

9a. Rembrandt, *Old Woman Praying, 'Rembrandt's Mother'* (signed: R, ca. 1629/30). Gilded copper, 15.5 x 12.2 cm. Salzburg, Landessammlungen, Residenzgalerie.

TRAINING PIECE AND SALES PRODUCT. ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE TRONIE IN REMBRANDT'S WORKSHOP

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Paintings which in more recent Rembrandt research have been classified as *tronies* play a central role in the Dutch master's oeuvre.¹ Such works also form an important part of the output of roughly half of his documented pupils.² *Tronies* are paintings of individual heads, bust length or half-figures, usually against a neutral background, wearing costumes like those found in genre and history painting. At the same time, these *tronies*, particularly within Rembrandt's circle, quite often appear deceptively like portraits, though they were never intended as depictions of specific individuals in the classic understanding of portraiture. Rather they show fictive characterisations of particular types, such as the old man or old woman (fig. 9a), the oriental, the soldier or the shepherdess. Since *tronies* rarely have significant attributes or identifying motifs, they usually cannot be iconographically classified as depicting a particular biblical, historical, mythological or literary person. Equally, it is not possible to transfer to *tronies* that have no attributes the typical meanings that seventeenth-century viewers applied to genre pictures. Among the most important characteristics of the seventeenth-century Dutch *tronie* is the life-like depiction of the figures and the prominence given to artistic techniques, be it a particularly free handling of paint, strong variations of light or exceptional colouring. Since *tronies* were usually painted from life, it is occasionally possible to identify the sitters. Artists sometimes even used their own features as models, though again these pictures are not to be confused with official portraits.

Tronies were extremely common in Dutch seventeenth-century painting. In my recently completed study on *tronies*, I looked at why this was the case and examined the functions of these paintings.³ There can be no doubt that *tronies* were an immensely popular subject and were produced by painters such as Lievens, Rembrandt, Hals and others as independent works for the free market. But apart from this, the execution of *tronies* seems to have been a particularly appropriate training exercise for apprentices: as a single object painted on a small format, *tronies* offered the possibility of practising the depiction of human physiognomy, different materials and textures, and interesting light effects. When painting *tronies* beginners did not have to solve complex compositional problems, execute detailed background settings, and required only a limited knowledge of anatomy. It is well known that as a young painter, Rembrandt employed *tronies* as a learning tool by experimenting with various light effects, different means of applying paint and depicting diverse facial expressions.⁴ The following contribution will examine the extent to which and the reasons why he had his pupils produce *tronies* during their apprenticeship or during the time they worked in his studio. Special attention will be paid to the question of whether the painting of *tronies* was a fixed part of an artist's training in Rembrandt's workshop.

The authors of the *Corpus of Rembrandt-Paintings* assume that Rembrandt's pupils, during their appren-

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¹ On the *tronies* by Rembrandt and his pupils, see e.g. Bauch 1960, 168-181; Brown 1981, 49f.; Blankert 1982, 26-28, 57-59; Bruyn 1982, esp. page 40; Bruyn and van de Wetering 1982, 8; Tümpel 1986, 57-61, 187, 299; Bruyn 1989, esp. pages 22-26; Schwartz 1989; de Vries 1989; Schatborn 1991, 75f.; Koba-

yashi-Sato 1994; Schuckman et al. 1996, 51-65; van der Veen 1997, 69-73; Bikker 2005, 29-31; Hirschfelder 2001; Schnackenburg 2001, esp. pages 112f.; Duparc 2004b, 48-50.

² On Rembrandt's documented pupils, see Blankert 1983; Broos 1983, esp. pages 45ff.; Jansen in Blankert et al. 1983, 70-81; Blankert 1997b; Bikker 2005; Liedtke 2004, 68.

³ My dissertation (Hirschfelder 2005) provides a general definition of the *tronie* as distinct from other genres of painting, in addition to looking at questions of form, function, meaning and popularity.

ticeship or their time as journeymen, executed *tronies* in large numbers.⁵ Thus, of the paintings in the first three volumes that have been de-attributed and in part classified as studio works, some 40 % are *tronies*.⁶ However, the difficulty with these works is that they can usually be neither convincingly attributed to another artist nor securely dated.⁷ Therefore it is in most cases impossible to determine with any certainty whether a Rembrandtesque *tronie* was executed by an apprentice as part of his training, by a more advanced journeyman or studio assistant, or indeed was even produced by a copyist or follower who was never active in the master's studio and who may even have been working at a much later date.⁸ Ernst van de Wetering assumes that because Rembrandt worked for Hendrick Uylenburgh in Amsterdam from 1631 to 1635, many of the painters active in the same studio during the 1630s will have used Rembrandt's *tronies* as sources without having ever been trained by him.⁹

Rembrandtesque *tronies* by anonymous artists are thus hardly suitable for making reliable assertions about the type and quantities of *tronies* produced by the master's pupils during their apprenticeship and as journeymen. However, in view of the important role played by *tronies* in the work of Rembrandt's pupils, it seems more than probable that they will have learned to produce such works during their training.¹⁰ It has been repeatedly assumed that the

execution of *tronies* in Rembrandt's studio served both didactic and commercial functions, without however the reasons for such an assumption having ever been sufficiently addressed.¹¹

The Copying of *Tronies* for Training Purposes

In order to show that *tronies* served a didactic function within Rembrandt's studio practice, it is useful to examine those examples that are known to be copies. In seventeenth-century Netherlandish texts on art, copying paintings is cited as one of the principle methods of learning the art of painting. By copying the work of another painter, an apprentice appropriates, as Karel van Mander wrote, the 'handelinge' of the artist he is following.¹² He thus not only learns a certain technique but also other principles of painting, such as composition, the distribution of light and shadow, and how to structure figures and drapery. Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) discusses 'the copying of all kinds of paintings' [het kopieeren van allerley Schilderyen] in connection with the correct application of colour as: 'a normal and very useful exercise for the upcoming young people especially when they have a good piece as their example' [een gewoone en zeer nutte oeffening voor d'aenkomende jonkheyt byzonderlijk als zy een goedt stuk tot haar

⁴ Bauch 1960, 174-180; Bruyn and van de Wetering 1982, 8; Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A14 on page 172, cat. no. A22 on page 235, cat. no. A33 on pages 326, 328; Tümpel 1986, 64, 187; Blankert 1997a, cat. no. 1 on page 82; van de Wetering 1999, 21.

⁵ Bruyn 1989, 22-26. For a critical analysis of the 'studio-theory', see Liedtke 1989; Liedtke 1997; Liedtke 2004.

⁶ Bruyn et al. 1982, 1986 and 1989. Of 122 de-attributed works in these three volumes, 53 are *tronies*.

⁷ Cf. Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. C19-C21, C23-C44; Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. C50, C52, C55, C57-C64; Bruyn et al. 1989, cat. no. C89, C92, C93-C96, C98-103, C115. In contrast to the paintings attributed to Rembrandt, the majority of these works has unfortunately not yet been scientifically examined.

⁸ Broos 1983, 52; van de Wetering 1983, 62. A number of the *tronies* in question have recently even been re-attributed to Rem-

brandt. This is true e.g. for Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. B4, B5, B6, C22; Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. C53. For the current attributions of these works, see Liedtke 1995a; Blankert 1997a, cat. no. 4 on pages 96-98; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 18 on page 122; Chong 2000, cat. no. 16 on pages 117-120; van de Wetering and Schnackenburg 2001, cat. no. 79 on pages 366-369, cat. no. 81 on page 374.

⁹ Van de Wetering 1986, 59. Cf. also recently Liedtke 2004, 60f. On Uylenburgh's 'academy', see Six 1925/26; Broos 1981/82, 251-253; van de Wetering 1986, 56-60; Montias 2002, 121-126.

¹⁰ In the literature extant *tronies* of minor quality are occasionally considered as training pieces of Rembrandt's apprentices, cf. e.g. Vogelaar and Korevaar 2005, cat. no. 6 on page 91, cat. no. 24 on page 127.

prinsipael hebben].¹³ Willem Goeree expressed the same opinion and emphasised that ‘for youths the simple copying is an appropriate method to first learn how to handle the brush, to get a manner of painting, to learn to find the paints and colours etc.’ [het zimpel nakopiëren (...) voor de Jongelingen wel een bequaem middel is, om voor eerst het Pinceel te leeren handelen, een manier van schilderen te krygen, de verwen en koloryten te leeren vinden enz.].¹⁴

Of course copies were not made solely for didactic purposes but also for commercial reasons. Some art dealers paid unknown painters a fixed wage to make copies of paintings by famous artists.¹⁵ In this way, a large amount of cheap merchandise entered the art market. In his frequently cited biography of Bernhard Keil, a Danish painter and pupil of Rembrandt, Filippo Baldinucci reports that the Amsterdam art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh owned an extensive collection of works by famous European painters which he had copied by young painters working for him: ‘for their study, and no less to his own benefit [per istudio loro, non meno che per proprio avvantaggio].¹⁶ Here the double function of copying is clearly expressed: on the one hand it served for the instruction of inexperienced painters, on the other it produced saleable merchandise.¹⁷ It is thus in most cases impossible to differentiate between a copy – be it extant or only known through documentary evidence – that was executed in order

to learn, to be sold, or indeed for both purposes. Only when it can be shown that a copy has been created during an apprenticeship is it possible to assume with some certainty that a didactic purpose lay behind its execution.

That Rembrandt’s *tronies* were frequently used as models is confirmed both by extant copies as well as references in inventories.¹⁸ As van de Wetering has shown, works listed in inventories as copies or paintings ‘after Rembrandt’ were not always what today would be considered a true copy: no terminological distinction was made between various pictorial categories – ‘the faithful copy, the copy with variations and the free treatment of a Rembrandtesque theme’.¹⁹ It can thus be assumed that any work which was closely based on one of Rembrandt’s models would, in the wider sense, have been understood as a copy, even if it was not a faithful reproduction of one of the master’s paintings. All three *tronies* of a young woman in Milan (Pinacoteca de Brera), Chapel Hill/N.C. (Morehead Planetarium) and Allentown/PA (Samuel H. Kress Collection) go back to the same prototype, namely Rembrandt’s *Bust of a Young Woman* in Buenos Aires (private collection), even though the copyists did not reproduce all its details, but instead varied their pictorial source.²⁰ In the *Corpus of Rembrandt-Paintings* it is assumed that all three paintings were executed in Rembrandt’s studio around 1632.²¹ Even

¹¹ Schatborn 1986, 61; Tümpel 1986, 60; Bruyn 1989, 16, 22; Schatborn 1991, 75; Bruyn 1991, 79; Huys Janssen 1992, 26; van der Veen 1997, 71; White and Buvelot 1999, 100, 122; van de Wetering 2005, 173f.

