

• Rembrandt. inventor. et. fecit. 1633.

## **REMBRANDT VAN RIJN (1606-1669)**

### **The Good Samaritan**

Signed and dated lower middle, "Rembrandt, inventor.id.feecit, 1633"  
etching

10 x 8 1/8 in. (24 1/2 x 22 1/4 x 1 1/2 in.)

1633

9449

### **PROVENANCE:**

Merrill Chase Gallery, Chicago  
Private Collection, Virginia

A prolific painter, draftsman, and etcher, Rembrandt van Rijn is usually regarded as the greatest artist of Holland's "Golden Age." He worked first in his native Leiden and, from 1632 onward, in Amsterdam, where he had studied briefly (ca. 1624) with the influential history painter Pieter Lastman. Rembrandt never went abroad, but he voraciously surveyed the work of Northern artists who had lived in Italy, like Lastman, the Utrecht painter Gerrit van Honthorst (Rembrandt's main link to Caravaggio), Anthony van Dyck, and—mostly through prints—Adam Elsheimer and Peter Paul Rubens. In the Leiden period, Rembrandt also responded strongly to earlier Netherlandish artists such as Lucas van Leyden (ca. 1494–1533). However, a crucial aspect of Rembrandt's development was his intense study of people, objects, and their surroundings "from life," as is obvious in paintings like his early self-portraits and the Saint Paul in Prison of 1627 (Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart).

Even by Dutch standards, Rembrandt's preoccupation with direct observation was exceptional and continued throughout his career. Despite the constant evolution of his style, Rembrandt's compelling descriptions of light, space, atmosphere, modeling, texture, and human situations may be traced back even from his late works (such as *The Jewish Bride*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) to the foundations of his Leiden years. It was also this program, in good part, that made Rembrandt a great teacher. His many pupils included Gerrit Dou, Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, Nicolaes Maes, and Carel Fabritius.

In Amsterdam, Rembrandt became a prominent portraitist, attracting attention with dramatic compositions like *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* (1632; Mauritshuis, The Hague). In securing commissions, the artist was assisted by the Mennonite art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh, whose cousin Saskia married Rembrandt in 1634. The Mennonites advocated personal interpretation of scripture, which probably influenced Rembrandt's subjective and often moving treatment of biblical subjects. The artist became highly successful in the 1630s, when he had several pupils and assistants, started his own art collection, and lived the life of a cultivated gentleman, especially in the impressive residence he purchased in 1639 (now the Rembrandt House Museum). Rembrandt exudes confidence and urbanity in his *Self-Portrait of 1640* (National Gallery, London), which was modeled upon courtly portraits by Raphael and Titian. These artists probably also inspired his Amsterdam signature, "Rembrandt" (dropping

“van Rijn”).

In the 1640s, Rembrandt's frequently theatrical style of the previous decade gave way to a more contemplative manner, a mature example of which is *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (1653; 61.198). The change reflects period taste but also personal circumstances, such as Saskia's death in 1642, financial problems, and the artist's controversial relationship with his son's nurse, Geertje Dircks, and then with his maidservant (and close companion) Hendrickje Stoffels. The great group portrait known as *The Night Watch*, dated 1642 (Rijksmuseum), could be said to mark the end of Rembrandt's most successful years, but the legend that customer dissatisfaction ruined his reputation is refuted by later commissions from such prominent patrons as Jan Six and the Amsterdam city government. The extraordinary volume of Rembrandt's production even after he declared insolvency in 1656 is punctuated by dozens of masterworks, like *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild* (1662; Rijksmuseum).

The powers of invention and perception that made Rembrandt a famous painter in his own time also made him a virtuoso draftsman (as is evident in works as different as *The Last Supper after Leonardo da Vinci* and *Cottage among Trees* [29.100.939]) and the most innovative printmaker of the seventeenth century. In about 350 etchings, he extended the medium's capacity to suggest various kinds of illumination and painterly effects. Some examples, like *The Three Crosses* of 1653, were radically revised in design and expression between different states.

Rembrandt inspired numerous seventeenth-century Dutch and German painters, as well as eighteenth-century artists throughout Europe (for example, Fragonard and Tiepolo) and a broad range of nineteenth-century realists. Many imitations were made in later periods, but the great majority of Rembrandtesque paintings that are not by the master date from his lifetime and suggest that his approach appealed to a fairly large audience, especially in Amsterdam.

