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Minerva in her Study of 1635:
The Splendor and Wisdom
of a Goddess

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Rembrandt's *Minerva in her Study* of 1635: The Splendor and Wisdom of a Goddess

By Volker Manuth and Marieke de Winkel

Divine wisdom has a bright radiance with which the human mind is enlightened

Karel van Mander on Minerva,

Wtleghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidii Nasonis, 1604, fol. 42

Rembrandt's move from his hometown of Leiden to Amsterdam in the winter months of 1631 marked a new phase in his life, not only personally but also artistically. His primary motivation in moving to the Dutch metropolis was to attract a new circle of patrons for his work as quickly as possible. He succeeded by painting powerful and psychologically subtle portraits for the wealthy Amsterdam merchants, and by developing an innovative approach to depicting biblical and mythological themes. During this early Amsterdam period he also continued to produce historical paintings in a smaller for-

mat that were clearly influenced by his former teacher Pieter Lastman (1583–1633). In addition, from c. 1632 onwards, there appears an increasing number of life-size historical figures, placed in the immediate foreground. Such imposing figures are not encountered in his earlier Leiden *oeuvre*. Through new ways of distributing light and shadow, as in the *Man in Oriental Dress* (the so-called *Noble Slav*) dated 1632 (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; fig. 1),¹ Rembrandt also enhanced the impression of the physical presence and monumental effect of his figures. This applies as well to the group of life-size repre-



Fig. 1 Rembrandt, *Man in Oriental Dress*, 1632, canvas, 152.5 x 124 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (*Corpus* A48)



Fig. 2 Rembrandt, *Bellona*, 1635, canvas, 125 x 96.5 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (*Corpus* A70)



Fig. 3 Rembrandt, *Flora*, 1634, canvas, 124.7 x 100.4 cm, St. Petersburg, The Hermitage Museum (*Corpus* Ag3)



Fig. 4 Rembrandt, *Flora*, 1635, canvas, 123.5 x 97.5 cm, London, National Gallery (*Corpus* A112)

sentations of goddesses and heroines from antiquity that Rembrandt painted between 1633 and 1635. The group of paintings consists of the *Bellona* of 1633 (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; fig. 2), two depictions of *Flora* of 1634 (St Petersburg, Hermitage; fig 3) and 1635 (London, National Gallery; fig 4) and the *Artemisia* of 1634 in the Prado, Madrid (fig. 5).² Outstanding among these superb paintings is the *Minerva*, signed and dated by Rembrandt in 1635 and the subject of the present essay. After the recent cleaning, which confirms the excellent condition of the painting, Rembrandt's goddess shines once again in her original glory. (Compare figs. 7 and 8)

The painting depicts the splendidly dressed young goddess Minerva with her long blond hair falling over her shoulders. Seated at a table, she looks up, her head slightly turned to the left as if she were distracted from her studies by someone approaching from beyond the pictorial space. Her right hand rests on the arm of the chair while the left hand lies on an open folio placed on the table before her (see fig. 9) Her fingers seem to mark a passage at the end of the page, which she was apparently reading before the distraction. A thick carpet decorated with bold patterns of brown, russet and gold covers the table. Minerva is wearing a wide-sleeved grey-blue garment with a

high-wasted bodice and a light grey skirt. At the neckline and the wrist a shirt decorated with delicate cross-stitches is visible. Over her shoulders lies a heavy cloak of shimmering gold-brocade, forming a striking contrast to the cool grey and blue tones of the dress. The cloak is fur-lined and held together at the front with an elaborate gold clasp. Under the cloak lies a white and blue scarf with fringes, while a knotted blue sash encircles her waist. She wears a string of pearls and large pear-shaped eardrops. She is crowned with a laurel wreath. In the right background additional books are casually arranged beside a globe. The assemblage of items includes a golden helmet placed on a draped piece of green fabric and a metal-tipped, wooden spear. Propped against a column on the rear wall is a grey shield bearing the head of Medusa in relief. Together with the spear and helmet, it is this last attribute that specifically identifies the protagonist as the Greek goddess Pallas Athena, or Minerva in Latin.

For an extended period of time, this important painting was one of Rembrandt's lesser-known works. At some point in the early 18th century, the painting entered the collection of The Earl of Somerville in Scotland. There it remained in the possession of the Somerville heirs, apparently unnoticed by connois-



Fig. 5 Rembrandt, *Artemisia*, 1634, Madrid, Prado, canvas, 142 x 153 cm (*Corpus* Ag4)

seurs and amateurs alike, for perhaps as long as two centuries. Rembrandt's *Minerva* re-surfaced at Christie's, London, in 1924, shortly after the death of Louisa Harriet Somerville (1835–1923), the daughter of Kenelm Lord Somerville (1787–1864).³ Since that sale the painting has been in several distinguished European private collections. Yet even when, for example, the Swedish industrialist and entrepreneur, Axel L. Wenner-Gren (1881–1961) lent the picture to the great Rembrandt exhibition in Amsterdam in 1956, it received relatively little attention. And although it was on long-term loan from 1988 to 2000 to the Bridgestone Museum in Tokyo, it was virtually unknown to the Western world. In 2000 the Japanese owner lent the painting to the exhibition *Greek Gods and Heroes in the Age of Rubens and Rembrandt*, which was organized by the National Museum in Athens. It was eminently appropriate that Rembrandt's Athena should be shown in the Greek capital that continues to bear her name. The *Minerva* then traveled to Dordrecht where it was studied more closely by

the Western art world. Unfortunately, the painting was still covered with a thick layer of discolored varnish. Now at last after cleaning, the wonderful brushwork and extraordinary colors chosen by this great Dutch master can be appreciated in full. (figs. 7, 8 and 9)

In 1925 Wilhelm Valentiner introduced the painting to the art historical literature. He pointed out certain obvious similarities between Rembrandt's *Minerva* and his etching of the so-called *Great Jewish Bride* from the same year (fig. 16). For Valentiner both figures exhibit a certain theatrical element in that they both appear “to have just descended from the stage.”⁴ Although Valentiner accepted the *Minerva* as by Rembrandt, other scholars did not decisively confirm the autograph nature of the painting. In 1953 Van Gelder tentatively suggested a collaboration between Rembrandt and his pupil Ferdinand Bol, a theory that was adopted three years later by Sumowski.⁵ Müller Hofstede, on the other hand, had no reservations accepting the

full attribution to Rembrandt.⁶ In 1968 Gerson voiced doubts of a more general nature, but without having seen the original.⁷ More recent surveys of Rembrandt's work either failed to consider the painting (Schwartz in 1984) or mentioned it briefly without further comment (Tümpel in 1986).⁸