¹² Miedema 1986/87, 273 and *passim*. Cf. Floerke 1905, 210, note 288. On the term and the concept of *handeling* [the way of working], see also Ketelsen 2000, 17–20.

¹³ Van Hoogstraten 1678, 218.

¹⁴ Van Goeree 1697, 84.

¹⁵ Floerke 1905, 158f.; Montias 1988, 246, 249, 254, tab. 2; Montias 1996, 159; Goosens 2001, 271, note 157.

¹⁶ Baldinucci 1845–1847/1974, vol. 5, 366. Cf. Six 1925/26, 233.

¹⁷ Cf. Bruyn 1989, 16.

¹⁸ See e.g. Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A22 on page 231, no. 7 on pages 235–240, cat. no. C41, no. 7 on page 666; Bruyn et al.

1986, cat. no. A49, no. 7 on page 165; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 8 on pages 100f. In some cases, Rembrandt’s pupils copied the heads of certain figures from many-figured compositions of the master and reproduced them as isolated heads or busts, Franken 1997. For inventories containing *tronies* copied after Rembrandt, see below note 106–110, and GPI 1994–2003, N-2071 (Inv. Aert de Coninck, Amsterdam April 13–17, 1639); GPI 1994–2003, N-2302 (Inv. Cornelis Aertsz. van Beyeren, Amsterdam May 7, 1638); Straat 1928, 62–76 (Inv. Lambert Jacobsz., Leeuwarden October 3, 1637).

¹⁹ Van de Wetering 1986, 50. Cf. van de Wetering 2005, 98, 132.

²⁰ Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. C57 on pages 678, 679, cat. no. C58 on pages 682, 684, cat. no. C59 on page 689, esp. cat. no. A50 on page 170; van de Wetering 1986, 50; Bruyn 1989, 23.

²¹ The painting in Chapel Hill could have been executed by Isaac Jouderville, Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. C58 on page 683.

if this is correct, no conclusion can be drawn about the individual painters' level of training, or as to why the *tronies* were executed. However, references to copies of *tronies* in inventories do in some cases clarify their purpose. A particularly illuminating example is the 1639 inventory of the estate of the goldsmith Aert de Coninck, father of the painters Philips and Jacob Koninck.²² While the inventory is well known, it has not been evaluated in relation to the issues under discussion here.²³

Of the 150 paintings inventoried in de Coninck's estate, 40 entries cite the name of the painter. A classification of all the works according to subject matter reveals that de Coninck owned 40 landscapes and sea-pieces, which together formed the largest group of paintings (26.6%). The second largest group with a total of 28 works was *tronies* (18.6%), followed by history paintings (25/16.6%). The remaining works comprised 17 still lifes, 16 genre pieces, five portraits, two allegories, one architectural piece and 16 unidentified pictures. Of the eleven listed copies, six were *tronies*. Four of the six copied *tronies* are cited as after models by Rembrandt, and two others after Jacob Backer:

'a piece of painting, being the *tronie* of an old man, after Rembrandt, without frame' [een stuck schilderije, sijnde een out-manstronie sonder lijst, nae Rembrandt]

'a *tronie* of a young man, after Rembrandt, without frame' [een jongmanstronie, nae Rembrandt, sonder lijst]

'a *tronie* of a student, after Rembrandt, in half-length, wearing a cap' [een studente-tronie, nae Rembrandt, halff lichaems, met een clappmuts]

'a *tronie* of a Turk, after Rembrandt' [een Turx tronie, nae Rembrandt]

'a *tronie* of a man, after Jacob Adriaensz. Backer, in an octagonal frame' [een manstronie, nae Jacob Adriaensz Backer, in een achtcante lijst]

'a *tronie* of Saint Peter, after Jacob Adriaensz. Backer' [een Sinte-Pieterstronie, nae Jacob Adriaensz Backer].²⁴

In addition to the *tronies* explicitly identified as 'after Rembrandt', de Coninck's estate obviously contained other Rembrandtesque *tronies*: the characterisation of six pieces as 'antique', and in one case as showing a Turk, clearly suggests that they represent

²² GPI 1994-2003, N-2071 (Inv. Aert de Coninck, Amsterdam April 13-17, 1639). Cf. also Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 149-155. The information given by Bredius is incomplete and sometimes incorrect. The edition of the inventory in the GPI 1994-2003 reproduces the original document as verified in the municipal archive of Amsterdam, Arch. 5075, Inv. 1266B, no. 12.

²³ Cf. Broos 1983, 41, 48; van de Wetering 1986, 48; Bruyn 1989, 22, note 45.

²⁴ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0117, 0121, 0127, 0128, 0119, 0126 (Inv. Aert de Coninck, Amsterdam April 13-17, 1639). Cf. also Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1639/9 on page 178. For the other copies owned by de Coninck, see GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0022, 0107, 0118, 0137, 0141: 'a piece copied after Crispijn de Passe, consisting of five figures' [een stuck copye nae Crispijen van de Pas, bestaen (de) in vijff beelden], 'a piece on canvas with Jacob and Esau, without frame, after Claes Moeyaert' [een stuck op doek sonder lijst van Jacob en Esau, nae Claes Moyert], 'a small landscape, after Claes Moeyaert, without frame' [een lantschapge, nae Claes Moeyaert, sonder lijst], 'a small landscape, after Moeyaert, without frame' [een lantschapge, nae Moyert, sonder lijst], 'a Saint John, after Moeyaert' [een Sint Jan, nae Moyert].

²⁵ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0122, 0125, 0130, 0131, 0132, 0138 (Inv. Aert de Coninck, Amsterdam April 13-17, 1639): 'an antique little boy, painted from life, not finished' [een antyck jongetge, nae 't leven geschildert, niet opgemaect], 'a *tronie* of an antique little daughter, not finished' [een *tronie* van een antycks dochtertge, niet opgemaect], 'a *tronie* of an antique woman, placed in an octagonal frame' [een antique vrouwetronie, sijnde in een achtcante lijst], 'small *tronie* of a young lady without frame' [antique joffrouwetronytge sonder lijst] 'an antique little seigneur without frame' [antyyq seinjoortie sonder lijst], 'a small *tronie* of a Turk without frame' [een Turx tronytge sonder lijst]. Even though the 'antyyck jongetge' and the 'antyyq seinjoortie' are not explicitly referred to as *tronies*, this is what they most probably were. On the seventeenth-century meaning of the term 'antique' [antiek], see de Vries et al. / supplement 1956, vol. 1, column 1268-1275; de Pauw-de Veen 1969, 59; Dudok van Heel 1980/81, 2f.; Groeneweg 1995, 22f.; de Winkel 1999, 68; NRD 51 in Volume II.

²⁶ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0093, 0094: 'a *tronie* of a shepherdess' [een tronye van een harderinne], 'a *tronie* of a shepherdess' [Een *tronie* van een harderinne]. See e.g. Govaert Flink's

ed figures wearing the fanciful ancient or oriental costumes that were typical of Rembrandt and his circle.²⁵ Moreover, two *tronies* depict shepherdesses, figures that the master's pupils are known to have repeatedly painted during the 1630s.²⁶

Each of de Coninck's sons is mentioned only twice in the inventory as author of paintings.²⁷ This does not however exclude the possibility that they were responsible for some of the unattributed works. At the time the inventory was drawn up in 1639, both brothers were only starting out as painters: Jacob, then in his mid-twenties, was already an independent master and had been living in Rotterdam since 1637; Philips was just nineteen and had not yet finished his apprenticeship.²⁸ This is evident from an invoice issued on 2 January 1640 by the executors of Aert Coninck's estate for thirty guilders paid to Jacob for having trained his brother Philips over a period of six months.²⁹

Prior to his father's death and apprenticeship under his brother Jacob, Philips had in all probability been a pupil under Rembrandt. Arnold Houbraken's assertion that Philips was taught by the great master was rejected by Horst Gerson on the grounds that it is inconceivable that a painter who had been trained by Rembrandt would subsequently be apprenticed to an unknown artist.³⁰ However, Houbraken's claim is supported by the evidence of Philips Koninck's own artistic production as well as a series of documents: not only is Kon-

inck's early work clearly modelled on Rembrandt's art,³¹ but he was closely associated with members of Rembrandt's circle and indeed with the master himself. In January 1641 Philips married Cornelia Furnerius, a sister of Rembrandt's pupil Abraham Furnerius, while in the 1650s he is known to have been in contact with Rembrandt and his pupil Heyman Dullaert.³² Moreover, as will be shown below, Aert de Coninck's inventory also endorses Houbraken's statement. Unlike Gerson, Ben Broos accepts – rightly in my opinion – the possibility that Philips was indeed trained by Rembrandt.³³ The fact that he did not complete his apprenticeship in the master's studio but rather under his own brother may be the result of circumstances that can no longer be reconstructed.

Since Philips Koninck had not completed his training by April 1639, it can be assumed that a large part of the paintings he had executed to that date were copies or variations of works by his teacher. Of the paintings listed in the inventory of his father's collection, the works most likely to have been produced by a young apprentice were the copies of *tronies* by Rembrandt. As will be shown, Philips Koninck was in all probability the creator of these works, and may even have produced the other Rembrandtesque *tronies* owned by his father. That the young artist painted *tronies* is proven by the reference to a 'woman's *tronie*, by Philips Coninck' [vrouwetronie, van Philips Coninck] in the inventory.³⁴ Since Philips's brother Jacob is also mentioned as having painted

Shepherdess of ca. 1636/38 in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Liedtke et al. 1995, cat. no. 22 on pages 91-93.

²⁷ Gerson 1936, doc. 5 on page 83.

²⁸ On Philips Koninck's biography, see Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 149, 156-166; Gerson 1936, esp. pages 8-14; Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 3, 1530; Bernt 1980, vol. 2, 28; Turner 1996, vol. 18, 228-230. On Jacob Koninck's biography, see Haverkorn van Rijsewijk 1902; Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 156f., 166-169; Gerson 1936, 83-86 (documents); Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 3, 1516; Bernt 1980, vol. 2, 27; Turner 1996, vol. 18, 228.

