



# Rembrandt

*The Artist's Meaning to Jews*

## Seen Through

*from His Time to Ours*

# Jewish Eyes

A  
U  
P

MIRJAM KNOTTER & GARY SCHWARTZ (EDS.)

REMBRANDT SEEN THROUGH JEWISH EYES



# Rembrandt

The Artist's Meaning to Jews

# Seen Through

from His Time to Ours

# Jewish Eyes

MIRJAM KNOTTER & GARY SCHWARTZ (EDS.)

Amsterdam University Press

The publication of this book is made possible by The Jewish Museum  
and Tolerance Center in Moscow.



Front cover illustration: detail of Rembrandt, *Portrait of Dr. Ephraim Bueno*, ca. 1647. Oil on panel, 19 x 15 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (SK-A-3982)

Back cover illustration: detail of David Bomberg, *Hear O Israel*, 1955. Oil on panel, 91.4 x 71.1 cm  
New York, Jewish Museum (1995-33; purchase: Oscar and Regina Gruss Charitable Foundation)

Frontispiece: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait as the Apostle Paul*, 1661. Oil on canvas, 91 x 77 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (SK-A-4050; bequest of Mr. and Mrs. de Bruijn-van der Leeuw, Muri, Switzerland, 1961)

Cover design and lay-out: Margreet van de Burgt

Image editing and requests: Lucie Ufheil

English editing: Gary Schwartz and Victoria Blud

ISBN 978 94 6372 818 8

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 675 5

DOI 10.5117/9789463728188

NUR 654



Creative Commons License CC BY NC

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>)

© The authors / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2024

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise).

Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use all copyrighted illustrations reproduced in this book. Nonetheless, whosoever believes to have rights to this material is advised to contact the publisher.

# Table of Contents

Introduction	7
MIRJAM KNOTTER AND GARY SCHWARTZ	
<b>JEWES AND JUDAISM IN REMBRANDT'S OWN WORLD</b>	<b>21</b>
Sephardi Jewish Life and Material Culture in Rembrandt's Time	23
MIRJAM KNOTTER	
Rembrandt and His (Jewish) Neighbors: A Stroll Through the Neighborhood	45
MIRJAM KNOTTER	
Map with residents and owners of houses in and around the Jodenbreestraat in Rembrandt's time (ca. 1625–1658)	between 50 and 51
MIRJAM KNOTTER AND GUIDO LEGUIT	
Rembrandt's Other Jews: The Amsterdam Ashkenazim in the Seventeenth Century	71
BART WALLET	
<b>SOCIETY, SPIRITUALITY, IMAGERY</b>	<b>89</b>
Rembrandt and Multicultural Amsterdam: Jews and Black People in Rembrandt's Art	91
MICHAEL ZELL	
Rembrandt, Menasseh ben Israel and Spinoza	111
STEVEN NADLER	
Rembrandt, the Jews and Judaism	123
SHELLEY PERLOVE	
Jewish Brides, Rabbis and Sitters in Rembrandt's Prints	141
ROMAN GRIGORYEV	

<b>JEWISH ARTISTS</b>	<b>155</b>
Modern Jewish Artists Discover Rembrandt	157
LARRY SILVER	
Laying it on Thick: British (Immigrant) Artists and their Rembrandt	185
SIMON SCHAMA	
Rembrandt and Russian Jewish Artists	203
NINA GETASHVILI	
<b>JEWISH COLLECTORS AND MUSEUMS</b>	<b>221</b>
Rembrandt as Seen by Jewish Museums	223
LAURENCE SIGAL-KLAGSBALD	
Jewish Collectors Take Rembrandt to their Hearts	235
GARY SCHWARTZ	
Acknowledgments	250
Bibliography	252
Index	264

# Introduction

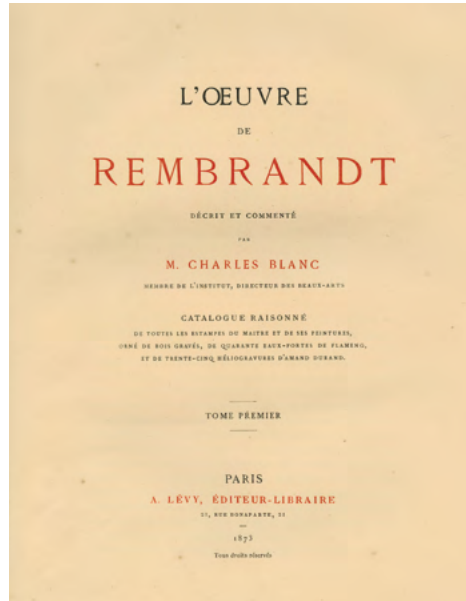
MIRJAM KNOTTER & GARY SCHWARTZ

“Voilà un juif de Rembrandt” (Just look at that Rembrandt Jew). The writer was pointing at a Jew not in a work by Rembrandt in the seventeenth century, but in the streets of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century.

That writer was Charles Blanc (1813–82), the most prestigious art historian, art critic and arts official of his time in France. Twice, from 1848 to 1851 and from 1870 to 1873, he was director of the Arts Administration of the French government. He wrote reviews of books and exhibitions for prestigious periodicals and was a founder of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, which was to become one of the leading art-historical journals in the world. Blanc also wrote two major works on Rembrandt. In 1853 he brought out *L'oeuvre de Rembrandt reproduit par la photographie* (Rembrandt's Work Reproduced by Photography), with one hundred photographs, more than two hundred illustrations of Rembrandt's etchings, and extensive commentary. In 1859 and 1861 this was expanded into *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt décrit et commenté par M. Charles Blanc* (The Complete Work of Rembrandt described and commented upon by M. Charles Blanc).

Blanc wrote about Rembrandt with comprehensive command of the known facts and unusual sensitivity. Reading him today, nearly two centuries later, one can only be impressed by how much he knew and how astute his judgments were. In one respect he has remained unsurpassed. In his entries on storytelling subjects—not only those from the Bible—he delved deeply into the sources, finding that Rembrandt had done the same before him. Particularly impressive is that he read the text of a rabbinical tract for which Rembrandt made etchings, *Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar* (The Glorious Stone, or On the Statue of Nebuchadnezzar) by Menasseh ben Israel (see fig. 56). His explanation is correct, but veined with antisemitic prejudice. In a four-page disquisition, Blanc recapitulates Menasseh's interpretation of the Jewish hero Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon's dream (Daniel 2). The king had





<sup>1</sup>  
Charles Blanc, *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt: catalogue raisonné de toutes les eaux-fortes du maître et de ses peintures ... orné de bois gravés et de quarante eaux-fortes tirées à part et rapportées dans le texte, décrit et commenté par M. Charles Blanc*  
2 vols., Paris (Gide) 1859–61

Maarsen, Loekie and  
Gary Schwartz

seen a statue composed of different materials—strong and brittle, costly and cheap—standing for kingdoms that one after the other were to vanquish those following the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. All of them were eventually to be overcome by “a kingdom that will never be destroyed.” Blanc explains all the recondite symbolism, then adds this remarkable postscript:

It must be acknowledged that in the two hundred years since the book was printed, the history of the world has not falsified the predictions of the Jewish author. We see the people of Israel constantly growing in influence, accumulating untold riches, pursuing its destiny through so many hardships and so much contempt, becoming the protector of sovereigns who once persecuted them. What it has come to is that we compete with them everywhere for dominance in the grand initiatives of this century, inclining you to believe that the coming appearance of the fifth monarchy and the Messiah is inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

This was not meant kindly.

Blanc’s appreciation of Rembrandt’s respect for the Jews of the Bible was not paired with respect on his part for the “Rembrandt Jews” of his own day. In the 1861 volume of *Oeuvre complet*, his entry on Rembrandt’s so-called etching of *Jews in the Synagogue* (fig. 2) draws a malicious distinction between the Jews of Rembrandt’s time and his own.

They [the Jews in Rembrandt’s time] are all dealers in jewelry, traffickers in pearls, garment merchants, furriers, money-changers; they know how to assay diamonds and acquire gold; they are knowledgeable about lace, ivories, enamels and antiques; they wear old furs, sagging bonnets, stale lingerie. Their sort is captured in this small print of the *Synagogue* in unmistakable fashion, which is easy for us to verify today, since the race has not changed, being the same men in different clothing. But the Jews of the seventeenth century were not, like those of our day, spread among

2  
 Rembrandt, *Pharisees in the Temple*, formerly known as *Jews in the Synagogue*, 1648  
 Etching, 7.2 × 12.9 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-OB-342)



diverse social professions. Public animus as well as their natural penchant keep them confined to trade in gold and curiosities, gems and used clothing. Rembrandt, who lived in their quarter in Amsterdam, knew them so well and depicted them so well that it's as if he made their physiognomy his own, and that not a day goes by when we don't have occasion to say: "Just look at that Rembrandt Jew."<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, as full of antisemitic innuendo as this passage is, Blanc's identification of Rembrandt's Jews with those of his own time would have appealed to the targets of his scorn. With or without physiognomic resemblance, Jews could enjoy the thought that a giant of European culture like Rembrandt showed special interest in them. His portraits of the Sephardi Jews Menasseh ben Israel and Ephraim Bueno fed this conception. And the look Rembrandt bestowed on his models—in particular young women and old men—could come undeniably close to the image of the modern Ashkenazi Jew.

A stunning example is the correspondence in dress, beard, pose and expression of the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson (1880–1950), in the 1940s, to an elderly man painted in Rembrandt's workshop in the 1650s (figs. 3 and 4). Because sitters like him did not begin to be called Jewish until the nineteenth century, this must be considered sheer coincidence. Yet it is easy to see how the stereotypical image of a Jew in later centuries could be projected onto the identity of Rembrandt models who were not Jews. By the time the first catalogue of Rembrandt paintings was published by John Smith in 1836, this kind of painting was indexed under its own section—"Portraits of Jews and Rabbis," with twenty-nine entries. Seldom was a painting of a woman identified as Jewish. One exception is the rather glamorous, self-assured young woman who looks us straight in the face in a panel painting on poplar, now in the Royal Palace in Warsaw. In 1769 the Berlin engraver Georg Friedrich Schmidt made a copy of the painting to which he gave the title *La Juive Fiancée* (fig. 5); mean-



272. PORTRAIT OF A RABBI. 1654. Dresden, Museum. (Panel 152 : 28)

3  
Rembrandt workshop,  
*Bearded Man with Black  
Beret*, 1654  
Oil on panel, 102 × 78 cm

Dresden, Gemäldegalerie  
(1567; from illustration in  
Bredius 1969, no. 272, where  
it is captioned "Portrait of a  
Rabbi.")

while, in another painting believed to be a pendant, he called the older man sitting at a desk with a pen in his hand *Le Pere de la fiancée reglant sa dot* (The father of the bride arranging her dowry). Neither identification stuck. When the painting of the girl first entered the Rembrandt literature, in 1901, it was given the title *A Young Girl in a Broad-Brimmed Cap, Her Hands on a Window-sill*, and the man *An Old Savant at his Writing Table*. From early on, however, a number of prints were said to depict Jewish brides (see figs. 68 and 73). A self-conscious Jewish art lover had opportunity enough to identify with Rembrandt models, and in doing so feel like the object of sympathy on the part of the artist.

This conviction was put into words by one of the foremost writers on Rembrandt in the twentieth century, Jakob Rosenberg (1893–1980; see fig. 143). Rembrandt, he wrote, “was especially attracted by the faces of old Jews, embodying patriarchal dignity, but he took an interest also in what we may call the pharisaic type. Here he expressed a stubborn tenacity of character, along with an intellectual gift for casuistic argumentation.” Rosenberg related this to Protestant Bible study and Dutch tolerance, while positing that Rembrandt’s exceptional acceptance of Jews went even further. “It was Calvinism in particular which drew attention to the Old Testament and opened up a more just consideration of the Jews as the original Biblical people. But in addition to all the historical circumstances which fostered Rembrandt’s interest, there remains the indisputable fact that the artist’s attitude toward the Jewish people was an unusually sympathetic one.”



4  
 Photograph of Rabbi Yosef  
 Yitzchak Schneerson, 1940s  
 Reproduced in mirror image.

Rosenberg was not unique in seeing Rembrandt's many depictions of subjects from the Old Testament as evidence of sympathy for Jews and Judaism. These works surely affected the way Rembrandt was seen through Jewish eyes. The only two documented purchases by a contemporary Jew of finished work by Rembrandt—an etching plate bought in 1637 by Samuel d'Orta and a painting bought in 1639 by Alfonso Lopez—were both of Old Testament subjects (see figs. 13 and 135). They were moreover subjects pertaining to tension between Jews and others, tension of a kind being experienced by the Jewish buyers. The etching plate depicted Abraham driving off his concubine Hagar and their son Ishmael. Ishmael was to become the progenitor of the Arab tribes who founded Islam. The fortunes of the Sephardi Jews of Spain, Samuel d'Orta's people, were intertwined with those of the Iberian Muslims. The painting bought by a Jew, Alfonso Lopez, showed the non-Jewish prophet Bileam who, having been called upon to curse the Jewish people, is on his way to bless them. In his dramatic life, Lopez, too, navigated a fraught dividing line between religions.

The choice of these two Sephardi Jews for depictions of these subjects can be taken as an indication that the interest of Jews in Rembrandt's Old Testament motifs was not only sentimental, but also had meaning for their own lives. In later centuries, these particular effects lessened, and Old Testament paintings by Rembrandt were not disproportionately collected by Jewish as opposed to non-Jewish collectors. The same is even true of New Testament subject matter. There is, however, one particular subject that Jewish Rembrandt lovers avoided: depictions of the Passion of Christ. This is understandable in light of the built-in accusation that Jews were to blame for the death of Christ, for which they assumed eternal responsibility: "All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'" (Matthew 27:25).

The only undisputed portrait of a contemporary Jew by Rembrandt portrays one of his neighbors, the Sephardi physician and scholar Dr. Ephraim Bueno.<sup>3</sup> On the cover of the present volume, he looks Rembrandt straight in the eye. The small oil sketch, made in preparation for Rembrandt's etched portrait of Bueno (see fig. 76), has given rise to the assumption of a personal bond between the Jewish doctor and the artist. The German-Jewish art historian and émigré to America Franz Landsberger, for one, pointed out in his *Rembrandt, the Jews and the Bible* (1946) Rembrandt's success in capturing Bueno's "species" (his Jewishness) and his inner life more successfully than did Jan Lievens in his later portrait etching of the doctor (see fig. 25):

It may be that Lievens' etching bears a more faithful resemblance to the original than does that of Rembrandt. But the latter discerns beyond the individual the species, and beyond the species the man. This is Ephraim Bonus; this is the Jew who has experienced centuries of suffering; this is the man who faces and strives to plumb the insoluble mystery of human destiny.<sup>4</sup>

Landsberger's observation was clearly influenced by his own experience as a Jewish refugee in the post-war era. So was that written twenty-five years later by a colleague who had also fled Germany for the United States: Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky had a different view of Rembrandt's portrait of Bueno, but he, too, related it to the sitter's Jewishness. Bueno's sombre expression, he wrote, evinces a great soul, to which he added that "the physiognomy, by contrast, does not really correspond and is, above all, without the accentuation of Jewish racial characteristics."<sup>5</sup>

The pattern of expectations created by Rembrandt's portraits of Jews and depictions of Old Testament subjects opened the possibility for attaching Jewish meanings to more abstract features of his work. A breathtaking utterance of this kind was made by a major figure in twentieth-century Jewish history, Rabbi Abraham Kook (1865–1935), the first chief rabbi of Palestine. After his death on 1 September 1935, he was commemorated by the British Jewish sculptor Avram Melnikoff (1892–1960).

When I lived in London I used to visit the National Gallery, and my favourite pictures were those of Rembrandt. I really think that Rembrandt was a *Tzadik* [a saint]. Do you know that when I first saw Rembrandt's works, they reminded me of the legend about the creation of light? We are told that when God created light, it was so strong and pellucid, that one could see from one end of the world to the other, but God was afraid that the wicked might abuse it. What did He do? He reserved that light for the righteous when the Messiah should come. But now and then there are great men who are blessed and privileged to see it. I think that Rembrandt was one of them, and the light in his pictures is the very light that was originally created by God Almighty.<sup>6</sup>

This remark has taken on a life of its own, generating nearly Talmudic explications. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the chief rabbi of Great Britain (1948–2020), cites and comments on the statement in a video on the biblical portion Vayakhel, as read in the synagogue in the year 5771.<sup>7</sup> He relates it to an earlier part of the exchange between Kook and Melnikoff. When the sculptor asked the rabbi whether sculpture was or was not accepted in Judaism, he got this answer: "Our sages say," he read out [from a huge volume], "that it is permitted to Jews to make images, if they are done imperfectly and maimed." Sacks makes the further connection, of the gap-leaping kind well known to students of the Talmud, between the imperfection of an image and the imperfection of its subject, specifically images of human beings. This allows him to put these thoughts into the mind of his revered predecessor: "Rav Kook's admiration for the artist had, I suspect, [...] everything to do with the light Rembrandt saw in the faces of ordinary people, without any attempt to beautify them. His work lets us see the transcendental quality of the human, the only thing in the universe on which God set His image." We are



5  
George Friedrich Schmidt  
after Rembrandt,  
*La Juive Fiancée*, 1769  
Reproduction print,  
18.1 × 23.4 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-54.183)

skeptical of this reading, feeling that it departs needlessly from the literal meaning of Rabbi Kook's words, which are sublimely visionary rather than acquiescently ethical. Nonetheless, it has found a place in Orthodox Jewish thinking. The distinguished rabbi and academic Meir Soloveichik (b. 1977) quotes Sacks approvingly, linking the dogma of imperfection to Simon Schama's characterization of Rembrandt as an artist uniquely capable of depicting the weakness of the flesh "not as compromising the moral nobility of his sitters, but as describing it." These steps from Kook to Sacks via Schama leads to this resounding conclusion: "If Judaism's idea of art is an art that can truly represent our frail, fallible humanity, then Rembrandt is the artist for Jews."<sup>8</sup>

Rabbi Soloveichik did not leave things at that. With Jacob Wisse, the art historian director of Yeshiva University Museum, he gave a course at Stern's College for Women, where they both teach, with the telling title "Rembrandt and the Jews: Art as Midrash in 17th-Century Amsterdam."<sup>9</sup> These encomiums to Rembrandt from pious Jews are particularly precious in the context of the theme "Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes." Of the other Jewish writers, collectors, art dealers or artists whose relation to Rembrandt we present, no one but the Leiden art historian Henri van de Waal is known to us to have been an observant Jew. We have not been demanding about the quality of Jewishness in their lives: for the purposes of the exhibition, we included anyone born into a Jewish family, even if the person converted to a Christian faith (as Alfonso Lopez did). In their behavior, we find indications that they were moved by the thought that Rembrandt had sympathy for Jews. This manifests itself demonstratively in the years from the 1880s on, when antisemitism took on extreme forms in France and Germany. The appreciation of Rembrandt by Jewish writers and collectors in these years can be seen as a defensive response to the discrimination from which they suffered. The ideas expressed by the rabbis quoted here have a different cast. They are proactive rather than reactive, and come close to identifying Rembrandt himself as an honorary Jew. Not even Henri van de Waal relates his own Jewishness to his views on Rembrandt, as Kook, Sacks and Soloveichik do.

In response to the many questions on Rembrandt's possible ties with Jews, three Jewish museums have mounted exhibitions, of different complexions, looking at Rembrandt from a Jewish angle. In 1982, Jewish museums in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York mounted the traveling exhibition *The Jews in the Age of Rembrandt*, organized by the Judaic Museum of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington. The emphasis here was on religious tolerance as a value on its own, a value shared by the United States and the United Provinces. (It has been said that the United States was named after the Dutch Republic.) The exhibition was in fact circulated by the Netherlands–America Bicentennial Commission, in celebration of "the two hundredth anniversary of the establishment [in 1782] of America's oldest, continuously peaceful relationship with a foreign nation—the Netherlands."<sup>10</sup> The catalogue had excellent essays by Simon Schama, Jane Farmer and Cynthia von Bogendorf-Rupprath, still very worth reading. In itself, the exhibition was modest, showing fifty-six prints from the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

Another anniversary celebration—the four-hundredth anniversary of Rembrandt's birth in 2006—saw the creation of two larger exhibitions. The Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam showed *The "Jewish" Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*, which is

sparked by “a healthy degree of skepticism” weighed all the presumed evidence for Rembrandt’s sympathy for Jews and Judaism and found it wanting. The scholarship, by Mirjam Knotter, Jasper Hillegers and Edward van Voolen (with an afterword by Gary Schwartz, who first broached the project) is pioneering and penetrating, full of new information and informed by an admirably critical spirit. When interrogated sharply, few of the presumed indications of Rembrandt’s affinity with the Jews in his environment, or with Judaism as a religion, held water. The identifications of Rembrandt sitters and models as Jews were found to be baseless (as were many of the attributions); special reproof was meted out to authors, even a major figure like Erwin Panofsky, who saw traces of Jewish suffering in the faces of these models. To the authors of the exhibition catalogue, this amounted to the kind of ethnic profiling that was in line with the discriminatory attitude of a Charles Blanc.

In the eyes of some, the skepticism of the Amsterdam exhibition curators was not altogether healthy. That came out in the attitude of the curators of the largest exhibition ever devoted to the subject, at the Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme in Paris in 2007, with 186 well-chosen displays. The title of the exhibition, curated by Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald and Alexis Merle du Bourg, gave expression to a more positive view of the matter: *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem: Juifs et Chrétiens à Amsterdam au Siècle d’Or* (Rembrandt and the New Jerusalem: Jews and Christians in Amsterdam in the Golden Age). The exhibition highlighted the Dutch view of themselves as sharers of the Jewish experience of being victims of religious persecution, and the Jewish view of Amsterdam as a refuge from the same. The evidence marshaled in the Amsterdam and Paris exhibitions is real and important. If the interpretations attached to it by the curators sometimes seem like attempts to explain the inexplicable, this only serves to bring out the emotional impact, right up to the present day, of the phenomena under study. This gave depth and added appeal to the present project.

### JEWES AND JUDAISM IN REMBRANDT’S OWN WORLD

A fixed feature in writings on Rembrandt is that he lived for about thirty years in a part of Amsterdam that also housed nearly all the Jews in the city. That circumstance often leads to the supposition that Rembrandt enjoyed friendly neighborly relations with Jews. The commissions he took on from Sephardim in the neighborhood led to the easy assumption that they were friends of his. Critical scrutiny has undermined these propositions, but left something of a void. From her position in the heart of that area, in seventeenth and eighteenth-century synagogue buildings that now house the Jewish Museum of Amsterdam, Mirjam Knotter set out to retrieve and order as much information as possible on the lives of the people in that part of town. With the assistance of a number of researchers and interns, she combed the archival records on the houses on Rembrandt’s block and the surrounding streets, in many of which Jews lived. Her main collaborators were Guido Leguit, a student in the Dual Master’s program Curating Arts and Cultures (University of Amsterdam and Free University of Amsterdam) and Hans Bonke, a volunteer. In two essays, Mirjam mines the massive archival findings to sketch

## INTRODUCTION

“Sephardi Jewish Life and Material Culture in Rembrandt’s Time” and more particularly “Rembrandt and His (Jewish) Neighbors: A Stroll Through the Neighborhood.” Her work raises to a new high level our ability to visualize and conceptualize Rembrandt’s Jewish environment.

The Jews who until now have made an appearance in the Rembrandt literature were sophisticated, well-to-do Sephardim, Spanish and Portuguese Jews. Most of them lived on the Sint Antoniesbreestraat and the streets behind it. The big change in the Jewish composition of the neighborhood after he bought his house in 1639 was the arrival in increasing numbers of immigrants, often refugees, from Eastern Europe. They were poorer than most Sephardim, but also more pious and knowledgeable about Jewish ritual. Introducing them into the Rembrandt literature for the first time, Bart Wallet contributes the essay “Rembrandt’s Other Jews: The Amsterdam Ashkenazim in the Seventeenth Century.” He traces with admirable clarity the all-but-clear relationships between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the religious and social standing of the groups, and the ways in which they interacted with the Amsterdam town government and non-Jewish Amsterdammers. Learning about the complexity of these relationships and arrangements is a beneficial corrective to any tendency to generalize about the religion and ethnicity of any group or denomination in Amsterdam. This is essential new material for our understanding of how the Jews of Amsterdam would have looked at an artist like Rembrandt.

Another border is breached by Michael Zell, in “Rembrandt and Multicultural Amsterdam: Jews and Black People in Rembrandt’s Art.” He asks pointedly why study of the ethnic component of Rembrandt’s neighborhood on the Sint Antoniesbreestraat has been limited largely to its Jewish inhabitants. Stimulated by the discovery that a number of free Black Africans lived a few doors away from Rembrandt, Zell has examined all the available sources concerning Black people in the city. He calls attention to pieces of evidence, like the remark by Ernst Brinck, later burgomaster of Harderwijk, that “almost all of the servants [of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam] are slaves and Moors.”<sup>11</sup> Although slavery was forbidden in the Dutch Republic, persons who were brought there as enslaved people had to apply for freedom in the courts. Their declarations and those of slave owners provide snippets of life stories. Zell’s essay changes the complexion of Rembrandt’s Amsterdam, restoring personality to the unexpected large number of Black people in his art.

