laughing, c. 1628 – a painting resurfaces\*

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Imagine a small, rectangular, very thin sheet of copper, almost as thin as paper, but it feels surprisingly rigid and cool when you pick it up. One side of it is covered with paint that has slightly flaked along the edge where the copper plate must once have been bent (see fig. 17). What you hold seems to be very old but the paint adds up to an image that is strikingly alive. The paint is applied in sometimes fine, sometimes broad, even coarse brushstrokes that evoke the image of a laughing young man with the features of the youthful Rembrandt. What you are holding is a painting by the 22 year-old Rembrandt which, after a long existence in anonymity, has now surfaced again.

Since the early twentieth century a considerable number of paintings created by the young Rembrandt in Leiden between 1624 and 31 have been added to his oeuvre, whereas prior to this few paintings from his early years had been recognized as works by him. The prevailing image of Rembrandt had evidently been dictated by the 'Rembrandtesque' Amsterdam Rembrandt for so long that there was a kind of blindness to the works from his time in Leiden. It was therefore only to be expected that the end to the series of 'new discoveries' was not yet in sight.

The notion of 'discovery' is perhaps better avoided here. It would be more accurate to say that it 'finally turned up'. Although the painting unexpectedly was recognized as a Rembrandt at an English provincial auction in October 2007 (figs. 1 and 4) and was immediately hailed in the press as a 'sensational find', the existence of the work had already been recorded – indirectly – in the Rembrandt literature for a long time. Several art historians knew it in the form of a reproductive print by the Flemish engraver Lambertus Antonius Claessens (1763-1834) (fig. 2). Claessens, incidentally, regarded the painting as a work by Frans Hals (fig. 3). In 1966 the German Rembrandt expert Kurt Bauch (who specialized in the early Rembrandt) listed



**1**  
Rembrandt,  
Rembrandt  
Laughing (1:1),  
c. 1628  
(after restoration),  
copper, 22.2 x 17.1 cm  
(± 0.5 mm), Private  
collection

**2**  
Reproductive print  
after the painting  
reproduced in fig. 1  
by Lambertus  
Antonius Claessens  
(1763-1834)

**3**  
Detail of fig. 2

the painting on which this print was based under 'works by Rembrandt that have survived only in copies or reproductions'.<sup>1</sup> Bauch realized this as early as 1933, when he wrote in his book *Die Kunst des jungen Rembrandt*: 'It is clear from the type and the composition that Claessens's print is based on a work by Rembrandt. It is essentially impossible to derive any criteria for an accurate dating from the apparently freely executed print'.<sup>2</sup> We now know that the print is strikingly faithful. As we shall see, however, Bauch's observation is very understandable.

Claessens's print had been identified as a copy after a Rembrandt painting earlier still. In

4  
Illustration of the  
auction house's  
assessment description



**A FOLLOWER OF REMBRANDT** "The Young Rembrandt as Democritus the Laughing Philosopher", a portrait study, half length oil on copper, bears monogram top left "HL?" and lengthy French hand written inscription verso, 23.75 x 17 cm (ILLUSTRATED)  
£1000 - 1500

1905, in his *Iconographia Batava* volume II, Moes described it in a section of his book devoted to portraits and self-portraits by Rembrandt as: 'By Rembrandt c. 1629, laughing, bareheaded, with gorget (L.A. Claessens sc. as "Le Rieur" by Fr. Hals).'<sup>3</sup> Hofstede de Groot in 1915 adopted Moes's attribution.<sup>4</sup>

However, this information was not known to the people who put the painting into the sale, or to the auction house (fig. 4), or to the people who bid for it. Following Bauch, in *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* Vol. I, Claessens's print was mentioned in cat. no. C 33 – in connection with what turned out to be a free copy of the painting (see fig. 26). But the print was not reproduced in that entry, so it was forgotten. The people involved in the new RRP had no more than a vague feeling of familiarity when they saw the reproduction of the painting in the newspapers. Claessens' print had been glanced at now and then when we were browsing in Bauch's books, but mistakenly left out of our research for *Corpus IV* devoted to Rembrandt's self-portraits.

The painting had been owned by an English family for many years. In 2007 opinions about the work that they had been given from time to time led them to list it with auctioneers Moore, Allen & Innocent in Norcote, Cirencester (Gloucestershire) as the work of 'a follower of Rembrandt' (see fig. 4).<sup>5</sup> The auction house did, though, reproduce it on the cover of the sale catalogue. It must have been on the basis of this excellent reproduction that some people began to suspect, prior to the sale, that this could be an authentic work by the master, even if it is not a 'typical' early Rembrandt, in so far as there is such a thing (see below).

It was possible to tell from the reproduction on the cover of the catalogue that the painting is of superb quality and definitely shows certain stylistic features that we find in the early Rembrandt. Seen from close up, it reveals Rembrandt's hand with its complex and intelligent differentiation in the handling of the paint; it displays the effectiveness, sureness of touch and looseness typical of his manner of painting throughout his life. One only has to scrutinize the expressive shaping of the laughing face or the brushwork in the shiny fabric of the doublet compared with that in the woollen mantle to appreciate the pictorial assuredness and sensitivity of the painter. The painting moreover bears a monogram which the auction house mistakenly read as HL? (see fig. 4), but which on close inspection appears to read RHL (Rembrandt [originally with a 't' (see fig. 7)] Harmenszoon Leydensis). The monogram is of such a rare type that no later imitator could have known it, and it seemed to be one with the original paint layer (fig. 5).

Would others, though, be convinced by such primarily connoisseurial observations and accolades? The experience with early works by Rembrandt that have resurfaced in the past has been that certain connoisseurs initially find it quite difficult to give the work a place in their image of Rembrandt's early oeuvre. In 1976, when the Dutch art-historian Henri Defoer showed Horst Gerson and the members of the RRP, the most prominent Rembrandt connoisseurs of the day, a photograph of the 1626 *Baptism of the Eunuch* (now in Utrecht) which he had discovered in a private home, their reaction was negative. It was only after scientific examination had produced a comprehensive set of objective arguments in support of an attribution to Rembrandt that the painting was accepted unreservedly and gradually found its place in the experts' images of Rembrandt.





5  
The monogram of the present painting photographed in slightly raking light. The brushstrokes locally, for instance at the beginning of the loop of the R, interfere with the underlying brushwork.