The painting's authenticity was more extensively addressed in the third volume of *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, which appeared in 1989. Notwithstanding the dense layer of yellow varnish then obscuring the surface, the team determined that the underlying condition of the painting was generally good, and there could be no doubt as to its authenticity.⁹ This judgement was based on various technical as well as stylistic observations. One of the facts that confirmed the painting's authenticity was its very reliable signature: *Rembrandt. f. /1635* placed in the left background in thick dark-brown paint (fig. 6). In an assessment of Rembrandt's signatures of the period, the inscription on the *Minerva* was singled out by the writers of the *Corpus* as a typical specimen, closely comparable to those on other autograph paintings by the master such as his *Ganymede* of 1635 (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) and his *Standard Bearer* of 1636 (Paris, Private Collection). Finally, the signature was tested during the recent cleaning and was found to be sound as well as integral to the painted surface.¹⁰

A surprising and very interesting fact came to light during the investigation undertaken by the members of the *Corpus*: it was discovered that the canvas support on which the *Minerva* was painted is directly linked to other works by Rembrandt and his workshop in the years 1635–1636. The canvas was found to have the same structure and identical weaving fault as the *Belshazzar's Feast* of c. 1635 (London, National Gallery; fig. 10) and a workshop version of *Abraham's Sacrifice* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek) dated 1636.¹¹ From this it can be deduced that the canvas of all three paintings was taken from the same bolt of linen.

The secure attribution to Rembrandt was not based merely on such "technical" evidence but was also determined on stylistic grounds. As the authors of the *Corpus* rightly pointed out, the painting fits in very well stylistically with the group of almost life-size mythological and historical female figures of the years 1633–1635. These works reveal Rembrandt's increased interest in strong three-dimensional effects with a convincing rendition of depth and texture. He achieved this spatial illusion by dramatic contrasts of light and shade, modelling and illuminating the essentially static figures, and by exploiting a range of contrasting textures as well as opposing cool and warm tonalities.



Fig. 6 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, 1635, New York, Otto Naumann, Ltd. (*Corpus* A114). Detail of signature

Evidence of this new direction can already be perceived as early as 1632 in the *Man in Oriental Dress* in New York (fig. 1), where warm golden browns are juxtaposed with cooler greys.¹² As stated above, it was only after his move to Amsterdam in late 1631 that Rembrandt first tried his hand at producing these monumental life-size figures in fanciful attire, a formula that his Leiden compatriot Jan Lievens (1607–1674) had famously explored in the 1620s. Nonetheless, Rembrandt can be credited with developing a variation on this theme, featuring three-quarter length goddesses or historical heroines who are splendidly attired in exotic costumes. His first effort at this type of single-figured, nearly life-size history painting was the *Bellona* of 1633 (fig. 2).¹³ This somewhat intimidating figure of the war goddess, which exhibits certain weaknesses in handling and execution, prompted the authors of the *Corpus* to describe this work as "only a first step" in Rembrandt's strive for stronger, three-dimensional effects.¹⁴ These shortcomings are further demonstrated by comparison to the *Minerva*. In a much more convincing manner Rembrandt here manages to convey a more concentrated light falling from the left to set off the figure against the dark background, thereby producing a much clearer illusion of depth. The formula was again utilized successfully in the two paintings of the flower goddess Flora from 1634 and 1635 (fig. 3 and 4).¹⁵ A much firmer brushstroke and a more subdued use of cool greys and warmer tints accompany this strong *chiaroscuro* effect. More striking, however, is the similarity of the *Minerva* to the *Artemisia* of 1634 (Madrid, Prado; fig. 5).¹⁶ These two paintings share many of the same compositional elements, basically showing a woman in lost profile seated at a table. In both depictions the figure of the blond woman



Fig. 7 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, 1635, New York, Otto Naumann, Ltd. (*Corpus* A114). During restoration



Fig. 8 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, 1635, New York, Otto Naumann, Ltd. (*Corpus* A114). After restoration



Fig. 9 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, 1635, New York, Otto Naumann, Ltd, (*Corpus* A114). Detail



Fig. 10 Rembrandt, *Belshazzar's Feast*, c. 1635, canvas, 167 x 209 cm, London, National Gallery (*Corpus* A110)

exudes a static, almost statuesque quality, even though she is dramatically lit against the dark background. The two paintings also share a subtle color scheme featuring creams and greys, rendered with a relatively bold handling of paint. A characteristic feature of Rembrandt's paintings of this period is the intensely illuminated foreground. The objects and figures in close proximity to the picture plane are richly textured and highly detailed in specific areas, while most of the shaded background is rendered in cursory, almost translucent brush strokes.¹⁷ This summary treatment of the background is also found in comparable areas of the *Seated Scholar* in Prague of 1634 (fig. 11), a painting that is extremely close in scale, conception and execution to the *Minerva*.¹⁸ The strong lighting effects and remarkably varied manner of painting so evident in both the *Minerva* and *Artemisia* are again perceived in the life-size figures wearing exotic costumes in *Belshazzar's Feast* of c. 1635 (fig. 10).¹⁹ Other shared aspects include dramatically cast shadows, the lively treatment of the gold embroidery of the cloak and the convincing rendition of the fur lining. The way in which this fur is painted, in dry curving brushstrokes, is virtually identical in both paintings, as is the formation of the pearls in rapid swirls with vivid, white

highlights. Taking into account the sophisticated and refined orchestration of the stylistic features of the *Minerva*, which is typical for other works of around the same period, there can be little question but to agree with the *Corpus* that this is a “wholly autograph work from 1635” by Rembrandt.²⁰

After the submission of the positive verdict of the Rembrandt Research Project the painting has generally been accepted as autograph. The opinion of Van Gelder and Sumowski, that Rembrandt's pupil Ferdinand Bol collaborated in painting the *Minerva*, was probably inspired by the existence of a signed drawing which faithfully but mechanically copies the composition (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; fig. 12).²¹ However, this proposed collaboration with Bol is impossible, not only because of the homogeneous style of the painting but also because it is known from documents that Bol did not come to work with Rembrandt until the early months of 1636.²² While Bol's proposed participation in the *Minerva* can be dismissed, his authorship of the drawn copy is possible. Bol's signature on the drawing is undoubtedly a later annotation, but there is no reason to insist that it is not by him. By Bol or not, the drawing is one of numerous copies made in 1636 and 1637 after authentic paintings by



Fig. 11 Rembrandt, *Seated Scholar*, 1634, canvas, 145 x 134.9 cm, Prague, Národní Galerie (*Corpus* A95)

the master. Comparable, though more skilfully drawn copies attributed to Bol were also made after Rembrandt's London *Flora* of 1635 and the privately owned *Standard Bearer* of 1636.²⁵ This activity accords well with contemporary workshop practice, where pupils executed drawn and painted copies after the works of the master. According to Rembrandt's handwritten note on the back of a drawing from c. 1636, he sold painted copies of the *Flora*, *Abraham's Sacrifice* and the *Standard Bearer* which had been executed by Bol and two fellow pupils.²⁴ As the *Corpus* has rightly pointed out, the relatively clumsy execution of the drawn copy of the *Minerva* is "just as one might expect from a newcomer" like Bol.²⁵

