



Gerrit Dou
Dutch, 1613 - 1675

Bust of a Bearded Man

c. 1642/1645

oil on panel

overall (oval): 18.41 × 14.92 cm (7 1/4 × 5 7/8 in.)

framed: 34 × 30.2 × 5.4 cm (13 3/8 × 11 7/8 × 2 1/8 in.)

Inscription: lower right over sitter's left shoulder, "DOV" in smaller letters: GDOV

Corcoran Collection (William A. Clark Collection) 2014.136.32

ENTRY

With piercing eyes, the bearded man in Gerrit Dou's small painting gazes steadily off to his right, his weathered face brightly illuminated against the dark beret that covers the back of his head. Everything about his physique and body language, from the set line of his jaw and the tight curls of his moustache to the forward tilt of his head, conveys his firm resolve. Dou reinforced this sense of authority through the vigor of his brushwork, which enlivens the figure by capturing the light striking his form. Bright accents bring life to his eyes, help model his forehead and cheek bones, and articulate the strands of his cropped, grey hair. Similar highlights define the folds of his open shirt and the buttons of his black jacket.

Dou's tour de force is an outstanding example of a *tronie*, a type of figure study that Dutch artists frequently employed in the early to mid-17th century. Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606 - 1669) and those connected to his workshop were particularly interested in painting such works, and Dou certainly derived his penchant for depicting them from his master. Rembrandt and Dou made *tronies* of both young and old models, but they were particularly drawn to the elderly, in whom they found "character," whether in the creases that lined a wizened face or in the wisdom that radiated from those who have experienced the vagaries of life. *Tronies* were often sold as independent works, although sometimes they were used by artists as studies for their own genre scenes and history paintings. Although there is very little documentation about these *tronies*, the term was widely used in 17th-century inventories to describe such figure studies. [1]

A great number of *tronies* were painted in Leiden in the 1620s and 1630s not only by Rembrandt and Dou, but also by Jan Lievens (Dutch, 1607 - 1674). Most of the

sitters are anonymous, although some models have been identified, among them Rembrandt's mother. The elderly subjects of Dou's *tronies* have often been identified as his own parents. Occasionally, collectors and dealers even made pendants of Dou's small panels, which tend to be oval in shape and about the same size. Thus it is not surprising that the first likely mention of *Bust of a Bearded Man* in the sale of the Jacques de Roore collection in The Hague in 1747 described the sitter as the artist's father and paired it with a now-lost "portrait of the artist's mother." If this was the Gallery's painting and its purported pendant, they were sold separately in the Johan van der Marck sale in Amsterdam in 1773 (nos. 66 and 67). In 1777, however, when this "portrait of Dou's father" appeared in a sale in Paris, it was paired with a self-portrait of the same dimensions by Dou.

Despite the romantic notion that Dou, Rembrandt, and Lievens depicted their aged parents in such works, most of these identifications—including the notion that this *tronie* was a portrait of Dou's father—have been proven wrong. [2] Dou's *Self-Portrait* in the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum in Braunschweig, which dates from the 1650s, shows the artist holding a small family portrait, presumably his own [fig. 1]. [3] The father of this family has a darker beard and rounder face than the man in this *tronie*, and is without question a different individual. Unfortunately, the identity of the bearded man in the Gallery's painting is unknown. [4]

Dou was renowned for the remarkable detail of his works, and his meticulous manner of execution brought him fame and fortune throughout his life. [5] In Philips Angel's 1641 lecture "In Praise of the Art of Painting," presented in Leiden, the artist and theorist recommended the "never sufficiently praised Gerard Dou" as a model for young painters. He urged artists to emulate Dou's ability to combine a meticulous style with a "curious looseness" of brushstrokes. [6] Angel remarked that a praiseworthy painter should be able, like Dou, to represent the textures of materials with precise yet lively and bold brushstrokes. On the other hand, an artist who allowed his work to become too stiff and lifeless would be mocked rather than praised. [7]

Few of Dou's *tronies* equal the vigor and animation of this small oval panel, which makes this work difficult to date with certainty. Nevertheless, the rough-hewn character of the model, the strong chiaroscuro effects, and the fusion of detailed handling of paint with expressive brushwork suggests a date in the early 1640s. [8] These painterly qualities can be compared to Dou's depiction of a scholar writing at his desk from the mid-1630s, a work in which the elderly bearded man has a comparably intense expression, but whose wrinkled forehead is painted in a more

delicate manner [fig. 2].