## SOCIETY, SPIRITUALITY, IMAGERY

Even the best-known contacts between Rembrandt and an Amsterdam Jew can be enriched with inventive research. The historian of philosophy Steven Nadler, the author of a biography of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, has looked again at the relationship between the rabbi and the artist, in “Rembrandt, Menasseh ben Israel and Spinoza.” He devotes a close reading to the messianic tract by Menasseh for which Rembrandt etched illustrations, *Even yekarah. Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar* (The Glorious Stone, or On the Statue of Nebuchadnezzar) (see fig. 56). Like Charles Blanc, Nadler relates Menasseh’s message to the expectations of the non-Jews among whom the Jews lived.



He finds this meaning not in a power struggle in which the Jews were taking over the world, but in the pious though idle hope of Menasseh's Christian millenarian friends that the Second Coming of Christ was in the offing and would bring about the conversion of the Jews. Concerning the publication itself, and Rembrandt's share in it, he has stunning new information. Nadler and his co-author, Victor Tiribás, discovered that the board of the Sephardi community censured Menasseh for having published this book, and forbade him from continuing to print it. The most widely accepted, though unproven, explanation for this is that the book contained a depiction of the Almighty in human form. This would explain the existence of copies without Rembrandt's etchings or with substitute engravings in which God is not represented. Rembrandt would then have been seen, in the Jewish eyes of the board, as a violator of the Second Commandment. Concerning the frequently broached relationship between Rembrandt and the most famous Dutch Jew ever, Baruch de Spinoza, Nadler deflates our own hopes that it ever existed.

Shelley Perlove has devoted more attention to the place of Judaism in Rembrandt's art than anyone; in this volume, she presents the main results of her research in "Rembrandt and the Jews and Vice Versa." Crediting Rembrandt with success in achieving what she calls "a semblance of authenticity" in his evocations of Jewish dress and biblical locations, she opens her mind and the reader's to the opportunities available to him for achieving this. A major source could be found outside his front door on the Sint Antoniesbreestraat, in the appearance and behavior of his Sephardi and Ashkenazi neighbors. But he also could have turned to Christian scholarship and Jewish religious writings. For images of the Temple he had available the influential translation of the Talmud tractate on the building, made by the Leiden professor of Hebrew Constantijn L'Empereur. Perlove relates the spaces in Rembrandt's renditions of the Temple to contemporaneous theories concerning the ground plan of the building and the location of particular events. She also finds sources in the Mishnah, available to Rembrandt in a Latin translation, for Rembrandt's unique depiction of two high priests in the Temple, who serve liturgical and administrative functions, respectively. All of these avenues of access connected Rembrandt's own Christian conviction and milieu to the Jews whose presence and history informed his art.

Roman Grigoryev's contribution, "Jewish Brides, Rabbis and Sitters in Rembrandt's Etchings," examines Rembrandt's etchings for what they can tell us about his relationship with Jews. In addition to concepts attending specific iconographies, he also comes up with at least one important observation concerning Rembrandt's actual contact with Jews. The poor men in the street from Rembrandt's Amsterdam years that have always been seen as Jews, Grigoryev points out, can already be found in his earlier work made in Leiden, where there were no Jews. This puts into doubt one of the key pieces of evidence for Rembrandt's interest in Amsterdam Jews other than those with whom he had a professional relationship. Grigoryev also questions the Jewishness of the women who in several etchings are called Jewish brides.

## JEWISH ARTISTS

In “Modern Jewish Artists Discover Rembrandt,” Larry Silver takes on the single most fascinating aspect of our subject: how Jewish artists regarded Rembrandt. Silver shows how in Eastern Europe and the Netherlands, the first Jews to become professional artists gravitated toward Rembrandt. Not only was he a hero and emblem of the kind of emancipation to which they aspired, he also brought Jewish imagery into the mainstream of European art. Silver singles out striking Rembrandt references in the work of the leading Jewish artist of the nineteenth century in Eastern Europe, Maurycy Gottlieb, who like Rembrandt introduced charged identities (including his own) into paintings of biblical dramas. In Western Europe it was mainly Rembrandt’s chiaroscuro and the emotional appeal of his figures and compositions that inspired Jewish artists like Jozef Israëls. Intense expressions of involvement with Rembrandt and his art, in word and image, are cited from Marc Chagall, Chaim Soutine, R.B. Kitaj, Larry Rivers, Leonard Baskin and others. These artists lend breadth as well as depth to our theme.

A particular class of Jewish artists who engaged profoundly with Rembrandt is discussed by Simon Schama, in “Laying it on Thick: British (Immigrant) Artists and Their Rembrandt.” Schama grew up in Jewish London, in proximity to these artists. The artist Schama considers the greatest British artist of the twentieth century, David Bomberg, was Jewish. His attachment to Rembrandt was thematic, stylistic, social and personal. He found a match between Rembrandt’s career and personality and his own, responded viscerally to the emotional impact of Rembrandt’s compositions, modeled his self-portraits on Rembrandt’s, and emulated his impasto. Going even further, Bomberg, his students Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff, and after them their friend Lucian Freud, “all pursued the ultimately unattainable end of an equivalence, even an interchangeability between flesh and paint.” Rembrandt was the one who showed these Jewish artists the way. Schama brings Chaim Soutine, who never visited Britain, into the picture on account of the way Soutine’s own appreciation of Rembrandt echoed that of Bomberg and his associates, as “the very epitome of a painter for whom passion and subject treatment were functionally inseparable.” These refugees and children of refugees or immigrants all found in Rembrandt a welcoming presence in new homes, where not everyone accepted them.

Thanks to the origins of our project in Russia, we felt called upon to include an essay on Jewish artists in that country, allowing us to bring into consideration artists who have not yet entered the canon of Western art. Nina Getashvili wrote for us on “Rembrandt and Russian Jewish Artists,” introducing for the first time in English-language scholarship a theme that has drawn increasing attention in Russia over the past decades. The names of most of the artists will be new to non-specialist readers. Their relations to Rembrandt involve more than artistic preferences. In the art world and outside of it, their lives were impacted by the dramatic events in Russian and Jewish history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A touching highpoint in Getashvili’s presentation can serve as a motto for our theme as a whole. They are the closing words from a book on Rembrandt by Leonid Pasternak, the most outspokenly Jewish of the artists in her essay:

Every Jewish home should have on its wall, perhaps alongside portraits of Montefiore and Herzl, a reproduction of one of the paintings emerging from the depths of Rembrandt's exalted soul, transmitting with so much love and such depth the spiritual inspiration nestling in the depths of the Jewish nation.

While working with Nina on the final details of her essay, we learned to our deep regret that she had suddenly passed away.

### JEWISH COLLECTORS AND MUSEUMS

Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald homes in on one of the key issues in the discussion of Rembrandt and the Jews. In "Jewish Museums Present Rembrandt" she lays out the contrasting views on the position of Jews in Rembrandt's Amsterdam in the three exhibitions mentioned above. The last and by far the largest of the exhibitions was her own, *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem*. Rather than generalizing about a "positive" versus "negative" attitude, she specifies the issues involved, point by point, providing a valuable launching pad for continued debate. Sigal-Klagsbald tackles another hotly contested question: is Rembrandt's 1636 etched portrait of a man Menasseh ben Israel (see fig. 124) or not? The identification was accepted by all cataloguers from the time it was broached, in 1751, until Adri Offenberg challenged it in 1992. His objections soon became the new orthodoxy. Sigal-Klagsbald, once more supplying point-by-point argumentation, comes down on the side for the traditional identification. She also offers fresh insights into the collaboration between Rembrandt and Menasseh, in Rembrandt's illustrations for Menasseh's book *Piedra gloriosa*. Amplifying the research of Steven Nadler, she puts her finger on the existence of uncut impressions of those four etchings in a single sheet. Does this not imply that the insertion of the Rembrandt etchings into the printed book was stopped after Menasseh was censured by the board of the Sephardi community? In all, Sigal-Klagsbald's contribution, which closes with an appreciation of *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes*, puts the reader in the middle of the most heated discussions on our theme.

From his time to ours, there have always been Jews who bought work by Rembrandt. In itself, this need not be meaningful. There are, however, circumstances that suggest a meaningful relationship between the collecting choices of these Jews and their ethnicity. In "Jewish Collectors Take Rembrandt to Their Hearts," Gary Schwartz sketches the general features of the phenomenon while highlighting the areas of heightened significance. The most striking of these was the near explosion of Rembrandt collecting by French and German Jews from the 1880s to the 1910s, which Schwartz relates to the horrifying upsurge of antisemitism in their countries in these years. Although none of them seem to have said it in so many words, Schwartz argues that their collecting of his art, and their donations of work by him to major museums, implies a recognition of Rembrandt's deeply felt representations of Old Testament subjects, his use of Jewish models and his reputation as being sympathetic to Jews. They saw him as a hero of European Christian culture who built a bridge to the Jewish world, and hoped that they could help Christians see him that way as well.



6

L. [Leonid] Pasternak, Academician [in 1905 Pasternak was elected to the venerable Imperial Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg], *Rembrandt: His Creations and His Value for Judaism*

Translated from the manuscript by Y. Koplivitz, with an introduction by Ch. N. Bialik (in Hebrew) Jerusalem and Berlin (Yavneh) 1923

How, we may finally ask, would Rembrandt have felt about his particular appeal to Jews? Little in his biography, with its conflicts with Jews, or the iconography of his Christian subjects, with their principled antagonism to Jews as deniers of Christ's divinity, encourages us to think he would have been pleased. There is, however, one self-portrait in which he projects an image of himself that, to our mind, expresses a decided openness to dialogue with or even identification with Jews, among others. We refer to the only self-portrait in which Rembrandt takes on the guise of a specific biblical figure, his imposing *Self-portrait as the Apostle Paul* in the Rijksmuseum (see frontispiece), featuring the sword and book that are St. Paul's attributes. This is usually taken as an endorsement by Rembrandt of a point of Pauline theology, or as an affirmation of Calvinism as opposed to the Catholicism of St. Peter.

Another interpretation, advanced by Gary Schwartz in 2006, offers a more inclusive possibility, embracing others rather than shutting them out. (Needless to say, no inference concerning what was in Rembrandt's mind can be proven.) This interpretation is based on Rembrandt's habit, in his self-portraits, of taking on guises that he also lends to his portrait sitters. The self-portraits, in this view, are less objects of introspection than gestures of connection,

even bonding, with the artist's fellow man. This method or manner evokes a certain passage in St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. In chapter 9, St. Paul declares his rights as an apostle, a self-representation in words that bears illuminating comparison to Rembrandt's visual self-representations. The climax of this statement reads thus.

[19] Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. [20] To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. [21] To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. [22] To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. [23] I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

"I have become all things to all people." That is the thought that we ascribe to Rembrandt. That Jews feel that he belongs to them is, in this view, exactly Rembrandt's intention, just as it was his intention to appeal to the interests and predilections of every viewer, no matter what their belief or stance in life. The Rembrandt seen through Jewish eyes that we bring out in this book has its equivalent in the Rembrandts seen through the eyes of Calvinists, but also Catholics, of non-believing humanists, of Black people, of aesthetes to whom the artist's intention and social contexts mean nothing. To look at Rembrandt through Jewish eyes, we hope, is to see him not as a sectarian but the figure of universal attraction and impact that he was.

## NOTES

- 1 “Il faut en convenir, depuis deux cents ans que ce livre a été imprimé, l’histoire du monde n’a pas démenti les prédictions de l’auteur juif. Et à voir le peuple d’Israël toujours grandir en influence, accroître indéfiniment ses richesses, poursuivre ses destinées à travers tant d’épreuves et après tant de mépris, devenir le protecteur des souverains qui autrefois le persécutèrent, enfin, nous disputer partout le premier rang et jusqu’à l’initiative des grandes entreprises de ce siècle, on serait tenté de croire à l’apparition prochaine de la cinquième monarchie et d’un Messie inévitable... Heureusement qu’aux jours de Menasseh-ben-Israël, les nations n’avaient pas encore appelé leurs Daniels à interpréter leurs songes, et qu’il n’est pas surprenant de voir se succéder tant de monarchies dans les rêves d’un monarque visionnaire.” Blanc 1853, in the text for plate 8.
- 2 Blanc 1861, 320–21.
- 3 For this identification, see Amsterdam 2006, 31–33.
- 4 Landsberger 1946, 227–31.
- 5 Panofsky 1973, 82–83.
- 6 Melnikoff 1935, 21.
- 7 Sacks 2011.
- 8 “Rembrandt’s Jewish Vision,” online at mosaicmagazine.com.
- 9 Online at [www.yu.edu](http://www.yu.edu), the website of Yeshiva University.
- 10 Los Angeles/Chicago/New York 1981–82, p. vi.
- 11 Quoted in Ponte 2020, 49.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Mirjam Knotter** is art historian and chief curator at the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam. She was co-curator and co-author of the exhibition and publication *The “Jewish” Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling* (2006–7). Knotter has curated over fifteen exhibitions and published a variety of articles and books on topics such as Rembrandt’s use of Hebrew inscriptions and Jewish art and culture. She currently leads a research project reconstructing Jewish daily life and material culture in the former Amsterdam Jewish neighborhood.

**Gary Schwartz** attended Jewish day schools in New York before he took up the study of art history in US universities. He moved to the Netherlands in 1965, where he has been active as a publisher as well as an art historian. Rembrandt has been a major focus of his attention since the 1960s. In 2009 he was awarded the triannual Prince Bernhard Culture Fund Prize for the Humanities.





# Sephardi Jewish Life and Material Culture in Rembrandt's Time

MIRJAM KNOTTER

## ABSTRACT

From the late sixteenth century onward, Amsterdam, in its new position as a leading metropolis in international trade, attracted immigrants from all over the world. Among them were merchants of Jewish ancestry originating from the Iberian Peninsula. They settled in the same new neighborhood in which Rembrandt and other artists and art dealers lived. Sephardi merchants took an active part in the city's economic and cultural life, commissioning and purchasing artworks and ritual objects for their homes and as donors to the congregations and synagogues they founded. Among them were a few artists, like the painter and art dealer Samuel d'Orta, whom we know was in direct contact with Rembrandt.

## KEYWORDS

Sephardim, ceremonial objects, patronage, immigrants, Samuel d'Orta

Detail from Romeyn de Hooghe, *Circumcision in the Home of a Sephardi Family*, ca. 1665  
Inscribed *Romanus de Hooghe pinxit 166[?]*  
Chalk and watercolor on parchment,  
55,5 × 68,5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-T-00-381)

When the nineteen-year-old Rembrandt arrived in 1625 in Amsterdam from his hometown of Leiden for an apprenticeship of about half a year with the celebrated history painter Pieter Lastman, the city was blossoming. Amsterdam had taken over the lead in international trade in Northern Europe after the fall of Antwerp (1585), and the Dutch Republic of the Seven United Provinces, though still at war with Spain, was in a rela-

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_KNOTTER01



tively calm and containable situation. With the Union of Utrecht (1579), several Dutch regions had concluded an agreement that can be seen as a precursor to a constitution, with provisions concerning defense, taxes, religion and other key issues. The Union gave considerable freedom of action to the cities and provinces, while safeguarding common national interests.<sup>1</sup>

The foremost concerns of the parties to the Union were establishing political tranquility and furthering economic prosperity, to which they gave precedence over other issues, including religious differences. Although the Dutch Reformed Church had a privileged status, and its ministers worked hard to suppress deviant theological views, the religious disposition of the inhabitants of the Republic, especially Amsterdam, was multifaceted and faith was considered the private domain of citizens. As long as public order was not disturbed, no one was to be prosecuted for their religion. This welcome feature of life in Amsterdam was noted in a rabbinic query (possibly by Rabbi Joseph Pardo) that was sent to Salonica in 1616: “They have allowed every man to believe in divine matters as he chooses, and each lives according to his faith, as long as he does not go about the markets and streets displaying his opposition to the faith of the residents of the city.”<sup>2</sup> There were, however, restrictions, such as the prohibition of the public practice of Catholicism.

### SETTLING IN AMSTERDAM

Economic prosperity and relative tolerance made Amsterdam an attractive home for those looking for new opportunities. The city was a magnet for ambitious entrepreneurs, craftsmen and workers as well as members of religious communities who were discriminated against and persecuted in their home countries. The first half of the seventeenth century saw a population explosion in Amsterdam, from fifty thousand in 1600 to one hundred and fifty thousand in 1650. The reputation of Amsterdam as a place where Jews could live freely soon spread, and many found their way to the city: when Rembrandt returned in the 1630s to Amsterdam to live there permanently, there was an established Jewish community of about nine hundred Sephardi (Spanish and Portuguese) Jews and sixty Ashkenazim (from Central and Eastern Europe). Their numbers grew rapidly. Toward mid-century the community consisted of about fourteen hundred Sephardi and a thousand Ashkenazi Jews.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the immigrant Sephardim originated from Jewish families who had converted to Catholicism in order to remain in the Iberian Peninsula after the edicts of expulsion in March 1492 (Spain) and December 1496 (Portugal). Doubts concerning the sincerity of the conversion of these “New Christians” or *conversos*, as they were called, made them the target of continued harassment by the Inquisition. Consequently, many fled, initially to Italy, France and North Africa, with some ending up further north in metropolises of international trade, such as Hamburg and Antwerp. From the late sixteenth century onward a second important pull factor for Sephardim settling in Amsterdam was the city’s dominant role in international trade. This created enhanced opportunities for trading houses for goods from the Portuguese and Spanish colonies where Sephardim had trustworthy relatives.



7  
 Cornelis Janson van  
 Ceulen (II), *Portrait of  
 Gualtherus Boudaan*,  
 ca. 1665  
 Oil on canvas,  
 107 x 90 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
 Museum (M001316;  
 acquired with the support  
 of the Rembrandt Society)

Not all the immigrant *conversos* wished to live as Jews. Those who did were often not familiar with Jewish law and ritual. To guide them in their re-Judaization, they called upon the Ashkenazi Rabbi Moses Uri ben Joseph ha-Levi (alias Philip Joosten), who came with his son Aron to Amsterdam from Emden before or around 1602. The rabbi brought a medieval Torah scroll and a precious illuminated *Machzor* (prayerbook for the high holidays) with him, which were used in the first services at the home of the rabbi and in the synagogues the community later established (see figs. 31 and 32).<sup>4</sup> Soon other rabbis and scholars from the Sephardi diaspora arrived, bringing knowledge of Sephardi Jewish traditions and rituals, and objects such as Torah scrolls and prayer books.<sup>5</sup> Simultaneously, a new generation of rabbis was trained at the Talmud Torah (later Ets Haim)

seminary, founded in 1616. Among them were Menasseh ben Israel and Jacob ben Judah Leon, who would become well known in wider circles than the Jewish community, and the later chief rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, who was appointed as rabbi of the Beth Israel congregation when he was only eighteen years old. The rabbis had no easy task in directing the immigrants toward an observant Jewish lifestyle. Beside the *conversos* who remained Christians, there were those who wished to reassert a Jewish identity without completely committing to life according to Jewish law. Their religious identity was not always clear. Cases are known of families torn between Christianity and Judaism, men refusing to have themselves circumcised and families that continued to eat non-kosher meat. There were also individuals who objected for spiritual or intellectual reasons to the Jewish way of life and thought imposed by the community's leaders. The best known of them are the philosophers Uriel da Costa and Baruch de Spinoza, whose criticism led to their excommunication from the Jewish community.

The Amsterdam city council allowed Jews to settle, but under certain restrictions. Jews were prohibited to engage in proselytizing or to have sexual concourse with, let alone marry Christians. Inevitably, there was some violation of these rules.<sup>6</sup> One example was the marriage in 1649 of the fifty-six-year-old Sephardi Jean Cardoso to the thirty-three-year-old Christian Jannetje Dorrevelts. It did not help allay the general consternation that Jannetje declared at her betrothal that she had converted to Judaism four years earlier.<sup>7</sup> As in other European Jewish centers, Jews were excluded from most guilds, to keep them from competing with non-Jews in crafts and professions. Sephardim with the means to do so were active as merchants in overseas trade, in this way contributing side by side with non-Jewish merchants to the growing prosperity of the Dutch Republic. They maintained close contact and ties with non-Jewish inhabitants, while living a Jewish life within the framework of their community and the walls of the synagogues. Meanwhile, rabbis and scholars made their knowledge available in manuscripts and publications of important Jewish religious works in Hebrew, Spanish and Portuguese as well as in Latin and Dutch translations, for which there was certainly an audience among Dutch Christian theologians. In general, these books were copied in manuscripts and published by Jewish printing houses, including that of Menasseh ben Israel, who in 1626 became the first European Jew to found a Hebrew printing press, which was followed by several others after 1640.<sup>8</sup> An illustrative example is a portrait of the Dutch Reformed minister Gualtherus Boudaan, who had himself proudly portrayed holding a copy of the Hebrew Tenach published by Menasseh ben Israel (fig. 7). On the whole, a situation was created that led to mutual benefit, and to which both the city council and the leaders of the Jewish community were committed.

A crucial moment in the recognition of the community was the 1642 visit to the synagogue on the Houtgracht of none other than the Queen of England. It was not a tourist event. The year before, Henrietta Maria and her husband, Charles I, had married their nine-year-old daughter Mary Stuart to the fifteen-year-old Prince of Orange, who would succeed his father, Frederik Hendrik, to become Stadholder Willem II. They were welcomed by Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, who spoke movingly of the allegiance of the Amsterdam Jews to the House of Orange.<sup>9</sup> There were other inter-



8  
Chanukah lamp, donated by  
Abraham Farrar in 1629/30  
Copper, 25,5 × 33 × 15 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum  
(MBo1882; on loan from  
CEPIG – Cultural Heritage  
of the Portuguese Israelite  
Community)



9  
Plate for washing the hands of  
the kohanim, donated by Sara  
Cohen de Herrera in 1635/40  
Portugal, mid-sixteenth century  
Gilt silver, 49 cm in diameter

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum  
(MBo1880; on loan from  
CEPIG – Cultural Heritage  
of the Portuguese Israelite  
Community)

ests involved, on both sides. Menasseh was aware that he was addressing the queen of a country that had expelled the Jews in the thirteenth century, an edict he was trying hard to have revoked. On the English side, Henrietta was hoping that establishing goodwill with the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam would help bring financial support for the Stuarts' fight against the revolt that had just erupted in her land.<sup>10</sup> Whatever these underlying circumstances, the visit by Orange princes and Stuart royalty to a Jewish synagogue was an event of great historical import.

### SYNAGOGUES AND CEREMONIAL OBJECTS

An aspect of Jewish tradition that the Sephardim embraced from the very beginning was the Talmudic injunction to glorify God by beautifying his worship (*hiddur mitzvah*). One way to fulfill that behest is to donate precious ritual objects to a synagogue. Among the few preserved ceremonial objects from this period is a copper Chanukah lamp, donated in 1629/30 by the Jewish scholar and physician Abraham Farrar. Its model became a prototype for Dutch Chanukah lamps, frequently copied over the centuries (fig. 8).<sup>11</sup>

Other objects were brought to Amsterdam by Sephardim from previous homelands, such as a silver-gilt Portuguese plate of the mid-sixteenth century (fig. 9). It was donated by Sarah Cohen de Herrera between 1635 and 1640 after the death of her husband, the religious philosopher and kabbalist Abraham Cohen de Herrera. Although made for secular use, it was now recast to serve for the ritual washing of hands preceding the priestly blessing at the synagogue. The plate was provided with a small silver plaque in



10

Romeyn de Hooghe, *De geweesene kerk der Ioden* (The former synagogue of the Jews), Amsterdam, published by Pieter Persoy, ca. 1695  
Etching, 23 × 27.5 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum (M005417; purchased with the support of the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund)

the center, showing two blessing hands, a reference to her husband's descent from the Temple priests, the *kohanim*, and a Hebrew inscription reading "Holy gift by Abraham and Sara Cohen de Herrera." The plate is typical of *converso* identity: it was made as a non-Jewish object in Portugal in the mid-sixteenth century and is decorated with hunting scenes, including a wild boar(!), which did not encounter any objections. The aforementioned objects reflect the patchwork culture of the Dutch Sephardim: they were new Dutch residents, took an active part in local life, and were simultaneously in touch with their Iberian roots, while redefining or sometimes forging a (new) Jewish life and identity in Amsterdam.<sup>12</sup>

In 1635 an Ashkenazi community and congregation, quite distinct from the Sephardi community, had been formed. The leaders of both congregations cooperated closely with the city council, which intervened in issues that might lead to unrest in the public sphere. The boards of the congregations took it upon themselves to prevent their members from giving offense to non-Jews, a condition that included all too public celebrations of Jewish life.<sup>13</sup> Within the walls of the synagogues, order and discipline were closely supervised, to avoid making a bad impression on the many curious non-Jewish visitors, including travelers from abroad. One of these visitors was John Evelyn, who noted in his diary after his visit to the Portuguese Synagogue on Saturday, 21 August 1644 that the "ceremonies, ornaments, lamps, law, and schools, afforded matter for [his] contemplation."<sup>14</sup> The French diplomat Charles Ogier who met Rabbi Menasseh ben

Israel in 1636 at the Neve Shalom synagogue described a service in another Sephardi synagogue, commenting on the prayer shawls worn by the men; the Torah scrolls and their ornaments; and the wooden panels that hung all over the synagogue. These were decorated with painted depictions of plants and trees, about which he remarks that nothing alive was visible on them, “not even a fly or a worm.”<sup>15</sup> Insofar as this alludes to the Dutch Sephardim adhering to the second commandment, forbidding the creation of images, it is a misconception. As we shall see below, they respected no such injunction. Ogier’s conclusion puts into words a common opinion about the Amsterdam Jewish communities: “Nowhere do the Jews, they say, live as freely as in Amsterdam.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1639, the very year that Rembrandt and Saskia moved into their new home on the Breestraat, the three Sephardi congregations united into the Talmud Torah congregation, which held its services in a large synagogue on the Houtgracht, a canal right behind their street (fig. 10). In 1640 an inventory of the ritual objects from the three former synagogues was drawn up, offering an overview of the many donations and loans of objects that had taken place. The list includes no fewer than forty Torah scrolls, covered with costly fabrics, some of them originating from such distant lands as Turkey, Morocco and China, as well as thirty-four pairs of silver Torah finials, Torah pointers, lamps made of silver and copper, and other ritual objects.<sup>17</sup> There were also costly coverings for the *Tebah* (the reading platform), and curtains for the Holy Ark, constructed of costly palisander wood from Brazil.