With Rembrandt, especially the young Rembrandt, the acceptance process is more of an uphill battle than it is with most other artists. Stylistically, Rembrandt was constantly on the move, especially in his early years, or rather he was constantly trying out different pictorial means. As I shall discuss below (preamble 1), there is no such thing as a ‘typical’ early Rembrandt. In a sense they all seem to be unique, and the same is true of this painting. This is confusing for those who prefer the safety of standard criteria. It should be added that people who were not present at the sale had to judge the painting afterwards from reproductions in newspapers because the painting was generally not accessible after the auction. This meant that the confusion about the attribution dragged on. But if some people persist in their doubts, how can they be persuaded of its authenticity if the work is indeed an autograph painting by Rembrandt? It will take more than

the three indicators set out above: certain pictorial characteristics, the quality and the exceptional nature of the monogram (figs. 1, 5 and 7).

#### Preambles

There are a few remarks that have to be made before I embark on a more detailed analysis of the painting. The first concerns the background to the unpredictability of the characteristics of Rembrandt’s early works. The second relates to the people who might have been working in Rembrandt’s studio at the time this painting was made. After all, the work could have been painted in Rembrandt’s manner by someone in his immediate circle. And thirdly, there has to be a remark of a methodological nature in response to the question as to the level of certainty – or, more fundamentally, the degree of probability – with which it is possible to pronounce on the attribution of this or any

other painting to Rembrandt (or anyone else).

This is perhaps the stage in my argument at which I should nail my colours to the mast and state that I am convinced that the work was painted by Rembrandt. This conviction is based not just on the first glance at a reproduction in the paper, but also on a gradually growing series of arguments, each of which will, though, as ever, be open to discussion. Like Bauch when he was confronted with Claessens's print, I did not get the feeling that I was seeing in the newspaper clipping (which for some time was my only source of information) consistent characteristics of an early work by Rembrandt. In my case that had primarily to do with the contours of the figure, which are atypical of the Leiden Rembrandt and more reminiscent of Rembrandt's early Amsterdam portraits. The same is true of the placement of the figure in the generous picture space. Like Bauch, I was therefore faced with a disturbing problem of dating, and hence attribution. The third of the following preambles deals briefly with the way such objections can be dealt with. This introduction is necessary because in Rembrandt's case traditional connoisseurship does not function safely – something that is manifest from the historiography surrounding the definition of Rembrandt's oeuvre.<sup>6</sup>

*Preamble 1.* The uniqueness of Rembrandt's individual early works.

In the studios of Rembrandt's time, a wide range of different aspects of the art of painting, known as *de gronden* (the grounds or principles), were deliberately brought up for consideration. They related to the knowledge of painting that artists and lovers of art were expected to possess, although by no means all of them did.<sup>7</sup> In 1604 these 'grounds' were canonized by Karel van Mander in his didactic work *Den grondt der edel vrij schilder-const*, the educational megapoem on the art of painting. After Rembrandt's death the 'grounds' were again dealt with – but in many significant details differently from Van Mander – by Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten in his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst* (1678) and, later still, by Gerard de Lairesse in his *Het groot schilderboek* (1707).<sup>8</sup> These *gronden* concern such pictorial aspects as the rendering of colour, space, light, how to deal with compositional problems, with drapery, landscape and so forth and, equally importantly, the rendering of man, especially his attitudes and facial expressions related to the various emotions or 'affects', as well as a multitude of

other aspects involved in the art of painting.

My hypothesis is that, having finished his formal training, Rembrandt was, it seems, systematically investigating these 'grounds' and improving on them with great energy.<sup>9</sup> That is why the changes from work to work in the early Leiden years are so drastic and each work is in a sense different from the others. The term stylistic 'evolution' is inadequate here. It may be preferable to refer to Rembrandt's efforts in his Leiden years (and after) as 'a search for other, more effective pictorial means'.<sup>10</sup>

*Preamble 2.* One also has to bear in mind that in the period when the present work was painted (in or around 1628 as I will demonstrate) Rembrandt already had at least two quite advanced pupils: the fifteen-year-old Gerard Dou (1613-1675), who entered Rembrandt's studio on 14 February 1628, and an anonymous pupil, probably, like Dou, a relatively young boy.

Attributing work to Dou that was made during his stay in Rembrandt's studio has so far proved extremely difficult and controversial. I made a rather impulsive attempt with the Tokyo painting on copper (see fig. 14).<sup>11</sup> The copies after some of Rembrandt's early self-portraits or studies in the mirror – like the ones in Nuremberg (see fig. 31) and Indianapolis – may also be works by Gerard Dou (see fig. 32).

As to the other (anonymous) early pupil, we have been more successful in assembling a hypothetical group of works that seems to have been produced during his training with Rembrandt. Nearly all of these were once attributed to Rembrandt (among them the much admired *Student in a Lofty Room* in the National Gallery in London).<sup>12</sup> The panel of one of the works attributed to this pupil (Bredius 64) comes from the same tree as the panel of Rembrandt's *Study in the Mirror* in Indianapolis (Bredius 3). This, taken together with certain stylistic arguments and aspects of the subjects of his paintings, makes it highly likely that this pupil was trained by Rembrandt in about 1628 and for some time thereafter. The restorer Martin Bijl, who treated – and with the RRP investigated – several of the paintings attributed to this aspiring young painter, provisionally referred to him as Dirck Lievens (1612-1651), Jan Lievens's younger brother who also became a painter (although without a clearly distinguishable oeuvre from after his time with Rembrandt). As at least one of the works (Bredius 68) attributed to this young

painter shows a Lievens-like ambition and scale, it is not far-fetched to connect him in some way to Lievens, who may also have contributed to his training.

I mention these pupils, who both started working with Rembrandt in 1628, the year the present painting was produced, because someone may propose one of them – or another unknown pupil (see for instance fig. 11) – as a possible author of the work. However, the superior quality and the amazing freedom and confidence in the execution are enough in themselves to rule out the possibility that the painting discussed in this article could be the work of an early Rembrandt pupil.

*Preamble 3.* Because of the complications surrounding the ‘searching’ Rembrandt I touched on in preamble 1, the attribution of paintings to the early Rembrandt is never easy, whether the arguments for attribution are based on objective evidence or more subjectively on connoisseurial assessment. Each individual argument may be met with a counter-argument that might undermine its strength. We have long struggled with this methodological problem and have eventually found a way to deal with it, based on the ideas on probability of Thomas Bayes (1702-1761). We first demonstrated this approach in our article ‘New directions in the Rembrandt Research Project Part I’ in *The Burlington Magazine*, March 1996,<sup>13</sup> and dealt with it more specifically in our remarks on the Bayesian approach in *A Corpus* Vol. IV (pp. 108/109) which boiled down to the statements: ‘Applying the Bayesian approach to our own research, one can argue that if several weak pieces of evidence support the belief that a painting could be by Rembrandt, the evidence becomes stronger to the extent that each piece of evidence tends to eliminate an alternative possibility.’ And ‘He [Bayes] also observed that a variety of evidence provides better confirmation than an equal amount of homogeneous evidence.’