In Greek religion and mythology, Pallas Athena was one of the most important of the twelve great Olympian deities, and she plays a prominent role in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.²⁶ According to myth, Athena sprang fully matured and armed from the head of Zeus her father after Hephaestus split it open on Mount Olympus. It is told that Zeus swallowed his pregnant wife, the Titaness Metis (meaning wisdom), so that she would not bear a child stronger than its father. Athena is described as a deity with diverse functions and attributes. Perhaps her most conspicuous role was that of a goddess of war, the female counterpart of Ares

(Mars). However, unlike Mars and Bellona, she was not known to have a bellicose nature, nor did she bear arms except when she supported her favorite heroes on the battlefield or when her country was threatened or attacked. Her ingenuity led to victory, and thus she became the goddess of Victory in War. Paradoxically, she was also regarded as the goddess of Peace. Her strategy led to the end of wars, and she was noted for her compassion and generosity. Over time she became more generally regarded as the goddess of wisdom. This aspect of her nature is often symbolized by the owl, which may or may not accompany her. In addition she was the patroness of the arts and skilled crafts in times of peace, especially spinning and weaving. Rembrandt's contemporary, the famous Spanish painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), included Minerva in the background of his so-called *Las Hilanderas* (*The Spinners*; Madrid, Prado) which relates the story of the expert weaver Arachne who dared to challenge Minerva in her capacity as the goddess of weaving.



Fig. 12 Attributed to Ferdinand Bol (1616 – 1680), *Minerva in her Study*, drawing, 257 x 202 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. 1975:85)

The rich apparel in Rembrandt's painting was of course very fitting for such a noble goddess, but it could equally apply to Minerva's role as the patroness of textiles and embroidery. In the beginning of the *Iliad* she is described as follows: ". . . And with them went Athena of the flashing eyes, wearing her splendid cloak, the unfading everlasting aegis, from which a hundred tassels flutter, all beautifully made, each worth a hundred head of cattle" (Book II of the *Iliad*). This mythical garment, or *aegis*, a goatskin with tassels, is not depicted by Rembrandt but is usually alluded to in art as a scaled breastplate bearing the head of Medusa fringed with snakes. In Book V of the *Iliad*, Homer paints a very poetic picture of Minerva, stating that she normally wore a dress she embroidered herself and that she took up arms only very reluctantly:

Meanwhile, on her Father's threshold, Athena, Daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, shed her soft embroidered robe, which she had made with her own hands, put on a tunic in its place, and equipped herself for the lamentable work of war with the arms of Zeus, the Cloud Compeller. She threw round her shoulders the formidable tasseled aegis, which is beset at every point with Fear, and carries Strife and Force and the cold nightmare of Pursuit within it, and also the ghastly image of a Gorgon's head, the grim and redoubtable emblem of aegis-bearing Zeus. On her head she put her golden helmet, with its four plates and double crest, adorned with fighting men of a hundred towns. Then she stepped into the flaming chariot, gripping the huge long spear with which she breaks the noble warriors' ranks when she, the almighty Father's child, is roused to anger.

In Medieval times the appearance of Minerva had changed somewhat, although it continued to be based on classical sources. Albricus (around 1200) in his *Liber ymaginum deorum* describes the goddess as:

. . . depicted by the poets as a ruler armed with a leather cuirass and with a sword, her head crowned with leaves covered by her crested helmet. She had a lance in her right hand and a crystal shield in her left with the terrible serpent head of the Gorgon [Medusa]. She also had flashing eyes. She wore a cloak of three different colors, namely gold, purple and sky blue.²⁷

Albricus's descriptions of the attributes of the gods served as the main source for Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum*, which would become the most important mythography consulted by Renaissance artists.²⁸ Boccaccio's work in turn was the basis for a refer-

ence work published by the Flemish painter, art historian and chronicler of artists' lives Karel van Mander (1548–1606) who wrote in his *Depiction of Figures*, of 1604: ". . . in which it is shown how the heathens depicted and differentiated their gods"; the author assures the reader that his text will be of "great use to ingenious painters and poets to accoutre their personages."²⁹ According to Van Mander "Pallas . . . had the golden helmet, encircled by a branch of olive: she had three garments of different colors, namely purple, blue and white, on which were embroidered Greek letters and various virtues."³⁰ Certainly Rembrandt was familiar with Van Mander's moralizing version of Ovid's famous *Metamorphoses*, wherein the author provides a description of the goddess. By including the shiny golden helmet, Rembrandt probably recalled Van Mander's reference to Minerva's "sparkling golden helmet,"³¹ even though he placed it in relative darkness in the background.

By the time Van Mander's text appeared, Minerva was already established as the protector of painters. Her popularity in this role often exceeded even that of St. Luke the Evangelist, the legendary author of the first image of the Madonna and Child and the traditional patron Saint of the painters' guild, which was called the Guild of St. Luke in every major artistic center in Holland in the seventeenth century. Minerva was especially associated with the intellectual aspects of the art of painting. For example, the imperial decree of 1595 issued by Emperor Rudolph II in Prague outlined guild regulations governing painters in the city and further elevated their craft to the level of the other arts.³² As a consequence of this change in status the figure of Minerva was added to the coat-of-arms of the painters' guild. Countless allegorical representations underscore Minerva's role as supporter of the art of painting linked to learned principles. A drawing dated 1598 by Rubens's teacher Adam van Noort (1562–1641) in the Museum Boijmans-Van Beuningen in Rotterdam shows the armed goddess embracing the personification of the Art of Painting and instructing her in geometry with the help of a compass (fig. 13).³³ As one of a series of four engravings from 1596, Hendrik Goltzius (1558–1616/17), depicted Minerva in full armor floating on a cloud (fig. 14). The lower corners of this print are decorated as expected with weapons of war, while the upper two corners contain musical instruments and the tools of the painter, thereby forming a direct connection between Minerva and the musical and artistic world.³⁴

In this painting Rembrandt has almost entirely neglected the belligerent aspect of Minerva's nature. Her arms and armor, shown in the background, are reduced to mere attributes: they