### SEPHARDI ARTISTS AND JEWISH PATRONAGE

For the fashioning of most objects, Jews, being excluded from the craft guilds, had to rely on non-Jews. An exceptional group were the calligraphers and engravers of artefacts demanding knowledge of Hebrew. Among the latter was the famous scribe Michael Judah Leon, whose calligraphy served as a model for the Hebrew letter-types Menasseh ben Israel had designed for his printing house.<sup>18</sup> Other famous calligraphers included Jehuda Machabeu and Abraham Machorro, who copied manuscripts, prayer books, and Torah and Esther scrolls (fig. 11).<sup>19</sup>

From the start, Jews and non-Jews exchanged skills and cooperated in the arts. For example, in 1612 a painter named Symon Jansz rented the cellar of his house in the Breestraat to a Jewish calligrapher, Symcha, and agreed that he would instruct him in the art of watercoloring.<sup>20</sup> In 1620/21 the cartographer Jacob Justo hired engraver Abraham Goos for the production of the first printed Hebrew map of the Holy Land, featuring Justo’s portrait (see fig. 128).<sup>21</sup> A remarkably close cooperation came into being between the rabbi and teacher Jacob Judah Leon “Templo” and the Christian Hebraist and millenarist Adam Boreel, who in the 1640s financed Leon’s reconstruction of the Temple, a topic that interested both for different religious reasons. In 1643 Leon contracted the perspective draughtsman Pieter Willemsz to make drawings for him, as well as a painting of Leon’s Temple model, to be copied in prints.<sup>22</sup>

The best-known Jewish artist in Rembrandt’s time was Salom Italia, who came from Italy to Amsterdam about 1641.<sup>23</sup> No sooner had he arrived on the scene than Jacob Ju-



11

*Respuesta a un filosofo Hebreo* (Response to a Jewish Philosopher), a polemical treatise by Isaac Orobio de Castro, copied by Abraham Machorro, Amsterdam 1668  
Manuscript, ink on paper, 24.6 × 20.2 cm

Amsterdam, Ets Haim –  
Livraria Montezinos  
(EH 48 C 04)

dah Leon commissioned a portrait engraving from him, which he used to advertise his Temple reconstructions (see fig. 26). Menasseh ben Israel, too, commissioned a portrait of himself from Italia as a calling card for his contacts.<sup>24</sup> In the 1696 inventory of Samuel (Abrabanel) Barbosa, Menasseh's son-in-law who had married his daughter Gracia, we find in the front room of their home on the Binnen Amstel near the Blauwbrug "a portrait of Manasse ben Israel."<sup>25</sup> From the description it is not clear if this was the aforementioned print or a painting. The value assigned to it, five guilders, comes close to that of landscape paintings in the same room.<sup>26</sup>

Salom Italia is best known for his decorative *megillot* (scrolls of the Book of Esther), with triumphal arches, portraits of the protagonists and narrative scenes with Dutch landscapes in the background. These *megillot* were made for private owners for the celebration of the Feast of Purim. Among them was the scribe Michael Judah Leon, who calligraphed his own *megillah* in 1642/43, engaging Salom for the decorations (fig. 12).<sup>27</sup> Another of Italia's well-known specialties was his border decoration for *ketubot* (marriage contracts). These include biblical scenes related to Jewish marriage, with figures dressed in contemporary clothing.<sup>28</sup> His *ketubot* were sometimes hand-colored, like that for the marriage of Isaac de Pinto and Rachel da Vega in 1654 (see fig. 28).

The only Jewish artist (and art dealer) documented to have had direct contact with Rembrandt was the Sephardi Samuel d'Orta. We know this from a notarial deposition of 17 December 1637, in which two youngsters, aged twenty and sixteen years old, make a statement at the request of "Samuel d'Orta, a Portuguese painter, residing in this city." The evening before, they stated, they saw and heard at the plaintiff's home that d'Orta accused "Reijnbrand van Rhijn, a fellow painter residing on the Binnen

12

Esther scroll, written by Michael Judah Leon, with decorations by Salom Italia, Amsterdam 1642/43  
Handwritten, ink on parchment, 29 x 407 cm, on a silver-gilt roller

London, Victoria and Albert Museum/National Art Library (MSL/1879/36)



Amstel,” of “not treating him properly.”<sup>29</sup> Rembrandt had sold d’Orta the etching plate of his *Abraham Casting Out Hagar and Ishmael* of the same year, on the condition that Rembrandt would “not keep any of the prints [made from the plate], except two or three that he stated would be for his own use and curiosity,” and that he would not sell them to anyone (fig. 13).<sup>30</sup> D’Orta, who clearly planned to sell prints of the plate, suspected Rembrandt of violating their agreement, and had the witnesses declare that Rembrandt had again promised d’Orta “not to sell the ones he had, being (so he said), three or four of the same prints which he still had in his possession.”<sup>31</sup>

Who was this artist, dealing in prints of Rembrandt’s *Abraham Casting Out Hagar and Ishmael*? In 1976 the researcher D. de Groot came across the document in the Amsterdam archives concerning the disputed sale by Rembrandt to Samuel d’Orta of the etching plate for Abraham driving off his mistress Hagar and their son Ishmael. Since then, the story has been repeated time and again in the Rembrandt literature without any other information available concerning the “Portuguese painter living in this city.” A chance find in the course of this research has brought up remarkable new facts about him.<sup>32</sup> The source is a document in The Hague city archives, published by D.S. van Zuiden in 1931 in an antiquarian journal and unnoticed in writings on Rembrandt until the present.<sup>33</sup> The document is a notarial deposition made in The Hague on 11 September 1662 by a man named Jacob Pereira,<sup>34</sup> at the request of “Sieur Samuel alias Fernando Dorta.” Since no other person named Samuel d’Orta or Dorta has ever been found in the Dutch archives, and since the person in question was a dealer in art objects, it feels safe to conclude that this is one and the same man. Not only does the document tell us much more about d’Orta than we ever knew about him—for example, that in 1637 he was only about nineteen years old—it also establishes that he and the only known Jewish buyer of a painting by Rembrandt, the Parisian jeweler and



agent for Cardinal Richelieu, Alfonso Lopez, knew each other well (see also Schwartz, p. 236):<sup>35</sup>

Mr. Jacob Pere[i]ra, approximately forty-eight years old, residing in Amsterdam and declaring it to be true, at the request of Sieur Samuel alias Fernando Dorta, that the deponent was very well acquainted with the requester in the years 1637 and 1638 in Paris; that the requester kept in the house of the deponent's father a trunk containing various curiosities, such as prints, drawings and such, as well as various paintings. [He declares further] that the requester with many other persons of quality often came to the said house to look at the above [goods], to deal in them or sell them.

There follows a list of impressive-sounding names of his clients.<sup>36</sup> The deponent goes on:

That in the years named or the period in question, not a day went by without a visit to the above house by Sieur Alonso de Lope, that the aforementioned Alonso de Lope employed the requester in writing letters and such in the Spanish and Portuguese language, that the requester frequently rode with the aforementioned Mons. de Lope in his carriage, that he was treated discreetly and respectfully by him, that he [Jacob Pereira] and his father had the honor on various occasions to be served as Sieur de Lope's table.

The reason that the deposition was made had to do with a dispute between d'Orta and a nephew or cousin of Alfonso Lopez named Michel Calvo. Jacob Pereira also had a disparaging comment to make about Alfonso Lopez himself, saying that he failed to pay "various honest people who he employed in his service." The following remark may be relevant to Rembrandt studies in another way. Pereira says that Lopez's duped employees did not dare to call him to judgment because of "the great credit he enjoyed from Cardinal Richelieu and later Cardinal Mazarin." In a recently discovered document, we learn that Cardinal Mazarin was in possession of a Rembrandt painting, probably the *Man in Oriental Costume* now at Chatsworth.<sup>37</sup> In the Mazarin documents he is called a Pasha, but Rembrandt and his Jewish patrons might have seen him as King Uzziah stricken with leprosy, an iconography current in the Rembrandt literature as well. It is dated 1639, placing it in the very period of Rembrandt's contacts with Samuel d'Orta and Alfonso Lopez. Rembrandt as seen through Jewish eyes may have risen in the estimation of the highest circles in Europe, precisely via his contact with Jewish patrons. (Richelieu may well have been party to the purchase of a Rembrandt self-portrait by Louis XIV.) In any case, we see Rembrandt's two major Jewish contacts of the late 1630s as members of the same network of Sephardi dealers serving the French aristocracy and court.

Two other Sephardim who gave "painter" as their occupation are Abraham Mendes (at his betrothal in 1642) and Joseph Pereira from Paris (at his betrothal in 1683), the latter being the son of the aforementioned Jacob Pereira.<sup>38</sup> No works by them are known, which is also true of d'Orta.



13  
Rembrandt, *Abraham  
Casting Out Hagar and  
Ishmael*, 1637  
Etching and drypoint,  
12.6 x 9.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-56)

In 1667/68 we find two other young Sephardi Jewish painters, Aron de Chaves and Jacob Cardoso Ribero. They were pupils of Jan Lievens, to whom they paid the relatively high tuition fee of one hundred guilders a year.<sup>39</sup> Nothing else is known about Cardoso Ribero, although he may be related to (or the son of) Jean Cardoso, who owned a large chimney piece by Lievens in his country house in Soest.<sup>40</sup> (See Knotter, p. 35.) De Chaves did indeed work as an artist, seemingly solely for Jewish patrons. The title page by Christiaan van Hagen for a book by the poet and troubadour Miguel (Daniel Levi) de Barrios was based on a drawing, now lost, by de Chaves. It is an allegorical portrait of the author and his family. His wife Abigael de Pina is depicted as the goddess Bellona, their daughter Rebecca as Cupid and their son Simon as Mercury, an example of the free attitude of Sephardim towards pagan subject matters in art (fig. 14).<sup>41</sup>

Aside from such early Jewish artists in Amsterdam as the engraver Salom Italia and the poet Moses Belmonte—who seems to have portrayed his mother Simcha Vaz (before her death in 1643)—the only other documented Jewish artists by whom painted works are known are the aforementioned Aron de Chaves and Benjamin Senior Godines. De Chaves was the maker of a monumental painting for the Portuguese Synagogue in London, *The Ten Commandments*, with Moses and Aaron flanking the tablets. The composition is of a type that is also found in Reformed churches in the Netherlands (fig. 15).<sup>42</sup> That de Chaves was also a skilled calligrapher is clear from a *megillah* that he calligraphed and illustrated in Amsterdam in 1687.<sup>43</sup> The same is the case with Senior Godines, who also worked as a calligrapher, draughtsman and engraver, but by whom also two rare “Memento Mori” (*vanitas*) and a triptych are known, all assignments by his Sephardi friend and patron Isaac de Matatiah Aboab (see fig. 43).<sup>44</sup>



### ART IN SEPHARDI HOMES

The many preserved inventories of the belongings of Dutch Sephardim offer a glimpse into their material culture and taste in art.<sup>45</sup> Specific items indicate their Jewish identity, such as Shabbat and Chanukah lamps, prayer books and shawls, framed Hebrew calligraphy, *megillot* and Torah scrolls with their adornments.<sup>46</sup> Like non-Jews in privileged parts of society, Sephardim were active in acquiring art and decorating their houses with paintings and maps, which they did from the time of their early settlement in Amsterdam onward.<sup>47</sup> Among the buyers at the auction of the estate of the painter and art dealer Cornelis van der Voort in 1625, held at his house and art shop at Jodenbreestraat 2, was “Joris Thomasz, a Portuguese with one eye,” who bought several “tronies” (faces, based on models).<sup>48</sup> Another Jewish resident of the Breestraat, the merchant Abraham Sarphati Pina, bought from the same estate the considerable number of thirty-six paintings, including portraits of English and French royals, twelve pictures of the Prince of Orange, a portrait of Emperor Rudolph II, and many tronies, as well as a biblical history painting of Hagar.<sup>49</sup> His taste extended to more daring themes as well, with successful bids for “a whorehouse,” “A painting of a naked woman, and vanity,” “*Susannah and the Elders*,” and “a courtesan.”<sup>50</sup> Nude and erotic images, which were widely popular at the time, were not taboo in Sephardi circles and are found in quite a few inventories of Sephardi households. For example, in the 1648 estate of Abraham Abenjacar (alias Duarte Dias Brandon) was also a painting of *Susannah and the Elders*, and in 1652, in a prominent room in the house of Diego de Castro, hung paintings of Actaeon spotting the naked Diana, and Neptune with some naked women.<sup>51</sup> Also Rembrandt’s direct neighbor Salvador Rodrigues owned a painting with “some nude images,” as did Isaac Serrano in 1656 and Moses de Isaac Salom (alias Moses de Pas) in 1685.<sup>52</sup> At the 1625 auction of the estate of the silk cloth dealer Hendrick Hoëffslager, who ran his business

14  
Christiaan van Hagen  
after Aron de Chaves, title  
page of Miguel (Daniel  
Levi) de Barrios, *Imperio  
de Dios en la harmonia del  
mundo* (God’s Empire in  
the Harmony of the World),  
edition thought to have been  
published in Amsterdam in  
1699. The first edition was  
published in Amsterdam in  
1670/71  
Etching, 23 × 17.5 cm

Amsterdam, Ets Haim –  
Livreria Montezinos  
(EH 6 C 22)

15  
 Aron de Chaves, *The Ten Commandments*, London  
 1674  
 Oil on canvas,  
 dimensions unknown

London, collection of the  
 Spanish & Portuguese  
 Sephardi Community.  
 Photo: Louis Berk



from his house Engelenburgh in the Breestraat, another resident of the street, the merchant David Pimentel, acquired a painting of Hagar and “a brothel.”<sup>53</sup>

The makers of paintings are not often mentioned in the inventories. The exceptions are all the more precious, such as a homestead by Hans van Coninxloo II and a watermill by the same artist that the Jewish wholesale merchant Bento Osorio, one of the founders of the Amsterdam Sephardi congregation, bought at the Hoeffslager auction.<sup>54</sup> The 1656 estate of Isabella de Pas, widow of Manuel Duarte, includes a landscape by Joos de Momper.<sup>55</sup> And the 1661 inventory of the house of the aforementioned Jean Cardoso on the Houtgracht lists in his “best room” a painting of a pagan sacrifice, probably by Jacob van Campen, a rider by Jan Baptist Weenix, and a seascape by Jan or Julius Porcellis.<sup>56</sup> In the front room we find another seascape by Porcellis, a tavern by Adriaen Brouwer, and a still-life of fruit by Jan Davidsz de Heem. Cardoso had a country house in Soest, where there was a chimney piece of the prophet Elijah by Jan Lievens. Yet another “sea” by Porcellis was listed in the 1666 estate of Rachel de Pinto, widow of Abraham de Pinto, and in 1669 the estate of the broker David Cardoso included a fruit still-life by Frans Snyders and a painting with “a pyramid on a beach” by Johannes Lingelbach. Rebecca Pallache (1685) owned two paintings by Daniel Vertangen depicting the rape of Europa, and in the 1691 estate of Margareta Pereira de Campos, widow of Martin de Campos, we find a tower of Babel by Brueghel.<sup>57</sup> Finding three paintings by Porcellis and one by Brouwer in these Vlooienburg collections prompts the fascinating thought that they might have been bought by the owners from Rembrandt, whose inventory contains work by these artists, presumably for sale.<sup>58</sup>



16  
 Romeyn de Hooghe,  
*Circumcision in the Home of  
 a Sephardi Family*, ca. 1665  
 Inscribed *Romanus de  
 Hooghe pinxit 166[?]*  
 Chalk and watercolor on  
 parchment, 55.5 × 68.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-T-00-381)

The type of painting most frequently encountered in Dutch households was the portrait, and in this regard the Amsterdam Sephardim of the seventeenth century were no exception. Among the 1,110 paintings found in sixty-two Sephardi inventories, the subject matter of 712 pieces is specified. About thirty percent of these, 226 to be exact, were portraits. Thirty were portraits of the deceased or his or her family, some clearly taken from previous locations.<sup>59</sup> In addition to family portraits there are ten portraits of French, Dutch and English royalty, as well as twenty-one portraits of Roman emperors. The total also includes twenty-nine tronies, face paintings that are not intended to be seen as portraits of an individual.<sup>60</sup>

At least in two instances, we know of painted portraits of Jews by Rembrandt. The first is a small panel, now in the Rijksmuseum, of the famous physician Dr. Ephraim Hiskiau Bueno, made in preparation for an etching of 1647 (figs. 24 and 75). The second, known only from an archival mention, depicted a young woman. On 22 February 1654 notary Adriaen Lock went to Rembrandt at the request of Diego d'Andrade to register a complaint that the portrait he ordered, and for which he had paid Rembrandt an advance of seventy-five guilders, “in no way resembled the appearance or the face of the ‘young daughter’ [young unmarried woman]” who sat for it.<sup>61</sup> She was about to leave for Hamburg, and d'Andrade demanded that Rembrandt alter the portrait right away, so that “it resembles her properly.” Otherwise, he wanted his payment back.<sup>62</sup> Rembrandt was unwilling to do so and replied that he was not going to touch the painting unless d'Andrade paid him the rest of his fee. He wished to leave it up to the



17  
Spice container, donated  
by Elias Gabay Henriques  
in 1711/12  
Silver, 17 x diam. 8 cm

Amsterdam, Cultural  
Heritage of the Portuguese  
Israelite Community  
(CEPIG) (0441)

board of the guild of St. Luke to judge whether or not the revised portrait resembled the sitter. If they found the likeness insufficient, he would alter the painting again, and if d'Andrade was still not satisfied, he would “whenever he had an auction of his paintings, [...] include it in the sale.”<sup>63</sup> The upshot of the case is unknown, but if the painting is the “Jewess by Rembrandt van Rijn” in the estate of art dealer Gerrit Uylenburgh in 1675, we can assume that Rembrandt kept it and sold it.<sup>64</sup> Jaap van der Veen has suggested that a young Sephardi woman comes into consideration as the sitter: Beatriz (Rachel) Nunes Henriques, who married Manuel (Isaac Haim de Abraham) Teixeira de Sampayo in Hamburg that year.<sup>65</sup> The latter bridegroom was the son of the wealthy Diego Teixeira Sampayo (Abraham Senior) of Hamburg and his second wife Sara d’Andrade.

Like non-Jewish collectors, Jewish art lovers also bought landscapes and seascapes, a group that constitutes about twenty percent of the paintings in Sephardi inventories. It goes without saying that they also bought history paintings. One hundred and one are found in sixty-two Sephardi inventories, making up about fourteen percent of the total. These are mainly subjects from the Bible, all from the Hebrew Bible. We find paintings of biblical patriarchs, kings and heroes as well as depictions of “the children of Israel.”<sup>66</sup>

The prophet Elijah appears not only in several Sephardi inventories,<sup>67</sup> he is also present, in a painting of *Elijah Fed by the Ravens*, in the background on the right-hand side of a drawing by Romeyn de Hooghe of a circumcision ceremony in a Jewish family home (fig. 16).<sup>68</sup> What makes this especially appropriate is that, according to Jewish tradition, Elijah attends every circumcision. His presence is symbolized by the “chair of Elijah,” here behind the man holding the plate with circumcision instruments. We see the father on the left, next to the *mohel* (circumciser), and the seated *sandek* (a man, usually the grandfather or godfather, given the honor of holding the baby boy). The man behind him, with a large beard, is probably Chief Rabbi Isaac Aboab da Fonseca. A portrait engraving of da Fonseca by Aernout Nagtegaal indeed resembles the man in the drawing.<sup>69</sup>

The story of Queen Esther was another perennial favorite.<sup>70</sup> As descendants of *conversos* and victims of persecution by the Inquisition, Sephardim could not help but identify with the Persian queen who had to hide her Jewish identity but dared to “come out” to save her people. Crypto-Jews on the Iberian Peninsula had long celebrated the holiday of Purim, in which the story of Esther is read from often lavishly decorated *megillot*, as a major event, although in canonical terms it is a minor holiday.

Still-life and genre paintings appear less in Sephardi inventories than in non-Jewish homes. More favored were allegories, specifically depictions of the five senses, sets

of which are regularly found in the inventories. The 1661 estate of Manuel Mendes de Crasto (alias Manuel d’Aguilar d’Andrada), who lived at Jodenbreestraat 55, actually contained three sets, in addition to biblical paintings of Tamar, the judgment of Solomon, Samson, Elijah, the Queen of Sheba, Benjamin, Jacob and Esau, as well as a painting of Queen Esther.<sup>71</sup> This preference, it is tempting to speculate, is akin to the enlistment of sensory experience in Jewish ritual. A striking instance is the Havdalah ceremony held every week, at the end of Shabbat. A candle emits light and heat, exciting the senses of sight and touch. The wine of the kiddush prayer is tasted and fragrant spices are smelled, as the participants sing beloved melodies, touching the sense of hearing. The Portuguese Synagogue owns a rare spice container for Havdalah, decorated with biblical scenes and Jewish rituals symbolizing the five senses (fig. 17).

A similar connection, here with Jewish rituals, is made on the title page of the 1687 prayer book *Mea berachot* (One Hundred Benedictions), engraved by the Sephardi artist Benjamin Senior Godines (fig. 18). “Hearing” is addressed by the blowing of the ram’s horn during New Year; “sight” by the stars and the moon during New Moon; “touch” by circumcision; “taste” by the blessing after the meal; and “smell” by the Havdalah ceremony.

Clearly, the Sephardim felt at home in their new country. One way in which this is reflected is found in the paintings that covered the walls of their homes, including Dutch landscapes, prints of Dutch towns, and a “painting of the Amstel River” that hung in 1647 above the chimney in the house of Jeronimo Henriques.<sup>72</sup> But Dutch culture also entered in the work of the Sephardi artist Salom Italia, who integrated Dutch scenes in his lavishly decorated megillot. The synagogues were a particular source of pride, a sentiment that was validated when they were depicted by Dutch artists like Romeyn de Hooghe, who was commissioned to immortalize in print both the old synagogue and the new one of 1675 (figs. 10 and 38). The famous painter of church interiors Emanuel de Witte even made three paintings of the Portuguese synagogue of 1675, one probably commissioned by the wealthy merchant David de Abraham Cardoso, who bequeathed it in his will which was drafted in 1687 to his good friend Jacob Nunes Henriques.<sup>73</sup>

Apart from the examples given above, not until the nineteenth century, after the emancipation of the Jews in 1796 and the abolition of the guild system in 1818, did Dutch Jews obtain more opportunities to turn to painting and silverwork as a profession. This, however, should not blind us to the fact that from their early settlement in Amsterdam onward, Dutch Jews commissioned works of art and precious objects and actively acquired them in auctions and on the free market, and even traded in Rembrandt’s work, as did Samuel d’Orta. They belonged to a small international network of Sephardi artists, art dealers and collectors. Sephardim like the Parisian Alfonso Lopez and Diego



18  
Benjamin Senior Godines,  
titlepage of *Mea Berachot*.  
*Seder Berachot. Orden de  
Bendiciones. Y las ocasiones  
en que se deven dezir*,  
translated by Isaac de  
Matatiah Aboab, Amsterdam  
(Albertus Magnus) 5447  
(1686/87)  
Engraving, 13 × 7.5 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
Museum (M000025)

d'Andrade from Hamburg knew Rembrandt personally, were aware of his talent, and commissioned, purchased or traded his work. That is not to say, however, that they felt a more special bond with Rembrandt than with any other artist. The conviction that they did only found expression centuries later, when Rembrandt's reputation as a "friend of the Jews" came into being.