²⁹ Gerson 1936, doc. 7d on page 84.

³⁰ Houbraken 1753, vol. 2, 53; Gerson 1936, 9.

³¹ On his composition, handling of light and the representation of figures and drapery, see Gerson 1936, 44f. In cat. no. 140 on page 117, he sees a close relationship between Koninck's early figure-paintings and Rembrandt's works of the 1630's. In addition he draws a connection between Koninck's early landscapes and the type of landscape Rembrandt developed in the 1640's, Gerson 1936, 45f., 50. Gerson does not however conclude that these similarities indicate that the painter was educated by Rembrandt.

³² Gerson 1936, 9f., 49; van Putte 1978, 20, 42, 76. On Furnerius as Rembrandt's pupil, see Broos 1983, 45. Cf. also van Hoogstraten 1678, 95.

³³ Broos 1983, 48. De Jager 1990 shows that an apprenticeship could be accomplished with different masters.

a *tronie*, it is quite possible that he was responsible for some of the anonymous *tronies* listed in the inventory.³⁵ It is thus at least worth considering the possibility that Jacob, like Philips, also trained with Rembrandt.³⁶ This however remains purely speculative since no documentary evidence about Jacob's apprenticeship is known and his small oeuvre offers little help in recognising his artistic origins.³⁷

There are many examples of contracts between a master and his apprentice containing a clause which laid down exactly if and how many of the paintings produced by a pupil during his training could be retained by him.³⁸ Those who paid a high fee for their training and thus did not have to work for the master were often permitted to keep their paintings as long as they paid for the materials. The master could however dispose as he saw fit of those works executed by pupils who were involved in the studio production and who only paid a small sum for training, or indeed received some sort of reimbursement or wage. Different combinations were of course possible, and contracts quite often contained clauses detailing exceptions.³⁹ In any case, some apprentices were allowed to retain their own work, or gave it to their parents, as was clearly the situation with Philips Koninck.

Given that both Koninck brothers were landscape painters, it is hardly surprising that their father's collection contained a particularly large number of such works. However, a comparison of the different groups of unattributed paintings, which could

quite possibly be by either of Aert de Coninck's sons, reveals that *tronies* (22) rather than landscapes (17) were the largest group. It is further interesting to note that while paintings were to be found in eleven rooms of the house, 13 of the 22 *tronies* were kept together in one room, the front room above the dining room [Voordercamertge boven 't eetzaeltge]. These were the six *tronies* after Rembrandt and Backer, five of the 'antique' *tronies*, a *tronie* of a woman broken in two, and an unfinished *tronie* by Jacob Koninck.⁴⁰ Also kept in the same room were four other paintings – a portrait [contrefeijsel] by Philips Koninck, an unfinished landscape, a landscape after Claes Moeyaert, a still life by Joris van Schooten – and a pen drawing of Bacchus by Jacob Koninck in an ebony frame.⁴¹

This grouping of the paintings in the room above the dining room can hardly be coincidental, especially as a number of factors suggest that the majority of the works were executed by Philips and Jacob. Firstly, the brothers are explicitly named as the authors of two paintings and a drawing. Secondly, seven of the eleven copies listed in the inventory were to be found in this room; these could be works the two brothers executed during their training. Thirdly, nine of the 17 works in the room are *tronies* which obviously had been produced in Rembrandt's studio or as part of an intensive study of his work because they were painted after *tronies* by the master or show Rembrandtesque features. Fourthly, four of the pictures are described as 'unfinished' [niet opgemaect],⁴² and are thus most

³⁴ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0004.

³⁵ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0124: 'a *tronie*, by Jacob Koninck, not finished, without frame' [een *tronie*, van Jacob Coninck, niet opgemaect, sonder lijst].

³⁶ Cf. also Broos 1983, 48.

³⁷ Cf. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 3, 1516f. and cat. no. 992-1001. Since Jacob is mentioned in Dordrecht in 1633, 1634 and 1636 in relation to his marriage plans and since he surely lived in Rotterdam from 1637 onwards (Haverkorn van Rijsewijk 1902, 9f.), an apprenticeship with Rembrandt would have been most likely before 1633. See also below note 43.

³⁸ For this and the following, cf. de Jager 1990, 76-78. Cf. also Miedema 1986/87, 271.

³⁹ Even though he only had to pay for some of the more expensive pigments and for the panels, Reymbrant Cornelisz. (Verboom) for instance was permitted in his contract (Delft December 7, 1618) to keep his paintings. Adriaen Carman (Amsterdam November 15, 1635) was allowed to produce one painting per year for himself. Jan Janssz. van Waterwijck (Delft March 27, 1621) could paint five weeks per year 'for his own profit' [tot sijnen eijgen prouffijte]. De Jager 1990, 77, doc. 8 on page 98, doc. 19, doc. 21 on page 100, the quotation *ibid*.

⁴⁰ Cf. GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0129: 'a woman's *tronie*, broken in two pieces' [een vrouwetronie, sijnde in twee stucken gebroken]. For the *tronie* of Jacob Koninck, see note 35.

likely to have been works which had not been purchased on the open market but rather formed part of the two brothers' own artistic production.

Aert de Coninck clearly used the room to keep paintings by his two sons, the majority or even all of which derived most likely from their time as apprentices. Such an assumption is supported by the presence not only of so many copies,⁴³ but also of the four unfinished pieces, the only ones in the entire house: 'a small ruin in a landscape' [een ruyntge in een lantschap]; 'an antique little boy, painted from life' [een antyck jongetge, nae 't leven geschildert]; 'a *tronie* of an antique little daughter' [een *tronie* van een antycks dochtertge] and 'a *tronie*, by Jacob Koninck' [een *tronie*, van Jacob Coninck].⁴⁴ One possible reason why a painter would leave a work unfinished was the lack of time due to other tasks or commissions, though this would have been unusual for a painter in the early stages of his training or career. In the case of the Koninck brothers, it is more likely that the inventoried works had not been painted for sale but as artistic exercises, so it was immaterial whether they had been completed or not. As for the *tronies*, it would not have been necessary to finish secondary features such as the background or the costumes of the figures, if they had been executed for study purposes. It was of course also possible that the painters were simply dissatisfied with what they produced. In both cases, however, the works would have served artistic instruction; their foremost function being that of a vehicle for gaining practical experience.

The paintings assembled in the chamber above the dining room were obviously not suited for display in the more representative rooms of de Coninck's house. This is a further indication of their status as exercise pieces. The 'Large Room' [Grote Camer], the most important room of the house, contained the largest number of paintings, none of which was a copy or a *tronie*, let alone incomplete.⁴⁵ Somewhat different is the situation in the 'frontroom of the house' [voorhuys]: the inventory gives the names of the artists of nine of the thirteen paintings listed as hanging in this 'public' section of the house, and of those, four are classified as *tronies*. Three were by well-known older masters; the fourth by Philips Koninck depicted a woman, which, because it is not identified as a copy and was displayed in the prestigious location of the 'voorhuys', must have been of a much higher quality than the *tronies* in the room above the dining room.⁴⁶ This is supported by the identification in the inventory of Philips as the artist, which suggests he had signed his *tronie*.

The evaluation of the inventory confirms the assumption that Philips Koninck was apprenticed to Rembrandt. In addition – and this is crucial – the analysis allows for the conclusion that the master's pupils learned to paint by executing *tronies*.⁴⁷ At least during the 1630s, the production of *tronies* may have been one of the main methods used by Rembrandt to train history painters. In any case, Aert de Coninck's inventory lists no copies after history paintings by Rembrandt, even though extant

⁴¹ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0133, 0118, 0120, 0134. The drawing is only listed in Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 152, no. 47, and Gerson 1936, doc. 5 on page 83. The examination of the original document (Amsterdam, municipal archive, Arch. 5075, Inv. 1266B, no. 12) proved that the drawing was actually located in the room in question.

⁴² The use of the word 'do up' [opmaken] to describe works of art in the seventeenth century meant 'to accomplish', cf. de Vries et al. 1910, vol. 11, column 1027-1035, V.4.o. (column 1034); de Pauw-de Veen 1969, 297f.

⁴³ Since a copy after a landscape by Claes Moeyaert (1591-1655) was to be found in this room, it is possible that Jacob Koninck was an apprentice of this master. This hypothesis is supported by the

fact that further copies after Moeyaert are listed in the inventory. Another plausible explanation would be that the paintings came from Salomon Koninck, who was a pupil of Moeyaert and was related to Aert de Coninck in an as yet unclarified way, Turner 1996, vol. 18, 226-228.

⁴⁴ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0120, 0122, 0125, 0124.

⁴⁵ On the hanging of paintings in seventeenth-century Dutch houses as well as the function and status of the different rooms, see Loughman and Montias 2000; Sluijter 2001; Westermann 2001.

⁴⁶ GPI 1994-2003, N-2071, no. 0004, 0005, 0006, 0007: 'a woman's *tronie*, by Philips Koninck' [een vrouwen*tronie*, van Philips Coninx], 'a woman's *tronie*, by van Geldorp' [Een vrouwen*tronie*,

works confirm that as an independent artist Philips was active as a history painter.⁴⁸

The Role of *Tronies* in the Early Work of Rembrandt's Pupils

The following will examine the early work of a number of Rembrandt's pupils as a means of verifying the hypothesis that the execution of *tronies* was part of the training programme in Rembrandt's studio. As Ernst van de Wetering has already demonstrated, *tronies* formed the major part of the works painted by Isaac Jouderville while apprenticed to Rembrandt.⁴⁹ As can be shown, this also applies to the more talented of the master's pupils.