In the case of the present painting, the variety of the available arguments is quite considerable. Naturally the weight of the arguments varies as usual. But the arguments presented below converge in a most convincing way to a strong, positive conclusion. Even the notion of Rembrandt’s search on various fronts – the ‘grounds’ – and the consequent singularity of each early work finds a place in this array of arguments. There is, for instance, a tendency to seek arguments in favour of or against an



attribution by testing a painting against comparable images. Given the fact that the present painting may well have been painted by Rembrandt while he was studying his face in the mirror and that it is painted on copper, the natural inclination would be to compare it with Rembrandt’s self-portrait on copper in Stockholm (compare figs. 1 and 6). However, in the light of Rembrandt’s questing approach to his art at this time, this is not really as fruitful as it might seem.<sup>14</sup>

For each argument I now present, I shall put forward objections that ‘weaken’ it, since that is the way the processes of argumentation usually function. The opponent often thinks that qualifying or countering every argument put forward by the other person will bring about the total collapse of the position he is taking. It is, though, the gradually woven fabric of ‘a variety of evidence’ (in Bayesian terms) that can lead to a probability bordering on certainty for the attribution of the painting to Rembrandt.

In presenting and weighing the arguments

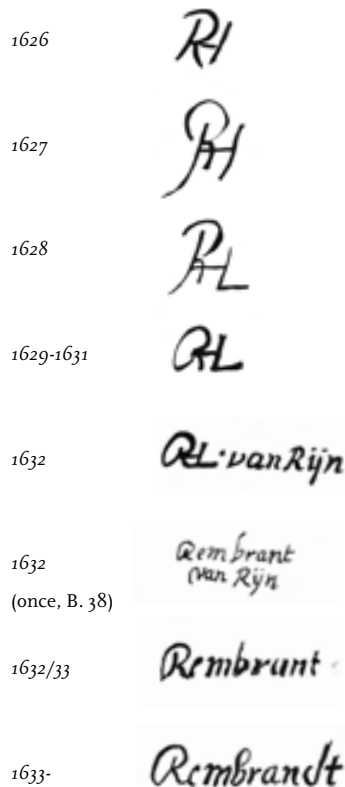
**6** Rembrandt, Self-Portrait with Beret and Gathered Shirt, 1630, gilded copper, 15 x 12.2 cm, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum

in the case of the present painting – as in any attribution problem – the more objective arguments should, of course, take precedence over the subjective, purely connoisseurial ones. However, as we shall see at the end of this article, in this case some ‘subjective’ arguments turn out to be remarkably objective when placed in the context of the evidence emerging from the more objective arguments.

### The signature

In the case of the painting under discussion, the RHL monogram is of major importance. It was inscribed in the paint of the background before it was dry (see fig. 5). The monogram is of a rare type used only in 1628 (or possibly late 1627 or early 1629) (fig. 7). It is so rare that no counterfeiter of a later period up to about 1980 could ever have known it in conjunction with the style of the painting. The fact that the inscription was applied in the wet paint is extremely important because it provides a trustworthy key to the dating of the painting. The similarities between this monogram and the one in the wet paint of Rembrandt’s *Study in the Mirror in Indianapolis* (Bredius 3), for instance, are striking (fig. 8). This last painting – given its genesis and a number of particular features dealt with in *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings Vol. IV* – should be taken to be an autograph Rembrandt beyond reasonable doubt. While cleaning the present painting the restorer, Simon Howell, found the same directions in the brushstrokes of the monogram as I had found during my study of the signature of the Indianapolis *Study in the Mirror* (see fig. 8). Compare also the signature on the *Old Man with Turban* (figs. 9 and 10).<sup>15</sup>

I should add, however, that until now we have doubted the attribution to Rembrandt of one painting with nearly the same type of monogram followed by the date 1628 (figs. 11 and 12).<sup>16</sup> This is *The Foot Operation* in a Swiss private collection which we consider to be a studio work. This case reminds us of the fact that in the past signatures may also have served as studio marks.<sup>17</sup> The main importance of the signature on the present painting is that it is definitely contemporaneous with the painting. After scrutinizing the paint surface we can conclude that, in places, the wet paint of the background on which the monogram was inscribed merges wet in wet with the paint of the figure. As will become clear, the possibility of fixing the painting’s creation so firmly in time is of the utmost importance to the evaluation of the



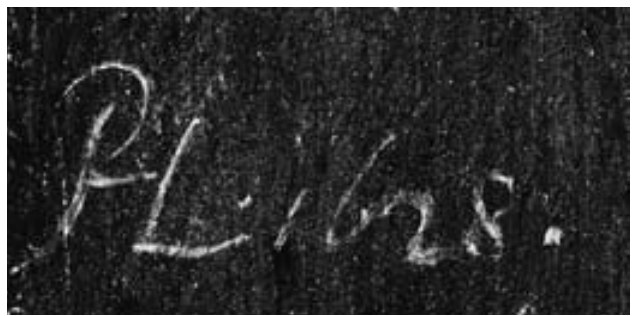
7 Overview of the evolving types monograms and signatures between 1626 and 1633 (Facsimile)



8 Field notes with transcription of the monogram on Rembrandt’s, *Study in the Mirror*, c. 1628/29, Indianapolis, Museum of Art. The arrows indicate the directions of the (wet-in-wet) brushstrokes.

initially confusing stylistic characteristics we referred to above, particularly where the nature of the contours and the positioning of the figure in the picture space are concerned.





**9**  
Monogram of fig. 10

**11**  
Circle of Jan Lievens and Rembrandt, *The Foot Operation*, 1628, panel, 31.8 x 24.4 cm, Switzerland, private collection

**10**  
Rembrandt, *Bust of a Man wearing a Turban*, c. 1627/28, panel, 26.7 x 20.3 cm, Private collection

**12**  
Monogram and date of fig. 11





13  
Rembrandt, St Peter and St John at the Temple Gate, c. 1628, etching, 22.1 x 16.9 cm (Bartsch 95)

### The copper plate

The next objective argument is the size of the copper plate on which the work is painted. Give or take a millimetre, by seventeenth-century standards it is exactly the same as a copper plate used by Rembrandt for an etching usually dated to 1628 (*St Peter and St John at the Temple Gate* [Bartsch 95]), one of Rembrandt's first ambitious etchings – apparently considered a failure, since Rembrandt made only a few (smudged) prints from it (fig. 13). The etching measures 22.1 x 16.9 cm, the present painting 22.2 x 17 cm. We initially considered the possibility that the plate of the failed etching was used as a support for the present painting, but a comparison of the edges of the plate used for the painting with the smudged edges of the printing plate, which left traces on the paper during the printing process, revealed that this was not the case. As we shall see, features of the painting invisible to the naked eye displayed remarkable similarities to the print (see fig. 20).