### NOTES

- 1 For a comprehensive overview of the complex religious composition and internal religious struggle within the Republic in the period 1610–30, see Dudok van Heel 2006, 13–44.
- 2 Cited in Bodian 1997, 63.
- 3 Swetschinski 2004, 91 and Israel 2017, 411, n. 39.
- 4 He was arrested during the High Holidays in 1603. The reports of the interrogations between 14 and 24 October of the then sixty-year-old rabbi offer detailed information on early Jewish life in Amsterdam (SAA, Confessieboeken, entry no. 5061, no. 282, fol. 123, 14 October 1603; fol. 136, 21 October; fol. 143, 24 October). The references to archival records at the Amsterdam City Archives (SAA) are abbreviated to: CB=Confessieboeken (Confession Books); DBK=Desolate Boedelkamer (Chamber of Abandoned and Insolvent Estates); DTB=Doop, Trouw en Begraafboeken (Baptism, Marriage and Burial books); KS=Kwijtscheldingen (formal delivery of property); NA=Notariële Archieven (Notarial Archives); OR=Ondertrouwregister (Register of betrothals).
- 5 These rabbis were Joseph Pardo, who grew up in Salonica and worked in Venice; his son David; Saul Levi Morteira from Venice; and Isaac Uziel from Fez, Morocco, who previously served as a rabbi in Oran, Algeria.
- 6 The Amsterdam burgomasters issued in 1616 a set of regulations prohibiting Jews "to seduce any Christian person away from our Christian religion or to circumcise one; and not to have any carnal relations, whether in or out of wedlock, with Christian women or girls, not even those of ill repute." In the statutes adopted in 1639, the Portuguese-Jewish communal leadership prohibited the circumcision "of anyone not of our Hebrew Nation." See Bodian 1997, 61–62.
- 7 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 680, fol. 180, 17 December 1649. See also Bodian 1997, 62. On Jannetje, see Knotter, p. 50.
- 8 Among them were the printing/publishing houses of Immanuel (Manuel) Benveniste (1640–59); Judah [Leib] ben Mordecai Gimpel and Samuel bar Moses ha-Levi (1648–52); Uri Phoebus ben Aaron ha-Levi (1658–88); Joseph Athias (1658–1709), who cooperated with the Catholic Susanne Veselaer, the widow of a printer; and David de Castro Tartas (1662–95).
- 9 The young couple did not attend the ceremony, since the bride was ill, but they did come the next day. For the published text, see Menasseh ben Israel 1642.
- 10 A century later, a loan from the rich Sephardi Sampson Gideon saved the English crown from another revolt, this time from the Stuarts! (See Schwartz, p. 238.)
- 11 Cohen, Kröger and Schrijver 2004, 170–71.
- 12 The term "patchwork culture" for Dutch Sephardim was introduced in Swetschinski 2000, chapter 6.
- 13 For example, in 1639 the *Mahamad* (synagogue board) decreed that "bridegrooms or mourners must not travel in procession, to avoid problems that can occur with crowds and to avoid being noticed [in an unfriendly way] by the inhabitants of the city." See Bodian 1997, 62.
- 14 Cited in Bray 1819, 21.
- 15 Cited in Dutch in Jacobsen Jensen 1912, 107–8.
- 16 Ibid, 108.
- 17 For an extensive overview of this inventory, see Cohen 2004.
- 18 Schrijver 2017, 298.
- 19 Judah Machabeu (b. Valladolid, Spain, ca. 1597) was active in Amsterdam and in Pernambuco, Brazil between 1646 and 1654.



- 20 “Is oock geconditionneert dat voorss. Symon Jansz voorsz Sijmha sal wijsen tot syne Symon Jansz gelegentheyt, het leggen vande waterverwen soo veele hij daer van weet” (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, 17, no. 375, fol. 32, not. Nicolaes Jacobs, 25 January 1612). See Bredius 1939, 198. The house next door, De Vergulde Schroeff, was Sint Antoniesbreestraat (SAB) 66 or 68. It was purchased in 1605 by Simon Jansz (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 15, 21 July 1605).
- 21 Justo is mentioned as a member of the Neve Shalom congregation in Amsterdam in the years 1619/20–25. See Garel 1987, 65.
- 22 Offenbergh 1993, 37.
- 23 He lived in “een seeckere gang op Uylenburg, naest de vergulden valck,” where he rented a room in the house of a Portuguese woman (SAA, NA entry no. 5057, 86, no. 2029, fol. 149, not. Salomon van Nieuland, 17 April 1646). See also de Vries and de Roever 1886, 44. The Vergulden Valck was probably located on the later Tweede Bataviedwarsstraat 5.
- 24 It was long assumed that Italia was the author of a set of four engravings for Menasseh ben Israel’s book *Piedra gloriosa* (1655), alongside the etchings by Rembrandt. However, this attribution is no longer accepted. See Nadler and Tiribás 2021, n. 48.
- 25 Inventory of the estate of Samuel Barbosa: “Een pourtrait van Manasse ben Israel, f 5,-” (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 6173, fols. 135v–142r, 137, not. P. Schabaelje, 11 May 1696). With thanks to Elke Stevens for providing the transcription of this inventory.
- 26 *Ibid.* The appraised values of the seven landscapes in Barbosa’s inventory (fols. 136–37) are between f 3,- and f 8,-.
- 27 Michael Judah Leon lived in 1631 on the Breestraat, when he was betrothed at the age of thirty-four to the nineteen-year-old Rachel de Lion from Porto, who also lived there (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 672, fol. 39, 22 May 1631). For the *megillah* see Amsterdam 2011, 10.
- 28 *Ketubot* after Italia’s design were printed well into the eighteenth century.
- 29 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 951C, record 622703, fols. 1144–45, not. Benedict Baddel, 17 December 1637.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Samuel d’Orta (in archival documents also mentioned by his alias Fernando Perera) was born in Amsterdam ca. 1618 as the son of the Portuguese *converso* merchant Francisco (David) d’Orta and Maria Nunes Canis (de Groot 1976, 76; Révah 1960, 19–20). His father Francisco traveled a lot but is mentioned in several notarial deeds in Amsterdam between 1618 and 1652, and resided at least in 1637 also in Paris (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 952, 2 November 1637, not. Benedict Baddel). Born in Lisbon, where part of his family still lived, he was arrested there in 1642. During the interrogations by the Inquisition he declared he had lived in Amsterdam for a long time with his wife, Maria Nunes Canis, with whom he had five children: Jacob, twenty-five-years old, born in Italy; Samuel, twenty-four-years old, born in Amsterdam, and his daughters Guiomar (Ester), Jerónima (Raquel) and Caná. See (online) “Processo de Francisco da Horta,” 1642-10-02/1644-10-23. Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa 1536/1821, Processos, proc. 10312.PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/10312. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa, Portugal, fols. 108–9, <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=2310474>. In exchange for his release in 1644, Francisco was forced to provide names of other Amsterdam Jewish citizens from Portugal and mentioned, among others, Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (Salomon 1983, 105). In 1652 Francisco, who was ill, declared at an Amsterdam notary that he wanted to keep the peace between his sons Jacob and Samuel d’Orta, that he had no possessions besides the furniture and household effects in the house he was living in and that these belonged to his sons (Notarial records 1978, 168, n. 8). Samuel d’Orta lived and worked as a dealer in art and jewelry in Paris, Antwerp, Amsterdam and The Hague. Although he seems to have been a successful businessman, he had debts for rent in 1666, for which he handed in as a pledge jewelry and a painting by Jan Brueghel I, of a banquet of the Gods, which he received back after he made the payment (van Zuiden 1931, 188).
- 33 Van Zuiden 1931, 187–90.
- 34 Jacob Pereira (ca. 1614–1673) was born in Paris, as is mentioned on his tombstone at the Sephardi cemetery Beth Haim in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, and should not be confused with the tobacco dealer Jacob Pereira who hired space in Rembrandt’s cellar. He may be Jacob Pereira d’Orta, a cousin of Samuel, who was mentioned as such when he was the witness at the betrothal of Sam-

- uel's brother Jacob Hamis d'Orta in 1662 (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 685, 30 June 1662, fol. 195).
- 35 See Schwartz 1986 (n. 3), 132; and Schwartz 2020, 59–60.
- 36 The entire document, with its rich harvest of names of collectors and dealers, deserves to be studied in depth.
- 37 Thanks to Gary Schwartz for the following additional information.
- 38 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 677, fol. 15, 12 July 1642. See also Ponte 2020a. For Pereira see SAA, entry no. 5001, no. 693, fol. 460, 5 November 1683.
- 39 De Chaves and Cardoso Ribeiro stayed with Lievens from before 1667 to 1668, as we know from a record from 1669 in which they testify on the request of Lievens about having helped another pupil, Jonas Witsen, with the preparation of his paint palettes. See de Jager 1990, 74.
- 40 In a notarial deed in 1667 about Samuel d'Orta's brother Jacob Hamis d'Orta, a 'Jacob Cardoso' is mentioned together with his cousin Eliazar Usiel Ribeiro, which may mean that the painter Jacob Cardoso Ribeiro is Jacob Cardoso (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 3604, no. 132435, not. Anthony v.d.Ven, 1 February 1667, fols. 24v and 25).
- 41 The makers' inscriptions are confusing: *AR* (in monogram) *de Chvs quis* and *Chr. Van Hagen sulq*, both otherwise unknown on prints. The first may refer to the French *esquisse* (sketch), the second a misspelling of *sculp.* (*sculpsit*), meaning engraved by van Hagen after a design by de Chaves. With thanks to Erik Hinterding for his comments on this issue.
- 42 It was originally made for the Creechurch Lane Synagogue, and has been preserved in the Bevis Marks Synagogue. The *Libro de los Acuerdos* (the book of resolutions) of the Sephardi community in London mentions in 1675: "For the canvas on which were painted the Commandments £1:17:6:, to Sr. H. Avilla for the gold £1: 10:, for his labour £3:, to Aron de Chavez for the painting £5:-." See Landsberger 1943, 304, and n. 50a.
- 43 The scroll with an additional sheet of blessings is now in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (L-B05.0202a-b).
- 44 One *Memento Mori* (an ink wash drawing on parchment) is at the Jewish Museum Amsterdam (M005412), the other as well as the triptych (both paintings in tempera on wood) are in the collection of the Jewish Museum London (JM 895.1 and JM 895.2).
- 45 The material below is based on over sixty Sephardi inventories registered in the Bankruptcy Chamber (*Desolate Boedelkamer*) and the notarial archives that were transcribed by a group of students (Saskia van der Bosch, May Meurs, Yuri van der Linden) and myself, back in 1992, under the guidance of Jaap van der Veen. In addition, many inventories were transcribed by Elke Stevens, to whom I am most grateful for generously sharing her work. Other records are in the extensive online source materials gathered by John Michael Montias, put online by the Frick Art Reference Library. Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld (2012b) has published a wealth of material on items in Sephardi inventories connected to their Iberian background.
- 46 For example, in the estate of Sebastian da Cunha, alias Isaack Ergas, husband of Hesther Ergas, there are "in de beste camer" a "jootse kerckdoeck" (prayer shawl), a Spanish Bible, and twelve Hebrew books (SAA, NA entry no. 5075, no. 2261, 16 May and 16 November 1653, fols. 460–68 and entry no. 2261, fols. 477–83). In the estate of Jean Cardoso (d. 1661), on the Houtgracht, are a Hebrew prayer book and in the back kitchen a copper Shabbat lamp and a Chanukah lamp; in his estate in Soest there is another copper Shabbat lamp in the smoking room. He also owned five Torah scrolls with ornaments, which he had deposited at the synagogue (SAA, NA entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fols. 952–1009, not. Adriaen Lock, 12 April and 9 May 1662). For an extensive overview of Sephardi Jewish material culture, see Levie Bernfeld 2012, esp. 209, n. 71.
- 47 For a general overview of Sephardi patronage in biblical history painting in Rembrandt's time, see Manuth 1987, 84–100 and Pastoor 1991, 124–25.
- 48 Auction of the estate of Cornelis van der Voort, 13 May 1625, The Montias Database of 17th-Century Dutch Art Inventories, #825. He is probably identical with the George Thomas who appears as a Portuguese merchant in a record in the Amsterdam archives in 1624 (SAA, NA entry no. 5075, no. 351, fols. 415v–416, not. Willem Cluijt, 31 December 1624), born in Lisbon in 1597, and who was married in 1623 in Amsterdam to Gracia Henriquez of Antwerp (Trouwen in Mokum ID 3948).

- 49 Auction of the estate of Cornelis van der Voort, 30 July 1625 (SAA, Orphan Chamber, entry no. 5073, no. 951, 30 July 1625, and Montias #563).
- 50 Ibid. At the time of his betrothal in 1624 Sarphati Pina probably lived in the house called Den Burgh at SAB 35, which his father Thomas Nunes Sarphati Pina (alias Joshua Sarphati) acquired in 1609 and where he may have stayed after his marriage (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 19, 18 June 1609).
- 51 Pastoor 1991, 125; inventory of the estate of Diego de Castro (SA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 358, fols. 117v and 118v, 8 May 1652).
- 52 Inventory of Salvador Rodrigues (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fol. 505–12, not. Adriaen Lock, 26 March 1654); inventory of Isaac Serrano (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 584, fols. 218v–220, 30 October 1656) and inventory of Moses de Isaak Salom (alias Moses de Pas) (SAA, NA entry no. 4117, fol. 489, not. Dirck van der Groe, 26 October 1685).
- 53 Inventory of the sale of the property of Hendrick Hoeffslager (SAA, WK, entry no. 5073, no. 954, 19 March 1625, no. 53 and no. 56). See also Montias #579.0015 and 579.0040.
- 54 Ibid., no. 36 and 38. At the same auction, Osorio also bought a copper chandelier.
- 55 Inventory of Isabella de Pas, widow of Manuel Duarte (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fol. 652, not. Adriaen Lock, 9 August 1656). In the tax register for 1650–52 she seems to rent the house 't Wapen van Monnickendam (SAB 67) from Anthonij Verspreeet (SAA, Archief van de Thesaurieren Extraordinaris, verpondings quohieren van den 8sten penning 1650–52, no. 255, fol. 96r).
- 56 I am indebted to Elke Stevens for generously sharing her transcription of Cardoso's inventory (SAA, NA entry no. 5075, no. 2261B, not. Adriaen Lock, 12 April and 9 May 1661).
- 57 Inventory of Rachel de Pinto (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 1356, fol. 221v–227r, not. Adriaen Lock, 16 July 1666); inventory of David Cardoso (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 375, p. 101v, 8 March 1669); inventory of Rebecca Pallache, with thanks to Elke Stevens for her transcription (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 3697, fols. 362–84, 25 September 1685); and inventory of the estate of Margareta Pereira de Campos, widow of Martin de Campos (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4241, fol. 140, not. Dirck van der Groe, 14 May 1691).
- 58 I am indebted to David DeWitt for this interesting suggestion in response to my presentation at the Historians of Netherlandish Art conference in The Hague in June 2022.
- 59 For example, in the inventory of Jeronimo Manrique [Henriques?] were portraits of his grandparents and uncles (SAA, DBK entry no. 5072, no. 357, fols. 39v–43v, 8 September 1651). In the inventory of Manuel Dias de Pas are seven portraits, including one of himself (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 356, fol. 253, 3 October 1651). In the 1656 inventory of the deceased Isabella de Pas, widow of Manuel Duarte, there are nine portraits, including a portrait of her husband, two of Isabella, two of her parents, one of her grandmother and a portrait of her daughter Leonora (SAA, NA, entry no. 2261, fols. 642–54, 9 August 1656). Jean Cardoso had a portrait of himself in his “best room” (SAA, NA, entry no. 2261, fols. 952–1009, not. Adriaen Lock, 9 and 12 May 1662), and in the house of Rachel de Pinto (SAB 84), were four portraits of herself (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 1356, fols. 221v–227r, 16 July 1666).
- 60 This includes twelve portraits of Roman emperors in the inventory of Samuel Plantinus.
- 61 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2196, no. 95, fol. 191, not. Adriaen Lock, 22 February 1654.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 The work was listed as “Een judin van Rembrant” and “Jodin van Rembrant van Rijn”; see Lammertse and van der Veen 2006, 297 (no. 9) and 301 (no. 30).
- 65 Van der Veen 1997, 77.
- 66 Of the 101 Old Testament paintings in sixty-two Sephardi inventories, the most frequently depicted figure is Jacob, in thirteen paintings (including six showing Jacob and Esau), followed by David (twelve, including five paintings of David and Abigail), Abraham (nine), Solomon (eight) and Moses (seven) and the Children of Israel (seven).
- 67 See, for example, the inventory of Manuel Mendes de Crasto (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 368, fol. 194r, 23 September 1661) and a painting of Elisha and another of *Elijah and the Widow* in the inventory of Salvador Rodrigues (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fols. 505–12, not. Adriaen Lock, 26 March 1654) as well as the chimney piece of Elijah by Lievens at Jean Cardo-

- so's house in Soest (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fols. 952–1009, not. Adriaen Lock, 12 April and 9 May 1662).
- 68 Wilson 1975, 250 reads the date in the signature as 1668, but 1665 is also plausible. The Rijksmuseum dates the drawing 1665–68.
- 69 It has been suggested (Wilson 1975, 253–54, van Nierop 2018, fig. 2.9) that the family portrayed may be that of the wealthy merchant and agent of the king of Portugal, Moses Curiel (alias Jeronimo Nunes da Costa) and Rebecca Abbas, for whom de Hooghe later made an etching of the exterior of their house on the Nieuwe Herengracht and who was involved in commissioning several etchings of the Portuguese Synagogue as well as of the Temple of Solomon. At the time of the execution of the drawing, the family lived on the Breestraat. Their youngest son Nathan was born in or around 1666. The second child, near the mother, would in that case be his brother Jacob, aged about six. The youngster on the left (next to the father) could be the approximately sixteen-year-old Aron, but there seems no one in the drawing that matches the approximately eleven-year-old Solomon (1655–1712).
- 70 Paintings of Queen Esther are found in several inventories: Manuel Mendes de Crasto (alias Manuel d'Aguilar d'Andrada) (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 368, fol. 194r, 23 September 1661); Diego de Castro (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 358, fols. 117v and 118v, 8 May 1652); Lea Curiel, widow of Louis Gonsales d'Andrade (alias Abraham de David da Costa d'Andrade) (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 6401 [no page numbers], not. C. van Achthoven, 24 May 1694); and a painting of King Ahasuerus in the inventory of Salvador Rodrigues (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2261, fols. 505–12, not. Adriaen Lock, 26 March 1654).
- 71 Inventory of Manuel Mendes de Crasto (alias Manuel d'Aguilar d'Andrada) (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 368, fol. 194r, 23 September 1661). Other inventories including sets of depictions of the five senses are those of Manuel Grasio (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 355, fol. 6, 6 July 1649); Abraham Franco Silvera alias Christoffel Mendes, next to a sea battle, several allegories and a painting of Neptune (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 584, no foliation, 9 August 1655) and Moses Gabay Isidero (alias Francisco van Isidero) (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 385, fol. 199r, 26 March 1680).
- 72 Inventory of Jeronimo Henriques (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 353, fol. 200 and foll., 21 July 1647 and Montias #1025, lot 1025.0001). In the house of David Cardoso hung, in the inner room, a map of the town of Maarssen and a painting depicting the village of Soest (SAA, DBK, entry no. 5072, no. 375, fols. 100v–104r, 8 March 1669).
- 73 Kaplan 1998, 150–53.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mirjam Knotter** is art historian and chief curator at the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam. She was co-curator and co-author of the exhibition and publication *The "Jewish" Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling* (2006–7). Knotter has curated over fifteen exhibitions and published a variety of articles and books on topics such as Rembrandt's use of Hebrew inscriptions and Jewish art and culture. She currently leads a research project reconstructing Jewish daily life and material culture in the former Amsterdam Jewish neighborhood.



# Rembrandt and His (Jewish) Neighbors: A Stroll Through the Neighborhood<sup>1</sup>

MIRJAM KNOTTER

## ABSTRACT

When Rembrandt arrived in Amsterdam, the Sint Antoniesbreestraat formed a center of artistic activity in a neighborhood where many immigrants from diverse backgrounds and religious denominations had settled, including many Jews. Well-to-do Sephardim bought houses in Rembrandt's block and became his direct neighbors. Rembrandt clearly had extensive contact with some of them: he rented space in his cellar to them, accepted commissions from them, and quarrelled with them. A detailed reconstruction of the residents and property owners in Rembrandt's block, offers insight into which Jewish residents may have known the artist, and who Rembrandt may have seen or met from his doorstep or on a stroll through his neighborhood.

## KEYWORDS

Jewish Quarter, Rembrandt, Ephraim Bueno, Sint Antoniesbreestraat, Sephardim

At the beginning of his pioneering study of Rembrandt's work, *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt* (1859–61), Charles Blanc placed an illustration by Léopold Flameng in which Rembrandt stands on his doorstep, looking at a group of less fortunate fellow citizens

19  
Léopold Flameng,  
illustration in Charles  
Blanc, *L'oeuvre complet de  
Rembrandt*, Paris 1859–61

Maarsssen, Loekie and  
Gary Schwartz

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_KNOTTERo2

in the crowded Breestraat (fig. 19). Across the street is the silhouette of a bearded man in a cloak, wearing a hat, bending over some merchandise spread out on the ground for sale. The man is clearly intended to represent a Jew, placed there to show that it was a Jewish quarter where Rembrandt lived, a place where Jewish models for his art could be plucked from the street. Flameng's illustration piques our curiosity to find out who Rembrandt's neighbors really were, and who he may have encountered, heard or seen from his doorstep or on a stroll through the neighborhood.<sup>2</sup>

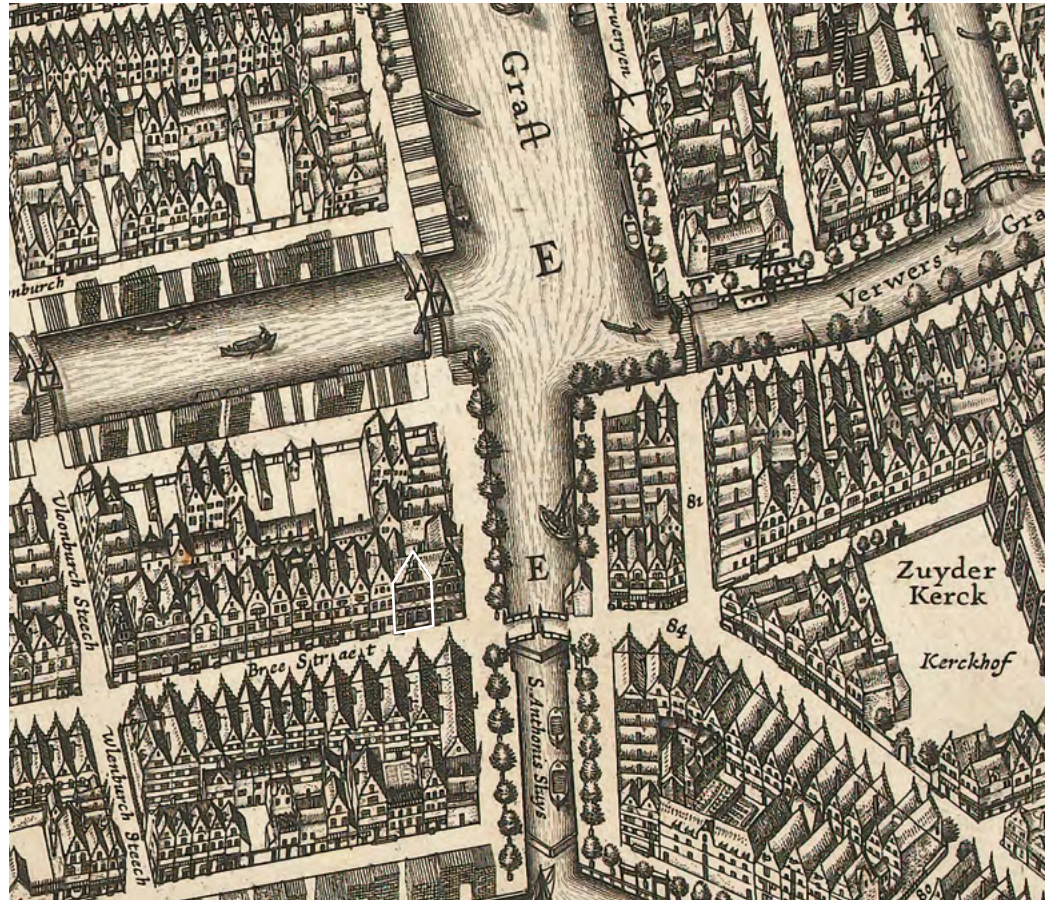
### THE JODENBREESTRAAT

Rembrandt's earliest residency in Amsterdam dates from the mid-1620s, when he spent six months as a pupil of the history painter Pieter Lastman. Lastman lived with his brother at Sint Antoniesbreestraat 61 (St. Anthony's Broad Street),<sup>3</sup> a house that their mother, Barber Jacobs, bought in 1608.<sup>4</sup> Their direct neighbors at the time were the jeweller and goldsmith Michiel Uijtens, and family, and on the other side was De Olijfberg (The Mount of Olives; SAB 57–59), a stately house on the corner of the Nieuwe Hoogstraat.<sup>5</sup> From 1609 this was owned by Geurt Dircksz van Beuningen, merchant, burgomaster and director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC).<sup>6</sup> He probably lived there until his death in 1633, with his third wife Lijsbeth Hendricx and two children from previous marriages.<sup>7</sup>

The Breestraat (Broad Street), as it was also called, was a fashionable avenue with stately houses. It was the main artery from the Nieuwmarkt—location of the guild of St. Luke, to which the painters belonged—to the square where, between 1670 and 1675, the Ashkenazi Great Synagogue and the Portuguese Synagogue were erected. The street led through a lively new neighborhood where immigrants of diverse religious background had settled, including many artists.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the Zuiderkerk, the first Protestant church built in the city, there were unmarked places of worship for Catholics, synagogues, and also a congregation of Brownists, dissenters from the Church of England who found more tolerance for their brand of Protestantism in the Dutch Republic than in their home country.<sup>9</sup> The Anglo-Welsh historian James Howell, who in 1619 stayed in the neighborhood, wrote about this to his father:

I am lodged in a Frenchman's house, who is one of the deacons of our English Brownists' Church here; it is not far from the synagogue of Jews, who have free and open exercise of their religion here. I believe in this street where I lodge there be well near as many religions as there be houses; for one neighbour knows not nor cares not much what religion the other is of, so that the number of conventicles exceeds the number of churches here.<sup>10</sup>

There was also diversity in the social and economic standing of the residents: artists and art dealers lived cheek by jowl with merchants and regents, and thus potential clients. Less wealthy residents from various backgrounds and denominations lived in rented cellars and rooms, including Black people and Ashkenazi Jews (see the contributions by Michael Zell and Bart Wallet in this volume). The maids and servants who formed part of the households came from all over Europe and Africa.<sup>11</sup>