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

June 30, 2017

COMPARATIVE FIGURES



fig. 1 Gerrit Dou, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1655, oil on panel, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig



fig. 2 Gerrit Dou, *Man Interrupted at His Writing*, c. 1635, oil on panel, The Leiden Collection, New York. © The Leiden Collection, New York

NOTES

- [1] For an excellent discussion of the history of the term *tronie* and the character of such images, see Dagmar Hirschfelder, "Portrait or Character Head? The Term *Tronie* and Its Meaning in the Seventeenth Century," in Ernst van de Wetering and Bernhard Schnackenburg, *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt* (Wolfratshausen, 2001), 82–91. See also Dagmar

Hirschfelder and Leon Krempel, eds., *Tronies: Das Gesicht in der fruhen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2014).

- [2] See Christiaan Vogelaar and Gerbrand Lorevaar, et.al., *Rembrandt's Mother: Myth and Reality* (Zwolle, 2005).
- [3] Although no document identifies the sitters, scholars generally agree that the individuals represented in the group portrait are Dou's father (Douwe Janszoon), his mother (Maria Jansdochter), and his brother (Jan). The style of Dou's costume indicates that he painted his self-portrait in the early 1650s, although the costumes of the figures in the painting he holds appear to date from the early 1630s.
- [4] Another version of the painting, probably not authentic, was exhibited in Raleigh: Wilhelm Valentiner, *Rembrandt and His Pupils* (Raleigh, 1956). That painting, which measures 7 ½ x 5 inches, is on canvas.
- [5] One of Dou's colleagues, Joachim von Sandrart, emphasized Dou's remarkable diligence and patience while executing his works. See Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie der edlen, Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste* (Nuremberg, 1675–1679; rev. ed. by A. R. Peltzer, Munich, 1925), 195–196.
- [6] Philips Angel, *Lof der Schilder-kunst* (Leiden, 1642; facsimile edition, Utrecht, 1969). See also Philips Angel, "In Praise of Painting," trans. Michael Hoyle, *Simiolus* 24 (1996): 227–258.
- [7] This issue is discussed in Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "A Reappraisal of Gerard Dou's Reputation," *The William A. Clark Collection* (Washington, DC, 1978), 63.
- [8] The painting is dated c. 1642–1645 by Ronni Baer in Ronni Baer et al., *Gerrit Dou, 1613–1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (New Haven and London, 2000), 84.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The primary support is a panel with horizontal grain and a very weak convex warp. On the reverse, most of the edges are beveled except for a small portion of the right side. Despite the lack of beveling along the right edge, the painting appears to retain its original dimensions.

The panel was prepared with a ground layer that is off-white in color and can be seen along the edges in areas of abraded and chipped paint. It is possible there is a second ground layer—a cool, light earth-brown color—exists on top of the off-

white layer, but it is unclear if this layer was applied overall or locally. The composition was blocked out with a semitransparent brown layer, which is evident in the lightest folds of the clothing and the cap. It is difficult to determine if the facial features were delineated with this brown sketch layer because the face was brought up to such a high level of finish. There likely is, however, a layer of dead-coloring under the face and neck.

The paint medium is estimated to be oil. The paint in the background and in the figure's clothing was applied in thin, semitransparent layers, allowing the painted sketch to contribute to the final effect. The face was painted wet-into-wet, with tiny, lively strokes that have a slight impasto and help suggest the wrinkles and furrows in the face.

The painting is in excellent condition and the panel is structurally sound. There are a few old pinpoint losses in the figure's forehead and there is some abrasion to the paint along the edges. A few small spots of retouching appear in the figure's forehead and clothing. Last, the painting is covered in a thick layer of discolored varnish that has a very fine craquelure overall.