The evidence of the pictorial and documentary sources assembled by Michiel Roscam Abbing makes it most likely that Samuel van Hoogstraten worked in Rembrandt's studio from ca. 1642/43 to 1646/47, when he returned to Dordrecht.⁵⁰ That his first signed and dated works are from 1644/45 could be taken as an indication that by then van Hoogstraten was already an independent master.⁵¹ It is however equally possible that the young artist remained in Rembrandt's studio as an advanced apprentice, assistant or journeyman and thus in a position that allowed him to sign some of his own works.⁵² Surviving guild regulations from a number of Dutch cities state that an apprentice who had completed his training was required to work for a certain length of time with an established painter in the city before being allowed to register as an

independent master with the Guild of St Luke.⁵³ Goosens has shown that in Haarlem the so-called 'free guys' [vrije gasten], journeymen who were not registered with the Guild as independent painters but rather were employed by a master, could under certain conditions sign their own paintings.⁵⁴ As we have already seen, the contracts for apprentices sometimes contained a clause permitting them to work for themselves during certain fixed periods. It is possible that these apprentices were also allowed to sign the works they produced for their own profit. Van de Wetering discusses a ruling issued in Utrecht in 1641 which forbade pupils or painters in the service of another master to deviate from his style or sign with their own name.⁵⁵ This not only shows that apprentices and journeymen normally worked in the style of their masters and did not use their own signatures, but also that such rules were not always followed. Accordingly, there are a number of different reasons why van Hoogstraten could have signed his own works in 1644 and still be a member of Rembrandt's studio.

But even if this was not the case, van Hoogstraten's first signed works were without doubt inspired by impressions gained during his training under the famous master. The works in question are two *tronies* showing van Hoogstraten's own features, one from 1644 in The Hague (Bredius Museum) (fig. 9b), the other from 1645 in Vienna (Liechtenstein Museum), a Self-Portrait with *Vanitas Still Life* (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) of 1644, and a portrait of a child of 1645.⁵⁶ Moreover, the unsigned and undated works that are today at

van Geldorp], 'a shepherd's *tronie*, by van Blocklandt' [een herderstronie, van Blocklant], 'a *tronie* of Diana, by Moreelse' [een Diana's *tronie*, van Moreelss].

⁴⁷ This assumption is supported by the inventory of Cornelis Aertsz. van Beyeren, which lists four copies after *tronies* of Rembrandt (GPI 1994-2003, N-2302, no. 0024, 0045, 0046, 0047 (Inv. Cornelis Aertsz. van Beyeren, Amsterdam May 7, 1638); cf. Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1638/5 on pages 151f.). The copies were certainly painted by van Beyeren's son Leendert, who evidently was a pupil of Rembrandt in 1637, Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 127f.; Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1637/2 on page 141, and the undated document 3 on page 594;

van der Veen 1997, 72. That the paintings were no more than practice pieces is underlined by the fact that three of them were stored in the attic.

⁴⁸ Cf. Gerson 1936, cat. no. 110-148 on pages 114-118.

⁴⁹ Van de Wetering 1983, esp. page 62.

⁵⁰ Roscam Abbing 1993, doc. 9, 10 on pages 34-35. Cf. also Brusati 1995, 25. On the duration of an apprenticeship and the starting age of an apprentice, see de Jager 1990, 69-71.

⁵¹ Dutch guild regulations of the seventeenth century usually required that an artist sign his works only after having completed his apprenticeship, Bikker 2005, II. Cf. also Muller 1880, 76, no. X/III; Obreen 1877-1890, vol. 4, 51; Hoogewerff 1947, 24.

tributed to van Hoogstraten and dated to the first half of the 1640s are almost without exception *tronies* of young men or *tronie*-like representations of the artist himself.⁵⁷ While it is possible that paintings from this period that depicted other subjects have been lost, the extant *tronies* show just how important the production of such works was in van Hoogstraten's early career.

It is of course impossible to establish whether van Hoogstraten's extant *tronies* were primarily made as practice pieces, especially as they could just as well have been executed for sale. The latter possibility would seem to be the case for the high-quality signed *tronies* in The Hague and Vienna. However, if these were among van Hoogstraten's first saleable works, then they must have been preceded by a considerable number of practice pieces. A young and inexperienced painter aiming to sell his art will undoubtedly first execute those types of paintings in which he has already achieved a certain degree of proficiency through practice. This would apply chiefly to those works that served as study material and as a means of acquiring painterly expertise during his apprenticeship.

Now one might assume that van Hoogstraten had already acquired experience as a painter before he came to Rembrandt.⁵⁸ It has to my knowledge gone unnoticed in this context that many years later, van Hoogstraten mentions in the *Euterpe Book of his Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* (1678) that by the time his father and first teacher Dirck



9b. Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Self-Portrait with a Jewelled Beret and Ermine Collar* (signed: S.v.H. 16(.)4 [1644]). Panel, 63 x 48 cm. The Hague, Museum Bredius.

had passed away, he had spent: 'already half of my life at the service of our Euterpe' [de helft van mijn leven reets in dienst van onze Euterpe].⁵⁹ From the practical point of view, the muse Euterpe appears in the *Inleyding* solely as the patroness of draughtsmanship.⁶⁰ When van Hoogstraten emphasises that

⁵² As late as 1646 van Hoogstraten apparently still took part in model-drawing sessions in Rembrandt's studio, White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 96 on page 247.

⁵³ In Haarlem this period lasted at least a year, Miedema 1980, vol. 1, 96, art. 3; Goosens 2001, 74f. The Hague guild regulation even prescribes two years, van de Wetering 1986, 57, note 97.

⁵⁴ Goosens 2001, 91f. On the 'free guys' [vrije gasten], see also *ibid.*, 74-79.

⁵⁵ Van de Wetering 1986, 57 with note 100.

⁵⁶ On these works, see Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 847, 851, 849, 858; Roscam Abbing 1993, cat. no. 1-4; Brusati 1995, cat. no. 1-3, 10; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 96 on pages 247f.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 843-846, 848, 850; Brusati 1995, cat. no. 9, A1. Brusati usually does not date the paintings; she does not accept the following works as by van Hoogstraten: Sum. 845, 846, 848, 850. Apart from the *tronies*, Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 879, dates a *Vanitas Still Life with a Young Men in Contemplation* (whereabouts unknown) to the middle of the 1640s (not mentioned by Brusati 1995).

⁵⁸ Roscam Abbing 1993, doc. 10 on page 35, considers the possibility that van Hoogstraten already was an independent artist before entering Rembrandt's workshop, that is after the death of his father and first teacher Dirck in December 1640.

⁵⁹ Van Hoogstraten 1678, 11.

⁶⁰ Czech 2001, 178-180.

he spent his life up until the death of his father in the service of Euterpe, then this implies that during this time he was chiefly if not indeed exclusively occupied with mastering the art of drawing.⁶¹ As can be deduced from seventeenth-century literature on art, the learning of drawing formed the starting point of a painter's education.⁶² Van Hoogstraten probably turned his attention to painting only under his second master – Rembrandt. If this was indeed the case, then *tronies* would certainly have been among the works on which van Hoogstraten would have learned the art of painting. And even if the young man was already able to paint, he could only acquire Rembrandt's specific style of painting in the master's studio – and again *tronies* would have been the principle vehicle for this purpose.

Significantly enough, van Hoogstraten's 1644 *Self-Portrait with a Jewelled Beret and Ermine Collar* (fig. 9b) was clearly influenced by the desire to imitate Rembrandt's painterly techniques and artistic strategies and to employ colour to achieve a comparable sense of presence. Though arms and chest are cast in shadow, face and shoulders are illuminated, an effect increased by the application of thick highlights. The treatment of the particularly rich costume emphasises the diverse materials. The brush models the impasto paint in very different ways so as to suggest the varying textures of the fur, the shirt and velvet beret. By comparison, the paint in the shaded areas is thin and in parts transparent.⁶³

During the seventeenth century, the imitation of a master's painting technique or his manner was a significant objective in the learning process of younger painters.⁶⁴ Houbraken reports that after Govaert Flinck had finished his apprenticeship with Lambert Jakobsz. around 1633, he apprenticed himself to Rembrandt in order to learn his 'handling of paints and way of painting' [*behandeling der verwen en wyze van schilderen*].⁶⁵ It remains unclear exactly how long Flinck spent as his apprentice or journeyman, but if Houbraken is correct in stating that it was for one year, then Flinck must have completed his training with Rembrandt some time around 1633/34. However, no signed and dated paintings of Flinck from this period are known.

Flinck was probably still in Rembrandt's studio in 1636. In a recent study, Marcus Dekiert has convincingly argued that the 1636 painting of the *Sacrifice of Isaac* in Munich (Alte Pinakothek), must have been executed in Rembrandt's studio, and in all probability by Flinck.⁶⁶ It is generally assumed that this is the year in which Flinck became an independent master, since he only began signing his paintings in 1636:⁶⁷ the *Shepherdess* in Brunswick (Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum), the *tronie* of *A Young Man with a Feather Beret and a Gorget* in Lausanne (private collection) (see fig. 9e) and the full-length portrait of *Jonas Jacob Leeuwen Dircksz.* in Amsterdam (Mennonite Parochial House).⁶⁸ In

⁶¹ The only documented work executed by van Hoogstraten prior to moving to Amsterdam is an etching (*Scurvy Grass*, monogrammed and dated 1642) for Johan van Beverwijck's medical handbook *Schat der Ongesondheyt* (Dordrecht 1642), Roscam Abbing 1993, doc. 9 and fig. 4 on page 34. Another, albeit unsigned etching in van Beverwijck's book is attributed to van Hoogstraten by Roscam Abbing 1993, doc. 9 and fig. 5 on page 35.

⁶² Van Hoogstraten 1678, 26-36; van Mander / Miedema 1973, vol. 1, 99 (fol. 8r), stanza 1, vol. 2, 423f., no. II 1a, 425; Kwakkelstein 1998. Cf. also Haverkamp-Begemann 1969; Schatborn 1981, II-32; Schatborn 1984; Miedema 1986/87; Bruyn 1989, 13.

⁶³ Cf. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, 1287.

⁶⁴ Van Mander / Miedema 1973, vol. 2, 430f., no. II 9b; Miedema 1986/87, 273. Cf. also Krempel 2000, 110-112.

⁶⁵ Houbraken 1753, vol. 2, 21. Furthermore, the author reports that Flinck imitated Rembrandt's style in such a perfect manner that some of his works were taken for and sold as originals by Rembrandt. According to Houbraken Arent de Gelder also went to Amsterdam 'to learn Rembrandt's manner of painting' [*om Rembrants wyze van schilderen te leeren*] (*ibid.*, vol. 3, 206). Houbraken writes that Samuel van Hoogstraten kept Rembrandt's 'manner of painting ... for some time ..., and in the course of time discarded from it, and finally adopted a completely different way of painting' [*wyze van schilderen (...) nog eenigen tyd (...), en allengskens, zig daar van weer ontwende, en eindelyk een geheele andere wyze van schilderen aannam*] (*ibid.*, vol. 2, 156). Like Flinck or Ferdinand Bol, many of Rembrandt's pupils were well advanced in their training when they entered the master's workshop. According to van de Wetering 1986, 45, they are not



9c. Govaert Flinck, *Bust of a Young Woman* (signed: G. Flinck 1637). Panel, 57 x 48 cm. New York, private collection.

the following year Flinck signed and dated three *tronies* and two portraits.⁶⁹ During the same period (1636/37) he however signed just a single history painting, a *Lamentation* (whereabouts unknown).⁷⁰ A series of *tronies* attributed to Flinck and dated by scholars to the years 1636/37 further supports

to be considered as pupils but rather as journeymen or assistants. Cf. also Bruyn 1991, 69; Blankert 1997b, 203. On the practical reasons why Flinck may have entered Rembrandt's workshop, see Jeroense 1997, 76.