20  
Rembrandt's house at the  
Jodenbreestraat. Detail from  
the map by Balthasar Florisz.  
van Berckenrode, 1625  
Etching, 46 x 53.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-1892-A-17491C)

### REMBRANDT'S DIRECT NEIGHBORS

Following his apprenticeship to Pieter Lastman, Rembrandt moved back to his native Leiden for about six years. When he returned to Amsterdam in the early 1630s, his first address there was a one-minute walk from Pieter Lastman's house. He moved in with the art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh (ca. 1587–1661), a Mennonite raised in Kraków, who ran his business out of his home on the corner of the Sint Antoniesluis (JB 2), a lock in the Amsterdam water system connecting the older and the newer part of the Breestraat. At the time, Uylenburgh's next-door neighbor was the Protestant merchant Balthasar de Visscher.<sup>12</sup> After Rembrandt's marriage in 1634 to Uylenburgh's cousin Saskia, the couple initially stayed with Uylenburgh, then moved in 1635 to rented lodgings nearby.<sup>13</sup>

By 1639, Rembrandt felt that he had such good prospects that he could afford to buy the stately house next to Uylenburgh's (JB 4–6) for the relatively large sum of 13,000 guilders, to be paid in installments (fig. 20).<sup>14</sup>

Rembrandt and Saskia's next-door neighbor, in a house named *De Drie Ooievaars* (The Three Storks; JB 8)<sup>15</sup> was the Portuguese-Jewish merchant Salvador Rodrigues (alias Josuah Jessurun Rodrigues), then aged about thirty-nine, who had bought the house in 1633 from Anthonie Thijsz for 12,000 guilders, which he paid partly with





21  
Rembrandt, *Self-portrait  
with Saskia*, 1636  
Etching, 10,5 × 9,5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-34)

jewels.<sup>16</sup> Born in the Portuguese town of Bragança around 1600, we find him as a merchant in Rouen before he moved to Amsterdam. Rodrigues lived first on the other side of the lock, near the Pinto house (SAB 69), before buying, in 1633, the house where Rembrandt would become his neighbor some years later.<sup>17</sup> After having lost his first wife, Leonor (Rachel) Jessurun Rodrigues, in 1631, Rodrigues was remarried in 1637 to the twenty-year-old Rachel Aboab from Venice.<sup>18</sup> He had two daughters and four sons, whom we meet in later years as jewelry merchants, a trade that Rodrigues practiced as well. He was an active member of the Sephardi Jewish community, serving as a board member of the congregation and of the Ets Haim seminary. In 1645 he also bought the house next to his (JB 10a).<sup>19</sup> His wife Rachel died in 1652, and when Rodrigues passed away two years later, an inventory of his goods was drawn up.<sup>20</sup> The rich interior had curtains of red damask, yellow silk wallpaper, tables of walnut and oak, and fashionable “Spanish” chairs, upholstered with red and blue cloth. We see in the household goods a reflection of international commerce: Turkish tapestries, chests and

22

Willem Drost (attributed to),  
*An Artist's Work Table at a  
 Window Overlooking a Roof*,  
 ca. 1650–55  
 Pen and brown ink with  
 brown and gray wash,  
 touched with white, over  
 indications in red chalk,  
 13 × 19.8 cm

London, British Museum  
 (1848,0911.4; © The  
 Trustees of the British  
 Museum)



a stitched blanket from the East Indies, Chinese porcelain. Among the many articles of clothing in the inventory are a dress made of flowered silk and two black capes, lined with black velvet, which may have been Salvador's.<sup>21</sup> On the walls hung a considerable number of paintings, including several landscapes, a rider, a hunter, two portraits—one of a woman, another of a child—and a painting with “some naked images in it,” as well as various biblical scenes and paintings of characters from apocryphal books. The assortment is impressive, with subjects from all sections of the Tenach, the Jewish Bible. From the Torah, the Pentateuch, are paintings of the teachings of Jacob, the prophet Balaam (Bileam), and two paintings of the Children of Israel; scenes from the *Nevi'im*, the prophets, show the Benjaminite bridal theft, the prophet Elijah, and the woman of Zarephtha; a major figure from the *Ketuvim*, the hagiographic writings, is represented in King Ahasuerus; and from the apocryphal but very popular Book of Tobit, we find the pious Tobias. Rounding out the selection are a painting of Jerusalem and another depicting the Temple of Solomon. These subjects are quite representative for the interior of a wealthy Sephardi household.<sup>22</sup> There are no ritual objects listed in the inventory, but that is not because Rodrigues owned none. In the 1640 inventory of the Talmud Torah congregation we find various ceremonial objects on loan from Rodrigues, including a Torah scroll with ornaments and precious textiles.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the estate contains quite a few silver items, as well as a lot of jewelry. Among these were precious gifts that Salvador bequeathed to his daughters: to each of them he left a small box with jewels, with a note reading: “the jewels in this little chest are for my daughter Sara Jeseroen [a second was for Rifca], which I give to her. May God grant that she enjoy them for long years.”<sup>24</sup> It is nice to think that a drawing attributed to Rembrandt's pupil Willem Drost, showing an artist's work table by a window (fig. 22), may include a view of Rodrigues's roof seen from the “Kunstcaemer” (art room) in Rembrandt's house.<sup>25</sup>

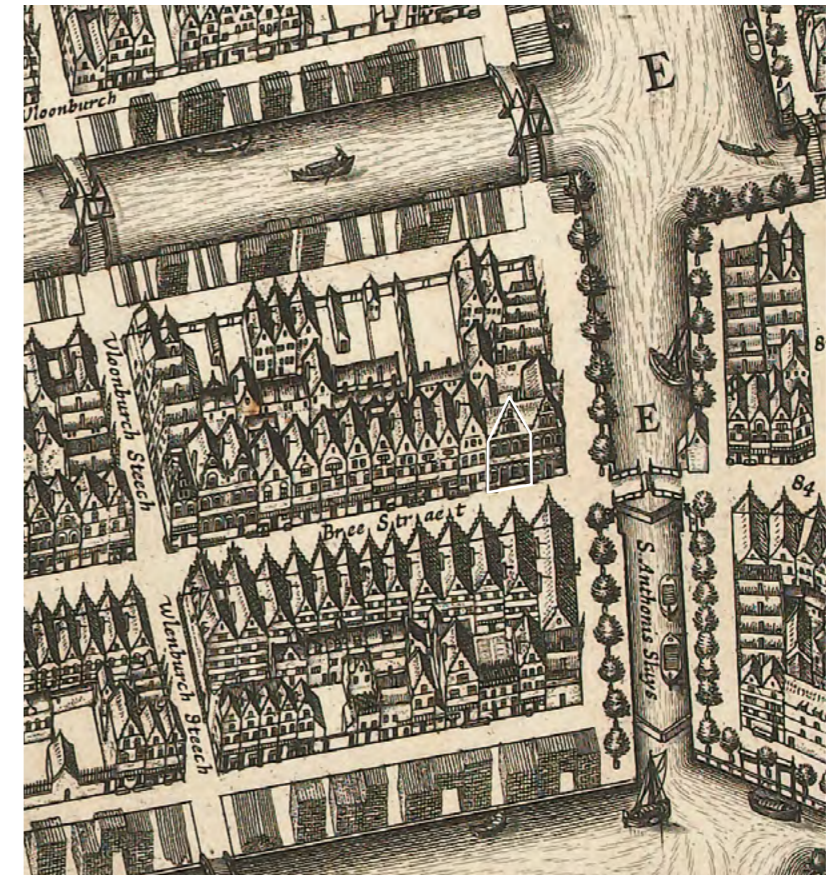


23  
Rembrandt, *A Scolding  
Woman*, ca. 1635  
Pen and brown ink,  
13.5 × 9.8 cm

London, The Courtauld  
(Samuel Courtauld Trust)  
(D.1978.PG.181; bequest of  
Count Antoine Seilern, 1978  
© The Courtauld)

All of this wealth in the Rodrigues house stood in stark contrast to the situation in the basement next door (JB 10a), where a junk shop had been located. A troublesome situation that may have reached the ears of Rembrandt and Saskia took place in 1634, when they were still living with Uylenburgh. Lijsbet Jansz, widow of Captain Pieter Barentsz Dorrevelt, who rented the house, issued a complaint, in the presence of witnesses, against Rebecca Jurriaens, the woman to whom she rented her basement and who ran the junk shop. Her tenant, the landlady said, was a major nuisance. She was always screaming at her, the landlady, her daughter and visitors, calling them “drunken pigs,” “a pockmarked whore” and “a topless hussy.” She is quoted as having taunted her landlady by saying to her (weeping) daughter: “you earned the pearls that you wear on your head with *bruien*,” a rude word for sex.<sup>26</sup> Surely more of these scenes took place in the neighborhood, but who knows if it was the troublemaking Jurriaens herself who inspired Rembrandt’s drawing of a scolding woman (fig. 23)?

Rembrandt and Saskia’s other direct neighbor was the celebrated portrait painter and appraiser Nicolaes Eliasz Pickenoy (JB 2), who lived there with his wife Levijntje



Rembrandt's house at the  
St. Antoniesbreestraat, the  
later Jodenbreestraat.  
Detail from the map by  
Balthasar Florisz van  
Berckenrode, 1625  
Etching, 46 × 53.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-1892-A-17491C)



# Residents and Owners of Houses in and around the Jodenbreestraat in Rembrandt's Time (ca. 1625–1658)

MIRJAM KNOTTER & GUIDO LEGUIT

## Sint Antoniesbreestraat (SAB)

- 1 SAB 57–59 De Olijfberg (The Mount of Olives)**  
1609–33 Owner/residents: **Geurt Dircksz van Beuningen** (1565–1633), merchant, burgomaster and director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), with his third wife, **Lijsbeth Hendricx** (1571–1655) and two children, **Dirck Geurtzsz** and **Maria**, from his previous marriages.
- 2 SAB 61 (Residence and artist's studio)**  
1608–24 Owner/residents: **Barber Jacobs** (1549–1624), dealer in secondhand goods, lived there after the death of her husband with her unmarried sons, the painter **Pieter Lastman** (1583–1633) and his brother **Nicolaes “Claes” Lastman** (1585–1625), painter and later goldsmith.  
1624–33 Owner/resident (until ca. 1632): **Pieter Lastman**.  
1625 (ca.) Resident: **Rembrandt** lodged here as an apprentice to Lastman.
- 3 SAB 63**  
1615–45 Owner/residents: **Michiel Uijtens**, goldsmith, with his wife **Anneken Nicolai** and children.  
1645–71 Owner/residents: **Willem Calckoen** (1604–71), goldsmith, with his wife **Anna Uijtens** (1608–67) and children.  
1645–83 (?) Residents and later owner: **Johannes Calckoen** (1628–83), goldsmith and jeweler, with his wife **Margaretha van Lemmers** (1638–1711) and children.
- 4 SAB 69 “Huis de Pinto” (Pinto House)**  
1622–46 Owner and probably residents: **Abel Mathijsz Burch** (?–1646), merchant and beer brewer, with his wife **Maria Quekels** (1588–1644) and family.  
1646–51 Owner: **Machteld Hooft**, heir of **Maria Quekels**.  
1651 Owner/residents: **Isaac de Pinto** (1629–1681), banker and merchant, with his second wife **Rachel da Vega** (1631–76) and his son **David Emanuel de Pinto** (1652–1712).
- 5 SAB 102**  
1625–37 Residents: **Lambert Gerritsz Ruijl** (1588–1637), painter and later zijdekramer (silk trader), with his third wife **Gerberich Heijndrix** (?–before 1649).  
1638– Owner/residents: **Gerberich Heijndrix** and her third husband **Egbert Gerritsz Daelder** (?–before 1660), owner and landlord of many houses.  
Before 1649/ Owners: the heirs of **Lambert Gerritsz Ruijl**, **Gerberich Heijndrix** and **Egbert Gerritsz Daelder**.  
1650–60 Owner/residents: **Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira** (1596–1660), with his wife **Esther Soares** (?–1667) and children. The house stays in the family.

\* The house numbers refer to those in the *Atlas van de gemeente Amsterdam*, published in 101 maps by Jan Christiaan Loman Jr. in 1876.

## Sint Antoniessluis (Sint Antonies lock)

- 6 Unknown address at the lock**  
1637 Residents: **Juda Machabeu** (alias **Luis Nunes do Valle**) (ca. 1597–1666), calligrapher, after his marriage in 1637 probably with his wife **Branca Cardozo** (1613–1692).
- 7 Unknown address at the lock**  
Before 1647– Residents: **Isaac Israel Rocamora** (1609–84), physician after 1666 and poet, formerly a Dominican monk, with his wife **Abigael de Moses Toura Fernandez Vega** (1622–63) and children.

## Jodenbreestraat

- 8 JB 2 (Residence, studio and art shop)**  
1620–37 Owner: **Nicolaas Pauw** (1607–40), son of nobleman **Adriaen Pauw**, noted diplomat. The house is rented out.  
ca. 1626– Tenant and residents: **Hendrick Uylenburgh** (ca. 1584/9–ca. 1637 1661), art dealer, with his wife **Maria van Eyck** (?–1638) and children.  
1631 Guest: **Rembrandt**, on and off at Uylenburgh's house.  
1633–37 Residents: **Rembrandt** moves in with **Uylenburgh**, followed by **Saskia van Uylenburgh** (1612–42) after their marriage in 1634.  
1637–? Resident: **Govert Flinck** (1615–60), painter.  
1637–45 Tenant, residents and later owner: **Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy** (1588–1650), painter and appraiser, with his wife **Levijntje Bouwens** (1599–after 1656) and children.  
1645–81 Owner/residents: **Daniel Pinto** (1610?–1681), Sephardi merchant and trader in tobacco, with his wife **Rachel** (?–1666) and children.
- 9 JB 4–6 The later “Rembrandt house” (Residence, studio and art shop); in the 1650s the cellar was rented out for the storage and selling of tobacco.**  
1616–39 Owner/residents: the heirs of **Pieter Belten I** (1565–1626), director of the West India Company (WIC), **Pieter Belten II** (1606–39), **Magdalena Belten** (1610–before 1659), her first husband **Anthonie Thijsz** (?–1634), and her second husband **Christoffel Thijsz** (?–1669).  
Before 1631– Tenant: **Balthasar de Visscher** (ca. 1590–after 1639), ca. 1638 merchant, his wife **Sara Cobbaut** (1598–1638) and children.  
1639–58 Owner/residents: until 1658 **Rembrandt** and until her death in 1642 **Saskia**, their son **Titus van Rijn** (1641–68). From ca. 1641/42 to 1649 **Geertje Dircks** (ca. 1610–56). From ca. 1647 to 1658 **Hendrickje Stoffels** (1626–63), and the daughter of **Rembrandt** and **Hendrickje**, **Cornelia van Rijn** (1654–84).  
1650s The cellar is rented to **Daniel Pinto** (ca. 1610–81) and the **Pereira brothers**, Sephardi merchants, to store and sell tobacco.  
1658/60–79 Owners: **Lieven Sijmonsz Kelle** (1620–85), leather merchant, and his brother-in-law **Samuel Geerinx** (ca. 1621–74). They split the house in two.

- 10 JB 8 De Drie Ooievaars (The Three Storks)**  
1622–33 Owners: **Elisabeth Thijsz** (ca. 1598–?) and her husband **Anthonie Thijsz** (1595–1634).  
1633–54 Owner/residents: **Salvador Rodrigues** (alias **Josuah Jesurun Rodriques**) (ca. 1600–54) merchant, his wife **Rachel Aboab** (1617–52) and children.  
From 1654 Owners: the heirs of **Salvador Rodrigues**.

- 11 JB 10a (Residence, the cellar functioning as a junk shop)**  
1623–31 Owner: **Jacob Jansz Sampson** (?–1631), silk merchant.  
1631–? Owner: **Lijsbet Jansz**, widow of **Jacob Jansz Sampson**.  
In 1634 Tenant: **Lijsbet Jansz**, widow of **Captain Pieter Barentsz Dorrevelt**, and her children.  
In 1634 Tenant of the cellar: **Rebecca Jurriaens** (ca. 1575–after 1655), owner of a junk shop.  
Until 1645 Owner: **Marritgen Jacobs Samsons** (1595–?) and her husband **Pieter Jacobsz Kerck** (1606–?).  
1645–54 Owner/residents: **Salvador Rodrigues** (ca. 1600–54) and family.  
From 1654 Owners and residents: the heirs of **Salvador Rodrigues**.

- 12 JB 10b De Witte Rooster (The White Rooster)**  
Until 1656 Owner: **Helena van Velthen** (1604–after 1645), wife of **Hendrick du Molijn**.  
1650 Tenant: **Joris Woutersz** (1598–1679), cloth merchant and owner of a silk shop, his second wife **Catalijntje Gerniers** (1603–61).  
1656–79 Owner/resident: **Joris Woutersz**.

- 13 JB 12**  
1621–27 Owners: the heirs of **Gerrit Koster** (?–before 1621), bell founder; the house is rented out.  
1627–32 Owner: **Assueres Koster** (1604–61), bell founder.  
1632–58 Owner: **Simon Lievensz** (1594–1658), shoe seller.

- 14 JB 14 De Zilveren Doornenkroon (The Silver Crown of Thorns)**  
Until 1626 Owner: **Anna de Faulconniers** (1574–?), widow of **Pieter Nimeij** (?–before 1622).  
From 1626 Owner: **Elbert Joostensz**.

- 1627– Owners/residents: the widowed sisters **Susanna** after 1631 (1598–?) and **Anna du Pire** (1594–1652).  
Before 1634 Owner: **Annetgen Hendrix**, widow of baker **Willem Jansen**.  
Until 1644 Owner: **Susanna van Eijndhoven**, wife of **Johannes Wtenbogaert** (1557–1644).  
1644–51 Owner/residents: **Paulus van Focquenbroch** (1598–1666), merchant, his wife **Catharine Sweers** (1608–66) and children.  
From 1650 Owner: **David Abendana** (alias **Fernando Dias de Britto**) (1604–77), Sephardi merchant and shareholder of the WIC.  
1654– Tenant: **Dirck Claesz van der Marck** (1625–83), ca. 1658 *koekebakker* (pastry baker).  
Until 1658 Owners: heirs of **Annetje Willems**, wife of **Adriaen Teunisz Lievelt**.

- 15 JB 16 Het Gekroond Compas (The Crowned Compass)**  
1619– Tenant: **Abraham Farrar II** (?–1664), Portuguese-Jewish after 1631 physician and poet, board member of the Talmud Torah congregation, his wife **Debora** (?–1660) and children.  
Until 1631 Owners: the heirs of **Carel Laurens**, merchant.

- 1631–38 Owner/resident: **Dirck Jansz (Compas)** (1587–1638), compass maker, his wife **Grietje Harmansz** (1585–before 1633), second wife **Christina Coornharts** and children.  
1638–1701 Owners: the heirs of **Dirck Jansz (Compas)**.

- 16 JB 18 De Oude Hillebrand (The Old Hillebrand)**  
From 1606 Owner: **Willem Jansz, bode op Hamburg** (courier on the Hamburg route), and his heirs.  
Until 1644 Owner: **Lucas Simons**.  
1644–59 Owner: **Harman Geerdincx** (d. 1680), carillon player. He rented the house to the Sephardi merchant **Henriques d’Azevedo**, who also rented the house next door.

- 17 JB 20**  
1650– Owners: the heirs of **Gerrit Gerritsz Parijs** and **Jan** after 1682 **Parijs** (?–1647).  
1650–53 Tenant: **Henriques d’Azevedo**.

- 18 JB 22–24 Sint Joris (St. George, a relief of whom is built into the facade)**  
From 1624 Owner: **Hendrick du Molijn** (1604–65), as husband and guardian of **Helena van Velthem** (1604–after 1645?).  
Until 1653 Owner: **Hester Francken (Franco Mendes)**, widow of **Manuel Franco Mendes** (d. before 1654), a Sephardi merchant, and their sons **Moses** and **Jacob**.  
1653–79 Owner: **Joris Wouterz** (1598–1679), silk merchant.

- 19 JB 26–28**  
1620–48 Owner/residents: **Rebecca Carel** (1602–48), her husband **Pieter Ranst** (1590–1641), merchant and later director of the WIC after their marriage in 1621, and their daughter **Jacoba Ranst** (1622–75).  
1648–75 Owner/residents: **Jacoba Ranst**, her husband **Gillis Valckenier** (1623–80), a later burgomaster of Amsterdam. The house remained in the family until it was sold in 1686.

- 20 JB 30**  
From 1623 Owner: **Hubert Arisz** (1588–before 1647), skipper.  
Until 1648 Half-owner: **Harmen Jansz**.  
From 1648 Half-owner and possibly residents: **Gijsbert Bruijnsz Garst** (1604–?), carpenter, his wife **Aeltje Jansz** (1606–?) and their children.

## ACROSS THE STREET

- 21 JB 1**  
1615–38 Owner/residents: **Catharina du Bois** (?–1638), widow of **Casper van Collen** (Ceulen) (1560–1615), gunpowder producer, and children.  
From 1626 Resident: **Jan Pellicorne** (1597–1653), merchant, after his marriage in 1626 to **Susanna van Collen (Ceulen)** (1607–60).  
From 1638 Owner: **Adriaen Roest** (1593–before 1653), lawyer.  
Until 1653 Owner: **Cornelis Claesz van Vierhuijsen**.  
From 1653 Owner: the heirs of **Adriaen Roest**.

- 22 JB 3**  
ca. 1612–31 Owner: **Pieter Maertensz Hoefijser** (1581–1647), receiver-general of the Admiralty in Amsterdam.  
1631–38 Owner/resident: **Isaac Montalto** (alias **Lopo de Luna Montalto**) (?–1644?), rabbi, adviser to King Louis XIII of France and trader in civet cats.  
From 1638 Owner: **Sijmon Barchman Wuijtiers** (1592–1664), Catholic merchant.

**23 JB 5 Leer en Leerort (Leather and—perhaps a reference to—the East Frisian village Leerort), artist’s studio and possibly silk shop.**

1614–51 Owner/residents: Adriaen van Nieulant (1586/7–1658), painter, art dealer, appraiser, his wife Kattelijne Thomas Raes (1591–1645), and children.

1631 Resident: Reijnier Jansz (?–1632), silk shop owner, possibly at this address. His widow Steijntge Reiniers (1594–?) remarried in 1633 with the silk merchant Joris Woutersz.

Before and Owner/residents: Adriaen van Nieulant, after the death in 1645 of his wife Kattelijne Thomas Raes.

1651–61 Owner: Gerrit Arentsz van Lier (1574–after 1661) and his wife Maijke Goris (1610–1690). The house is named Leer en Leerort.

**24 JB 7 't Huis van Nassauwen (The home of Nassaus)**

1624–57 Owner: Joan Huydecoper (1599–1661), merchant, lord of Maarsseveen, director of the VOC, and six-time burgomaster of Amsterdam.

1631 Probable tenant: Isabel Mendes (1612–64), widow of Bartholomeus Rodrigues.

1650 Tenant: Jacob Fransz Hinlopen (1618–71), lawyer, married to Maria Huydecoper (1627–58), daughter of Joan Huydecoper.

1651(?)–1701(?) Tenant/owner/resident: Jacomo (Jacob) de Pinto (1631–1701) and his wife Rebecca Pereira (1632–?) and children. In 1661 he seems to be the owner; he probably lived there until his death.

**25 JB 9**

1621–33 Owner/residents: Jan Cock (1575–1633), pharmacist, his wife Lijsbeth Fransdr Banninck (1581–1623), parental home of Frans Banninck Cocq.

1633–46 Owners: Frans Banninck Cocq (1605–55), (resident from 1621 to 30), later burgomaster of Amsterdam, lawyer, lord of Ilpenstein Castle and the captain in Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*, and his brother Jan Cocq (1607–58).

1646–60 Owner/residents: Weintgen Oetgens van Waveren (1595–1660), widow of Lieutenant Cornelis Michielsz Blauw and her daughters.

**26 JB 11 De Witte Lelie (The White Lily), Pharmacy**

1610–26 Owner/residents: Francois de Penijn (1566–1626), pharmacist, his wife Sara Lodewijcx and children.

1610–28 Owner/residents): Sara Lodewijcx (1575–1628) and the heirs of Francois de Penijn.

1626–41 Owners: heirs of Francois de Penijn.

1641 Owner/resident: Dirck Willinck, owner of a firm in chamois leather.

1650–53 Tenant: Johannes Grindel (1617–after 1672), pharmacist. Until 1668 Tenant, residing in the cellar, Ritchard Price (?–1668), doorkeeper of the English Church.

**27 JB 13 Het wapen van Kortrijk (The Arms of Courtrai)**

The former house of painter Joos Goemare (1574–1611).

From 1624 Owner/residents?: Govert Spruijt (II) (1625–95), copper caster, his mother Catheline de Klerk, and heirs of Govert Spruijt (I) (ca. 1576–1624).

**28 JB 15 De Zeeridder (The Knight of the Sea)**

1615–30 Owner: Evert Pietersz Bijlevelt.

1617–20 Tenant: David Jessurun (alias Francisco Mendes Porto) (1596–?), insurance agent and poet.

In 1630 Owner: Cornelis Davelaer (1582–1640), city lawyer of Amsterdam, and Lord of Petten.

1630–39 Owner: Matthea Rodrigues Cardoso (alias Isaac Gabay) (1591–1649), merchant, trader in civet cats.

1639–61 Owner/resident: Pieter van Teijlingen (1598–1661), pharmacist, deacon and elder of the Reformed Church.