PROVENANCE

Possibly^[1] Jacques Ignace de Roore, Antwerp;^[2] (his estate sale, The Hague, 4 September 1747, no. 89, with pendant). possibly Johan van der Marck, Leiden; (his estate sale, by Hendrik de Winter and Jan Yver, Amsterdam, 25 August 1773 and days following, no. 66).^[3] possibly (sale, Hôtel d'Aligre by Alexandre Joseph Paillet, Paris, 17 February 1777 and days following, 1st day, no. 79); (Jacques Langlier, Paris).^[4] possibly Gilbert Paignon Dijonval [1708-1792], Paris;^[5] by descent to his grandson, Charles-Gilbert, vicomte Morel de Vindé [1749-1852]; (his sale, by Charles Paillet and N. Bernard, Paris, 17 December 1821 and days following, no. 21 bis); (Thomas Emmerson, London). possibly Jeremiah Harman [1763-1844], London, by 1842;^[6] (his estate sale, Christie and Manson, London, 17-18 May 1844, no. 33); Robert Clouston [d. 1882], Balrath, near Navan, co. Meath, Ireland; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 18 June 1881, no. 116); James.^[7] Gottfried von Preyer [1807-1901], Vienna, by 1901;^[8] (sale, 1902); purchased by William A. Clark [1839-1925], New York; bequest 1926 to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington; acquired 2014 by the National Gallery of Art.

[1] This provenance puts together chronologically all the histories attached by a number of authors to various paintings that might be identified with the Gallery's painting; hence, through the 1881 sale, many "possiblys" are added to the text. The first author to do this was James Douglas Breckenridge, *A Handbook of Dutch and Flemish Paintings in the William Andrews Clark Collection*, Washington, 1955: 13 note. There is uncertainty identifying the Gallery's painting in the sale catalogue descriptions, in which the painting is often described as a portrait of the artist's father, and the authors sometimes describe separate paintings that might be the same one. See: John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*, 9 vols., London, 1829–1842: 1(1829):19, no. 55 [1777 Du Barry collection sale]; 34, no. 99 [Paignon Dijouval *sic* collection bought 1821 *en bloc* by Mr. Emmerson]; 9 (1842):18, no. 58 [Paignon de Dijonval, Emmerson, J. Harman]; Ernst Wilhelm Moes, *Iconographia Batava*, Vol. 1, Amsterdam, 1897: 483, no. 3984/2 [De Roore 1747] and 3 [Coulston *sic* 1881, J. Harman 1844]; Wilhelm Martin, *Het Leven en de werken van Gerrit Dou*, Leiden, 1901: 203, no. 135 [Paignon Dijonval *sic*, Harman 1843]; Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 10 vols., Esslingen and Paris, 1907–1928: 1(1907):431, no. 291 [Paignon Dijonval *sic*, Emmerson, Harman 1844, Coulston *sic* 1881, Von Preyer, Clarke *sic*]; 432, no. 292 [De Roore, 1747, Van der Marck 1773]; 436, no. 319d [Dubarry *sic* 1777, and identified by the author as possibly the same as no. 292].

[2] This is the name as given in the 1747 sale catalogue. He was probably Jacobus Ignace de Roore, 1686–1747, a painter and art dealer in Antwerp.

[3] Yver's name appears beside this lot (and lot number 67, a woman's portrait) in an annotated copy of the sale catalogue in the NGA Library, indicating the painting might have been bought in.

[4] Although some of the paintings in this sale belonged to the comtesse du Barry, and Smith and Hofstede de Groot describe the sale as the Du Barry sale, not all the paintings were hers and the Dou was included in this group; see The Getty Provenance Index Databases, description and contents of Sale Catalog F-A450, where the buyer's name is also recorded. Langlier was a dealer; the painting does

not appear in his sale, held 24 April 1786 and the following days at the Hôtel de Bullion in Paris.

[5] Smith 1842, 18, no. 58, gives the name as Paignon de Dijonval.

[6] Smith 1842, 18, no. 58.

[7] Ernst Wilhelm Moes (*Iconographia Batava*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1897: 1:483, no. 3984, item 3) is the first author to cite this name, but incorrectly spells it "Coulston" and does not provide details about the 1881 sale. The correct spelling of the name, the identification of the 1881 sale, and the names of the buyers at both the 1844 and 1881 sales were kindly provided by Lynda Mcleod, librarian at Christie's Archives, London (e-mail of 17 April 2015, in NGA curatorial files).

[8] Martin 1901, 203, no. 135.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1908 Loan to display with permanent collection, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, 1908-1909.