The argument of the similarity in size between the copper support of the present painting and the plate from which Bartsch 95 was printed might seem to carry little weight in the light of the fact that standard sizes of panels, canvases, paper and, so it seems, of copper plates, too, were all available. However, in those days there could be considerable variation within the standard sizes. Identical 'twins' like the plates under discussion would therefore most probably have derived from the same batch, originating from the same producer or retailer and very likely ending up in the same workshop. In this case, given the fact that the etching is certainly authentic, there is a distinct possibility that these two identical plates were both used by Rembrandt.

However, with reference to the painting on copper in Tokyo, which is also from 1628 and undoubtedly from Rembrandt's workshop, one may ask: what if another copper plate of nearly the same size (22.1 x 17.1 cm)<sup>18</sup> is not accepted as an autograph work by Rembrandt (fig. 14)? Would that not negate this particular argument? And would the position be retrieved by pointing out that the Tokyo copper plate is of lesser quality, that it had been clumsily repaired before it was painted on and beaten so thin on one side that a piece of unknown width eventually broke off? Did the pupils work with material inferior to that used by the master?<sup>19</sup> There are indications that this may have been the case.

Comparison of the X-radiographs of the copper support of the present painting with that of



**14** Gerard Dou (?), Fragment of a nocturnal biblical or historical composition (detail), 1628, copper, 22.1 x 17.1 cm, Tokyo, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation



**15** X-radiograph of fig. 1



**16** X-radiograph of fig. 14



17  
Fig. 1 after cleaning

18  
Electron emission-  
radiograph of fig. 1

19  
Infrared-radiograph  
of fig. 1

20  
Reconstruction of the  
underlying painting  
of fig. 1

21  
Rembrandt, David  
with the Head of  
Goliath before  
Saul, 1627, panel,  
27.2 x 39.6 cm,  
Basel, Kunstmuseum



the Tokyo painting prompts an examination of the process by which these remarkably thin but hard copper plates were made (figs. 15 and 16). These plates were produced by rolling and then tempered by hammering them.<sup>20</sup> In the X-radiographs of these paintings, the traces of the regular hammer-blows stand out dark in the thinner areas of the plate. The evidently extremely thin areas in the plate (approx. 0.2 mm) on which the work in Tokyo was painted let so much radiation through that radio-absorbent parts of the composition can be distinguished (which is not true of the support for the painting discussed in this article). Judging by the edges, this plate is about 0.5 mm thick. Numerous minor variations on the format of the present painting (22.2 x 17.1 cm ± 0.5 mm) can be found in Hinterding's article on Rembrandt's etching plates.<sup>21</sup> This was apparently a very common standard size. But it is only in the case of Bartsch 95 (fig. 13) and the present painting that the plate sizes are close to being identical.

#### A superimposed painting

A third objective argument, although again not in itself conclusive, might be that the laughing

figure is painted on top of an earlier painting, a history piece (with figures of a different scale from the laughing figure itself). The underlying painting was discovered with electron emission (fig. 18) and infrared radiation (fig. 19) (see the Appendix, p. 37, for technical specifications).<sup>22</sup> The subject of this underlying painting has not yet been identified (for a tentative reconstruction, see fig. 20).

Such superimposed paintings frequently occur in Rembrandt's Leiden oeuvre, mainly with his small works. Interestingly, most of the superimposed paintings from the Amsterdam period are self-portraits.<sup>23</sup> We now accept, or tend to accept, the following fourteen superimposed paintings from Rembrandt's Leiden period as autograph: *Corpus I* A 8, 9, 18, 20, 29, 38, B 3, 4, C 5, 22, 27, 38, IV p. 637 (fig. 10) and *Handjeklap/La main chaude* in Dublin. In this case, the argument that the present work was painted by Rembrandt is strengthened to the extent that the underlying work, as far as we can make it out, may well be by Rembrandt. It contains elements which are very reminiscent of the young Rembrandt's hand: freely executed weapons like a shield and a sword, and indications of the







22  
Rembrandt,  
Laughing Man,  
1630, etching,  
5 x 4.4 cm  
(Bartsch 316)



23  
Jan Lievens (?), The  
Laughing Man or  
Study in the  
Mirror, c. 1630,  
panel, 41.5 x 34 cm,  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum



24  
Isack Jouderville,  
Laughing Man  
with Gorget and  
Gold Chain or  
Study in the Mirror  
(detail), c. 1630,  
panel, 52 x 49 cm,  
The Hague,  
Museum Bredius



drapery or costumes of two (apparently kneeling) figures in the foreground. The silhouettes of the heads and shoulders of two other figures to the right in the middle ground of the scene are strongly reminiscent of similar pairs of figures in unquestionable history pieces painted by the young Rembrandt, for instance the *Repentant Judas* (Br. 539A). Like the indications of architectural arches above these figures, the silhouetted figures in the painting covered by the present painting also recall *St Peter and St John* in the etching (Bartsch 95) mentioned above (see fig. 13). The combination of kneeling figures and weapons (fig. 20) – a sword lying on the ground, what could be a leaning spear on the extreme left, a shield with its characteristic indication of shininess are reminiscent of the similarly small *David before Saul* of 1627 in Basel (fig. 21).

But superimposed paintings also occur with works from Rembrandt's studio or by other painters from Rembrandt's immediate milieu (*Corpus I C 42, I A 32* (later attributed to Jan Lievens), *I A 33* (de-attributed in Vol. IV).

#### The affect of laughing

It is well known that from his earliest works onwards Rembrandt was deeply involved in efforts to convincingly render a great variety of human emotions or 'affects', as a rule in scenes in which several figures interact.<sup>24</sup> One of the most striking features of the present painting is the artist's extraordinary success in suggesting a superbly convincing laugh. A fourth objective argument (or perhaps I should say cluster of arguments) in favour of an attribution of the painting to Rembrandt is connected with this aspect of Rembrandt's work as an artist.<sup>25</sup>

The question of the function of such works, when they only show a single figure with a specific affect, is relevant in the case of the present painting. Around 1630, for instance, Rembrandt created five well-known etchings depicting as many different affects, including 'laughing' (fig. 22). These prints are sometimes described as his earliest studies of affects. In fact, though, they represent almost his last Leiden achievements in this field. We may ask if the customary description of them as self-portraits is actually justified (see below). They may have been intended as drawing examples for young painters to practise the rendering of affects. Reviewing the history of paintings of this kind, one cannot escape the impression that this was actually a genre in its own right.<sup>26</sup> The fact that relatively ambitious paint-



ings of laughing figures were made in Rembrandt's immediate circle – and there are no comparable paintings of figures displaying other emotions – contributes to this impression (see figs. 23 and 24).