Fig. 13 Adam van Noort (1561–1641), *Minerva and Art*, drawing, 1598, 265 x 191 mm, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

are literally overshadowed and cast aside. This might explain the misidentification of the subject as “Saskia as Deborah,” when the painting appeared on the market in 1924 (see provenance). Already in his first depiction of *Minerva in Her Study* in Berlin, which Rembrandt painted around 1631, he represented the classical goddess at a table with books and a lute (fig. 15). Arms and armor, shield and helmet hang on the wall in the background. That painting is possibly identical to one of the same theme that was recorded in the 1632 inventory of the Stadholder Frederik Hendrik in The Hague, however there attributed to Jan Lievens.³⁵ Minerva’s virtues enabled her to serve as a role model for women of the aristocracy, especially for queens in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. As a result there exist a significant number of historical portraits in which the sitter is represented as Minerva.³⁶ However, this certainly is not the case with the Berlin *Minerva* (fig. 15), nor with the painting that is the subject of this essay. The facial features of the Berlin *Minerva* are not individualized enough to assume that a portrait is intended, and the face in the *Minerva* under discussion corresponds to the



Fig. 14 Jan Pietersz. Saenredam (1565?–1607) after Hendrick Goltzius, *Athena leaning on her Shield*, 1596, engraving, 317 x 247 mm, (Bartsch 62, Hollstein 139)

general facial type that Rembrandt frequently employed at this time, for example in the *Bellona* of 1633 in New York (fig. 2), the *Floras* of 1634 and 1635 in St. Petersburg and London respectively (figs. 3 and 4) and the *Artemisia* of 1634 in Madrid (fig. 5). This visage is basically indebted to the simple beauty of Rembrandt’s bride Saskia, which is identified by the artist on his lovely drawing of her from 1633 (Berlin; Benesch 427). Scholars have recognized Saskia’s face in Rembrandt’s etching of a woman in historical guise, the so-called *Great Jewish Bride* (fig. 18). While this may be so, one can identify Saskia as the model for the *Minerva* only with a leap of faith.³⁷

Facial features aside, there are remarkable similarities between the *Minerva* of 1635 and a painting of the same theme by a Rembrandt pupil or follower in the Denver Art Museum (fig. 16).³⁸ The many compositional features, including the placement of Minerva at a round table with an open folio, a column in the background with the Medusa shield nearby, as well as the goddess’s fur-lined robe draped over the back of the chair, are details that testify to an interrelationship between the two paint-

ings. An additional picture from the circle of Rembrandt with the same subject matter and a related composition is in the Mauritshuis in The Hague (fig. 17).³⁹ It is notable that in all three paintings (Berlin, Denver and The Hague), Minerva wears a red robe. It appears that Rembrandt's painting in Berlin served as the iconographical prototype for the version in The Hague, while the Denver painting is indebted to the *Minerva* of 1635. As has been shown, the depiction of Minerva in rich attire, while downplaying her attributes of arms and armor, seems to be specific to Rembrandt and his circle in their early representations of the goddess. It was only in the 1650s, in a painting from Rembrandt's circle now in Lisbon (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), that Minerva would be depicted wearing her shield, spear, and helmet decorated with the owl (fig. 19).

That Rembrandt depicted Minerva foremost as a peacetime protector of learning is indicated by her rich clothing, which also relates to the traditional personifications of Peace. The Amsterdam poet Tobias van Domselaer (1611–1685) describes Peace in a play re-enacting the liberation of Leiden, which was per-

formed in Amsterdam.⁴⁰ Peace is personified as: “A serene woman with a pleasing and friendly countenance, richly attired and with costly adornments, and with her a book. . . . Her hair should be encircled by a laurel wreath.”⁴¹ According to Van Domselaer, *Peace* enjoys these particular attributes because:

Rich clothes are worn in times of peace; while in wartime one is reduced to wearing wretched things; *Peace* can buy costly jewelry and other frivolities instead of the destructive arms required by *War*. Art and scholarship [indicated by the book] are practised by her, . . . *Peace* draws all sorts of scholars and artists to her, because she is able to reward them generously, . . . Wisdom can best be cultivated in times of peace.⁴²

The laurel leaves around her head are further explained as follows: “The brave commanders were crowned with laurel leaves in ancient times, when they were hailed as victorious conquerors over their enemies: . . . Peace is depicted here crowned with the laurels of the victor instead of the soft olive branches because the Dutch and their allies could only win this



Fig. 15 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, c. 1631, panel, 60.5 x 49 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (*Corpus* A38)



Fig. 16 Follower of Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, panel, 45.5 x 35 cm, Denver, Art Museum (*Corpus* C9)



Fig. 17 Follower of Rembrandt, *Minerva*, 61.7 x 53.5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague

peace through an eighty years' war."⁴⁵ Van Domselaer's *Peace* therefore describes a peace re-established by means of arms. It is possible that by gracing his *Minerva* with the same attributes as van Domselaer's *Peace*, Rembrandt implied similar intentions. His is a peaceful *Minerva* who by her calm countenance, her rich clothes and heavy tomes shows that peace provides the stability and prosperity under which scholarship and the arts will flourish. Her laurel wreath, however, shows her to be a victorious and wise goddess of war, who takes up arms not out of blind anger but only for a just and patriotic cause.

It is interesting to note that Rembrandt's *Minerva* of 1635 was finished in the same year that the States General under the Stadholder Frederik Hendrik committed to joining France in the invasion of the Southern Netherlands in order to oust the Spanish. This conflict could have led to the reopening of the river Scheldt which would have given the city of Antwerp back her commercial importance at Amsterdam's expense. Not surprisingly, the dangers of military conflict and its potential damaging effects persuaded the Amsterdam regents, who then governed the city, to object to the invasion. Rembrandt's depiction of *Minerva*

as the goddess of war, who is neglecting her arms and armor in favor of peaceful scholarly pursuits, would undoubtedly have appealed to the Amsterdam regents in this period.

The acceptance of the abovementioned drawn copy as a work by Bol (fig. 12) implies that Rembrandt's *Minerva* must have remained in his workshop until at least 1636. Apparently it was not sold immediately upon its completion. This might be an indication that Rembrandt made the *Minerva* not as a commission but with a view to selling it on the open market. This was in no way an unusual practice in Rembrandt's studio. In his essay on Rembrandt's patrons and early owners, Josua Bruyn has convincingly shown that some of Rembrandt's sitters for commissioned portraits also bought his history paintings.⁴⁴ These history pieces were usually made in the same year (or somewhat earlier) than the time when potential clients sat for him and were probably on view at his house. According to Rembrandt's handwritten note of probably 1636 mentioned above, the London *Flora* (fig. 4), completed in the previous year, was also in all likelihood lingering in the workshop. So too was Rembrandt's *Abraham's Sacrifice* of 1635 (St Petersburg, Hermitage), of which a



Fig. 18 Rembrandt, *Historical Figure of a Woman (The Great Jewish Bride)*, 1635, etching, (Bartsch 340)



Fig. 19 Circle of Rembrandt, *Minerva*, c. 1655, canvas, 117.8 x 90.7 cm, Lisbon, Museu Fundação C. Gulbenkian (Bredius 479)

version exists in Munich by an anonymous pupil (Bol or Flinck?) that is dated 1636.⁴⁵ That these rather large pictures were not sold immediately could have been due to the fact that they were extremely expensive. Some twenty years later Rembrandt asked 500 guilders for a painting of a three-quarter length historical figure.⁴⁶ This seems to have been his standard price, which could be considered quite extravagant given that the yearly wages of a master craftsman were about half that sum.