1978 The William A. Clark Collection, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, 1978, unnumbered catalogue, fig. 48.

2000 Gerrit Dou (1613-1675): Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt, National Gallery of Art, Washington; Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague, 2000-2001, no. 11, repro.

2001 Antiquities to Impressionism: The William A. Clark Collection, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, 2001, no. 62, repro.

2014 Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, 2014, no. 9, repro.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1752 Hoet, Gerard. *Catalogus of Naamlyst van Schilderyen*. Supplement by Pieter Terwesten. 2 vols. The Hague, 1752-1770: 2(1770):206, no. 89.
- 1829 Smith, John. *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*. 9 vols. London, 1829-1842: 1(1829):19, no. 55 as The portrait of an old man, with a black velvet bonnet, 34, no. 99, as Portrait of the artist's father; 9(1842):18, no. 58, as The Artist's Father.
- 1897 Moes, Ernst Wilhelm. *Iconographia Batava*. 2 vols. Amsterdam, 1897-1905: 1(1897): 483, no. 3984 n. 3.
- 1901 Martin, Wilhelm. *Het Leven en de werken van Gerrit Dou*. Leiden, 1901: 203, no. 135, as Dou's Father.
- 1902 Martin, Wilhelm. *Gerard Dou*. Translated by Clara Bell. London, 1902: 48, 104, no. 11, as Portrait of Dou's Father (reprint ed. London, 1908).
- 1907 Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*. 8 vols. Translated by Edward G. Hawke. London, 1907-1927: 1(1907):440, no. 291 and no. 292, both as Dou's Father; 445, no. 319d, as Portrait of an Old Man.
- 1907 Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. 10 vols. Esslingen and Paris, 1907-1928: 1(1907): 431, no. 291, as Dou's Father; 432, no. 292, as Dou's Father; 436, no. 319d, as Portrait of an Old Man.
- 1911 Martin, Wilhelm. *Gérard Dou, sa vie et son oeuvre: Etude sur la peinture hollandaise et les marchands au dix-septième siècle*. Paris, 1911: 51, 174, no. 67, as The Father of the Painter.
- 1913 Martin, Wilhelm. *Gerard Dou: des Meisters Gemälde in 247 Abbildungen*. Klassiker der Kunst in Gesamtausgaben 24. Stuttgart and Berlin, 1913: 29 repro., 181, no. 29b (rechts), as The Father of the Artist.
- 1925 Carroll, Dana H. *Catalogue of Objects of Fine Art and Other Properties at the Home of William Andrews Clark, 962 Fifth Avenue*. Part I. Unpublished manuscript, n.d. (1925): 172, no. 170, as Portrait of an Old Man.
- 1928 Corcoran Gallery of Art. *Illustrated Handbook of the W.A. Clark Collection*. Washington, 1928: 41.
- 1932 Corcoran Gallery of Art. *Illustrated Handbook of the W.A. Clark Collection*. Washington, 1932: 44, no. 2081, as Portrait of the Artist's Father.
- 1955 Breckenridge, James D. *A handbook of Dutch and Flemish paintings in the William Andrews Clark collection*. Washington, 1955: 12 repro., 13, as

The Artist's Father.

- 1976 Hoet, Gerard. *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen*. 3 vols. Reprint of 1752 ed. with supplement by Pieter Terwesten, 1770. Soest, 1976: 2:206, no. 89.
- 1978 Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr. "A Reappraisal of Gerard Dou's Reputation." In *The William A. Clark Collection: An Exhibition Marking the 50th Anniversary of the Installation of the Clark Collection at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington*. Exh. cat. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, 1978: 60 fig. 48, 61-67.
- 1986 Sutton, Peter C. *A Guide to Dutch Art in America*. Washington and Grand Rapids, 1986: 301, as Portrait of a Bearded Man.
- 1990 Baer, Ronni. "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613-1675)." 3 vols. Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1990: 1:39.1-39.4; 2:3, no. 39; 3:repro. 39, as Bust of a Man.
- 2000 Baer, Ronni, et al. *Gerrit Dou, 1613-1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. Exh. cat. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague. New Haven, 2000: 84-85, no. 11, 137, repro.
-

To cite: Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "Gerrit Dou/*Bust of a Bearded Man*/c. 1642/1645," *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, <https://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/106946> (accessed April 23, 2024).