**29 JB 17 (Later embellished with façade insignia 5435, the year 1674–75 on the Jewish calendar)**

From 1627 Owner: Abraham Govertsz van der Graeff.

Until 1645 Owner: Jan Olis.

From 1645 Owner: Isaac Belmonte (alias André or Christoffel Nunes) (1612–91), merchant and board member of the Portuguese Jewish community.

**30 JB 19 De Arent (The Eagle)**

1618–27 Owner: Sijmon Jansz Lacher.

From 1627 Owner: Abraham Govertsz van der Graeff.

In 1645 Probable owner Abraham Aboab Osorio (alias Denis Jennes) (see below).

In 1678 Owner/resident: Ribca Abendana, widow of Samuel and 1694 Abendana, and daughter of Abraham Aboab.

**31 JB 21**

Until 1636 Owner: Dr. Evert Moerselaer (1594–1636), physician.

1636–41 Owner: Fytgen Apers (1594–1667), widow of Dr. Evert Moerselaar.

1641–45 Owner: Wiggert Willemsz, silk merchant.

From 1645 Owner/residents(?): Abraham Aboab Osorio (alias Denis Jennes) (1596–1664), merchant, board member of the Sephardi congregation, his wife Sara and children.

**32 JB 23**

1620–49 Owner/residents: Elisabeth van der Bel (?–1649), widow of Nicolaas van Bambeeck (I) (1544–1615), her son Nicolaes van Bambeeck (II) (1596–1661), merchant, and possibly his brother Cornelis and others.

1638–50 Resident: Agatha Bas (1611–58), after her marriage to Nicolaes van Bambeeck (II).

1650–74 Owner and probably residents: Abraham Israel Pereira (?–1674), merchant, his wife Sarah Pereira and their children, including Jahaco (Jacob), Samuel, merchants, and Rebecca.

**33 JB 25–27 't Romeins Keyershoofd (The Roman Emperor’s Head)**

From 1620 Owner: Nicolaas Pauw (1607–40).

1632–44 Owners/residents: Bento Osorio (1559–1644), merchant and one of the founders of the Portuguese-Jewish congregation, his wife Esther Maria Teixeira (?–1637) and children.

1644– Owners/residents: heirs of the Osorio family. 18th century

## OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

**Nieuwe Doelenstraat (see the insert in the upper right)**

**34 NDS 18 or 20**

1635–51 Owner: Willem Boreel (1591–1668), VOC lawyer and ambassador to France, had two houses built on this location.

1635–37 Tenants: Rembrandt and Saskia.

## Nieuwe Amstelstraat

**35 NAS 12 Residence and Ashkenazi synagogue, with entrance on the Leprosengracht**

Until 1641 Owner: David Lopes.

1641–52 Owner/residents: David Perera Preto (1610–52), his wife Rachel Preto (1612–88?) and children.

1642–49 Tenants: Ashkenazi Jewish congregation.

1652–61 Owners/residents: the heirs of David Perera Preto.

## Vlooienburgsteeg (later: Houtkoperdwarstraat)

**36**

Before 1639–Tenant: Uriel da Costa (1583/84–1640), philosopher, 40 and his maidservant Digna de Castro.

## Houtgracht

**37 HG 4 Synagogue of the Sephardi Beth Jacob congregation**

1614–39 Owners from 1630 onward: Beth Jacob congregation.

Tenants: José (Joseph) Pinto (?–1635), merchant, and his wife Esther Pinta.

**38 HG 11 Jewish meat hall**

1648–56 Owner: the Sephardi Talmud Torah congregation.

**39 HG 25**

Until 1641 Tenant: Dr. Joseph Bueno (?–1641), physician.

Until 1641 Owner: Jan Lamberts, barge captain and landlord.

1641–52 Owner: Christoffel Hamersteijn, baker and landlord.

1652–65 Owner/residents: Dr. Ephraim Bueno (1599–1665), scholar and physician, and his wife Judith (1607–70).

**40 HG 33–37/39 Sephardi Synagogue, on a lot where three buildings had stood**

1618–39 Tenants, later owners, of a warehouse used as synagogue by the Beth Israel congregation.

Owner: Jan Thivart (1576–1633), sugar and salt refiner and art collector.

1639–75 Owner: the united Sephardi Talmud Torah congregation.

**41 HG 54 Ashkenazi synagogue**

1648–72 Tenants: The Ashkenazi congregation.

**42 HG 55 Sephardi Synagogue**

1612–39 Tenants and later owner Neve Shalom congregation.

From 1639 Owner: Mozes Moreno Monsanto (alias Manuel Rodrigues Monsanto) (?–1655).

**43 HG 59 Mozes en Aaron Kerk (Church of Moses and Aaron), on the site of a former block of houses and a concealed Catholic church.**

?–1649 Owner of several houses on that site: Willem Kick (1579–1647), entrepreneur and lacquer artist.

1649–50 Owner: Pietertje Syverts, widow of Willem Kick.

1650s Tenant: Michael d’Espinosa (1587/88–1654), merchant, his third wife Hester (1601–52), his son Baruch de Spinoza (1632–77), philosopher, and siblings.

## VLOOIENBURG CITY ISLAND

### Korte Houtstraat

**44 KHS 32 De Tempel Salomons (The Temple of Solomon) Museum and shop**

1647–75 Owner/residents: Jacob Juda Leon “Templo” (1602–75), rabbi and teacher, his second wife Rachel (1623–75) and children.

### Lange Houtstraat

**45 LHS 24 Former Sephardi synagogue, Brownist church**

Before 1607 Tenants: Sephardi Beth Jacob congregation.

1610–17 Owner: Jean l’Ecluse, schoolteacher, book printer and elder of the Brownist congregation.

1610–62 Tenants: Brownist congregation.

**46 LHS 38–40 Print shop of Emanuel Benveniste**

1640–65 Tenant and owner: Emanuel Benveniste (1608–65), book printer, his wife Branca (1610–57), his second wife Hester, and children.

1656 Tenants: (LHS 40) Leonarda Nunes (alias Rachel Nunes de Castro), with her maidservant Anna Lopes; and Beatris Rodriguez.

### Binnen Amstel/Zwanenburgerstraat

**47 ZBS 41 House belonging to De Suyckerbakkerij (Sugar Refinery). Rembrandt’s studio and residence**

1610–26/28 Owner: Gillis Lambertsz (1565–1625), timber dealer and builder of the sugar refinery.

1626–36 Owner: Emanuel van Baserode (1553/56–1636), merchant and houseowner.

1636–40 Owner: the heirs of Emanuel van Basenrode.

1636–40 Tenant: Jan van Veldesteijn (ca. 1592–1666), sugar refiner.

1637–39 Tenants: Rembrandt and Saskia.

1640–65 Owner/resident: Jan van Veldesteijn.

**48 ZBS 61 Huis Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk House)**

1633–61 Owner/residents: Jonas Abrabanel (1593–1662), broker, his wife Ester Soeira (1602–76) and children, possibly residing there with his brother-in-law Menasseh ben Israel (alias Manuel Dias Soeiro) (1604–57), his wife Rachel Abrabanel (1602–54) and children Joseph, Gratia and Samuel.

### Jodenhouttuinen

**49 Cellar at the Jodenhouttuinen, near the Sint Antonies lock**

Residents Eleaser Swaeb, a tobacco spinner and his wife Judick Salomons.

Bouwens and their children.<sup>27</sup> He rented the house where Rembrandt previously resided with Uylenburgh from its young owner, Nicolaas Pauw, the son of the nobleman and diplomat Adriaen Pauw. Pickenoy had moved in sometime before 1638, when Uylenburgh left for quarters further down the street. Pickenoy bought the house at some point, since in 1645 he sold it to Daniel Pinto from Lisbon, a Jewish dealer in tobacco and other goods aged approximately thirty-five.<sup>28</sup> Pinto moved into the house with his wife Rachel and their two- or three-year-old daughter Sara. Their son Moses was born there in 1647.

Pinto rented a space in Rembrandt's cellar for storing and selling his tobacco, which we know on account of a conflict between them in 1654.<sup>29</sup> Like many buildings in the street, Pinto's house was sinking, forcing him to carry out a huge renovation, which he started in early spring 1653.<sup>30</sup> In the long period until the completion of the job in May 1654, Pinto had notary Benedict Baddel draft statements, including a testimony by the carpenter and the mason, to the effect that Rembrandt had not paid his share of the costs for the jacking up their common wall.<sup>31</sup> On 15 May he took another step, complaining that the renovation had kept him from using the cellar space for his business for five to six months.<sup>32</sup> This could either have been an attempt to force Rembrandt to pay the costs after all, or an excuse for not paying the rent. Rembrandt, clearly needing the income, seems to have resolved his disagreements with Pinto, which we know from another incident. On Friday morning, 2 July 1655, Pinto's cellar was entered by three or four "Persiaenen" (a label applied to Armenian merchants, some of whom came from Isfahan). They came to buy tobacco, but got into a fight with an employee, the twenty-one-year-old Daniel de Chaves from Livorno, after he refused to take them to another storage space to see more tobacco.<sup>33</sup> The fight spilled over onto the street, and although two witnesses declared a few days later that de Chaves—by then in jail—was the one who was assaulted, he was found guilty of assault and ended up being sentenced to two months in prison or to pay a fine of one hundred guilders.<sup>34</sup>

The previous year there had been more trouble in Rembrandt's cellar, when the brothers and tobacco merchants Jacob and Samuel Pereira, who rented the half of the space not used by Pinto, discovered a theft. On 10 February 1654, notary Baddel took a deposition, at the request of the Pereira brothers, from the nineteen-year-old David Nunes.<sup>35</sup> David said that he lodged with a man named Eleasar Swaeb, a tobacco spinner, who lived with his wife Judick Salomons in a cellar at the Jodenhouttuinen near the Sint Antonies lock.<sup>36</sup> David had seen a large batch of tobacco in Swaeb's cellar, and when he asked what it was, Swaeb and his wife urged him not to say anything about it, offering him hush money, drinks and the services of prostitutes. It turned out that Swaeb, together with a companion named Hertz (alias Swijngas), had stolen about sixty rolls of tobacco from the Pereiras' storage space in Rembrandt's cellar.<sup>37</sup> They worked at this over a period of a month and a half, letting themselves in very early in the morning with copies they had made of the keys to the back entrance, which had been lent to them by Jacob Macharro, an employee of Jacob Pereira. Swaeb's wife Judick was later accused of throwing keys into the water, likely the keys they used for the theft.<sup>38</sup>

If this were not enough, another incident took place in 1656. On 4 May Mordechay and Abraham de Andrade and Isaque and Abraham Rodrigues stated in front of



a notary that they were “in a tobacco shop on the Breestraat,” talking to a man called Moises, when the latter was suddenly attacked with a knife by a certain Malachi.<sup>39</sup> Since Mordechai was the supervisor of the carpentry work at Rembrandt and Pinto’s houses in 1654, and Isaac and Abraham were probably the sons of Salvador Rodrigues, the aforementioned neighbor on the other side, this brawl likely took place in Rembrandt’s cellar.

Among the other owners and residents of the houses in the same block were the cloth merchant and silk shop owner Joris Woutersz, who lived in De Witte Rooster (The White Rooster; JB 10b), and next to him (JB 12) Simon Lievensz, a shoe seller, with his family.<sup>40</sup> His son Lieven Sijmonsz Kelle, a merchant in leather, would later buy Rembrandt’s house after Rembrandt’s bankruptcy, together with his brother-in-law, Samuel Geerincx.<sup>41</sup> The next house (JB 14), De Zilveren Doornenkroon (The Silver Thorn Crown), was sold in 1644 by the Remonstrant minister Johannes Wtenbogaert—known from Rembrandt’s painted and etched portraits of the mid-1630s—as husband and guardian of Susanna van Eijndhoven, whom he had married the year before; they lived elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> The new owner was the merchant Paulus van Focquenbroch, who moved into the house with his wife Catrina Sweers and their children, including their four-year-old son Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch, who later became a well-known poet and playwright. Paulus’s business did not go well, and in connection with his financial difficulties, an inventory of his goods was drawn up in 1649. Like Rodrigues (and Rembrandt), the Focquenbrochs sat on Spanish chairs. They had an oak drawing table with a Turkish carpet and many paintings, including family portraits, some landscapes and a “Christ and Mary.”<sup>43</sup> In 1650 the property passed by forced sale into the hands of a prominent member of the Jewish community: the merchant, pepper trader and shareholder of the West India Company (WIC) Fernando Dias de Britto (also known as David Abendana).<sup>44</sup> We do not know if this native of Lisbon also lived in the house with his wife Hanna Osorio (daughter of the wealthy Jewish merchant and fellow resident of the Breestraat, Bento Osorio), and their many children; from 1654 to 1658 Dirck Claes van der Marck, a pastry baker, lived there as a tenant.<sup>45</sup>

Other owners of property in the row were the heirs of Dirck Jansz Compas, a compass maker whose house was appropriately named Het Gekroond Compas (The Crowned Compass; JB 16).<sup>46</sup> In 1639 they seem to have rented the house to Abraham Farrar, a Jewish physician, poet and president of the board of the Sephardi congregation Talmud Torah, a friend of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and the donor of a precious Hanukah lamp to the synagogue (see fig. 8).<sup>47</sup> The next house, De Oude Hillebrand (The Old Hillebrand; JB 18), was owned between 1644 and 1659 by the carillon player Harman Geerincx, the father of the aforementioned Samuel. He rented the house to a Sephardi merchant named Henriques d’Azevedo, who also rented the house next door (JB 20) from the heirs of the dyer Gerrit Gerritsz Parijs.<sup>48</sup> Next to it (JB 22–24) lived the Jewish merchant Manuel Mendes Franco, his wife Hester and their sons Moses and Jacob, who sold the house in 1653 to the aforementioned silk merchant Woutersz.<sup>49</sup> Next door, in a large double building (JB 26–28) built by Jan Jansz Carel, lived Pieter Ranst, an extremely wealthy merchant from Bruges, later to become a director of the WIC; Ranst had lived here since his marriage in 1621, as this was the parental home of his wife, Rebecca Carel. A costly painting of birds and

animals by Roelant Savery may have adorned the walls of their home, which Ranst had acquired for 225 guilders at the auction of the estate of Hendrick Hoeffslager in 1625, a silk merchant who lived down the street in De Engelenburg (Castel Sant' Angelo; JB 48–50).<sup>50</sup> On this occasion, Ranst may have met some of his Jewish neighbors, since Bento Osorio and David Pimentel also acquired paintings at that auction (see Knotter, p.35). After Ranst's daughter Jacoba, by then an orphan, was married in 1648 to Gilles Valckenier (later a burgomaster of Amsterdam), Valckenier moved in with her in her parental home.<sup>51</sup> The house remained in the family until it was sold in 1686 to Moses de Pinto, the son of Rembrandt's neighbor Daniel Pinto.<sup>52</sup> The last house in the row, JB 30, was partly owned from 1648 onward by the carpenter Gijsbert Bruijnsz Garst, who also seems to have lived there.<sup>53</sup>

### FAMOUS JEWISH NEIGHBORS

Turning to the right into a small alley named Vlooienburgsteeg (later Houtkopersdwaarsstraat), Rembrandt would have passed the house where the controversial philosopher Uriel da Costa lived. Having been the target of a long-term public smear campaign and expelled from the Jewish community, da Costa ended his life in 1640 by shooting himself, an incident which cannot have passed unnoticed in the neighborhood. The year before, da Costa had transferred his few possessions and the contents of his house to his maidservant, Digna de Castro, stating to the notary that she had been living with him and served him, and that “she kept him pleased.”<sup>54</sup> In his autobiography *Exemplar humanae vitae* (A Kind of Human Life), which was reportedly found in his house and was published many years later by the Remonstrant theologian Philip van Limborch (Gouda, 1687), we read that the allegations against him had prevented him from a marriage he, being a widower, really wanted.<sup>55</sup> He seems to have been living in common-law marriage with Digna, a situation in which Rembrandt would also end up with Hendrickje Stoffels years later.

At the end of the alley lived someone Rembrandt certainly knew—the physician and scholar Dr. Ephraim Hiskiau Bueno, along with his second wife Judith.<sup>56</sup> His spacious home was on the corner of the Houtgracht (HG 25), where the entrance was located.<sup>57</sup> Bueno was a man with prominent contacts both within and outside the Jewish community. In a document of singular importance, a letter of 1646 by the poet Joost van den Vondel to his colleague Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, Vondel amusingly recalls that his now deceased friend, the Remonstrant city secretary of Amsterdam Daniel Mostaert, had invited Bueno to go with him to “the patient with the big belly” and deemed it advisable to “relieve” the superfluous moisture that was bothering him.<sup>58</sup> This “patient” turned out to be a wine barrel, which Bueno and Mostaert helped to empty together. Thus Bueno was not only befriended by Mostaert but was clearly also a good acquaintance of Vondel and Hooft.

In Rembrandt's etched portrait of him of 1647 (see fig. 75), Bueno is depicted standing, his hand resting on a banister in an interior. If a specific dwelling is intended, it would have been in this house, where Bueno and his wife seem to have lived before



24  
Rembrandt, *Portrait of  
Ephraim Bueno*, ca. 1647  
Oil on panel, 19 x 15 cm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  
(SK-A-3982)

he bought it in 1652. His father, Joseph Bueno, also a famous physician, had lived there as a renter up to his death in 1641.<sup>59</sup> We know this also from a rather revealing source about their “daily life”: when the house next door was sold in 1641, it was stipulated that the “Jewish doctor” (this could refer to either Ephraim or Joseph, who died later that year) should be allowed to continue to use the “sekreet” (outhouse) shared with the neighbors.<sup>60</sup> In 1650 the house was still rented out to the Bueno family.<sup>61</sup> So when Rembrandt portrayed Ephraim, first in an oil sketch in preparation for the etching, he probably lived right around the corner (fig. 24). Some years later, Jan Lievens, too, made a portrait print of Bueno, who was clearly a somewhat older man of distinction by then (fig. 25).<sup>62</sup>

25

Jan Lievens, *D.<sup>or</sup> Ephraim Bonus, Medicus Hebraeus* (Dr. Ephraim Bonus, or Bueno, Jewish Physician), ca. 1660  
Etching and engraving,  
34.2 × 27.1 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
Museum (Moo7553; Jaap  
van Velzen collection)



Two years after Bueno passed away in 1665, an inventory of his belongings was drawn up.<sup>63</sup> This included a house behind the Breestraat next to the Talmud Torah Synagogue, named De Vergulde Son (The Gilded Sun) which had belonged to his brother-in-law, the physician Dr. Jacob Moreno. The furniture included a cupboard made of a red tropical wood called *sakerdean* and a table of *sakerdean* and ebony, twelve Spanish chairs upholstered with red leather, bedstead curtains of red silk damask and eight history paintings of unspecified subjects. The inventory also mentions over two thousand books in Hebrew, Spanish and Latin, including 1441 unbound copies of the sixteenth-century *Shulchan aruch* (Set Table, a codex of Jewish Law by Joseph Karo), which Bueno had published in Amsterdam in 1662.<sup>64</sup>

If Rembrandt continued his walk and crossed the bridge to the city island Vlooienburg, he would enter the Korte Houtstraat. There at number 32 stood a house named Tempel Salomons (The Temple of Solomon).<sup>65</sup> Since 1647 this was the home of the rabbi, teacher and scholar Jacob Judah Leon “Templo,” the latter addition to his name referring to his famous reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Leon, who lived there with his second wife Rachel and their children, had created a small museum in his home, where he showed his models of the Temple and the Tabernacle in the desert, as well as large replicas of Temple appurtenances: the golden menorah, the altar, the table with the showbread and the garments of the high priest.<sup>66</sup> He also traveled with his Temple model, of which the last trace ends in England. Visitors who came from far to see his creations could also purchase engravings depicting these objects or buy copies of his popular book on the Temple, which was reprinted several times and eventually



published in five languages. All of this Leon advertised in posters, of which a rare hand-colored impression remains (fig. 26). In his *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam* (1664) Philip von Zesen dedicates a passage to Leon's displays.<sup>67</sup> Considering the great fame of this house museum it seems unlikely that Rembrandt would never have visited it. Moreover, Rembrandt and Leon had a common acquaintance in Constantijn Huygens, the secretary of the stadholder, who as the liaison between artists and the stadholder's court had participated in early commissions to Rembrandt. Rembrandt could even have met his former benefactor in front of Leon's door: from a letter of recommendation for Leon by Huygens to Christopher Wren, we know that around 1647 Huygens had taken Hebrew lessons with Leon.<sup>68</sup> A practice sheet that has been preserved among Huygens's papers shows the Hebrew alphabet (probably calligraphed by Leon) and, in Huygens's handwriting, the Dutch names and vocalization signs of the letters. The sheet is preceded by a note by Huygens with the address of his teacher, "near the Balonbaen," a popular indoor tennis court across the street.<sup>69</sup>

Another famous Jewish resident of Vlooienburg was the rabbi, printer and self-appointed diplomat Menasseh ben Israel. When his daughter Gracia Soeira (their family name) was married in 1646 to Samuel—the son of Menasseh's brother-in-law, the real

26

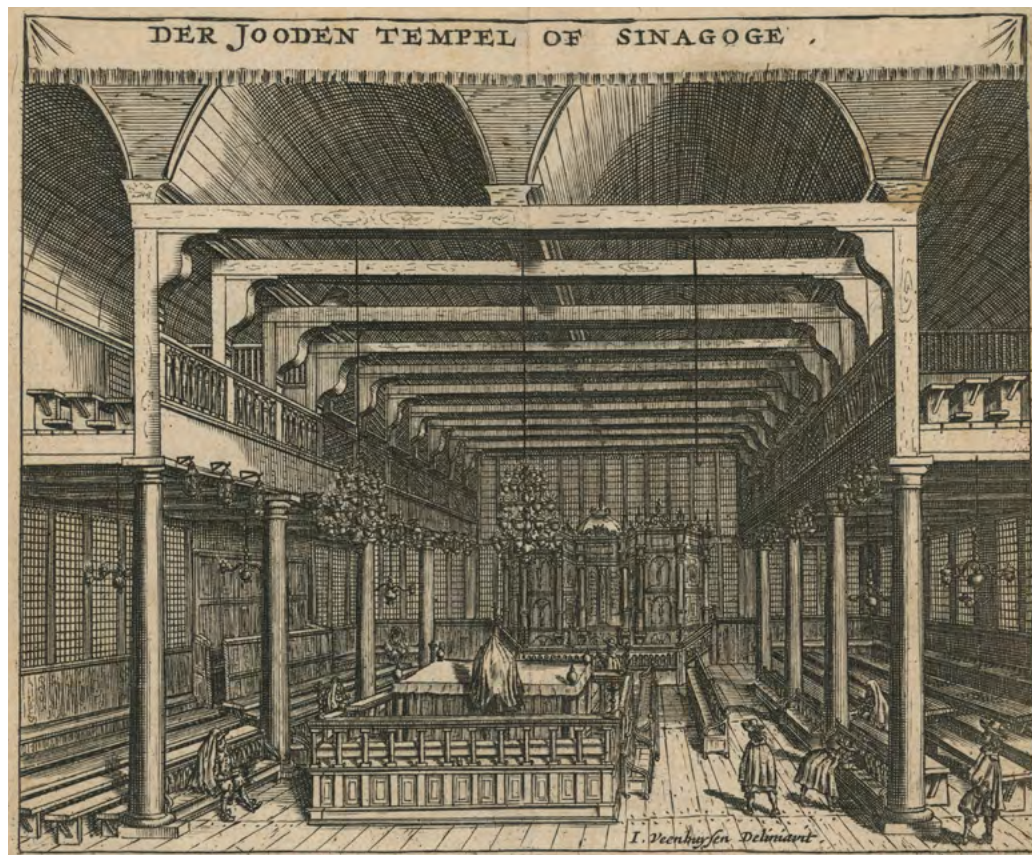
Jacob Judah Leon Templo's broadsheet of his model of the Temple, Amsterdam, after 1652

Engraving by Jacob van Meurs, hand-colored, possibly by Dirk Jansz van Santen, 45,5 x 53 cm

Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Allard Pierson (ROS.INC.470)

27  
 Jan Veenhuysen,  
*Der Jooden Tempel of  
 Sinagoge* (The Jewish  
 Temple or Synagogue),  
 in Philip von Zesen,  
*Beschryvinge van  
 Amsterdam*, 1664  
 Engraving, 11.2 × 30 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
 Museum (Moo1431)



estate broker Jonas Abrabanel—both gave as their addresses “Binnen-Amstel.” Menasseh may even have lived with Abrabanel, with whom he was close, in Huis Sloterdijk (later Zwanenburgerstraat 61), which Abrabanel had bought in 1633.<sup>70</sup> The rabbi and Rembrandt were surely acquainted: in 1655 Rembrandt made four illustrations for his *Piedra gloriosa* (see Nadler, p. 115).

Turning back towards the Breestraat, Rembrandt would have seen on the right side of the Houtgracht the stately synagogue of the Sephardi Talmud Torah congregation (HG 33–37). It was long thought that Rembrandt depicted the interior of this synagogue in an etching of 1648 known as *Jews in the Synagogue* (see fig. 2). This title turned out to be a later interpretation. In the 1679 inventory of the Amsterdam bookseller and printmaker Clement de Jonghe, who acquired a large number of Rembrandt’s etching plates, this one is described as “Pharisees in the Temple.”<sup>71</sup> In point of fact, the building in the etching bears no resemblance to the synagogue, which we know from a 1664 engraving of the interior (fig. 27).

