

- 1897–1906 Bode, 7 (1902): 15, 106, no. 522, repro.; 8 (1906): 378.
 1906 Rosenberg: 362, 405, repro. (also 1908 ed.: 455, 563 repro., and 1909 ed.).
 1907 *Kann*, 1: iv, no. 73.
 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 100, no. 174.
 1912 Hofstede de Groot: 173–188, 187–188.
 1913–1916 Widener, 1 (1913): intro., no. 39, repro.
 1914 Valentiner: 249, no. 85.
 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
 1931 Widener: 48, 49.
 1923 Meldrum: 202, no. 416A.
 1931 Valentiner: no. 155, repro.
 1935 Bredius: 13, 302 repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 13, 302, repro.).
 1938 Waldmann: 342.
 1942 Widener: 6.
 1948 Widener: 43, repro.
 1957 Duveen: 234.
 1963 Walker: 314, 342, repro.
 1965 NGA: 110.
 1966 Bauch: 48.
 1966 Rosenberg, Slive, and Ter Kuile: 78, repro.
 1967 Van Regteren Altena: 70–71.
 1968 NGA: 98, repro.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 230, 573, no. 302, repro.
 1969 Washington: no. 9.
 1975 NGA: 286–287, repro.
 1976 Fowles: 52.
 1985 NGA: 334, repro.

1942.9.63 (659)

Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn

Study of an Old Man

probably late 17th century
 Oil on oak, 28 x 21.5 (11¹/₈ x 8¹/₂)
 Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The support is a vertically grained oak panel composed of a single beveled board fitted with its original strips of wood to square off the beveled edges. Dendrochronology gives the panel a felling date of 1666.¹ A small vertical check in the bottom edge has been repaired. A thin off-white ground, consisting primarily of lead white bound in oil, is visible through thinly painted passages.²

The x-radiograph reveals the presence of another portrait, turned 180 degrees, lying below the present portrait (fig. 1). The earlier portrait is partially visible through the sketchy unfinished beard. Raking light reveals the outlines of the image, a head with a cap, smaller in size than in the current portrait. Cross-sections show no intermediate ground layer between the two paintings.

Paint in the present portrait is applied thinly, with impasted highlights, and hair curls incised with the butt end of a brush. The background was painted first with a reserve left for the head. Paint loss is minimal: retouching is confined to the edges and abrasion is minor. A moderately discolored varnish is present. No conservation has been carried out since acquisition.

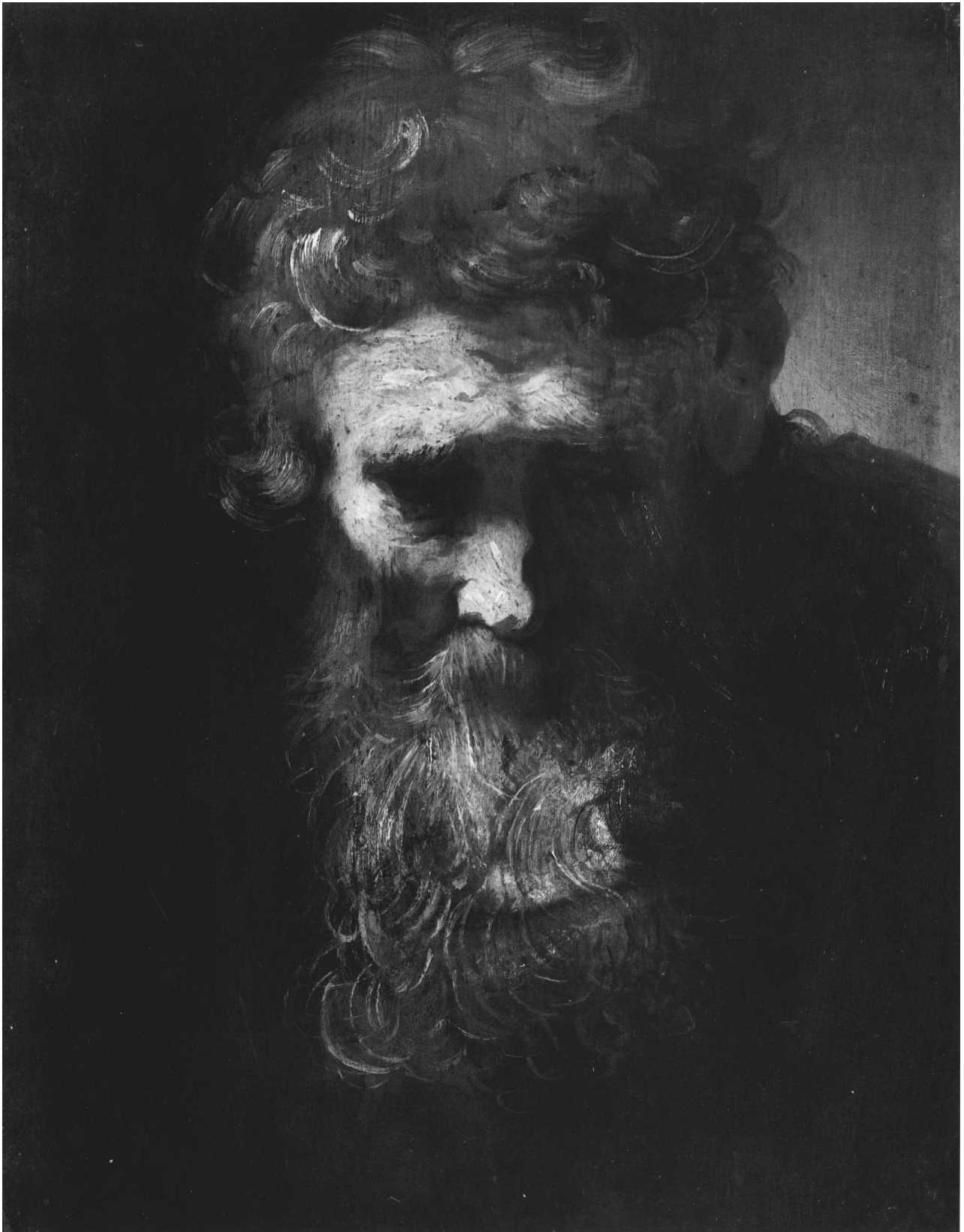
Provenance: (Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell, London); sold 1905 to Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

Exhibited: Washington 1969, 18, no. 7.