As we have seen, depictions of the goddess of wisdom were not that rare in seventeenth-century Holland. Rather than producing this painting for the open market, Rembrandt in all probability had a certain clientele or specific patron in mind. With its emphasis on scholarly pursuits and learning, the *Minerva* could have been destined for the eyes of Constantijn Huygens, erudite secretary to the Stadhouder Frederik Hendrik, with whom Rembrandt was undoubtedly acquainted at this time.⁴⁷ Alternatively, Rembrandt might have offered it to one of the famous and wealthy professors at Leiden University. One does not need to speculate so far afield, when one considers that several of Amsterdam's erudite regents had recently participat-

ed in founding the 'Athenaeum Illustre' or the illustrious school.⁴⁸ In 1632 the Athenaeum was inaugurated in the former St. Agnes convent, where the choir and nave had been transformed into auditoria. The ceiling of this chamber was newly decorated with scrolling leaf and tulip motifs including depictions of Minerva as the patroness of arts and scholarship. An image of wisdom as exemplified by Rembrandt's *Minerva* would have been eminently suitable indeed for one of these scholars, although one wonders how many of them could have afforded such an extremely expensive painting. It seems more likely that Rembrandt targeted one of Amsterdam's Burgomasters as an appropriate client for his *Minerva*. Among their number was the wealthy Cornelis de Graeff (1599–1664). The poet Jan Vos (1610–1667) praised De Graeff as being endowed "with a brain provided by Minerva for the well-being of Holland."⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that De Graeff owned two (anonymous) "large paintings with gilded frames being Pallas and Venus."⁵⁰ Cornelis's younger brother, Burgomaster Andries de Graeff (1611–1678) who was a patron of Rembrandt, also owned a picture of Minerva to which Jan Vos dedicated a poem entitled "Pallas in the house of the Noble Andries de Graef, Burgomaster of Amsterdam." The reference in the poem to a woman named Christina was undoubtedly in honor of Andries' widowed sister (1609–1679) who lived in his house.

Minerva shows herself in the house of de Graeff,
Where wisdom watches, one finds a commendable
steadfastness.

Still it is futile that she shows herself in this room
Here, one does not need a higher goddess on the wall:
Christina herself can serve here as Minerva.
The lively spirit eclipses the dead paint.⁵¹

The popularity of this goddess of wisdom within the circle of Amsterdam regents who associated with Rembrandt is also demonstrated by the master's pen and wash drawing of *Minerva in her Study*, which he added to the *album amicorum* (friendship album) of Jan Six (1618–1700) in 1652 (fig. 20).⁵² Rembrandt knew the enormously wealthy merchant, poet and Burgomaster Jan Six in the 1640s and 1650s as a friend and business partner. He completed a portrait etching of him in 1647 and a masterfully painted portrait in 1654. Six led the life of a classically cultivated connoisseur. Rembrandt's drawing shows Minerva seated behind a desk in a study with her back to the window; the room is decorated with draped curtains and a bust. Like the painting of 1635, her shield with the Medusa's head, lance and helmet are hanging on the wall next to her desk, although in this case she is



Fig. 20 Rembrandt, *Minerva in her Study*, 1652, drawing 190 x 140 mm, in: *Album Amicorum of Jan Six* (“Pandora”), Amsterdam, Collection Six

represented writing instead of reading. Clearly for Jan Six Rembrandt revived his peaceful image of Minerva.

The subject of Minerva in her study was obviously popular in scholarly circles. A drawing by the Leiden artist Pieter Couwenhorn (c. 1599–1654), dated 1635, shows Minerva in a study, this time accompanied by Mercury (fig. 21). The drawing can be found in the *album amicorum* of the scholar, humanist, historian and poet Petrus Scriverius (1576–1660).⁵⁵ Scriverius and Rembrandt in all likelihood knew each other in Leiden.⁵⁴ When in 1663 the paintings in the estate of Scriverius were auctioned in Amsterdam, “Two fine, large pieces by Rembrandt” were included.⁵⁵ Other potential buyers of Rembrandt’s painting of 1635 could have been dedicated art lovers, such as the wealthy merchant and collector Harmen Becker, who in the 1660s commissioned Rembrandt to paint a *Juno* (the wife of Jupiter and goddess of affluence).⁵⁶ In his inventory of 1678 “a Pallas by Rembrandt van Rijn” is listed beside two Junos.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, we can only speculate whether Rembrandt’s *Minerva* was identical with the painting once owned by Becker.

Emil Kieser wrote in 1941, “Rembrandt and Antiquity, for some that sounds odd, incompatible, almost the antithesis.”⁵⁸



Fig. 21 Pieter van Couwenhorn, *Minerva and Mercury in her Study*, drawing, 1635, in: *Album Amicorum of Petrus Scriverius* (1576–1660), The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library)

Rembrandt was long associated with biblical subject matter rather than with the heroes and deities of pagan antiquity. But Kieser’s statement regarding his relationship with the classical world no longer rings true. Rembrandt’s *Minerva* decisively places him among those who turned to the humanist ideal. His celebration of the peaceful *Minerva* follows an existing iconographical tradition, but when placed in the context of Amsterdam culture and politics of the 1630s, proves to be a powerful expression of an engaged mind.