A bit further on, at the location where later the Catholic Mozes en Aäronkerk (church of Moses and Aaron) was erected, lived the philosopher Baruch de Spinoza, in a house that his father Michael, a trader in subtropical fruit and groceries, rented from the entrepreneur and earliest known Amsterdam lacquer artist Willem Kick.<sup>72</sup> Kick had his workshop on the Breestraat, in a property that he also owned. After he passed away (he was buried in the Zuiderkerk in 1647), his widow, Pietertje Syverts, sold the property

at the Breestraat to Elisabeth van der Bel, the widow of Nicolaes van Bambeeck (I).<sup>73</sup> Kick's heirs seem not to have sold the property on the Houtgracht but kept renting it to the Spinozas, as we know from the tax registers of 1651–53. Michael de Spinoza passed away in 1654.

### REMBRANDT'S NEIGHBORS ACROSS THE STREET

If Rembrandt walked along the Houtgracht towards the Zwanenburgwal, he would pass the Jewish meat hall, built in 1648, which was situated behind his house, one lot to the west. Turning the corner, back to the Jodenbreestraat, catty-corner across the lock from his house, was the parental home (JB 1)<sup>74</sup> of Susanna van Collen (Ceulen), daughter of the gunpowder producer Casper van Collen (Ceulen) and his wife Catharina du Bois. Susanna probably lived there for one or two years with her husband Jan Pellicorne after their marriage in 1626.<sup>75</sup> They certainly knew Rembrandt: about 1632, a life-size portrait of Pellicorne with his son Caspar, and a pendant of Susanna with their daughter Anna were painted in Rembrandt's studio.<sup>76</sup>

Next door (JB 3) lived from 1631 to 1638 Rabbi Isaac Montalto (alias Lopo de Luna Montalto), who served as adviser to King Louis XIII of France.<sup>77</sup> Montalto was an active man. In addition to his rabbinical duties and his role in publishing Jewish religious works to be printed by Menasseh ben Israel, he and his brother Michael ran a lucrative business in civet cats.<sup>78</sup> (They were sold not as pets but for the musky fragrance emitted by their perineal glands, which was a valued ingredient in perfumes and to extract which the animal was killed or operated on.) He was confident enough to engage in disputes with Christians, as he is mentioned as a participant—along with Menasseh ben Israel, a “Rabbi Aron,” and Jacob Judah Leon—in a religious debate with the polemicist Jan Pietersz Beelthouwer. This schoolmaster and “comforter of the sick” (*ziekentrooster*, a euphemistic title for a lay catechist), was a controversial thinker who actively sought discussion with rabbis in preparation for his book *Schild der Christenen tegen alle onchristenen* (Shield of the Christians against all non-Christians), first published in 1649. The stated purpose of this book was to protect Christianity against its detractors, including Jews. At the beginning, he describes a conversation he had in 1644 with Montalto and Rabbi Aron, in the hearing of several Jews, which took place in Montalto's house.<sup>79</sup> We cannot be certain that this was the house in Jodenbreestraat, which Montalto sold in 1638 to the Catholic Sijmon Barchman Wuijters, but it must have been in the neighborhood.<sup>80</sup>

Next door to the rabbi lived an acquaintance of Rembrandt, the well-known painter, art dealer and appraiser Adriaen van Nieulandt, who owned JB 5 from 1614 to 1651.<sup>81</sup> He and his wife Kattelijne Raes, and their nine children, did not live there permanently; over the years we come across them at different addresses in the city. But when Kattelijne passed away in 1645, van Nieulandt gave as his address to the Orphan Chamber: “On the Breestraat, over the Sluis, across from Rembrandt the painter,” as if the Rembrandt House were already a city landmark.<sup>82</sup> From 1651 onward the house was owned by Gerrit Arentsz van Lier, and was named Leer en Leerort.<sup>83</sup>



28  
 Marriage contract of Isaac  
 de Pinto and Rachel da Vega,  
 1654  
 Engraving, hand-colored,  
 border design by Salom  
 Italia, 49.8 × 43.2 cm

Amsterdam, Ets Haim —  
 Livraria Montezinos  
 (EH Pl. A-1)

The neighboring house (JB 7) was the parental home of Joan Huydecoper, merchant, lord of Maarsveen, director of the VOC, and six-time burgomaster of Amsterdam, who in 1628 was the first documented purchaser of a painting by Rembrandt.<sup>84</sup> The house, named 't Huis van Nassauwen (The home of Nassaus), seems to have been rented out, at least in 1631, to Isabel Mendes, the young and very wealthy widow of Bartolomeo Rodrigues, the brother of Rembrandt's neighbor Salvador, and later possibly to the lawyer Jacob Franz Hinlopen, who had married Huydecoper's daughter Maria.<sup>85</sup> Incidentally, Rembrandt and Geertje Dircx appeared before Hinlopen in 1649, in his position as commissioner of the Marital Dispute Court.<sup>86</sup> In 1651 Huydecoper rented the house to a Jewish merchant, Jacomo (Jacob) de Pinto from Rotterdam, who had just married Rebecca, the daughter of another neighbor, the wealthy sugar mer-





29  
 Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hof van de E: Heer de Pinto*,  
 ca. 1695  
 published by Pieter Persoy,  
 Amsterdam ca. 1695  
 Etching, 25.2 × 30.8 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
 Museum (M007547)

chant Abraham Israel Pereira (JB 23).<sup>87</sup> He seems to have bought the house later on, and probably lived there with his family until his death in 1701.<sup>88</sup>

Jacob's brother Isaac de Pinto is known as the resident of the stately and still extant Pinto House, further down the street (SAB 69), which he bought in 1651 from Maria Quekels, widow of the brewer Abel Mathijsz Burgh.<sup>89</sup> Thanks to a family history that Isaac penned, we know quite a lot about him.<sup>90</sup> He tells us that he lived in Rotterdam—where his family settled after they left Antwerp—and married his cousin Rachel, with whom he was deeply in love. The couple found Rotterdam depressing because of the lack of young people in their community and planned to move to Amsterdam. In 1652, however, shortly after giving birth to her first child, Rachel died, and the grieving widower Isaac had to leave his son behind in Rotterdam to supervise the renovation of his house on the Breestraat. After making the move, he held various administrative positions in the Portuguese Jewish community of his adopted home-town. Succumbing to heavy pressure from his family, in 1654 he agreed to marry Rachel da Vega, an orphaned relative without a dowry, so that his son would have a mother to take care of him.<sup>91</sup> Their handsome marriage contract, designed by Salom Italia and signed by Menasseh ben Israel, is preserved (fig. 28). In an etching of the exterior of his house made years later by Romeyn de Hooghe we see Isaac's son David Emanuel standing in front of the door, surrounded by a group of people, including beautifully dressed ladies with high wigs, presumably Sephardi women, and a Black servant (fig. 29). Their appearance con-

trasts with that of two men further down the street, who look like the more traditionally dressed Ashkenazi Jews of the time.

Turning back to the block across the street from Rembrandt, the fifth house (JB 9) was the parental home of Frans Banninck Cocq, later burgomaster of Amsterdam, lawyer, lord of Ilpenstein Castle and the captain in Rembrandt's *Night Watch*. The house was sold in 1646 to Weintgen Oetgens van Waveren, the widow of Lieutenant Cornelis Michielsz Blauw, who lived there with her two daughters until her death in 1660.<sup>92</sup> Next to it, in a house named De Witte Lelie (The White Lily; JB 11), was a pharmacy owned by the Penijn family from 1626 to 1641 when it was bought by Dirck Willinck, who had a firm in chamois leather.<sup>93</sup> He rented the house to the pharmacist Johannes Grindel, at least in 1650, but seems to have lived there himself as well, as he was paying the tax in 1651–53.<sup>94</sup> His tenant Grindel had married in 1642 with Annetie, the daughter of the next door neighbor Govert Spruijt, a copper caster (JB 13).<sup>95</sup> Spruijt's wife Trijntje van Kokelen had previously been married to another well-known former resident of the street, the painter Jacques Savery.<sup>96</sup> Her son was the still-life painter Johannes Spruijt.<sup>97</sup>

Next door was De Zeeridder (Knight of the Sea; JB 15), owned from 1630 on by Matthea Rodrigues Cardoso, a Sephardi trader in civet cats. He sold the house in 1639 to the pharmacist Pieter van Teijlingen, who served as deacon and elder of the Reformed Church and who lived there until his death in 1661.<sup>98</sup> The house next door (JB 17) belonged to Abraham Govertsz van der Graeff, and after him to Jan Olis, who sold it in 1645 to Isaac Belmonte (alias André or Christoffel Nunes) from Spain, a merchant. Menasseh ben Israel dedicated his *Hope of Israel* to him in 1650; and in 1656, as a member of the board of the Talmud Torah congregation, Belmonte cosigned the ban on philosopher Baruch de Spinoza. The next house (JB 19) was named De Arent (The Eagle) and seems to have belonged to Abraham Aboab Osorio (alias Denis Jennes), a wholesaler in Brazilian tobacco and silk who also held various administrative positions in the Sephardi community. He lived there with his wife Sara, a daughter of Bento Osorio, and their children.<sup>99</sup> In 1645 Aboab bought the house next door (JB 21) from Wiggert Willemsz, a silk merchant, who in his turn had bought it in 1641 from the heirs of the Reformed physician Evert Moerselaar, a cousin and close friend of the burgomaster and surgeon Nicolaes Tulp, known from Rembrandt's famous *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (1632).<sup>100</sup>

Next to the Aboab family (JB 23) once lived the richest woman on the Breestraat, Elisabeth van der Bel, widow of Nicolaes van Bambeeck, with her son Nicolaes Jr., a trader in cloth and wool, and her daughter-in-law Agatha Bas, with their six children.<sup>101</sup> In 1641, the year in which Rembrandt painted his *Night Watch*, he also created splendid pendant portraits of Nicolaes and Agatha.<sup>102</sup> Their heirs sold the house in 1650 to the wealthy Madrid sugar merchant Abraham Israel Pereira, who had fled the Inquisition and arrived in Amsterdam, via Venice, in 1644.<sup>103</sup> Abraham and his wife Sara were the parents of the tobacco dealers Jacob and Samuel Pereira, who rented Rembrandt's cellar.

The last house in the row was a stately building called 't Romeins Keyersshoof (The Roman Emperor's Head; JB 25–27). This was the family home of the Osorios. Bento (Baruch) Osorio, a native of Lisbon, was a merchant on a grand scale, investor

in the WIC and one of the founders of the Sephardi Jewish community of Amsterdam. He was living in the Breesstraat as early as 1625, in a house opposite the Zuiderkerk, and after on another location in the street before he bought 't Romeins Keyersshoof in 1632.<sup>104</sup> When Osorio died in 1644, his funeral was attended by many, including the rabbis Menasseh ben Israel and Saul Levi Morteira. The large building remained the family residence.

Three more Jewish denizens of Rembrandt's neighborhood cannot be left unmentioned. The first two are well-known men whose respective skills led to the creation of a beautiful manuscript: Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira and the calligrapher Judah Machabeu (alias Luis Nunes do Valle). In 1650, for the considerable sum of 8,500 guilders, Rabbi Morteira bought the corner house on the other side of the lock (SAB 102) from Gerberich Heijndrix (widow of Lambert Gerritsz Ruijl, a painter and later *zijdekraker*, or silk trader), and her third husband Egbert Gerritsz Daelder.<sup>105</sup> Morteira served as rabbi in the Portuguese Jewish congregation, first in Beth Jacob and then, after the unification of the congregations in 1639, in Talmud Torah. One of his duties was to encourage the practice of halakhic Judaism among *ex-conversos*. In his sermons, he expressed criticism of *conversos* still living as Catholics in their homelands, and of the exuberant dress and banquets common among the wealthy Amsterdam Sephardim of his time, living in large houses with empty rooms, while others had no place to live.

For years, a portrait of an old man by Rembrandt from about 1660 was associated with Morteira. The Dutch-Jewish historian Jacques Zwarts had no doubt about this identification. In an article of 1926, he muses about a visit by Rembrandt to the rabbi, "to ask the said master about biblical difficulties," including the Hebrew inscriptions for his painting of *Moses and the Tablets of the Law*.<sup>106</sup> This seems rather unlikely, as Morteira was known for his strict interpretation of Jewish law and made a name for himself for openly criticizing Christianity in his writings. He was especially vehement concerning Catholicism, but given that he was also antagonistic toward the Calvinism of his day, he did not have much contact with non-Jews.<sup>107</sup> In 1656 Morteira, occupying a seat in the rabbinical court, was another of the signatories of the ban on Spinoza.

The calligrapher Judah Machabeu also lived in a house at the lock, when in 1637 he was betrothed to the twenty-four-year-old Branca Cardozo.<sup>108</sup> In 1646 he left for Brazil, not returning until more than ten years later. He was an outstanding calligrapher, the master of a multitude of scripts. Between 1662 and 1664, shortly after Morteira's death, he calligraphed five copies of *Providencia de Dios con Ysrael* (The Providence of God with Israel) a famous work by the rabbi. That this specific work was circulated in handwritten rather than printed copies may have been a precaution due to its provocative nature, with its open challenge to Christian tenets.

This brings us to a third famous Jewish resident of a house at the lock, the physician and poet Isaac Israel Rocamora from Valencia.<sup>109</sup> Born as Vincente Rocamora in a family of Jewish ancestry that had been forcibly converted to Catholicism, he grew up as a pious Catholic and became a Dominican friar; he was even appointed as confessor of the Spanish Princess Maria. In 1643, however, he left the Iberian Peninsula for Amsterdam, where he returned to the faith of his ancestors and adopted his Jewish name. He became an active member of Jewish communal and cultural life and wrote poems in

Spanish and Latin. Rocamora became a close friend of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and asked for his help to get accepted as a student of medicine at the Franeker University. Menasseh willingly involved his friend, the classical scholar and theologian Gerard Vos, and asked him to write a recommendation letter for Rocamora to their mutual friend Johannes Antonides van der Linden, Professor of Medicine and Rector of the University of Franeker. The letter is revealing for our understanding of how these Christian scholars thought of the religion their Jewish friends practiced, as van der Linden writes:

This Rocamora has been warmly recommended to me by your friend, Menasseh, who I know has no deficiency in your eyes except for his religion. I, for my part (and I would say this of few, not only of that sect, but of any other), consider him a man of true worth, albeit he lives in darkness. He has requested me to write you a letter informing you of his protégé's intention. Unless I am mistaken, religion is no impediment to the conferring of a degree; for, while you were still in your native city, this honor was bestowed by the University of Leyden upon David Haro. I remember, moreover, having heard from my old colleague Adolf van Voorst (God rest his soul!), in talking of this matter, that medical knowledge only comes into the question, and not religious belief; especially in these parts, where the Jews are licensed to practice the art.<sup>110</sup>

In conclusion, during Rembrandt's years in the street, things changed. Some of the old elite moved to the newly built canals, while well-to-do Sephardim bought houses in Rembrandt's block and became his direct neighbors. From the 1630s onward an increasing number of Ashkenazi Jews, in background and Jewish identity quite different from the Sephardim, found their way to the city. As early as 1634, one source even called the Breestraat "the Jews' street," suggesting that the Jewish presence was already the most striking characteristic of a neighborhood that was on its way to becoming the Jodenbuurt, the Amsterdam Jewish Quarter.<sup>111</sup> Contact with non-Jews was the particular province of well-integrated Sephardim, who cultivated a similar taste in the arts, dress and furnishing to the non-Jewish elite. Such contact could even develop into friendship, as we see in Ephraim Bueno's relationship with city secretary Daniel Mostaert, Menasseh ben Israel's friendship with Christian scholars such as Gerard Vos and Johannes van der Linden, and Jacob Judah Leon's cooperation with the millenarist Adam Boreel for his Temple reconstructions. Nevertheless, these contacts and friendships do not mean that they approved of each other's religious viewpoints. To devout Christians, including scholars such as Vos and van der Linden, Jews like their friend Menasseh were respected and appreciated, but in their eyes lived "in darkness" by not accepting Christ as their Messiah.

As shown above, Rembrandt clearly had extensive contact with some Breestraat Sephardim. He rented space in his cellar to them, accepted commissions from them, and perhaps even sold them paintings from his house (see Knotter, p. 35). Léopold Flameng's depiction of the street is right: when Rembrandt stood on his doorstep, left his house for walks in the neighborhood, a visit to the local pharmacy or at the art auctions he attended, he met Jews of all kinds. He saw them, and they him, and surely quite a few of them were aware that a famous artist was living among them.

## NOTES

- 1 This article is the result of the research project *Behind the Doors: (Jewish) Life and Material Culture in Amsterdam* by the Jewish Museum, Amsterdam, initiated by the author in 2020, with the great help of interns Guido Leguit and Ruie Wijnschenk. Special thanks to Hans Bonke, Maarten Hell, Elke Stevens, Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld and Jaap van der Veen for sharing their knowledge and to Geert Kessels and Pim van Bree, the developers of the Nodegoat database, which is a wonderful tool for this type of research. The references to archival records at the Amsterdam City Archives (SAA) are abbreviated to: CB=Confessieboeken (Confession Books); DBK=Desolate Boedelkamer (Chamber of Abandoned and Insolvent Estates); DTB=Doop, Trouw en Begraafboeken (Baptism, Marriage and Burial Books); KS=Kwijtscheldingen (formal delivery of property); NA=Notariële Archieven (Notarial Archives); OR=Ondertrouwregister (Register of betrothals); Tax register 1650-52/3=Verpondings-quohieren van den 8sten penning).
- 2 The Dutch Jewish scholar Abraham Mordechai Vaz Dias (Vaz Dias 1935 I and II) was the first to draw up an overview of Rembrandt's Jewish neighbors, which he published in a list of names and small biographies.
- 3 The house numbers in this article refer to those in *The Atlas van Amsterdam*, published by Jan Christiaan Loman Jr. in 1876. The part of the street before the lock is referred to as SAB (Sint Antoniesbreestraat), the part after, where Rembrandt lived, as JB (Jodenbreestraat).
- 4 Barber Jacobs bought the house (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 17, fols. 104r-v, 29 April 1608) from painter Jonas van Merle. The house has the number SAB 61 due to the fact that the neighboring house, De Olijfberg, was previously a double house (SAB 57-59). See also van Heel 2006, 75, who refers to a later house (De Preeckstoel) (SAB 82) owned by Lastman from 1631-33.
- 5 Uijtens (also spelled as Uttens or Vuijtens) bought the house in 1615 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 24, fol. 13, 25 June 1615) and sold it in 1645 to his son-in-law, the goldsmith Willem Calckoen, who had married his daughter Anneken in 1627 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 41, fol. 164 (159), 10 August 1645).
- 6 Bredius and de Roever 1886, 13.
- 7 Van Beuningen was brought to his grave from his home in the Breestraat (SAA, DTB, entry no. 5001, no. 1054, fols. 78v and 79, 19 November 1633).
- 8 For an overview of artists and art dealers that lived and worked in the Breestraat, as well as other prominent residents, see Dudok van Heel 2006, 74-75.
- 9 On the first day of Christmas 1610, a group of Brownists held a service in a hall owned by Jean de l'Ecluse, which previously had served as a synagogue (van Agt 1974, 9). It was located next to Lange Houtstraat 26 on the city island Vlooienburg. Catholics, officially not allowed to hold services, had "schuilkerken" (hidden churches) on several locations in Amsterdam, including a house named Moses on the Jodenbreestraat, today the location of the Mozes en Aäronkerk.
- 10 See Howell/Jacobs 1890, 28. Howell stayed with Jean de l'Ecluse, a schoolteacher and book printer from Rouen, and deacon of the congregation of Brownists in Amsterdam, who had arrived in Amsterdam about 1595. L'Ecluse lived in a house at the lock (Zwanenburgwal 11), which he bought in 1616 from Pieter Belten I (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 24, fol. 165v, 9 April 1616), right behind the house where Rembrandt settled in later years, but was also the co-owner of a complex on Vlooienburg, at Lange Houtstraat 24, which the Brownists used as a lodging for visitors, so Howell may have stayed over there, or at L'Ecluse's home.
- 11 The personnel in Jewish households included Ashkenazi Jews as well as Christians, and formerly enslaved Black people (Levie Bernfeld 2020).
- 12 De Visscher, who rented the house from the heirs of Pieter Belten I, was charged for tax at this address in 1631 (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 92). When his wife Sara Cobbaut passed away in 1638, they still lived there (Lammertse and van der Veen 2006, 49 and n. 142).
- 13 Between 1630 and 1633 Rembrandt lived partly in Leiden and partly in Amsterdam, lodging with Uylenburgh. In 1633 he moved permanently to Amsterdam, staying with Uylenburgh until 1635 (Wijnman 1956, 100). Rembrandt and Saskia probably moved in May that year to the Nieuwe Doelenstraat, possibly no. 18 or 20, which Rembrandt rented from the regent Willem Boreel, who himself lived next door (van Eeghen 1959, 151). Rembrandt was still on the Nieuwe Doelenstraat in February 1636, when he wrote to Constantijn Huygens that he was living next

- to Boreel. From 1637 to 1639 Rembrandt and Saskia lived at the Suyckerbakkery, a sugar refinery on the Binnen-Amstel (van Eeghen 1959, 152), which he mentions in a letter to Huygens of 12 January 1639 (Koninklijke Verzamelingen, The Hague, inv. no. G001-18, autografencollectie, no. 362a).
- 14 Rembrandt bought the house from the heirs of Pieter Belten I on 5 January 1639 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 45, fols. 195v-196, 8 January 1653). The house was split into two after it was sold in 1658/60.
  - 15 This refers to a previous owner, Egbert Sturck (old Dutch spelling for *stork*).
  - 16 Mourits 2016, 45.
  - 17 Rodrigues is listed in the 1631 tax register between captain Abel Mathijs [Burch] and the heirs of Egbert Pelicorn, which makes it probable that he previously lived in SAB 67 (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 52, no. 147). His heirs sold JB 8 in 1722; the document refers to 18 May 1633 as the date when Rodrigues purchased the house (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 96, 29 January 1722).
  - 18 SAA, OR, entry 5001, no. 674, fol. 264, 30 September 1637.
  - 19 Rodrigues bought JB 10a (the houses 10a and 10b were combined into one house (JB 10) in later years) for 6,700 guilders from Pieter Jacobsz Kerck, husband of Marrantge Jacobs Sampson (SAA, KS, entry 5062, no. 40, fols. 252v-253, 6-8 April 1645). In the tax register of 1650-52/3, where he is charged for both JB 8 and 10, no tenants are listed (SAA, tax register 1650-52/3, no. 255, fol. 154r).
  - 20 Jaap van der Veen kindly provided us with a transcription of Rodrigues' inventory (SAA, NA entry no. 2261 (A), fols. 505-12, not. A. Lock, 16 March 1654).
  - 21 See n. 20, fols. 508-9.
  - 22 See n. 20, fols. 505, 507 and 511.
  - 23 The 1640 inventory of the possessions of the Sephardi communities lists several ceremonial objects as belonging to "Josuah Jessurun Roiz." According to Cohen 2004, 253, n. 49, "Roiz" should be understood as Rodrigues. The objects include a silver lamp, a Torah scroll with silver holders, a green Torah mantle with gold stripes, a white and gold Torah binder and a pair of silver Torah finials.
  - 24 See n. 20, fol. 511.
  - 25 The drawing was long considered to be by Rembrandt. Meischke (Meischke 1956, 17, fig. viii) suggested that it depicts a view of the house of Rembrandt's neighbor, Egbert Sturck [*sic* Salvador Rodrigues]. Sturck passed away in 1612 (SAA, DTB, entry no. 5001, no. 1053, fols. 150-51, DTB 1053, 21 July 1612). Both the attribution to Drost and the identification of the room are subject to further discussion. The Rembrandt House curator Leonore van Sloten and head of collections Epcó Runia consider the identification of this space as the *kunstcaemer* to be quite possible (email to the author, 28 March 2022).
  - 26 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 596, no. 249291, fol. 88, not. Laurens Lamberti, 26 June 1634.
  - 27 Dudok van Heel suggested that Pickenoy moved to this address in 1635 or 1636. In 1637 he paid an annual rent of 200 guilders to Nicolaas Pauw (Dudok van Heel 1985, 153 and 156 IIA; Dudok van Heel 2006, 65). Van der Veen suggests that Uylenburgh moved into the house named Cronenburgh in May 1638 (Lammertse and van der Veen 2006, 54-55).
  - 28 SAA, KS, entry 5062, no. 41, fols. 68v-69, 26 May 1645. In a notarial deed in 1660 Pinto is described as about fifty years old (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2209, not. Adriaen Lock, 16 August 1660, fol. 177).
  - 29 For a detailed account of the conflict, documented between 14 February 1653 and 15 May 1654, see Vaz Dias 1935, 24-25; Vaz Dias 1936 I, 35-36; Meischke 1956, 16-17; Dudok van Heel 1990; Dudok van Heel 1991; and Nadler 2003, 1-10. Transcriptions of the original documents with English translations are online available at <http://remdoc.huygens.knaw.nl>.
  - 30 Pinto registered his agreement with contractor Pieter Swens at the notary (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2436, fol. 966, not. Jan Molengraeff, 14 February 1653). Carpenter Jan Jansz declared half a year later that Pinto paid the costs for both the common wall with Rembrandt and the hall (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 969B, fols. 422-23, not. Benedict Baddel, 15 September 1653).
  - 31 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 969A, fols. 189-90, not. Benedict Baddel, early November 1653.
  - 32 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 972A, no. 317927, (no fol.) not. Benedict Baddel, 15 May 1654. Pinto died in 1681. We find his tombstone, with carved flower wreaths and vases, at the Ouderkerk Jewish cemetery, next to that of his son Moses.