It goes without saying that in his searching approach to painting Rembrandt must have had a lively interest in what other painters elsewhere had done in the past and were doing in his own day and age. A possible connection with the work of Frans Hals that Henri Defoer drew to my attention is very interesting in this context. In the tellingly observed backward-leaning pose with the slightly tilted head, the laughing man in the present painting bears a striking resemblance to Frans Hals's almost identically positioned (in mirror image) *Mulatto* of c. 1628-30 (fig. 25). It is tempting to see a direct link of some kind between the two works, most likely that the young Rembrandt quoted his older contemporary rather than the other way round, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the strong resemblance of the poses of the two figures could simply be a coincidence, as the two paintings nearly differ fundamentally in every other respect.

The connection between the present painting and another painting is clearer. In this case,

Rembrandt's painting, as Kurt Bauch recognized when he saw Claessens's print, was undoubtedly the prototype. It is a free copy of approximately the same size as the present painting (fig. 26). Notwithstanding the many differences, particularly in the costume, given the countless corresponding details (compare the irregular tapering of the locks of hair on either side of the head, the type of eyebrows, the fall of the light on the face, the shape of the left corner of the mouth, from the viewer's perspective, with all the details around it) there can be no doubt that the maker of this painting took the newly-discovered painting as his starting point. Experts like Bode, Lugt, Bauch and Gerson who have seen the painting shown in fig. 26 and published about it seem to have doubted only the attribution to Rembrandt and not the early seventeenth-century origin of the painting. Given the evidence that it is a free copy after the present painting, it is a 'document' of considerable significance in support of the attribution of that work to Rembrandt, since prototypes used for free (studio) copies were usually works produced by the master of a workshop.

**25**  
Frans Hals, *Mulatto*,  
c. 1628-30, canvas,  
75.5 x 63.5 cm,  
Leipzig, Museum der  
bildenden Künste (cat.  
1924, no. 1017)

**26**  
Free copy after fig. 1,  
panel, 20.5 x 17.5  
cm, Whereabouts  
unknown (coll.  
Baron Edmond de  
Rothschild?)

### Other evidence

These more or less objective arguments in favour of an attribution of the painting to Rembrandt – concerning the monogram, the size and nature of the copper plate, the fact that the painting is superimposed on a history piece that shows striking similarities to early history paintings by Rembrandt, Rembrandt's interest in rendering affects and the fact that the present painting was used by a follower as a prototype for a free copy – do not provide watertight proof that this painting is by Rembrandt, although these arguments converge with a considerable degree of probability in that direction. The most important thing is that they constitute a sound basis for further evaluations.

Here the date is crucial. Thanks to the precision of the dating of the painting, we can confidently argue that the pictorial means developed in this painting are pioneering when seen in the context of the sequence of creative innovations made by Rembrandt, from his early years until well into the Amsterdam period.

These features have to do with the rendering of the contours of the figure, with the scale of the picture space, the placing of the figure in this space, the execution of the highlights in the face and the treatment of the catch lights on the gorget. And lastly, the assessment of the resemblance between the laughing young man in the painting and Rembrandt himself (as we know him from his first detailed self-portrait with his face in repose and shown in normal lighting, see fig. 31) will provide the final argument in support of the attribution of the work.

In all these aspects, this painting, like many other early paintings, must have served Rembrandt as a 'laboratory' for the development of pictorial and other solutions, some of which would be incorporated in Rembrandt's growing repertoire of artistic resources in the years to come.

One of the most striking features is the figure's contour. As I have said, when I saw the painting for the first time in a newspaper cutting, that was the aspect that I found most confusing. In some respects the painting seemed to be quite early, whereas those contours reminded me of later works, the portraits from 1631 onwards and especially of a 'trony' of 1631 (which – incidentally – was larger at the top) (see its reconstruction in fig. 27).<sup>27</sup>

One could elaborate at length on this type of contour, which is remarkably autonomous. In the present painting it was shaped by painting the background against the figure and not by

working outward from the inside. Rembrandt may in fact have 'discovered' this type of powerfully rhythmic contour in that process. It is interesting to note that, while applying and possibly reapplying the paint to the background, he had at the same time to cover the underlying painting completely as well as define the contours of the figure. Between 1628 and 1631 Rembrandt painted no other individual three-quarter-length figures against a neutral background. We do not see this type of contour again until he became a portrait painter in 1631. This would explain Bauch's (and my) confusion about the dating of the painting, a confusion which – as I said at the beginning of this article – made Bauch even doubt the faithfulness of Claessens's print after the painting which was still 'lost' in Bauch's time.

At the start of this article I announced that 'subjective' stylistic arguments, in this case the character of the contours and – as I will discuss below – the ample picture space with a neutral background, would prove to be of surprisingly objective weight in the question of attribution. Because there were a number of arguments (the monogram, the copper plate, the type of the underlying painting) which meant that the painting could be firmly placed in or very near to 1628, it was possible to define the pioneering role of these stylistic features, resulting in an even better foundation for the attribution of the painting.

Another feature that presages Rembrandt's later concentration on paintings with single figures – especially portraits – is the ample space he allows his figure; there is a great deal of room above the laughing man's head which lends the figure a stunning presence (comparable to the figure in fig. 27). This, together with the slight tilting of the head and the undulating contour of the torso, produces the dynamic character of the work, which gives the painting the appearance of being of a later date than it actually is. It ties in with the earlier observation that this work is pioneering in several respects, enhancing their significance.

Another striking feature in this painting is the constellation of cursorily and remarkably thickly applied flesh-coloured highlights in the face (fig. 28). Apart from their essential colouristic contribution, in their casual application these touches help to suggest the fleeting nature of the facial expression depicted. *Mutatis mutandis*, one finds this same type of looseness in Rembrandt's other depictions of the laugh in the 1630 *Laughing Soldier* in The Hague



27  
Rembrandt, Half-length Figure of a Man wearing a Gorget and Plumed Hat, 1631 (reconstruction of the original size), panel, 83.5 x 75.6 cm, Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago





28  
Fig. 1 under raking light (detail)



29  
Back of the copper support of fig. 1

(Bredius 134), and it is still there in the 1663 *Self-Portrait as Zeuxis Laughing* in Cologne (Bredius 61). This feature also appears to have been developed in the present painting for the first time. The same can be said of the execution of the gleaming gorget, done with a brilliance familiar from a number of other, later Leiden paintings like the *Nuremberg Self-Portrait* of c. 1629 (see fig. 31), and more elaborately in the *Getty Old Man* (Bredius 79) and the Chicago painting illustrated in fig. 27.