- 1 See J. Bruyn, B. Haak, S.H. Levie, P.J.J. van Thiel, E. van de Wetering, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* (henceforth *Corpus*), vol. II (1986), A48, and recently W. Liedtke in: Exhib. cat. *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt. Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*, New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), 1995, vol. 2, pp. 42–45, no. 2.
- 2 For Rembrandt's *Bellona* see *Corpus* A70, and recently W. Liedtke in: Exhib. cat. New York (note 1), vol. 2, pp. 55–58, no. 7. For the two paintings of *Flora* see *Corpus*, vol. II, A95 and vol. III (1989), A112. Whether Rembrandt's painting of 1654 in the Prado in Madrid is a depiction of Sophonisba or Artemisia has been the subject of ongoing debate, see for this Chr. Tümpel, 'Bild und Text: Zur Rezeption antiker Autoren in der europäischen Kunst der Neuzeit (Livius, Valerius Maximus)', *Forma et subtilitas. Festschrift für Wolfgang Schöne zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. W. Schlink, M. Sperlich, Berlin, 1986, pp. 198–218, esp. 215 (*Artemisia*), *Corpus*, vol. II, A 94 (as *Sophonisba*) and vol. III (1989), p. 774–76, Corrigenda et Addenda (*Sophonisba* or *Artemisia*). Most recently A. Golahny, 'Rembrandt's "Artemisia": Arts Patron', *Oud Holland*, 114, 2000, pp. 139–152.
- 3 In 1818 and 1819 the painting was included in three auctions in London but remained unsold. It was offered by John Southey, Lord Somerville (1765–1819), the distinguished agriculturist who served as President of the Board of Agriculture from 1798 to 1800, and as Lord of the Bedchamber to King George III (see Provenance).
- 4 W. Valentiner, „Komödiantendarstellungen Rembrandts,“ *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, vol. 59, 1925/26, p. 270.
- 5 J.G. van Gelder, "Rembrandts vroegste ontwikkeling," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, vol. 16, 1953, p. 296; W. Sumowski, "Nachträge zum Rembrandtjahr 1956," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe VII)*, 1957–1958 (no.2), pp. 224, 253. Sumowski's enthusiastic acceptance was communicated verbally to Alfred Bader in the summer of 2001.
- 6 C. Müller Hofstede, "Die Rembrandt-Ausstellung in Stockholm", *Kunstchronik* 9, 1956, p. 91.
- 7 H. Gerson, *Rembrandt Paintings*, Amsterdam, 1968, no. 94.
- 8 G. Schwartz, *Rembrandt, Zijn leven, zijn schilderijen*, Maarssen 1984 [English edition in 1985]; Chr. Tümpel, *Rembrandt. Mythos und Methode*, Königstein/Taunus, 1986, p. 402, no. 106.
- 9 *Corpus* A 114, p. 170. Nancy Krieg who restored the painting in the fall of 2001 writes in her condition report (5 September 2001): "The overall condition of the picture is excellent. The paint layer is extremely well preserved with even the smallest flickers of paint intact. Examination under UV shows that many of the colors are self-fluorescing, (i.e., the yellow highlights in Minerva's cloak fluoresce yellow), reflecting Rembrandt's technique of adding organic yellow lakes directly into his mix."
- 10 See the essay on Rembrandt's signatures of the period in *Corpus*, vol. III, pp. 51–56, esp. p. 52. Compare nos. A113 and A120. In her condition report (see note 9) Nancy Krieg states "Examination under the binocular microscope shows the signature to be original."
- 11 *Corpus* A 114, A 110 and A 108 copy 2. See E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt. The Painter at Work*, Amsterdam, 1997, pp. 101, fig. 129, and pp. 105, 107, 124.
- 12 *Corpus* A 48.
- 13 *Corpus* A 70.
- 14 *Corpus* A 70, pp. 330–331.
- 15 *Corpus* A 112.
- 16 *Corpus* A 114 (see also addenda to vol. III where the *Artemisia* is discussed after restoration)
- 17 Or as it is put in the *Corpus*: "A lively paint relief in the lit passages and a certain translucency in the dark ones play a part in the brilliant solution to the problem of giving convincing form to the bulk of a life-size figure set in a surrounding space felt as atmospheric." *Corpus* vol. III, p. 8.
- 18 *Corpus* A 94. Gerson, 1968 p. 248 stated: "The similarities between *A Scholar in his study* and *Minerva* are suggestive, but it would probably be going to far to propose that they are companion pieces."
- 19 *Corpus* A 110.
- 20 *Corpus* III, p. 174
- 21 W. Sumowski, *Drawings of the Rembrandt school*, 10 vols., New York 1979–1992, vol. I, p. 276.
- 22 For the document mentioning Bol as a witness in Dordrecht in December 1635 see A. Blankert, *Ferdinand Bol. Rembrandt's Pupil*, Doornspijk 1982, p. 71.
- 23 *Corpus* A 120.
- 24 According to a note in Rembrandt's handwriting on the back of one of his drawings. (Benesch 448) For a discussion of this document see *Corpus*, A 83 (the London *Flora*).
- 25 As is remarked in *Corpus* III, p. 14.
- 26 For the iconography of Athena/Minerva in Greek and Roman art see *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (LIMC), vol. II/1, Zurich/Munich, 1984, pp. 955–1044, vol. II/2, pp. 702–765.
- 27 Cited in translation after R. Pfeiff, *Minerva in der Sphäre des Herrscherbildes. Von der Antike bis zur Französischen Revolution* (Bonner Studien zur Kunstgeschichte vol. I, ed. J. Müller Hofstede et al.), Münster, 1990, p. 49. For the reception of pagan gods during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance see J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, Princeton, 1972 (first ed. in French, London 1940).
- 28 For the changing iconography of the figure of Minerva during the Renaissance see R. Wittkower, "Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* II, 1938/39, pp. 194–205, and also H. Freifrau von Heintze and H. Hager, "Athene-Minerva, ihr Bild im Wandel der Zeiten," *Jahrbuch der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften* 1, 1961, pp. 36–127.
- 29 K. van Mander, *Wtbeeldinge der Figuren: waer in te sien is hoe d'Heydene hun Goden uytghebeeldt en onderscheyden hebben, Alles seer nut den vernuiftighen Schilders en oock Dichters hun Personnagien in vertooninghen oft anders toe te maken*, Alkmaar 1604.