⁶⁶ Dekiert 2004, 39-59, 68-76. The painting is a second version of Rembrandt's *Sacrifice of Isaac* in The Hermitage (St. Petersburg), Bruyn et al. 1989, cat. no. A 108 on pages 101-113.

⁶⁷ Moltke 1965, 14; Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, 998; Brown et al. 1991, 314.

⁶⁸ Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 656, 658, 685.

⁶⁹ Moltke 1965, cat. no. 342 on page 136, fig. on page 135; Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 663, 664, 686, 687.

⁷⁰ Moltke 1965, cat. no. 59 on page 78; Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 612. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 611, 613, attributes only two other history paintings of 1636



9d. Rembrandt, *Young Woman with a Veil* (signed: Rembrandt. ft. 1633). Panel, 65.6 x 49.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

the impression that Flinck – like van Hoogstraten – predominantly painted *tronies* and portraits in the period immediately after leaving Rembrandt's studio.⁷¹

and 1637 to Flinck. In addition cf. Moltke 1965, p. 14 and cat. no. 47.

⁷¹ Cf. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 642, 659, 660, 661, 665, vol. 5, cat. no. 2078, 2080, 2081, vol. 6, cat. no. 2278; Liedtke 1995b, 160-162. The bold numbers are not listed in Moltke 1965, who often does not date Flinck's works. On the attribution of Sum. 2080 and Sum. 2081 to Flinck, see also Brejon de Lavergnée et al. 1979, no. R.F. 1961-69 on page 59; Liedtke et al. 1995, cat. no. 22 on page 91. Bruyn 1987, 226 with note 31 on page 233, questions the following attributions by Sumowski to Flinck: Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 657, 659, 660, 661, 665. Most scholars assume that Jacob Backer painted Sum. 657, cf. Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 6, cat. no. II/657 op page 3607. According to Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. C62 on page 701, Sum. 2078 is an anonymous work from Rembrandt's workshop.

The formal structure of Flinck's *tronies* is remarkably close to the principles established by Rembrandt for executing such works. The five *tronies* that Flinck signed and dated 1636 or 1637 show either a bust or half-length figure against a neutral background with the head strongly illuminated. Flinck also adopted Rembrandt's figural type of young men and women wearing fanciful costumes. He follows Rembrandt in his choice of motifs, and although he has generalised the facial features of the figures, they are nevertheless close to models used in the master's studio. The *Bust of a Young Woman* (New York, private collection) (fig. 9c) of 1637,⁷² for instance, is a slight variation of Rembrandt's 1633 *Young Woman with a Veil* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) (fig. 9d), while the Brunswick *Shepherdess* is based on Rembrandt's *Flora* (St. Petersburg, Hermitage) of 1634.⁷³ The three signed *tronies* of young men from 1636 and 1637 are characterised by the same type of costume that Rembrandt used for *tronies* and representations of himself during the late 1620s and early 1630s.⁷⁴ They all wear a jewelled feather beret as well as other typical accessories such as gorgets, colourful scarves, braided jackets or gold chains. But beyond all such motival similarities, Flinck was also trying to emulate Rembrandt's specific style. Thus, the warm brown tones and red and white accentuation of the *tronie* in Lausanne (fig. 9e) are based on Rembrandt's colouring.⁷⁵ Other aspects, such as the use of light, the impasto highlights, the summarily depicted costume and the fluffy locks of hair, are also dependent on pictorial solutions devised by Rembrandt.

It is obvious that when executing his early *tronies*, Flinck deliberately sought to make his works as similar as possible to those of his one-time master.

The same approach was also adopted by Willem Drost, who began his apprenticeship with Rembrandt towards the end of the 1640s or in the early 1650s.⁷⁶ As Jonathan Bikker has shown in his recently published monograph, the technique used by Drost for his *tronies* is in many ways comparable to Rembrandt's.⁷⁷ Moreover, *tronies* form the major part of Drost's oeuvre up to 1655, the year he left for Italy.

During the early stages of their careers as independent masters, some of Rembrandt's most talented pupils clearly concentrated on producing *tronies* which imitated the master's style or adopted at least certain characteristics of his artistic principles. Therefore, it can be concluded that already during their apprenticeship the execution of *tronies* served as one of the most important methods of assimilating Rembrandt's virtuoso style.

This is further supported by the fact that in addition to extant works by the master's pupils, documentary records exist concerning works painted by Carel Fabritius during his training. Shortly after his marriage to Aeltge Hermansdr. van Hasselt in Middenbeemster in September 1641, Fabritius moved to Amsterdam to begin his apprenticeship with Rembrandt.⁷⁸ On 24 April 1643 an inventory of the estate of his deceased wife was drawn up, and

⁷² Cf. Moltke 1965, cat. no. 342 on page 136, with fig. on page 135.

⁷³ Brown et al. 1991, cat. no. 61 on page 318; van den Brink et al. 1993, 158.

⁷⁴ For the three *tronies* see Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 2, cat. no. 658, 663, 664.

⁷⁵ See e.g. the choice of colour in Rembrandt's *Old Woman Praying* from ca. 1629/30 (Salzburg, Salzburger Landessammlungen, Residenzgalerie), Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A27 (and fig. 9a in the present contribution).

⁷⁶ Bikker 2005, 10f.

⁷⁷ Bikker 2005, 14-18.

⁷⁸ Brown 1981, 16-18, 160f. Cf. van Hoogstraten 1678, 11f., 274, 308.

⁷⁹ Brown 1981, 17f.; van der Veen 1997, 72; Duparc 2004b, 18.

⁸⁰ Moreover, several *tronies* have been attributed to Fabritius, Brown 1981, 49 and cat. no. 3, Pl. 3, cat. no. A1-A3, Pl. 10-12; Wegener 2000, cat. no. 63 on pages 164-166. For a critical revision of these attributions, see Duparc 2004b, 48f., 60f.; Duparc 2004a, cat. no. 13 on pages 147-149.

⁸¹ Brown 1981, 147, doc. 6.

⁸² On the term 'aansmeren', see de Vries et al. 1882, vol. 1, column 326; de Pauw-de Veen 1969, 228, 265f., 318, 321, 365; Brown 1981, 85, note 21. On the usage of the term to characterise a particularly free manner of painting, see esp. de Pauw-de Veen 1969, 318, 321. Cf. also de Vries et al. 1936, vol. 14, column 2127-2136, on the term 'smeren'.

although none of the 15 paintings listed is accompanied by an artist's name, it can be assumed that most were by Fabritius.⁷⁹ In addition to the reasonable supposition that his wife would own pictures by her husband, the estate contained an unusually large number of *tronies* – seven in all – and as such paintings which during the 1630's and 40's were among the most favoured subjects of apprentices and journeymen in Rembrandt's studio.⁸⁰ The *tronies* are described as follows:

- 'a *tronie* of a soldier' [een krijgsmans troonij]
- 'a *tronie* of an old woman' [een oude vrouw troonij]
- 'a roughly painted *tronie*' [een ruwe aengesmeerde troonij]
- 'a (loosely) painted *tronie*' [een aengesmeerde troonij]
- 'an antique *tronie*' [een antijkse troonij]
- 'a *tronie* of an old man, antique' [een oud mans troonij attijck]
- 'a shadowed *tronie*' [een schaduwde tronij].⁸¹

The additional descriptive features allow for the conclusion that Fabritius used motifs similar to those found in *tronies* by Rembrandt. But beyond this broad assumption, the identification of two works as *aengesmeerde troonij* provides information about their manner of execution. The term 'aansmeren' has a very general meaning of 'to paint', but it can also refer to a particularly loose style of painting.⁸² This could mean that the two *tronies* were executed in a sketchy manner or – as Brown supposes – remained unfinished.⁸³ However, the latter kind is usually identified in contemporary



9e. Govaert Flinck, *A Young Man with a Feather Beret and a Gorget* (signed: G. Flinck. f 1636). Canvas, 66 x 53 cm. Lausanne, private collection.

documents as 'dead-coloured' [gedootverft] or 'unfinished' [niet opgemaect] and not as 'loosely painted' [aengesmeerd].⁸⁴ Also telling is the addition of the word 'rough' [ruw], meaning a coarse or rough manner of painting, to describe one of these two *tronies*.⁸⁵ Irrespective of its degree of completion, Fabritius obviously used the picture

⁸³ Brown 1981, 18.

⁸⁴ De Pauw-de Veen 1969, 251-255, 297f. See e.g. Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 170 (Inv. Abigaël van Nieuland, widow of Salomon Koninck and Cors Jansz. Buyck, Amsterdam February 20, 1673): 'five dead-coloured sketches of small *tronies* of men' [vyff gedootverffde schetsjens van manstronytgens], 'three *tronies*, not finished, by the same Koninck' [drie *tronien*, niet opgemaect, door dito Koninck]; GPI 1994-2003, N-5314, no. 0196 (Inv. Jan Miense Molenaer, Haarlem October 10, 1668): 'a small piece, dead-coloured by Brouwer and finished by Molenaer in a different way' [een stuckje van

Brouwer gedootverruwt en van Molenaer opgemaect verkeerdertjes].

⁸⁵ Van Mander follows Vasari to use the word to praise Titian's sketch-like style of his later years, van Mander / Miedema 1973, vol. 1, 259f. (fol. 48r-48v), stanza 22-26. On the meaning of the term 'rough' [ru(u)w; rouw] in the seventeenth century, see lately Atkins 2003, 284f. On the 'rough manner', see in general van Mander / Miedema 1973, vol. 2, 600, no. XII 26c; Raupp 1984, 171; van de Wetering 1982, 11-33; van de Wetering 1991, 16-22; Raupp 1993, 93; van de Wetering 1997, 154-190; Schnackenburg 2001, 94-96.