### Rembrandt's likeness and a proposed title for the painting

I shall end this article with the rather confusing issue of the title of the painting. It came on to the art market as "The Young Rembrandt as Democretes the Laughing Philosopher". The title was inspired by an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century inscription in pen and ink on the back of the copper support (fig. 29). Rembrandt's name does not appear in this inscription, but the name of the laughing philosopher is mentioned. It is not surprising that the laughing figure was identified as Rembrandt. If we compare it with the *Nuremberg Self-Portrait* of c. 1629, the subject certainly looks very much like Rembrandt in terms of the physiognomy – to the extent that a laughing face can be compared with a face in repose (compare figs. 30 and 31). Look, for instance, at the way the hair grows around the temples and the forehead, and the type (fine, wavy) and colour of the hair (dark blond with lighter strands). Look at the shape of the eyebrows and eyelids, the type of nose and the characteristic break of the nose from the forehead to the bridge, the position and shape of the visible part of the ear, the smooth, glistening red lower lip and the broad chin; they are all strikingly similar. The way the head sits on the neck is also typical of Rembrandt. The painting that has resurfaced must consequently have been painted in front of a mirror reflecting Rembrandt's own grimacing face.

These physiognomic characteristics and other aspects typical of Rembrandt are found not only in the *Nuremberg painting*, which was not accorded its rightful place in the Rembrandt oeuvre until 2000, but also, of course, in the copy of it in the *Mauritshuis* (see fig. 32). For a long time this version was thought to be the original, and it largely determined the prevailing view of the physiognomy of the young Rembrandt. When one compares the three paintings (figs. 30, 31 and 32), one is struck by

how much the newly-emerged painting has in common, in terms of execution, too, with the *Nuremberg painting*, even though the two works are so different in size. And of course there are also other differences. In the present painting we find the thickly impasted, deep pink touches that have to do with creating the laughing expression, and the subdued tone of the cheek, kept cool to achieve the reduced effect of the light on the left-tilted head. Neither occurs in the *Nuremberg work*. A striking similarity is found in the handling of the hair, which exhibits not only the same 'fluffiness' but also the same variation of light and dark blond by the temples and over the forehead. These similarities are all the more striking when the two paintings are compared with the *Hague copy*, where the same passages were executed with a spiky hatching technique (fig. 32). The considerable kinship between the present painting and the *Nuremberg self-portrait* is also evident in details like the transition from light to shade by the left eyelid (from the viewer's perspective) and in the freedom in the execution of the highest light on the gorget. The general spontaneous sensitivity of the handling of the brush – specific to Rembrandt – is perhaps the most persuasive in support of the attribution of the present painting to Rembrandt.

But if the physiognomic resemblances between the present painting and the *Nuremberg painting* are indeed as striking as I say, why have I refrained from describing the painting as a self-portrait by Rembrandt? After all, Rembrandt cannot have studied only the affect of 'laughing' in the mirror. At the same time he must also have portrayed his physiognomic characteristics and other features typical of his appearance utterly faithfully.

During our work on Vol. IV of *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, devoted to what were customarily described as Rembrandt's self-portraits, we became increasingly convinced that this traditional designation for every work in which Rembrandt's face appears cannot be used indiscriminately and has to be qualified. This is particularly desirable because the term 'self-portrait' did not exist in the seventeenth century. People in Rembrandt's time referred to a self-portrait as 'a portrait of (for example) Rembrandt painted by himself'. From this it is clear that a self-portrait was first and foremost a portrait, and implicitly one that conformed to the requisite associated conventions. As we see in note 26, paintings like this were called



'laughing tronies' (trony in the sense of 'face'), but with the emphasis on laughing.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, despite the fact that Rembrandt used himself as his model (the most patient model a painter could wish for, particularly where a face contorted in an emotion was concerned), the painting discussed here should strictly speaking be called the 'Laugher' or 'Laughing Man'. Laughter, after all, (and the difficulty of capturing it in a painting) must originally have been the real *raison d'être* for this painting.

But, in the end we are free to give titles to paintings as we like. The whole idea that a painting should have a set title did not exist in the seventeenth century. But nowadays, in the ongoing discussion about famous paintings, an accepted title facilitates communication. So why not call the painting *Rembrandt Laughing*?

It would avoid the term 'self-portrait' and would, indeed, indicate both the model and the painter, who had to act out as well as render the affect so masterfully presented in this extraordinary work.

(translation: Lynne Richards and Murray Pearson)

### Appendix

Technical data and information about the pigments analyzed by N. Eastaugh (London)

Electron emission radiography (see fig. 18) is a surface technique that will preferentially reveal the upper paint layers rather than the ground or support and is therefore useful for paintings on copper. It works by using much

**30**  
Detail of fig. 1 (1:1)

**31**  
Rembrandt, Self-Portrait Wearing a Gorget, c. 1629 (detail), panel, 38.2 x 31 cm, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum

**32**  
Copy (by Gerard Dou?) of fig. 31 (detail), panel, 37.9 x 28.9 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague





more energetic X-rays than are typically employed for radiography of paintings. These X-rays eject electrons from the atoms which constitute the paint. Such electrons can travel only relatively short distances before being re-absorbed; those near the surface can escape into a sheet of radiographic film held in intimate contact, thus creating the exposure. The images are also the reverse of conventional radiographs, with X-ray dense pigments such as lead white appearing dark as opposed to light. A Pantak 300kV X-ray source was used with industrial X-ray film.

The infrared imaging (see fig. 19) was carried out with a Xenics XEVA Cooled TE<sub>3</sub> InGaAs (indium gallium arsenide) FPA ('focal plane array') camera sensitive from 0.9-1.7µm (0.9-1.7 micron/900-1700nm). InGaAs (and 'MCT'-mercury cadmium telluride) cameras have been progressively taking over the role of IR vidicon systems in reflectography applications as they offer much better performance in terms of such areas as linearity and dynamic range.

The cross-sections were difficult to photograph. However, they show a conventional preparation for copper plates. The greyish ground is a lead white + black mixture with a little chalk in it. There is also some of the green 'oleate' layer present, which is the bright green in small spots visible in various places around the edges and in damages. Most of the samples have a simple structure with one or two layers, apart from one taken from the brown drapery, where there are about five layers overall (mostly shades of brown). It was possible to confirm the presence of lead tin yellow type I and a very finely ground azurite. Other pigments were earths, lead white, vermilion and a red lake. There were small fragments of the red lake scattered across the painting, rather like dried paint that had been re-ground.

Nicholas Eastaugh

## De lachende Rembrandt, ca. 1628 – een recent opgedoken schilderij

Ernst van de Wetering

Op 26 oktober 2007 werd tijdens een lokale Engelse veiling een klein schilderijtje ingebracht als werk van een navolger van Rembrandt (afb. 1 en 4). Sommigen onder degenen die boden meenden het te herkennen als een eigenhandig, vroeg werk van Rembrandt zelf en boden daarom lang tegen elkaar op tot het bij een verrassend hoge som werd afgeslagen. In de daarop volgende periode werd het schilderij onderzocht. In dit artikel wordt van dat onderzoek verslag gedaan. De belangrijkste vraag is of de toeschrijving aan Rembrandt gerechtvaardigd is.