Walter Liedtke

Department of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

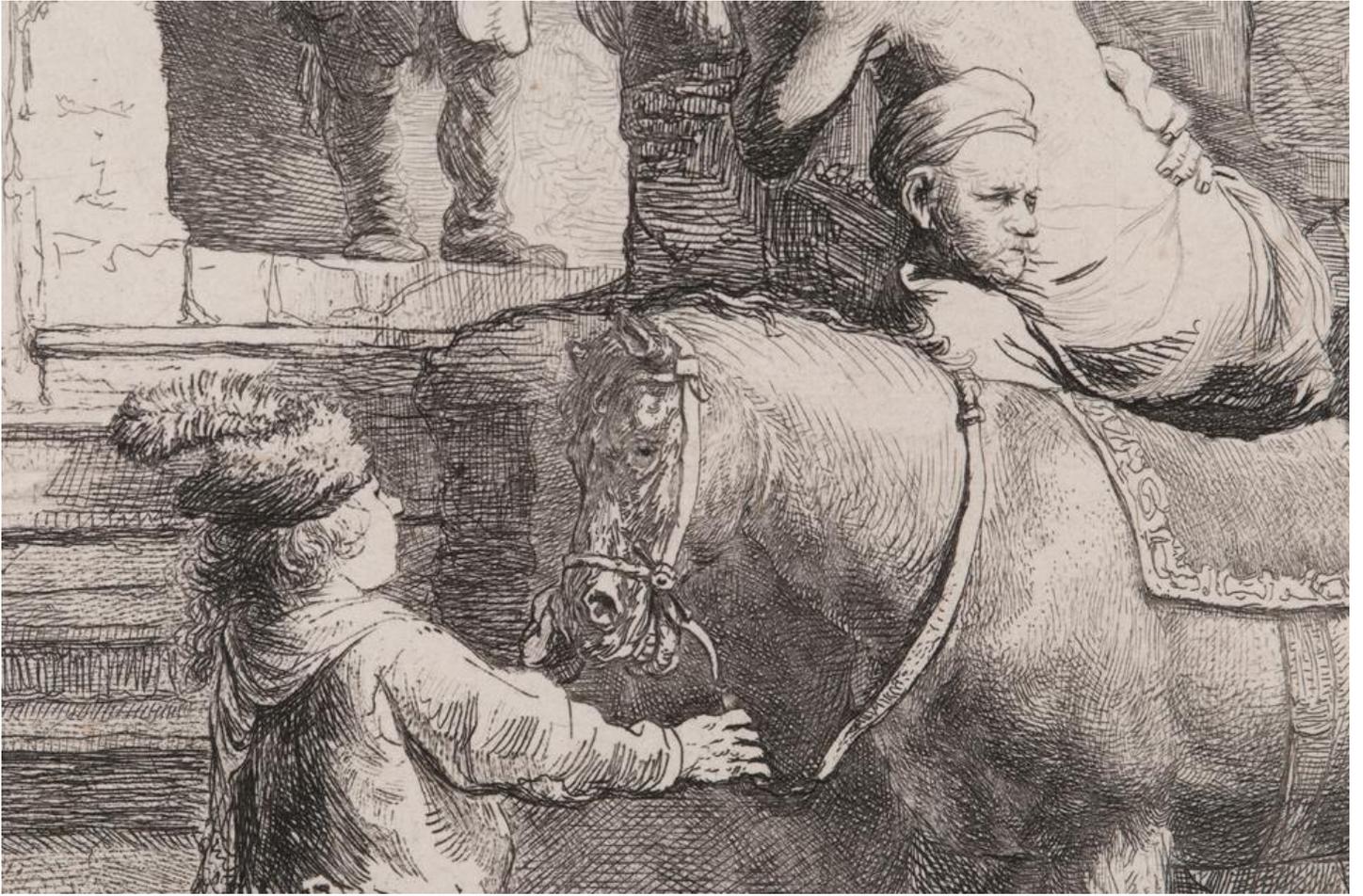
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W. H. Stiles del.



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BERNHARDT HAVRENSZ. \*1681/1682 - 1688

THE GOOD SAMARITAN



THE GOOD SAMARITAN

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ vanRIJN (1606 - 1669)

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