- 30 fol. 126v: *Pallas ... hadde den gulden helm/ bekranst met een Olijftakken: sy hadde dryerley cleederen van verscheyden verwen/ als purpur/ blauuw/ en wit/ waer op de Griecsche letteren waren gheborduert/ en alderley deughden.*
- 31 For a detailed description of Minerva which corresponds remarkably little with Rembrandt's depiction of the goddess, see K. van Mander, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidii Nasonis, Alles streckende tot voordering des vromen en eerlijcken borgherlijcken wandels. Seer dienstich den Schilders, Dichters, en Constbeminder, oock yeghelyck tot leering by een gebracht en gheraemt*, Haarlem, 1604, as the fifth book of his *Schilderboek*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 42–45; the quote referring to the helmet is on fol. 42v.
- 32 For this see exh. cat. *Prag um 1600. Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, Essen (Villa Hügel), 1988, p. 209, no. 88 with ill.
- 33 For the drawing see Z. Zaremba Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp 1550–1700*, Princeton, 1987, p. 34 (as dated 1599) with Fig. 18
- 34 For the print see *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 4 (formerly vol. 3, part 2), p. 378, no. 62, and recently D. de Witt, in: V. Manuth et al. (eds.), exh. cat. *Wisdom, Knowledge & Magic. The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, Kingston (Agnes Etherington Art Centre), 1996/97, p. 56, no. 18 with ill.
- 35 For the ambiguous relationship between Rembrandt's *Minerva* in Berlin and a painting called "Melancholy, in the form of a woman sitting on a chair at a table on which are books, a lute and other instruments" attributed to Jan Lievens in the 1632 inventory of the Stadholder, see *Corpus* A38.
- 36 For a more detailed discussion of portraits of female sitters in the role of Minerva, see Pfeiff 1990 (note 27).
- 37 The identification proposed by Schwartz, 1984 (note 8), pp. 121–122, that the Berlin painting represents "Charlotte de la Trémouille as Minerva," is proven incorrect when one compares securely identified portraits of the sitter. Christopher White, *Rembrandt as an Etcher*, University Park, 1969, p. 115 concluded that Saskia was the model for the etching.
- 38 *Corpus* C9. The painting is dated by the authors of the *Corpus* to "in or soon after 1651" and attributed to Rembrandt's Leiden pupil Isaac de Jouderville (1613–before 1648). Given the painting's dependency on our *Minerva*, one would be forced to postulate a date after 1635 for the painting in Denver.
- 39 See A.B. de Vries et al., *Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis*, Alphen aan de Rijn, 1978, p. 195–199 (as Circle of Rembrandt)
- 40 Tobias van Domselaer, *Beschrijving der sieraden van 't tooneel waar op de vertooningen in 't bly-eindend Treurspel van 't beleg en ontzet van Leyden vertoont worden*, Amsterdam 1670, pp. 12–14.
- 41 *Ibid.* p. 12: "*Vreede*: een zedige vrouw, met een aangenaam en vriendelijk wezen, rijkelijk gekleedt en kostelijk versiert, en bij dezelve een Boek. . . . Haar hoofd-hairen zijn met een laurierkroon omringt."
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13: ". . . rijkelijke kleederen draaghtmen in den tijdt van Vreede; daarmen in de tijdt van oorlogh zich met slechter behelpt; kostelijke sieraden en andere dertelheden, koopt de Vreede voor 't geene dat den oorlog, tot haar vernieldendt krijgstuigh, van noode hadt. Konsten en geleertheden (door het boek aangewezen) by haar in swang gaan: ja de Vreede lokt allerley wijzen en konstenaars tot haar, door dien dat zy dezelve mildelijk kan beloonen . . . de olijftakken worden ook aan Pallas, dat is, de Wijsheydt toegewijdt, die in vreede-Tijden best kan geleert worden'.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 13: "Met laurier-kranzen heeftmen van out gekroont de hoofden van de dappere Veldt-oversten, wanneer zy, al zegepralende, over de overwinning hunner vianden, wierden verwelkomt: . . . De Vreede vertoont haar hier, met overwinnende laurier, in plaats van stille, zachte en geruste olijftakken (als hier voren gezeyt is) gekroont, ter oorzaak dat de Hollanders met hare Bondtgenooten, deze hunne Vreede door een tachtig-jarigen oorlog hebben moeten winnen."
- 44 J. Bruyn, "Patrons and early owners," *Corpus* vol. II, pp. 91–98.
- 45 *Corpus* A 108; A 108 copy 2, and pp. 107–112. As mentioned previously, the linen on which the copy is painted comes from the same bolt as the *Minerva* and *Belshazzar's Feast* in the National Gallery in London.
- 46 From his Italian patron Don Antonio Ruffo for his *Aristotle* of 1652 (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Ruffo found this a very steep price indeed and in a later transaction told Rembrandt that in Italy painters asked far less. Nevertheless, Rembrandt told him that the price was not too much and that he would not lower it. See W.L. Strauss and M. van der Meulen, *The Rembrandt Documents*, New York 1979, 1654/10; 1661/5; 1662/11.
- 47 Rembrandt's first letter to Huygens was written in February 1636, where the painter states that he was already "completing the three passion pictures" that Huygens commissioned for Frederik Hendrik. See *The Rembrandt Documents* (note 46), 1636/1 p. 129.
- 48 The name was derived from the Greek Athena. Although the Romans identified Athena with their goddess Minerva, the most Graecophile of the Roman emperors, Hadrian (117–138) recalled the goddess' Greek name specifically when he established the Atheneum as a proto-university in Rome in c. 135.
- 49 Jan Vos, *Alle de gedichten [...] verzamelt en uitgegeven door J.L. [Jacob Lescaille]*, Amsterdam, 1662, ed. Amsterdam 1726, vol. I, p. 288.
- 50 Municipal Archive Amsterdam. PA. no. 76 (de Graeff) nr. 605/32, Notaris Dirck van der Groe. 24 december 1691–18 augustus 1692, fol.765. Sometimes the image of Minerva served as a pendant of Venus, the goddess of love, which is proven by the inventory of the merchant Joan Deutz who in 1712 owned a Venus and Pallas by the Rembrandt pupil Govert Flinck.
- 51 Jan Vos, *Alle de gedichten* (note 40), vol. I, p. 356.
- 52 The album amicorum, entitled "Pandora" by Jan Six, is still in the possession of his descendants in Amsterdam. It has been argued repeatedly that Rembrandt's drawing represents Anna Wijmer, the mother of Jan Six, as Minerva in her study. E. Haverkamp-Begemann, "Rembrandt's so-called portrait of Anna

- Wýmer as Minerva,” *Studies in Western Art. Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art*, New York, 1961, vol. III, Princeton, 1963, pp. 59–63, has rightly rejected this hypothesis. See recently P. Schatborn in: exh. cat. *Rembrandt: the Master & his Workshop. Drawings & Etchings*, H. Bevers, P. Schatborn, B. Welzel (eds.), Berlin (Altes Museum), Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), London (National Gallery; etchings only), 1991/92, New Haven/London, 1991, p. 109, no. 31(B).
- 53 For the album amicorum of Petrus Scriverius (1576–1660) see K. Thomassen et al., *Alba Amicorum. Het Album Amicorum en het poëziealbum in de Nederlanden*, Maarssen/The Hague, 1990, p. 70, no. 56 and P. Schatborn in: exh. cat. *Rembrandt: the Master & his Workshop* (note 52), p. 110 with fig. 31c.
- 54 For their proposed relationship see G. Schwartz, *Rembrandt, zijn leven, zijn schilderijen*, Maarssen, 1984, pp. 24–27, 35–46.
- 55 See *The Rembrandt Documents* (note 46), 1663/7.
- 56 In 1665 Becker demands that Rembrandt finish the Juno. Comp. Municipal archive Amsterdam, notary J. Hellerus, NA 164, p. 107, see also *The Rembrandt Documents* (note 46), 1665/17. For a discussion of Rembrandt’s Juno in the Armand Hammer Collection in Los Angeles as the painting mentioned and possessed by Becker, see recently J. Lloyd Williams in: exh. cat. *Rembrandt’s Women*, Edinburgh (National Gallery of Scotland), London (Royal Academy), 2001, no. 140 with ill.
- 57 His inventory also lists a “Standard Bearer” by Rembrandt. Comp. Municipal archive Amsterdam, notary S. Pelgrom, NA. 4767, pp. 324–378, dd. 19 October–23 November 1678.
- 58 E. Kieser, “Über Rembrandts Verhältnis zur Antike,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 10, 1941/42, pp. 129–162, for the quote see p. 129.