Hoewel het schilderijtje gevierd werd als een nieuwe ontdekking was het bestaan ervan al bekend dankzij een reproductieprent die rond 1800 vervaardigd werd door de Vlaamse graveur J.A. Claessens (afb. 2). Claessens meende overigens dat het schilderij dat hij in prent bracht door Frans Hals geschilderd was (afb. 3). Moes (1905), Hofstede de Groot (1915) en Bauch (1933/66) (noten 1-4) waren er echter van overtuigd dat Claessens een werk van Rembrandt gekopieerd had.

Bij het ontwikkelen van argumenten voor of tegen de toeschrijving van het schilderij aan Rembrandt werden eerst de meest objectief te beoordelen aspecten nader beschouwd:

- Het monogram (afb. 5) in de linker bovenhoek is op de nog niet geheel droge verf van de achtergrond gezet. Het blijkt van een type te zijn dat Rembrandt alleen in – of kort voor of na 1628 – gebruikte.
- Het koperplaatje waarop het schilderijtje werd geschilderd blijkt in formaat (22,2 x 17 cm) treffend overeen te komen met de plaat die Rembrandt gebruikte voor een ets die ook in 1628 ontstond: de Petrus en Johannes bij de Tempelpoort (22,1 x 16,9 cm) (afb. 13).
- Veertien van Rembrandts vroege schilderijen op klein formaat zijn over andere – kennelijk verworpen – schilderijen aangebracht. Ook het nieuw ontdekte schilderij is over een eerder schilderij – een klein historiestuk – aangebracht (zie afb. 18, 19, 20). Het onderlig-

gende schilderij vertoont kenmerken van schilderijen van Rembrandt uit de voorgaande periode.

- Het ‘affect’ lachen speelt – zoals vele andere affecten – in Rembrandts vroege oeuvre een grote rol. Het feit dat een vroege vrije kopie van juist dit schilderij bestaat (afb. 26), uitgevoerd op een paneeltje van ongeveer hetzelfde formaat, pleit voor de eigenhandigheid van het nieuw ontdekte schilderij omdat (vrije) kopieën in de regel naar het werk van de meester werden vervaardigd.
- In enkele stilistische – en dus meer subjectief te beoordelen – aspecten van het schilderij (de aard van de contour van de figuur, de beeldruimte waarin hij tegen een neutrale achtergrond is geplaatst, de manier waarop de vluchtige expressie van de lach is weergegeven, de manier waarop de lichten op de ijzeren ringkraag zijn aangebracht) loopt dit schilderij vooruit op soortgelijke stilistische kenmerken bij schilderijen die Rembrandt vanaf 1630/31 vervaardigde. Dat wijst erop dat in dit schilderij diverse schilderkunstige oplossingen voor het eerst door Rembrandt zijn toegepast (vergelijk afb. 1 met afb. 27). Alleen al daarom kan het schilderij dankzij de exacte datering ervan met een grote mate van waarschijnlijkheid aan Rembrandt zelf worden toegeschreven. Dat wordt nog eens bevestigd door een aantal opvallend sterke overeenkomsten met Rembrandts zelfportret in Neurenberg uit ca 1629 – zowel in de physionomie als in de werkwijze (vergelijk afb. 30 en 31). De overeenkomsten zijn van

dien aard dat – mede gezien de andere hierboven aangestipte argumenten – met zekerheid kan worden gesteld dat het nieuw ontdekte schilderij door Rembrandt zelf voor een spiegel geschilderd moet zijn.

Als dat laatste zo duidelijk het geval is waarom kunnen we het nieuwe schilderij in het vervolg niet als een ‘zelfportret van Rembrandt’ benoemen? Schilderijen kregen in de zeventiende eeuw geen titels. Daarom is iedereen vrij welke titel dan ook aan een schilderij te geven – zo’n titel is immers niet meer of minder dan een middel om een schilderij in onze tijd ondubbelzinnig aan te kunnen duiden. Maar met het begrip ‘zelfportret’ moeten we voorzichtig zijn. In de zeventiende eeuw bestond dat woord niet. Wilde men (bijvoorbeeld) een zelfportret van Rembrandt aanduiden dan schreef men: ‘Een portret van Rembrandt door hemzelf gemaakt’. Het kernwoord was dus ‘portret’ met de daarmee verbonden conventies, met name dat het gezicht in de regel in rust – en daarmee goed herkenbaar – werd weergegeven. Een schilderij als het onlangs ontdekte werd in Rembrandts tijd als ‘een lachende tronie’ aangeduid (zie noot 26); tronie betekende gezicht. Het kernwoord was ‘lachend’. Nu we door de vergelijking met het Neurenbergse zelfportret zo zeker weten dat Rembrandt de spiegel niet alleen gebruikte om de expressie van een lachend gezicht zo goed mogelijk te bestuderen, maar tevens daarbij zichzelf zo getrouw mogelijk weer te geven zou mijn voorstel zijn het schilderij ‘De lachende Rembrandt’ te dopen.

\* On 27 November, the author was invited to study the painting that had been sold at auction by Moore, Allen & Innocent in Norcote, Cirencester (Gloucestershire) on 26 October 2007 as a work by a follower of Rembrandt. The new owners suspected that the painting might be a work by Rembrandt himself. When they showed it to me, they also produced the results of different types of radiographic investigations as reproduced in this article in figs. 15, 18 and 19. These investigations were carried out by (or under the supervision of) Dr Nicholas Eastaugh. By the time I saw the painting it had already been cleaned by Simon Howell, who had also removed the earlier retouches (see fig. 17). It was agreed that I would participate in publishing the relevant observations, findings and ideas after additional

research had been carried out. On 21 December I returned to London with Karin Groen, a member of the Rembrandt Research Project, to discuss further research to be carried out by Dr Eastaugh. The results of his investigations can be found in the Appendix to this article. I am extremely grateful to Bob van den Boogert, Margaret Oomen, Lideke Peese Binkhorst and Jaap van der Veen for their help in writing this article. I also thank Lynne Richards and Murray Pearson for their superb translation and Heleen van Haaren for her patience in dealing with the many problems we caused during the pre-press work.