9f. Rembrandt, *Laughing Soldier* (signed: Rt, ca. 1629/30). Gilded copper, 15.4 x 12.2 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis.

to demonstrate a particularly rough manner of applying paint. This is a characteristic feature of certain *tronies* by Rembrandt, such as the *Laughing Soldier* in The Hague (Mauritshuis) (see fig. 9f).⁸⁶

Even if the nineteen-year-old Fabritius was already advanced when he entered Rembrandt's studio and was soon partaking in the production of paint-

ings,⁸⁷ he would unquestionably have spent his first year receiving instructions and learning to emulate the master's style. That both were closely related to the execution of *tronies* is confirmed by the inventory of the estate of Fabritius's wife.

The Didactical Purpose of *Tronies*

As the following will show, the production of *tronies* served to prepare Rembrandt's apprentices for the specific task of executing both history and genre paintings. Rembrandt usually painted his *tronies* from life, as can be shown from his repeated use of certain persons as models.⁸⁸ Accordingly, the master's *tronies* were particularly suited as pictorial sources for pupils to practise painting true-to-life depictions of the human face and in addition the reproduction of certain facial expressions. Seventeenth-century history and genre painters were expected to be able to convincingly render faces as well as give a life-like portrayal of different characters and emotions.⁸⁹ Its importance for history painting was clearly expressed by Samuel van Hoogstraten in his *Inleyding* of 1678 when he described the face of a person as a mirror of the soul [*spiegel des geests*] and pointed out that it was essential for history painters in particular to be able to use facial features to convey the specific character traits of their protagonists.⁹⁰

As Hans-Jörg Czech has shown, van Hoogstraten established in the nine books of his *Inleyding* a curriculum for training painters that is hierarchically

⁸⁶ On this painting and its current attribution to Rembrandt, see van de Wetering and Schnackenburg 2001, cat. no. 79 on pages 366-369.

⁸⁷ Brown 1981, 14, 18, assumes that Fabritius learned the basics of painting from his father who was an amateur.

⁸⁸ See for instance the many *tronies* after the old man erroneously called 'Rembrandt's father' by early scholars, Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A29, A42, B4, B7; van de Wetering and Schnackenburg 2001, cat. no. 75 on pages 356f. Most of Rembrandt's *tronies* show models who were also used by the master in other contexts.

⁸⁹ Cf. Lee 1940, 217-226; Blankert 1980, 26-28; Raupp 1983, esp. pages 409-412, 414-416; Weber 1991, 195-211.

⁹⁰ Van Hoogstraten 1678, 41: 'Nevertheless one calls the face a mirror of the spirit, and one should in essence know its greatness. And thus a sensible painter should, when working on a History, with a poetic invention bring the spirit of the person he wants to depict to life, and give him something by which he may be recognized: As majesty to Agamemnon, slyness to Ulysses, undauntedness to Ajax, boldness to Diomedes, and wrath to Achilles' [*Nochtans noemtmen het aengezicht een spiegel des geests, en zijne grootheit moetmen in de weezentlijkheit kennen. En aldus moet een vernuftich Schilder, wanneer hy eenige Historie voorheeft, met een Poëtische uitvinding, de geest des persoons, dien hy will verbeelden, in het wezen brengen, en hem iets geeven,*

structured, with the contents of each book assuming that the lessons of the previous book(s) have been studied and practised.⁹¹ Van Hoogstraten makes no mention of *tronies*, perhaps because by the time he wrote his book, these works no longer featured much in the Dutch art world. Furthermore, the classic and Renaissance examples which van Hoogstraten refers to in his book do not, of course, deal with *tronies*. It is however notable that some chapters in the *Inleyding* contain theoretical views on the human face for which the execution of *tronies* would have provided the equivalent practical experience.

In his first book, of which the muse Euterpe is patron, van Hoogstraten provides instructions and recommendations for learning the art of drawing; in the next book, this time under the muse Polymnia, he addresses the actual training of painters.⁹² The first three chapters of this second book discuss 'the human face [...], the most noble and beautiful [part] of the human being' [des menschen aengezicht (...), het Edelste en Schoonste van den mensch].⁹³ In the first chapter, van Hoogstraten establishes that the face is a person's most distinctive feature;⁹⁴ in the second, he cites stories from ancient history and mythology which were to be represented by history painters to explain how the human appearance conveys not only information about gender and ethnical background, but also about a person's character, intellect and temperament. It is only in the third chapter that van Hoogstraten deals with portraiture.

What is interesting is that his theoretical treatment of the face represents the prelude in the second – Polymnia – book and thus has the same status in

the process of learning as the drawing of heads in the Euterpe book. There, van Hoogstraten explains that the first step in mastering the art of draughtsmanship is to learn how to draw eyes, noses, mouths, and ears as well as different faces after prints.⁹⁵ However, in the Polymnia book, he confines himself to theoretical statements and refrains from giving any practical advice as to how an apprentice should acquire the ability to paint a life-like depiction of the human face. In Rembrandt's studio, the painting of *tronies* clearly served exactly this purpose.

Not only history and genre painters were expected to be able to execute a convincing likeness of the physiognomy and facial expression of a particular individual, it was also a prerequisite for an artist desiring to become a portraitist. Peter Schatborn is surely correct in maintaining that one of the many possible functions of *tronies* in Rembrandt's studio could have been their usefulness as practice pieces for learning the art of executing representative portraits.⁹⁶ This does not however mean that it was their primary function. On the contrary, the artistic conception of many *tronies* – the use of extreme forms of illumination, the summarily rendered details of the costumes, a generally loose brushwork – is not consistent with the requirements placed on portraiture, at least during the 1630s and 1640s. Moreover, as I have shown in my dissertation, Dutch specialists for portraiture did not usually produce *tronies*, which played no role in the oeuvre of such important portraitists as Michiel van Mierevelt, Jan van Ravesteyn, Cornelis van der Voort, Nicolaes Eliasz., Wybrand de Geest, Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen, Thomas de Keyser, Adriaen Hanneman, Johannes Verspronck, Pieter Nason, Jan Mijtens and Jan de Baen.⁹⁷

daer hy aen te kennen zy: Als ontzachtlijckheit aen Agamemnon, listicheit aen Ullises, onvertzaegtheit aen Ajax, koenheit aen Diomedes, en toornicheit aen Achilles.]

⁹¹ Czech 2001, 172.

⁹² Czech 2001, 180, 333.

⁹³ Van Hoogstraten 1678, 38.

⁹⁴ On the content of the 'Polymnia' book, see Czech 2001, 180-183.

⁹⁵ Van Hoogstraten 1678, 26. In practice etched *tronies* like the ones Jan Lievens produced in greater number could also be used for this, see e.g. Dutch Hollstein, vol. 11, cat. no. 33-36 on pages

32-35, cat. no. 39-41 on pages 37-39. On Lievens's series of *tronies*, see Bruyn 1982, 40, note 8; Schatborn and Ornstein-van Slooten 1988, 17, cat. no. 21-35 on pages 48-56. Cf. also the series of 'Diversae facies in usum iuvenum et aliorum deliniatae per Michaelem Sweerts Equit. Pict. etc.' (Brussels 1656) edited by Michael Sweerts. It comprises 12 busts of figures of different age and sex in varying costumes designated for the study of drawing, cf. Bolten 1985, 96-99, 254f.; Tainturier 2001; Luijten 2002, cat. no. P9-21 on pages 174-177.

⁹⁶ Schatborn 1986, 61.

Tronies as a Commercial Product

Thus the painting of *tronies* clearly did not form part of the training of those apprenticed to portrait specialists, but was instead related to the work of history or genre painters. History painters, however, were usually also proficient in other genres, and quite often received commissions for portraits, as indeed did genre painters – Gerard Dou is a case in point. So while the execution of *tronies* was not a prerequisite for an artist wishing to become a portraitist, their production during an early phase in his training not only prepared him for the task of representing figures in history or genre paintings but also helped develop the skills necessary for portraiture. In this way, *tronies* can be said to have fulfilled a double function.

Tronies provided Rembrandt's apprentices with a means of learning how to paint true-to-life representations of the human face without having to idealise their features; they also allowed pupils to develop those additional skills that were necessary to or helpful in the production of history and genre works. Such extras included the ability to invent and depict interesting fanciful costumes, which employed a sophisticated use of colour, and a wide variety of textures and materials to arouse the admiration of the beholder.⁹⁸ Painting *tronies* also helped students master a convincing deployment of light and shadow, to make effective use of *chiaroscuro*, and to realistically show how light reflects on different textiles, metals, jewels and other materials. Finally, by copying his *tronies* Rembrandt's pupils learned to imitate their master's specific manner of painting.

My study has hitherto focused on how *tronies* were used as practice pieces by Rembrandt's apprentices during their training. But beyond their function as a learning tool, the production of such paintings by the pupils certainly had an additional economic advantage for the master. The 1637 inventory of Lambert Jacobsz.'s estate provides an important indication that the practice of copying *tronies* in Rembrandt's studio was also carried out with the intention of selling the copies.⁹⁹ Besides being a painter, the Leeuwarden master Lambert Jacobsz. was an art dealer who maintained contact with the Amsterdam dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh.¹⁰⁰ Among the works in Jacobsz.'s estate were the following:

- 'A *tronie* of an old man with a long, broad beard by Mr. Rembrandt van Rijn himself [Een outmans troni met een lange bredebaert van M. Rembrant van Rijn selfs]
- 'An old woman in a black bonnet, after Mr. Rembrandt' [Een oude bessie met een swart capproen na M. Rembrant]
- 'A *tronie* of a woman, after Rembrant il re de mendici (the king of the poor)' [Een vrouwen tronie nae Rembrant il re de mendici]
- 'A handsome young Turkish prince, after Rembrandt' [Een schone Jonge Turcksche prince nae Remb]
- 'A soldier with black hair and an iron gorget tight around his neck, after Rembrandt' [Een soldaet met swart haer een Iseren halskraegh sluijer om den hals nae Remb.]

⁹⁷ Hirschfelder 2005, 291-310.