THIS STUDY of an old bearded man with a sad, forlorn expression was acquired as a Rembrandt by Peter A. B. Widener from the London art market in 1905. When Wilhelm Valentiner catalogued Widener's paintings in 1913, he dated it about 1645 and emphasized the painting's "broad, powerful brushwork and deep thoughtful expression which characterize the artist's later style."³ Ensuing assessments, however, have been less enthusiastic. In most subsequent catalogues of Rembrandt's paintings the picture has been doubted, rejected, or omitted entirely. Martin questioned the attribution as early as 1921, and, while Bredius included the picture in his 1935 catalogue, he expressed his doubts in a note: "The



Fig. 1. X-radiograph of 1942.9.63, here shown upside down



Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Study of an Old Man*, 1942.9.63

picture is known to me only from a photograph, and I am not entirely convinced of its authenticity.⁴ Kurt Bauch subsequently rejected it, as did Horst Gerson.⁵ Jakob Rosenberg is the only modern Rembrandt scholar to accept it as authentic.⁶ The National Gallery changed its attribution to "Style of Rembrandt" in 1984.

This painting is one of a large number of rapidly executed oil sketches that Valentiner introduced into Rembrandt's oeuvre in the early years of the twentieth century. Most of these attributions have now been rejected. Indeed, the painting has only the vaguest resemblance to Rembrandt's work. The figure type is uncharacteristic for Rembrandt; the anatomy of the head is not understood; and the superficial modeling of the skin and hair is foreign to Rembrandt's style.

A date of execution for the painting is difficult to establish. Dendrochronological examination has determined that the tree from which the panel was made was felled in 1666 plus or minus five years.⁷ The head, however, is painted over another painting of a head of a man. This figure, visible in an x-ray, is seen in profile and wears a hat (fig. 1). Since the handling of paint in this figure is quite different from that in the surface image it seems unlikely that both heads were painted by the same artist. Almost certainly, the head we see today was executed on an old panel after Rembrandt's death, in emulation, or imitation, of the master's work.

Notes

1. Dendrochronology by Dr. Josef Bauch, Universität Hamburg, 29 November 1977.

2. Cross-sections and pigment analysis of paint and ground layers are available in the conservation laboratory's files. Pigments identified in the upper painting were available during the seventeenth century.

3. Widener 1913–1916, no. 32.

4. Martin 1921, 34; Bredius 1935, 11.

5. Bauch 1966, 47; Gerson/Bredius 1969, 568.

6. Rosenberg 1948, 1: 244, in his concordance of paintings agrees with the conclusion reached by Bredius in the 1942 New York edition of Bredius 1935 (no. 243). Rosenberg had not changed his opinion in the 1964 rev. ed., 371, of his monograph.

7. Report from Dr. Josef Bauch of the Ordinariat für Holzbiologie, Universität Hamburg, 29 November 1977 (in NGA curatorial files).

References

- 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 233, no. 448.
 1908 Widener (typescript) 2: 173.
 1909 Hofstede de Groot: 173–183, 179, 180, fig. 5.
 1913–1916 Widener: intro., no. 32, repro.
 1914 Valentiner: 246, no. 52.
 1921b Valentiner: xx, 49, no. 53, repro. (also 1923 ed.: xxiv, 56, no. 61, repro.).
 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
 1931 Widener: 96–97, repro..
 1931 Valentiner: no. 95, repro.
 1935 Bredius: 11, 243, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 11, 243, repro.).
 1942 Widener: 6, no. 659.
 1948 Widener: unpaginated, repro.
 1948 Rosenberg: 1: 242 (also 1964 rev. ed.: 371).
 1959 Widener: 37, repro.
 1963 Walker: 312, repro.
 1965 NGA: 110, no. 659.
 1966 Bauch: 47, no. 243.
 1968 NGA: 98, no. 659, repro.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 568, no. 243, repro.
 1969 Washington: no. 7.
 1975 NGA: 288–289, no. 659, repro.
 1985 NGA: 334, 479, no. 659, repro.

Jacob van Ruisdael

c. 1628/1629–1682

THE EXACT DATE of Jacob van Ruisdael's birth is not known, but a document from June 1661 gives his age as thirty-two. His father, Isaack, was born in Naarden in about 1599, at which time his family's surname was De Goyer. Isaack's brother Jacob (born c. 1594) adopted the name Ruysdael, possibly because his father had lived in the castle of Ruisdael (or Ruisschendael) near Blaricum. Only later did Isaack (d. 1677) and his younger brother, the landscape

painter Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/1603–1670), begin to use this surname, while a fourth brother, Pieter (born c. 1596), always called himself De Goyer.

On 12 November 1628, Isaack van Ruysdael, by then a widower, was married for the second time, to Maycken Cornelisdr. His son Jacob may have been the child of this marriage. In addition to his documented activities as a picture dealer and a maker of