1. K. Bauch, *Rembrandt Gemälde*, Berlin 1966, no. A 25.
2. ‘Das hier ein Rembrandtwerk zu Grunde liegt ist nach Typus und Aufmachung deutlich erkennbar. Kriterien zur genaueren Datierung sind aus dem offenbar sehr eigenmächtigen Stich kaum zu gewinnen.’, K. Bauch, *Die Kunst des jungen Rembrandt*, Heidelberg 1933, p. 208, fig. 206, p. 189.
3. E.W. Moes, *Iconographia Batava*, Vol. II, Amsterdam 1905, p. 310: 6693, no. 6. In the jubilant article in the *Volkskrant* of October 27 2007, the day after the auction, Jan Six Jr, head of the Department of Old Master Paintings at Sotheby’s Amsterdam, was quoted as having already discovered the Moes attribution. Like those who bid at the auction, Jan Six was attributing the painting to Rembrandt.

4. C. Hofstede de Groot, *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, vol. VI, Esslingen a. N.–Paris 1915, no. 601a: '[Rembrandt] Selbstbildnis. Sehr jung, lachend. Barhaupt mit Halsberge. Das Original ist verschollen. Gestochen von L.A. Claessens als "Le rieur" [sic] nach Frans Hals (!)'.
  5. Moore, Allen & Innocent (Norcote, Cirencester, Gloucestershire), A sale by auction of selected pictures, Friday 26th October 2007. 'A follower of Rembrandt "The young Rembrandt as Democretes the laughing philosopher", a portrait study, half length oil on copper, bears monogram top left "HL?" and lengthy French hand written inscription on verso, 23.75 x 17 cm (illustrated) £1000-1500.'
  6. E. van de Wetering, 'Delimiting Rembrandt's autograph oeuvre; an insoluble problem?', in: *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt*, exhib. cat. Staatliche Museen Kassel / Museum Het Rembrandthuis, Kassel / Amsterdam 2001/2002, pp. 58-81; E. van de Wetering, 'Connoisseurship and Rembrandt's paintings: new directions in the Rembrandt Research Project, part II', in: *The Burlington Magazine* (CL) February 2008, pp. 83-90.
  7. S. van Hoogstraeten, *Den eerlyken jongeling, of de edele konst van zig by groote en kleine te doen eeren, geagt en bemint te maken*, Dordrecht 1657, p. 26: '... daerom rade ik dat men hare gronden in 't gros lere verstaen, ...' [I therefore advise you to learn to gain a general understanding of the principles of the art of painting]; see also E. van de Wetering, 'Rembrandt's "Satire on Art Criticism" reconsidered', in: *Shop Talk. Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive* (eds. Cynthia P. Schneider, William W. Robinson, Alice I. Davies et al.) Cambridge, Mass. 1995, pp. 264-270.
  8. Karel van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vrij schilderconst*, Haarlem 1604, ed. H. Miedema, Utrecht 1974; S. van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst*, Rotterdam 1678; Gerard de Lairese, *Het groot schilderboek*, Amsterdam 1707.
  9. This hypothesis will be elaborated on in depth in an essay in *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* Vol. V (scheduled for publication in 2009).
  10. See also E. van de Wetering, 'Rembrandt as a searching artist' in idem et al., exhib. cat. *Rembrandt. Quest of a Genius*, Amsterdam (Rembrandthuis) 2006, pp. 79-123.
  11. E. van de Wetering/B. Schnackenburg, *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt*, exhib. cat. Kassel/Amsterdam 2001/2002, cat. no. 58.
  12. See further exhib. cat. *Rembrandt's moeder, mythe en werkelijkheid*, Leiden/Zwolle, cat. no. 8.
  13. E. van de Wetering and Paul Broekhoff, 'New directions in the Rembrandt Research Project, Part I. The 1642 self-portrait in the Royal Collection', in: *The Burlington Magazine* CXXXVIII (March 1996), pp. 174-180.
  14. For the possible function and meaning of that painting see *Corpus IV*, pp. 166-171.
  15. See Ernst van de Wetering, Karin Groen, Peter Klein, Jaap van der Veen, Marieke de Winkel, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings, Vol. IV Self-portraits*, Dordrecht 2005, *Corrigenda A 22/Bredius 3*; pp. 598-601 and 164-165.
  16. See J. Bruyn, B. Haak, S.H. Levie, P.J.J. van Thiel, E. van de Wetering, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* Vol. I, The Hague/Boston/London 1982, C 11 and op. cit. (note 11), cat. no. 26.
  17. A. Jensen Adams, 'Rembrandt f[ecit]. The italic signature and the commodification of artistic identity', in: *Künstlerischer Austausch-Artistic exchange. Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte Berlin, 15.-20. Juli 1992*, Band II, pp. 581-591, esp. p. 584.
  18. Y. Kobayashi-Sato, T. Ohmori and A. Ozaki, *In darkness and light. A Rembrandt in Tokyo rediscovered*, Bridgestone Museum of Art Ishibashi Foundation, Tokyo 1989.
  19. The thickness of the copper plate of the painting in Tokyo ranges from 0.2 mm to 0.6, average 0.38, op. cit. (note 18), p. 65.
  20. I. Horovitz, 'The materials and techniques of European paintings on copper supports', in: *Copper as canvas. Two centuries of masterpiece paintings on copper 177-1775*, New York/Oxford 1999, pp. 63-92.
  21. Bartsch 83, 94, 98, 192, 270, 272, 273, 277, 278. See E. Hinterding, 'The history of Rembrandt's copper plates, with a catalogue of those that survive', *Simiolus* 22 (1993-1994), pp. 253-315; Erik Hinterding, *Rembrandt as an etcher*, *Studies in prints and printmaking* (Vol. 6), Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 2006.
  22. For specifications, see the appendix to this article contributed by Nicholas Eastaugh.
  23. See *Corpus IV*, pp. 96-98.
  24. *The Three Senses, Bileam and the Ass, Tobit and Anna, Christ driving out the Moneychangers*, etc.
  25. See also *Corpus IV*, pp. 165-171.
  26. One often comes across such paintings in seventeenth-century inventories. In his will of 1641 Jacques de Gheyn III bequeathed 'the head of a young girl laughing'; in the list of the art left by Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, 1639, there is 'a laughing head with a hand by C.H.'; in the inventory of Maria Apers van der Houve, Delft 1656: 'a laughing head by Reynbrant' [possibly the present painting?], Doc. 1656/21, cf. Br. 134 and *Corpus I B 6* and *Corpus IV*, p. 626; in the inventory of Jan Zeeuw, Amsterdam 1690: 'a laughing head by Frans Hals f 6:-:-'; in the inventory of Isaack Gorssius and Constantia Schuyt, Heemstede 1697: 'a laughing peasant by Frans Hals' (with thanks to Jaap van der Veen).
  27. E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt. The Painter at Work*, Amsterdam 1997, p. 16 and fig. 13.
  28. For the present confusion around the term 'tronie', see *Corpus IV*, p. 172.