⁹⁸ According to Philips Angel's *Lof der schilder-konst* (Leiden 1642) the persuasive representation of different fabrics was taken as a means of giving special aesthetical pleasure to the beholder. Angel 1642, 55, demands that a painter 'knows how to make a clear distinction between silk, velvet, woollen and linen cloths' [recht onderscheyt weet te maeken van Zijde, Fluwelen, Wollen, en Linde-Laeckenenen] and emphasises that 'a praiseworthy painter should be able to depict these different things in the most pleasant manner for everyone's eye (by his art of the brush), making difference between the bare rough cloth-like and the plain satin smoothness (...)' [een prijs-waerdig Schilder dese verschey-

denheden op 't aengenaemste voor yders ooge (door zijn Pen-ceel-konst) behoorde te kunnen voorstellen onderscheyt maeckende tusschen de schrale ruyge Laecken-achtigheyt, en de gladdes Satijne effenheyt (...)].' Cf. Sluijter 1993, 50-56.

⁹⁹ Straat 1928, 62-76 (Inv. Lambert Jacobsz., Leeuwarden October 3, 1637). Cf. Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 137/4 on page 144.

¹⁰⁰ Dudok van Heel 1980, 107; Montias 2002, 123.

¹⁰¹ Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1637/4 on page 144. Cf. also Straat 1928, no. 7, 8, 11, 14, 15 on page 72, no. 20 on page 73 (Inv. Lambert Jacobsz., Leeuwarden October 3, 1637).

¹⁰² Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1628/2 on pages 61f., doc. 1631/4 on pages 75f., doc. 1635/1 on page 116.

'Another small *tronie* of an oriental woman, being the portrait of H. Uylenburgh's wife, after Rembrandt' [Noch een kleine oostersche vrouwen troni het conterfeisel van H. Ulenburghs huisvrouw nae Rembrant].¹⁰¹

Rembrandt lived with and worked for Hendrick Uylenburgh during the first half of the 1630s.¹⁰² The association between Uylenburgh and Lambert Jacobsz. suggests that the works listed in the latter's inventory were acquired from Uylenburgh in whose studio they had been executed by unknown painters or apprentices after models by Rembrandt.¹⁰³ The *tronie* of the woman in oriental costume for which Uylenburgh's wife served as a model is a clear indication that the paintings came from Uylenburgh.¹⁰⁴ Their unusually detailed descriptions identify them as exactly the types of *tronies* that were painted by Rembrandt and his pupils in the 1630s: elderly men and women, figures wearing oriental dress and (young) men with gorgets.

The fact that Lambert Jacobsz. owned works that were copied after *tronies* by Rembrandt or that were painted in the master's manner is a clear sign that such works were intentionally executed for the art market. Not only were the *tronies* sold to Jacobsz., but as an art dealer he would also have considered them as stock for sale. Of course the *tronies* listed in his inventory do not have to be by (unknown) apprentices or journeymen working in Rembrandt's studio; they could also have been executed by painters employed by Uylenburgh using models by Rembrandt.¹⁰⁵ Whatever the case, Uylenburgh clearly followed a policy of having his studio assistants

copy *tronies* by Rembrandt in order to sell them, something which Rembrandt must have known about – and presumably sanctioned. It is therefore hard to imagine that Rembrandt himself would not have also used copies of his own works to boost his income.

Other evidence confirms that copies of Rembrandt's *tronies* were acquired by Dutch art dealers and collectors. A 'copied *tronie* painted after Rembrandt' [copy *tronij* naer Rembrant geschildert] is listed in the 1640 inventory of the painter and dealer Hans van Coninxloo (III);¹⁰⁶ the Dordrecht merchant Adriaen Huijbrechtsz. Verveer had purchased a '*tronie* after Rembrandt' [*trony* na Rembrant],¹⁰⁷ while the Amsterdam merchant and collector Herman Becker owned 'a small man's *tronie* after Rembrandt van Rijn' [een kljne mans *tronie* nae Rembrant van Rijn] as well as five *tronies* by Rembrandt himself.¹⁰⁸ The estate of the soap-boiler Gerrit Reijersz. Elias included 'a little painting being a copy: *tronie* of Christ, by Rembrandt' [Een schilderijtje, synde een copye: Christus *trony*, van Rembrant],¹⁰⁹ and the inventory of Reijncke Gerrits even cites the name of the copyist: 'a *tronie* after Rembrandt by Dirck van Santvoort' [Een *tronij* na Rembrant, Dirck van Santvoort].¹¹⁰

It is of course no longer possible to establish if these copies really came from Rembrandt's studio, and even if they did, whether they were primarily executed as commercial products or in the context of the training of apprentices. It is however clear that there was a market for comparatively reasonably priced copies after *tronies* by Rembrandt. The

¹⁰³ Broos 1983, 38.

¹⁰⁴ The painting cannot be considered a portrait as in that case it surely would have been kept by the family. Furthermore, Rembrandt did not paint commissioned portraits of women in fanciful costume during the 1630s.

¹⁰⁵ According to Liedtke 2004, 61, 63, there is no valid evidence that Rembrandt had apprentices or even a larger number of pupils while working in Uylenburgh's 'academy' in his early Amsterdam years.

¹⁰⁶ Montias Database 2 [2003], Inv. 1161, no. 0042 (Inv. Hans van Coninxloo (III), Amsterdam October 24, 1640). The painting is not mentioned in Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc.

1640/10 on page 196. On the Coninxloo family as art-dealers, see Montias 2002, 74-76, 115-119.

¹⁰⁷ GPI 1994-2003, N-1525, no. 0014 (Transfer of paintings, Adriaen Huijbrechtsz. Verveer, Dordrecht August 23, 1660).

¹⁰⁸ GPI 1994-2203, N-2288, no. 0065, 0008, 0010, 0016, 0135, 0186 (Inv. Herman Becker, Amsterdam October 19, 1678); Postma 1988, 14-18.

¹⁰⁹ GPI 1994-2004, N-2062, no. 0001 (Inv. Gerrit Reijersz. Elias, Amsterdam July 1-August 1, 1676).

¹¹⁰ GPI 1994-2003, N-2275, no. 0022 (Inv. Reijncke Gerrits, Amsterdam June 12, 1647). Cf. Strauss and van der Meulen 1979,

master undoubtedly made the most of this demand and had his pupils and journeymen produce at least some *tronies* for direct sale. This is also suggested by particularly high-quality examples: certain copies after *tronies* by Rembrandt in which he showed himself in fanciful costumes were definitely not executed by beginners as practice pieces; indeed these works are of such high quality that they have in the past been taken for originals by Rembrandt,¹¹¹ as for example was the case with the *tronie* in Atami (Museum of Art), which today is considered to be a copy of the *tronie* in Indianapolis (Museum of Art).¹¹²

Between 1630 and 1660 a significant number of Dutch painters produced a large body of *tronies*.¹¹³ There was clearly great demand for such works among contemporary art lovers. Rembrandt could respond to this by both painting *tronies* himself and by having his studio produce examples for the market. As a pictorial genre, *tronies* had the advantage of being comparatively small in size and of a single figure, all of which meant they could be produced in a relatively short space of time and cheaply given the low costs for support and paint.¹¹⁴ Accordingly, it was easy for Rembrandt to build up a stock of *tronies* which could be sold on the open market at a later date. The production of a greater number of cheaper and less time consuming works was more cost effective and made for a quicker turnover than the production of a few larger, more complex and labour-intensive paintings. This is another reason why *tronies* were particularly attractive to younger

artists who had just become independent masters, especially if they had not yet acquired substantial commissions and had no or reduced financial resources to invest in expensive paintings. This surely explains why artists such as Govaert Flinck, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Willem Drost and even Rembrandt himself were particularly keen on painting *tronies* during the early stages of their careers.

Stockpiling *Tronies*

As extant inventories show, seventeenth-century Dutch artists usually had a store of paintings which could be shown to interested customers and art lovers in their studios or shops.¹¹⁵ The 1656 inventory of Rembrandt's possessions lists around thirty *tronies*.¹¹⁶ Given what has been established about Rembrandt's teaching practice, it can be assumed that marketable *tronies* stored in the studio were used by the master's pupils as models for study pieces or for the production of saleable copies and variants. There are even indications that Rembrandt deliberately retained *tronies* he himself had painted for this explicit purpose.

Four small *tronies* that had been painted by Rembrandt before he left Leiden in 1631 were subsequently etched by Jan van Vliet in 1633 and 1634:¹¹⁷ Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* in Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) of ca. 1628; the *Laughing Soldier* of ca. 1629/30 in The Hague (Mauritshuis) (fig. 9f); the *Bust of an Old Man in a Cap* of ca. 1630 in King-

doc. 1647/4 on page 255. For more examples, cf. Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 1, 294 (Inv. Barent Christiaensz. Micker, Amsterdam August 18, 1687): '1 *tronie* after Rembrandt' [1 *troni* naer Rembrandt]. The following are listed in the inventory of the scholar Johan van Beverwijck and were probably *tronies*: '4 little paintings, portraits of two old men and two old women, copies after Rembrandt, for 10-0-0' [4 *cleyne schilderijckens, conterfeytsels van twee oude mans ende twee oude vrouwen, copien van Rembrandt op 10-0-0*], Loughman / Montias 2000, Appendix D on page 146 (Inv. Johan van Beverwijck, Dordrecht February 22-23, 1651); NRD 27 in Volume II.

¹¹¹ Van de Wetering 2001, 63-65.

¹¹² Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A22 on pages 231-240, esp. no 7/1

on pages 235, 238; Bruyn et al. 1989, cat. no. I A22 on pages 598-601; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 8 on pages 100f.; van de Wetering 2005, 162-165. For other examples of this kind, see the paintings in The Hague (Mauritshuis) and Nuremberg (Germanisches Nationalmuseum), Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A21 on pages 229f.; Bruyn et al. 1989, cat. no. I A 21 on page 597f.; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 14a/b; Sluijter 2000; Wadam 2000; van de Wetering 2005, 91, 173.

¹¹³ Hirschfelder 2005, 263-275.

¹¹⁴ Apart from the reputation of an artist, the price of a painting in the seventeenth century was determined by its size, represented subject and manner of painting resp. production time, cf. Montias 1987, 460f.; Montias 1988, 246; van der Woude 1991, 303-308.