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN

(LEIDEN 1606 – AMSTERDAM 1669)

Minerva in her Study

Signed and dated, center left: *Rembrandt. f. / 1635*. Oil on canvas, 137 x 116 cm.

PROVENANCE

James, 12th Lord Somerville (1697/98–1765), Drum House, Scotland; by descent to his grandson John Southey (Somerville), 14th Lord Somerville (1765–1819); sale, London (European Museum[?]), March 1818, lot 166 (seller John Southey, 14th Lord Somerville) [unsold]; sale, London (European Museum[?]), June 1818, lot 166 (seller John Southey, 14th Lord Somerville) [unsold]; sale, London (European Museum[?]), March 1819, lot 166 (seller John Southey, 14th Lord Somerville) [unsold]; by descent to the Honorable Mrs. Louisa Harriet Somerville Henry (1835–1923), of The Pavilion, Melrose, Roxburghshire, and of Malborough Buildings, Bath; sale, Lord Wandsworth et al. (property of the late Mrs. Louisa Harriet Somerville Henry), London (Christie's), 21 November 1924, lot 123 (Portrait of "Saskia as Deborah" for 6200 gns. to Lewis & Simmons; according to a second copy of the sales catalogue at the RKD in The Hague, sold to Smith for 6510 gns.); with Lord Joseph Duveen, New York; collection of Jules S. Bache, New York, 1929 (according to the photo mount in the Frick Art Reference Library, New York); collection of Marzell von Nemes (1866–1930), Munich; sale, Marzell von Nemes, Munich (Mensing & Fils, F. Muller, P. Cassirer, H. Helbing), 16–19 June 1931 (16 June), lot 59, reproduced (Portrait of "Saskia as Athene" for 80,000 Marks; with expertises by M.J. Friedländer, W. Martin, F. Schmidt-Degener, C. Hofstede de Groot and W.R. Valentiner. According to the article, "Die Nemes – Auktion in München", in the *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 June 1931, the painting was bought by Mensing for a Dutch client. However, a copy of the auction catalogue kept at the RKD in The Hague includes a handwritten reference to an anonymous buyer from America); collection of Dr. Axel L. Wenner-Gren (1881–1961), Stockholm, before 1940; sale, Dr. Axel L. Wenner-Gren et al., London (Sotheby's), 24 March 1965, lot 21 with ill. ("Saskia as Minerva," for £ 125,000 to Julius Weitzner, London, and Hallsborough Galleries, London; probably sold to Antenor Patiño); sale Paris (Palais Galliera), 6 June 1975, lot 27 with col. ill. (purchased by Baron Marcel Bich); collection Baron Marcel Bich, Neuilly-sur-Seine; purchased from Baron Bich by a Japanese corporation, 1988; on loan from 1988 to 2001 to the Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation, Tokyo; purchased from the Japanese owner, 2001.

EXHIBITIONS

Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Axel Wenner-Gren, Sweden, Karlstad (Värmlands Museum), 1940, no. 2; *Rembrandt*, Stockholm (Nationalmuseum), 1956, vol. 1, pp. 13, 27, no. 16, vol. 2, pl. 11 (on loan from Axel L. Wenner-Gren); *Rembrandt Tentoonstelling ter Herdenking van de Geboorte van Rembrandt op 15 juli 1606. Schilderijen, Etsen*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), Rotterdam (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen), 1956, no. 28 with ill. (on loan from Axel L.

Wenner-Gren, Stockholm); *L'Europe et la découverte du monde*, ed. G. Martin-Méry, Bordeaux, 1960, p. 19, no. 30 and fig. 26 (on loan from Axel L. Wenner-Gren, Stockholm); *Rembrandt, his Teachers and his Pupils*, ed. Christopher Brown, Tokyo (Bunkamura Museum of Art), Chiba (Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art) and Yamaguchi (Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art), 1992, no. 6, illustrated in color; *Greek Gods and Heroes in the Age of Rubens and Rembrandt*, eds. P. Schoon, S. Paarlberg, Athens (National Gallery/Alexandros Soutzos Museum), Dordrecht (Dordrechts Museum), 2000/2001, p. 278, no. 61, illustrated in color.

LITERATURE

W.R. Valentiner, "Komödiantendarstellungen Rembrandts," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, vol. 59, 1925/26, p. 270, and reproduced on p. 267 (as owned by Lewis & Simmons); A. Bredius, *Rembrandt Schilderijen*, Utrecht, 1935, no. 469; J. Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, Harvard, 1948, vol. I, pp. 43 and 164; J.G. van Gelder, "Rembrandts vroegste ontwikkeling," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, vol. 16, 1953, p. 296; Müller Hofstede, "Die Rembrandt-Ausstellung in Stockholm," *Kunstchronik* 9, 1956, p. 91; W. Sumowski, "Nachträge zum Rembrandtjahr 1956," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe VII)*, 1957–1958 (no.2), pp. 224, 253, reproduced fig. 17; K. Bauch, *Rembrandt. Gemälde*, Berlin, 1966, no. 259; H. Gerson, *Rembrandt Paintings*, Amsterdam, 1968, no. 94, reproduced; A. Bredius, *Rembrandt. The Complete Edition of the Paintings*, revised by H. Gerson, London/New York, 1969, no. 469, reproduced; C. White, *Rembrandt as an Etcher. A Study of the Artist at Work*, University Park and London, 1969, pp. 114–115; C. Tümpel, *Rembrandt. Mythos und Methode*, Königstein/Taunus, 1986, p. 402, no. 106, reproduced; J. Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, Dordrecht-Boston-London, vol. III, 1989, pp. 168–174, no. A114, reproduced; R. Pfeiff, *Minerva in der Sphäre des Herrscherbildes (Bonner Studien zur Kunstgeschichte, vol. 1)*, Münster, 1990, pp. 101–102; reproduced fig. 105; C. Grimm, *Rembrandt selbst: Eine Neubewertung seiner Porträtkunst*, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 61, reproduced figs. 107 and 120; C. Brown, J. Kelch, P. van Thiel et al., *Rembrandt: the Master and His Workshop. Paintings*, exhib. cat. Berlin (Altes Museum), Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), London (National Gallery), 1991–1992, p. 261; L.J. Slatkes, *Rembrandt. Catalogo completo dei dipinti*, Florence 1992, p. 170, no. 92, reproduced; W. Liedtke et al., *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Aspects of Connoisseurship*, exhib. cat. New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), 1995–1996, vol. 2, p. 56, note 12; E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt. The Painter at Work*, Amsterdam, 1997, pp. 101, reproduced fig. 129, and pp. 105, 107, 124.