9g. Jan G. van Vliet after Rembrandt, *Bust of a Laughing Man with a Gorget* (signed: JG v.vliet fec. / RHL Inuentor). Etching (Holl. 21 [1st state of 2]), 22.6 x 19 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

ston (see fig. 6a); and the 1630 *Old Man in a Fur Cap* in Innsbruck (Tiroler Landesmuseum).¹¹⁸ Van Vliet certainly based his etchings on Rembrandt's originals rather than copies. The comparison of the paintings and etchings reveals similarities that support this assumption. This is particularly true for

the *Laughing Soldier*, where van Vliet tries to imitate the broad stroke of paint on the bridge of the man's nose which unfortunately looks like a small swelling in the etching (fig. 9g).¹¹⁹ This would hardly have been possible if van Vliet's model had been anything but the original *tronie*.

Recent scholarship has shown that Rembrandt and van Vliet remained in contact until at least 1635.¹²⁰ Co-operation between the two artists during this period can be deduced both from the fact that they produced etchings together and that the same water marks are found on the paper used by both for their graphic works. Thus it is reasonable to assume that Rembrandt himself placed his *tronies* at van Vliet's disposal, so they must still have been in his possession in 1633 and 1634. Obviously Rembrandt retained these works over a longer period of time, which explains how his pupils could have used them as models and as study objects. Copies of all four *tronies* do exist, though it has not yet been possible to establish exactly when they were painted.¹²¹

The *tronies* executed by Rembrandt between 1628 and 1630 were particularly well suited as visual sources for his pupils. Peter Schatborn has suggested that Rembrandt employed three different painting techniques for three small *tronies* on gilded copper – the *Laughing Soldier* (fig. 9f), the *Old Woman Praying* (Salzburg, Residenzgalerie) of 1629/30 (fig. 9a), and his 1630 *Self-Portrait* (Stockholm, Nationalmuseum).¹²² Because of this, they were

¹¹⁵ Montias 1982, 194-196; Goosens 2001, 94, 255, 261-265. Cf. Bredius 1915-1922, esp. vol. 1, 1-9 (Inv. Jan Miense Molenaer, Haarlem October 10, 1668); GPI 1994-2003, N-5314. On Rembrandt keeping his self-portraits in stock, see van de Wetering 2003, 4.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, doc. 1656/12 on pages 349-388.

¹¹⁷ On van Vliet's etched *tronies* after paintings by Rembrandt, see Bruyn 1982, 40-46; Schuckman et al. 1996, cat. no. 5-12 on pages 50-65.

¹¹⁸ On the current attribution of these paintings to Rembrandt, see Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A14, A29, as well as above note 8. On the corresponding reproductions by van Vliet, see Schuckman et al. 1996, cat. no. 6 on page 53, cat. no. 8 on pages 55ff., cat. no.

10a on page 58, cat. no. 11a on page 62. The etching of *The Old Man in a Fur Cap* (B. 24) is dated 1633; that of the *Laughing Soldier* (B. 21) is supposed to have been executed in 1634; the remaining etchings (B. 19, B. 23) are dated 1634.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Bruyn 1982, 42; Schuckman et al. 1996, cat. no. 8 on page 55.

¹²⁰ Schuckman et al. 1996, 52, cat. no. 16a-16c on pages 68-72, cat. no. 18 on page 74; Hinterding 1996, esp. pages 24-26; Roy-alton-Kisch 1996, esp. pages 9-12; Hinterding 2001, 85-92.

¹²¹ Cf. Martin 1913, 26, 180; Bruyn et al. 1982, cat. no. A14, no. 7 on pages 173, 176, cat. no. A29, no. 7 on page 291, cat. no. B6, no. 7 on page 430, cat. no. C22, no. 7 on page 580.

¹²² Schatborn 1986, 61. Cf. also Cavalli-Björkman 1992, cat. no. 49-53 on pages 180-185; White and Buvelot 1999, cat. no. 18 on page 122.



9h. Gerard Dou, *An Artist's Studio*. Panel, 66.5 x 50.7 cm. USA, private collection.

predestined to serve as models for pupils, whereby the use of copper as a support was particularly advantageous to illustrating the different techniques. Schatborn's theory is even more convincing in view of the fact that Rembrandt's pupils used his *tronies*

to assimilate the master's style. This in no way excludes the possibility that the *tronies*, all of which bear Rembrandt's monogram, were at the same time intended as 'demonstration pieces designed to impress the virtuosi, erudite lovers of art [and] visitors to the studio'.¹²³

Depictions showing studio interiors further confirm that Rembrandt's pupils and his pupils' pupils considered *tronies* as an integral part of the apparatus of a studio where they could be used for study or as visual models. An *Artist's Studio* (USA, private collection) (fig. 9h) attributed to Gerard Dou shows a painter working at his easel in front of which is a *pronk* or Vanitas still life arrangement, while on the wall are two *tronies*, apparently painted on paper.¹²⁴ The one on the left shows an old woman in profile wearing a headscarf, that on the right a young man with a turban and gold chain; both are in painted ovals. The life-size format is an argument against them being drawings. Executed in grey tones with white highlights, they are in all probability *grisailles*.¹²⁵ Since they are not framed and indeed damaged in some places at the edges – one has even come away from the wall – they are clearly not intended for sale but for use in the studio.

A second example (whereabouts unknown) (fig. 9i), today attributed to a follower of Dou, shows an artist sitting before his easel in a studio containing a particularly large assortment of diverse props.¹²⁶ A still life of weapons graces the foreground, an umbrella, a palette and other objects hang on the

¹²³ Schnackenburg 2001, 113.

¹²⁴ For the attribution of the painting, see Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 1, cat. no. 261.

¹²⁵ Cf. Rembrandt's *Bust of an Old Man*, paper on wood, 10,8 x 7 cm, signed: Rembrandt. 1633, London, private collection, Bruyn et al. 1986, cat. no. A74.

¹²⁶ The painting was auctioned in Amsterdam (Christie's) on November 11, 1996, lot 137, as the work of a follower of Gerard Dou. According to Fred Meijer it could have been executed by Jacob van Spreeuwen, cf. the current attribution in the RKD (The Hague). The painting reproduced by van de Wetering 1977, fig. 9 on page 48, is obviously a second version and not the same work, even though both are quite similar.

¹²⁷ Cf. Schatborn 1981, 15-19; Walsh 1996, 33-36, 52-56, 63-72.

¹²⁸ Miedema 1986/87, 274.

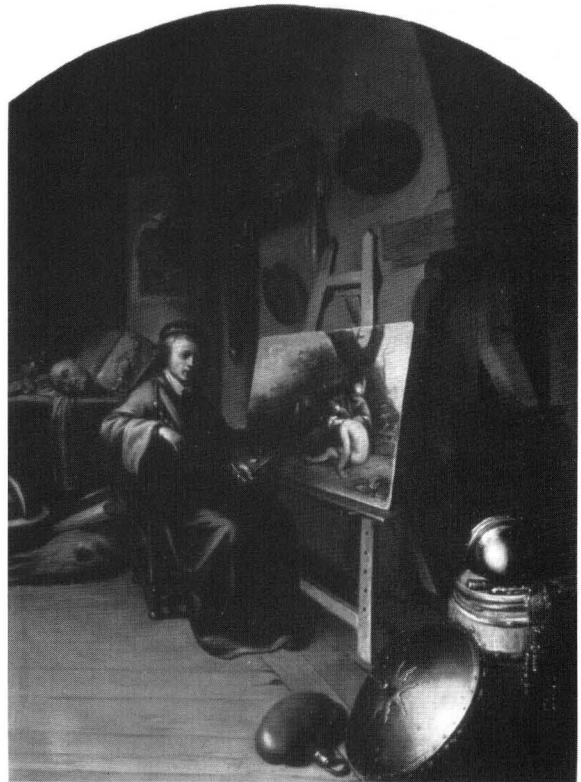
¹²⁹ An example from Rembrandt's circle would be the *Parable of the Lost Treasure* in Budapest (Szépművészeti Múzeum), Sumowski [1983-1994], vol. 4, cat. no. 1916. The head of the treasure-hunter was obviously modelled after the *tronie* of an *Old Man* in Kassel (Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie) which is today regarded as a studio work of ca. 1645, Schnackenburg 1996, vol. 1, cat. no. GK 247 on pages 246f., vol. 2, pl. 125. For other *tronies* after the same model, see Bredius 1935, cat. no. 241; Bauch 1966, cat. no. 186. On *Flemish tronies* as preparatory studies, see e.g. Müller Hofstede 1968; Held 1980, vol. 1, cat. no. 432-450; Müller Hofstede 1987/88.

wall. Attached to the column to the left is what is clearly a painted but unframed *tronie* of a young black woman wearing an opulent fanciful costume. On the table below lies an open book with a drawing of a standing oriental, and a plaster cast of a head. The album of drawings and the sculpture are clearly study objects of the kind that were typically found in the studios of seventeenth-century Dutch painters.¹²⁷ It is significant that the *tronie* is placed in such close proximity to these objects: it is thus integrated into the context of a painter's practical studies and belongs, as its rather careless display emphasises, to the studio tools.

Conclusion

Hessel Miedema has highlighted the extent to which the production of works of art and the process of learning were closely related in the seventeenth century.¹²⁸ The present study has shown that this was particularly true for the *tronies* produced in Rembrandt's studio. They played an important role in both the master's production practice as well as his training programme. On the one hand, his more advanced apprentices or assistants created *tronies* for sale on the free market, often using as models finished works by Rembrandt. On the other, pupils with little experience in painting acquired the necessary skills by executing or copying *tronies* as a means of practising the art of rendering faces, different textures and materials and interesting light effects. In addition, they learned how to imitate the master's specific style or at the very least essential features of his technique. This is also true for the more advanced assistants and journeymen working in Rembrandt's studio.

In the first instance, the painting of *tronies* prepared one for the task of executing history or genre works. It however also helped painters acquire the neces-



9i. Follower of Gerard Dou (Jacob van Spreeuwen?), *An Artist's Studio*. Panel, 50.6 x 37.2 cm. Whereabouts unknown (Auction Christie's, Amsterdam, 11.11.1996, lot. 137).

sary skill of producing a true-to-life image of a sitter, with Flinck and van Hoogstraten being examples of two artists who trained under Rembrandt and who were active as portrait painters very early in their careers. Except in a few rare cases, neither Rembrandt nor his pupils used *tronies* as preparatory studies for larger compositions – a practice that was quite common in Flanders.¹²⁹ Instead, pupils in Rembrandt's studio practising the art of painting *tronies* did so with the ultimate intention of eventually selling them to collectors who would value them as works of art in their own right.