- 33 Ponte 2022.
- 34 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2199, 6 July 1655, not. Adriaen Lock, fols. 17–18 and SAA, CB, entry no. 5061, no. 310, fol. 213, 9 July 1655. See also Ponte 2022.
- 35 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 972A, no. 316152, not. Benedict Baddel, fols. 364–65, 10 February 1654. See also Nadler 2003, 34.
- 36 In the archival records he is also mentioned as Lenart Swaeb (SAA, CB, entry no. 5061, no. 310, fols. 3–4, 12 February 1654; and *ibid.*, fols. 5–6, 18 February 1654).
- 37 In the testimony of David Nunes, Swaeb’s companion in crime is referred to as an Ashkenazi Jew named “Herts anders [otherwise] Swijngas.” According to Nadler 2003, 34, his name was Hartog Abrahams. Indeed, a person with this name, a dealer in old clothes, was interrogated on 12 February (see n. 120).
- 38 SAA, CB, entry no. 5061, no. 310, fols. 5–6, 18 February 1654.
- 39 See Ponte 2023 and SAA, entry no. 5075, no. 1923, no. 401039, not. Joris de Wijze, 4 May 1656.
- 40 Woutersz bought the house in 1656 from Hendrick du Molijn, when he was already living there (SAA, KS, entry no. 5066, no. 11, fol. 13, 12 May 1656). Lievensz had bought it in 1632, as we know from a deed of sale of the property by his heirs (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 50, fol. 132v, 29 May 1659).
- 41 The exact date of the sale is unclear. The record of the transport (SAA, KS, entry 5061, no. 2170, fol. 76, 18 December 1660) refers to 1 February 1658 as the date of the sale to Kelle and Geerinx, though the house was auctioned again in 1659 and bought by Claes Abramsz Blijendael who was, however, unable to pay, after which it was purchased by Kelle and Geerinx. See also Crenshaw 2006, 73.
- 42 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 40, fol. 29v, 25 May 1644.
- 43 See Hekman and de Ligt 2011 for a transcription of the inventory (20 August 1649).
- 44 SAA, KS, entry no. 5061, no. 2168, fol. 134v, 22 June 1651, with a reference to 3 January 1650 as the date of the sale.
- 45 Their betrothal was registered in 1631 (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 672, fol. 59, 22 August 1631). For van der Marck see SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2976, no. 265067, not. Alweijn de Jager, 30 April 1658, fols. 55–56.
- 46 Compas bought the house in 1631 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5073, no. 925, fol. 54, 2 January 1631).
- 47 The Farrars may have lived here for quite some years; in a notarial deed of 1619 the previous owner, Carel Laurens, declares that Dr. Rosa (the alias of Abraham Farrar) is now living in his house in the Breestraat, across from the St. Antoniesluis (SAA, NA, entry no. 645, fols. 574–75, not. Not. Sibrant Cornelisz 23 October 1619), and in the 1631 tax register (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 85) a certain “Abraham Verhaar” is listed at this location. This is probably a misspelling of the name Farrar.
- 48 SAA, tax register 1650–52/3, no. 255, fol. 154v.
- 49 SAA, KS, entry no. 5066, no. 9, fol. 54, 19 January 1654 and entry no. 5067, no. 3, fol. 41, 19 January 1654, with a reference to 19 May 1653 as the date of the sale.
- 50 Inventory of the sale of the property of Hendrick Hoeffslager (SAA, WK, entry no. 5073, no. 954, 19 March 1625); see also Montias #579. Rans bought no. 3, “1 stuck van alderlij gevogelt ende beesten van Roelant Savary” for 225 guilders, in addition to a seascape by Aert Anthonisz and some other works by unnamed painters.
- 51 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 466, fol. 72, 20 August 1648.
- 52 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 64, fol. 380v, 27 June 1686.
- 53 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 42, fol. 165v, 3 March 1648.
- 54 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 1555, fol. 677, not. Jan Volkaertsz Oli, 6 June 1639. For a transcription of the full document, see Meijer 1949, 162.
- 55 Vaz Dias 1936 II was convinced that some nasty aspects of da Costa’s life story were exaggerated and partly invented by the anonymous editor(s) of the text. This was demonstrably so concerning the passages about his flogging and public humiliation in the synagogue, which according to Vaz Dias were taken from an antisemitic book on the Jews from 1608 by the Reformed minister Abraham Costerus. The latter, in turn, had borrowed the passages from the highly popular *Synagoga Judaica* (1604) by the Swiss theologian and Hebraist Johannes Buxtorf, which explicitly promised the Christian reader to “consider” with utmost diligence the “great ingratitude,

- disobedience and stubbornness” of the Jews through a detailed description of their ceremonies. It is also noteworthy that the da Costa text refers to contemporary Jews as Pharisees, a typical Christian framing of the time. Matt Goldish (2010–11, 11) on the other hand, considers the text as a typical *converso* text, influenced by, among other things, da Costa’s Christian background and convictions. Moreover, Goldish states that da Costa was “far more solicitous toward Christians than he is toward his Jewish co-religionists” and “sees himself in the *Example* in the role of Jesus.” (Goldish 2010–11, 11). What da Costa’s original text may have been remains a question; the manuscript has disappeared after several seventeenth-century sources had seen it, among whom was Johannes Müller, who discussed it in his book *Judaismus oder Judenthum* (1644). The publisher of the printed edition, too, claimed to own a copy.
- 56 Ephraim and Judith married in 1635 (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 674, fol. 41, 27 July 1635), after Bueno’s first wife Ester, daughter of the physician Dr. David Arari, passed away in 1629.
- 57 When Bueno registered his betrothal with Ester Arari in 1625, he lived at the city island Vlooienburg (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 670, fol. 109, 29 November 1625). He was still there in 1635 when he married Judith.
- 58 See van Tricht 1979, 742 and Vlessing 1996, 204.
- 59 Ephraim Bueno bought the house from Christoffel Hamersteijn (SAA, KS, entry no. 5061, no. 2168, fol. 208v, 2 January 1654), with reference to 17 January 1652 as the date of sale.
- 60 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 38, fols. 74v–75, 27 May 1641.
- 61 The 1650–52/3 tax register mentions after Hamersteijn’s (crossed out) name “per dr Joseph Bueno,” meaning that Joseph rented the house (SAA, tax register 1650–52/3, no. 255, fol. 162v). Since Joseph had passed away in 1641, his heirs, including Ephraim, seem to have paid the rent before Ephraim bought the house in 1652.
- 62 A print described as “Doktr. Ephraim Bonus” in the 1679 inventory of the estate of bookseller and printmaker Clement de Jonge, is probably Lievens’s version, and not Rembrandt’s, since—in contrast to Lievens—Rembrandt kept the lower margin, with space for a name, empty, while Lievens’s portrait has identifying inscriptions (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 186. no. 4528, fol. 121, not. Johannes Backer, 11 February 1679).
- 63 Inventory of Ephraim Bueno (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2262A, fols. 101–15, 30 November 1667, not. Adriaen Lock).
- 64 The same books recur in the inventory of the deceased Jacob Moreno, who earlier that year died in De Vergulde Son (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2262, fols. 44–47, not. Adriaen Lock, 20 July 1667).
- 65 Leon bought the house in 1647 from Isaak Levi (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 42, fols. 32v–33, 12 February 1647).
- 66 Offenberg 1992b, 129.
- 67 Von Zesen 1664, 198.
- 68 See Worp 1911–17, vol. 6, 356, nr. 6954.
- 69 In the Collectie Constantijn Huygens in the National Library, The Hague (Ka 48, fol. 299r), the following note can be found in Huygens’s handwriting: “Hebraïca. Leon Hebreu auteur du temple de Salomon au Vloijenburgh tegenover de [doorgehaald: Baol?] Balonbaen.” This information was kindly provided to me by Ad Leerintveld in an email dated 27 May 2002.
- 70 See Amsterdam 1987, 31, Dudok van Heel 1993, and Hell 2022, 66. Abrabanel hands the house over to his son Joseph in 1661 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 52, fol. 18, 28 April 1661).
- 71 The plate was listed as “62: Phariseen inden Tempel” in the inventory of the estate of Clement de Jonghe (SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 186. no. 4528, fol. 138, not. Johannes Backer, 11 February 1679).
- 72 The tax register 1650–52/3 (fol. 161v) lists at this location “Willem Kick per Michael Spinoza,” indicating that Spinoza’s father rented from Kick. Since Kick had passed away in 1647, the Spinoza’s probably kept renting the house from Kick’s heirs.
- 73 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 43, fols. 65v–66, 15 October 1648.
- 74 It was thought for long that the painter, art dealer and diplomat Pieter Isaacsz lived here. He indeed owned the house (see n. 77), but he seems to have lived further down the street, in a house named Cronenburgh (SAB 53; Dudok van Heel 2007, 81).
- 75 In the 1631 tax register “the widow of Caspar van Ceulen” is charged at that location for the considerable amount of 340 guilders (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 94). For Jan Pellicorne see Dudok van Heel 2007, 81 and 86.



- 76 Wallace Collection (P82 and P90). The paintings were considered authentic portraits by Rembrandt until Tümpel in 1986 and the Rembrandt Research Project doubted this and attributed them to Rembrandt's workshop (Tümpel 1986, no. A 118; *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* 1982–2015, vol. 2 [1986], no. C 65 and Duffy and Hedley 2004, 349 suggested that it was made by Rembrandt with the help of a pupil. This has been generally accepted although there is no consensus about the extent of the “help.”
- 77 Montalto bought the house from Pieter Maertensz Hoefijser, receiver general of the Admiralty in Amsterdam from 1613 to 1641. In the deed of transfer (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 35, fol. 305v, 16 August 1631) the owners of the properties next to Montalto are the heirs of Pieter Isaacsz on the north side and Adriaen van Nieulandt on the south. Van Nieulandt seems to have been renting his house at the time to Reijnier Jansz, who is listed next to Montalto in the 1631 tax register (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 96).
- 78 In 1637 Montalto commissioned a printed edition by Menasseh ben Israel of *Pitron chalomot* (The Interpretation of Dreams) by Rabbi Shlomo Almoli. For his trade in civet cats, see Prins 1936.
- 79 Beelthouwer 1666, 2nd ed., 17.
- 80 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 36, fols. 50v–51, 28 January 1638.
- 81 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 23, fol. 86, 6 May 1614. In the 1631 tax register Reijnier Jansz, owner of a silk shop, is however charged at this address (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 96). Jansz may have rented the house at the time. In the tax register of 1650–52, van Nieulandt's name is crossed out. By then the property had been sold to van Lier (SAA, tax register 1650–52/3, no. 255, fol. 153v).
- 82 On 16 February 1645 he gives as his address “Op de Breestraat, over de sluys, over Rembrant de schilder.” See van Eeghen 1986, 23.
- 83 SAA, KS, entry no. 5066, no. 6, fol. 179, 14 February 1651.
- 84 Schwartz 1984, 134.
- 85 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 458, fol. 285, 14 October 1642. The 1650–52/3 tax register lists “Schepen Joan Huydecooper [crossed out] p. Jacob Fransz Hinloops,” which means that Hinlopen paid the tax for this location, he may have rented it from his father-in-law (SAA, tax register 1650–52/3, no. 255, fol. 153v).
- 86 Wijnman 1968, 109.
- 87 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 681, fol. 152, 1 December 1651. Pereira had purchased JB 23 in 1650 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 43, fol. 237, 20 April 1650).
- 88 Jacob de Pinto is mentioned as the owner when the house next door was sold (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 52, fols. 112v and 113, 22 April 1661).
- 89 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 44, fol. 170, 26 April 1651.
- 90 The original manuscript is at Ets Haim - Livraria Montezinos (EH 48 E 35).
- 91 Their Jewish marriage took place on 15 Av 5414 (29 July 1654), probably in Rotterdam, and was registered in Amsterdam on 26 February 1655 (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 682, fol. 250).
- 92 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 41, fol. 112, 22 January 1646.
- 93 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 524, no. 209631 (no foliation), not. Jacob Jansz Westfrisius 23 January 1641.
- 94 SAA, tax register 1650–52/3, no. 255, fol. 153.
- 95 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 676, fol. 163, 12 March 1642.
- 96 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 665, fol. 382, 20 November 1604. Savery lived from about 1616 to 1618 on the Breestraat in the Indische Rave (Indian Raven; SAB 30; Dudok van Heel 2006, 79).
- 97 At his betrothal, Johannes lived on the Breestraat (SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 684, fol. 196, 20 June 1659).
- 98 SAA, KS, entry no. 5061, no. 2167, fol. 92, 7 August 1640, with reference to 19 January 1639 as the date of the sale, and SAA, DTB, entry no. 5001, no. 1055, fols. 130v–131, 18 November 1661.
- 99 In the documents of the sale of JB 21 in 1641, Aboab is mentioned as the owner of JB 19 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 38, fol. 96v, 24 May 1641).
- 100 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 40, fol. 97, 10 January 1645 and SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 38, fol. 96v, 24 May 1641. For Moerselaer and Tulp see Rogge 1880, 82.

## A STROLL THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- 101 Bel bought the house in 1620 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 27, fol. 129, 8 February 1620). In the 1631 tax register she is charged 875 guilders (Frederiks and Frederiks 1890, 36, no. 105).
- 102 Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels (155) and The Royal Collection, Great Britain (RCIN 405352).
- 103 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 43, fol. 232, 20 April 1650.
- 104 Osorio gave this as his address at the auction of silk cloth dealer Hendrick Hoeffslager's possessions on 19 March 1625 (Montias #597). In a transfer of the house in 1731, is mentioned that Bento Osorio bought 't Romeins Keyersshoof on 9 May 1632 (SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 105, fols. 159v–160, 29 October 1731).
- 105 SAA, KS, entry no. 5062, no. 44, fol. 138, 10 December 1650.
- 106 Zwarts 1926, 12–13.
- 107 Fisher 2012, esp. 119–20.
- 108 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 674, fol. 277, 6 November 1637.
- 109 SAA, OR, entry no. 5001, no. 679, fol. 105, 10 July 1647 and no. 686, fol. 237, 23 May 1665.
- 110 Reichman 2022.
- 111 The English writer and politician Sir William Brereton wrote during his 1634 visit to Amsterdam about “a street [...] called the Jews’ Street: they have three synagogues,” describing probably the Breestraat and the Sephardi synagogues on the Houtgracht (Brereton 1844, 61).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mirjam Knotter** is art historian and chief curator at the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam. She was co-curator and co-author of the exhibition and publication *The “Jewish” Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling* (2006–7). Knotter has curated over fifteen exhibitions and published a variety of articles and books on topics such as Rembrandt’s use of Hebrew inscriptions and Jewish art and culture. She currently leads a research project reconstructing Jewish daily life and material culture in the former Amsterdam Jewish neighborhood.



# Rembrandt's Other Jews: The Amsterdam Ashkenazim in the Seventeenth Century

BART WALLET

## ABSTRACT

Critical examination of some two hundred notarial deeds relating to the Amsterdam Ashkenazim offers new insights into the social and cultural history of this community in Rembrandt's age. These sources, which are often very detailed and descriptive, give voice to the Ashkenazim themselves. The entangled processes of establishing Portuguese Jewish and Ashkenazi communities led to clearly demarcated communal borders, borders that were rendered porous, however, in everyday social interactions. Moreover, over the course of the century the Ashkenazi community's social profile diversified, as a vibrant middle and upper class was constituted that connected to translocal Ashkenazi networks. As such, it was a fully diasporic community, simultaneously located in the local and in the translocal spheres.

## KEYWORDS

Ashkenazim, translocal networks, social borders, diaspora, Amsterdam

30  
Rembrandt, *Four Men  
Standing, Wearing Hats*,  
in 1732 inventories as *Een  
Soldaetje bij 3 Smousen*  
(A Soldier with Three  
"Smousen"—an insulting  
word for Jews), ca. 1650  
Black chalk, framing lines in  
black ink over brown ink,  
15.3 × 10.3 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-T-1930-55; gift of  
C. Hofstede de Groot,  
The Hague)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_WALLET



31  
The Torah scroll of Rabbi  
Moses Uri ben Joseph  
Ha-Levi, ca. 1400  
Ink on parchment on  
wooden scrollers,  
119 × 28 × 13 cm

Amsterdam, Portuguese  
Israelite Community (T57)

When in 1631 Rembrandt settled in the vibrant eastern neighborhood of Amsterdam on and around the Sint Antoniesbreestraat, he found himself in a truly cosmopolitan environment.<sup>1</sup> Many different languages could be heard in the streets, spoken by people hailing from different parts of the world and adhering to a variety of religions. Among these neighbors, Rembrandt encountered Jews. Most belonged to a group known as Sephardim or Portuguese Jews, the name referring to the Iberian Peninsula from which they had been driven in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

While the Portuguese Jews, who numbered about a thousand at the time, have attracted a lot of attention in Rembrandt scholarship and Jewish historical studies alike, it was not the only Jewish community in Rembrandt's Amsterdam. Not long after the Portuguese started their merchant community in Amsterdam, Jewish immigrants from the east, known as Ashkenazim, settled there as well. Among the first was the famous Uri Ha-Levi family from Emden, which plays an important role in the founding myth of the Sephardic community; they are portrayed as the co-religionists who initiated the New Christians, who had been living as Catholics, into religious Jewish life. Two material reminders of their role are the medieval Torah scroll and the Machzor (prayerbook for the Jewish High Holidays) which the rabbi took with him to Amsterdam (figs. 31 and 32). The rabbi left the Torah scroll to the Sephardi congregation upon his return to Emden; the machzor was donated to the Ashkenazi congregation in 1669 by his grandson, the printer known as Uri Fayvesh (Phoebus) ben Aron Ha-Levi.

These newcomers were part of a much larger pattern of migration to Amsterdam from the Germanic and Central European lands, including a considerable Lutheran

32

The Amsterdam Machzor.  
Written in the surroundings  
of Cologne ca. 1250  
Manuscript, ink and  
watercolor on parchment,  
51.7 × 13.0 cm

(Mo14777; Amsterdam,  
Jewish Museum, and Co-  
logne, Landschaftsverband  
Rheinland. Acquired with the  
support in the Netherlands  
of the Ministry of Educa-  
tion, Culture and Science;  
BankGiro Loterij, Mondriaan  
Fund; and the René & Su-  
sanne Braginsky Foundation;  
and in Germany of the Kul-  
turstiftung der Länder, Ernst  
von Siemens Kunststiftung,  
C.L. Grosspeter Stiftung,  
Kulturförderung des Landes  
Nordrhein-Westfalen,  
Rheinischer Sparkassen- und  
Giroverband, Sparkasse  
Köln-Bonn and Kreisspar-  
kasse Köln)  
Photo: Ardon Bar-Hama



minority comparable in size to the Jewish communities. Ashkenazim were pushed out of the Holy Roman Empire by ongoing wars and economic conditions, which limited the possibilities for Jews to settle and start families. Amsterdam, on the other hand, was a bustling metropolis, in need of a cheap labor force. The earliest Ashkenazim in the city hailed from places such as Frankfurt am Main, Kassel, Worms, Emden, Hanau, Metz, Charleville and Prague.<sup>2</sup> Most of them were rather poor, working as servants in Sephardi households, as kosher butchers for the Portuguese, in petty trade with the Germanic countries and as peddlers and beggars (fig. 33). Ashkenazim living in Rembrandt's vicinity included the blanket maker Abraham Benedictus from Hagenau and his wife Judith Josephs; the kosher butcher Jacob Sampson and his wife Aeltie Moses van Worms; and the tobacco spinner Eleaser Swaeb and his wife Judick, who were caught stealing tobacco from Rembrandt's cellar, which he rented to some Jewish tobacco dealers (see Knotter, p. 51).<sup>3</sup>



33  
 Romeyn de Hooghe,  
*Hof van den Baron Belmonte*, published by  
 Pieter Persoy, Amsterdam  
 ca. 1693-95. Detail showing  
 Baron Manuel de Belmonte  
 (Isaac Nunes) giving alms  
 to the poor in front of his  
 mansion on the Herengracht  
 Engraving, 25.2 × 30.8 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
 Museum (M007051; Jaap  
 van Velzen Collection)

Although there are no known portraits by Rembrandt of individual Ashkenazim, they were just as much part of his cultural imagination as the Portuguese Jews. I would therefore like to call them “Rembrandt’s Other Jews.” In this essay I aim to bring to light the dynamics of Amsterdam’s second Jewish community, which within a century would become the largest in all of Europe.

The process by which this second Jewish community was founded took several decades, in constant interplay with the earlier established Portuguese community and with the municipal authorities. In the course of the century, I will argue, the Amsterdam Ashkenazi community developed a profile of its own, deeply interwoven with the social fabric of the metropolis.<sup>4</sup> Scholarship on the seventeenth-century Amsterdam Ashkenazim is scarce, with pre-war amateur historians, mainly David Mozes Sluys and Abraham Mordechai Vaz Dias, still serving as the main points of reference.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that these scholars had access to Ashkenazi community archives that were lost in the Second World War. Scholars of the Portuguese community, such as Yosef Kaplan, Daniel Swetschinski and Miriam Bodian, have analyzed how Ashkenazim were perceived from within the Sephardic community.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of the complex ways in which Rembrandt was and was not related to the city’s Jews is offered in Steven Nadler’s riveting book *Rembrandt’s Jews*, as well as in the exhibition catalogue *The “Jewish” Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*.<sup>7</sup>

## BORDER-MAKING

The first half of the seventeenth century was a formative period for both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities.<sup>8</sup> In heavily intertwined processes they defined their identities and negotiated their mutual relations. This process was conditioned by asymmetrical power relations in which the Portuguese community had the upper hand. In order to grasp what happened to the Ashkenazim we have to start briefly with the Portuguese. There was a community composed for a large part of “New Jews,” who in a climate of religious mobility had decided to adopt the religion of their ancestors. They became Jews, but were well aware of a certain equivocality in their identity.

The two elements that played the largest role in defining their identity were ethnicity and religion.<sup>9</sup> Ethnicity mattered most, since they cherished their Iberian heritage and kept in contact with family members across the globe. Most were not refugees in the proper sense of the word, but first and foremost members of a diasporic community united by links with their country and culture of origin.<sup>10</sup> Ethnic solidarity was expressed by using the term *Nação* (nation), which was supposed to comprise all descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, wherever they lived and irrespective of their present religion.

Next to ethnicity, religion was key to their identity. The Sephardim were Jews by choice—at least, the dedicated core of the community was. This is important to note, since many Portuguese immigrants hesitated to make a choice, preferring to keep their options open. Religion and ethnicity did not always coincide. Part of the *Nação* was Jewish, but another part was Catholic, and some were even Protestant. There was, moreover, one more problem: in cities such as Amsterdam, Venice and Hamburg, the New Jews also encountered “old Jews” with different ethnicities, among them Italian Jews, *Tudescos* from Germany and *Polacos* from Poland. These “old Jews” fostered a culture of Jewish learning, embedded in firm Jewish religious identities. For Sephardim seeking to define the newly formed borders with New Christian family members on the Iberian Peninsula, in the New World and in various port cities, coming to terms with Amsterdam Jews of different backgrounds was an additional challenge, and a complex one.

One of the questions that needed to be answered was what status to accord to the Ashkenazim. As adherents to and scholars of the Jewish faith, they stood immeasurably higher than most Sephardim. Socially, however, they did not come close to the cosmopolitan Portuguese, nor could they ever become part of the *Nação*. The early modern period offered several models for the structure of Jewish communities.<sup>11</sup> First came the Levantine Model, which was adopted in Venice, Salonica, Constantinople and other, mainly Mediterranean cities. Here, the Jewish communities that were established preserved the practices and kinship relations of a group's region of origin. This gave rise to myriad synagogues and communities, rooted in Hungary, Germany and Poland as well as the homelands of the Sephardim. The Levantine Model was followed by the Colonial Model, with a distinctly different strategy. In this paradigm the first Jews to arrive in a new location established the modes and customs (*nusach* and *minhag*) for the community, to which later arrivals had to conform. What this amounted to, in the Dutch and





34  
 David ben Menachem  
 Hacohen, title page of  
*Sefer Mizmor-le-Todeh*  
 (*Seyfer mizmer le-toudeh*),  
 printed by Elijahu Aboab,  
 Amsterdam 1644

Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
 University Library  
 (OTM: ROK A-1378)

British Americas, was that new Jewish communities (with the exception of Suriname) were Sephardi. Until the first half of the nineteenth century most Jewish communities in the Americas were Sephardi, although a significant part of the membership was ethnically Ashkenazi.

Amsterdam followed what can be called the Western European Model, a less fragmented variant of the Levantine Model. Two large Jewish communities came into being, ethnic in nature but distinguished by slightly different codes of religious law (*Halakhah*) and ritual practice (*nusach*). This process took several decades, a period during which other, larger developments in the Jewish world were taking place. The printing revolution resulted in the rapid spread of halakhic codices and prayer books throughout Europe. While this furthered cultural transfer between Sephardi and Ashkenazi domains, it also led to new border-making. The huge success of Yosef Karo's *Shulchan Aruch* (1565), a predominantly Sephardi codification of Halakhah, mobilized an Ashkenazi reaction, as Joseph Davis has demonstrated. Rabbi Moses Isserles wrote glosses to the *Shulchan Aruch*, titled the *Mappa* (1571), commenting on all instances where Ashkenazi codification differed from Sephardi.<sup>12</sup> This consolidation of the halakhic borders between both major traditions intersected with the negotiation of social and communal differences between various types of Jews in Amsterdam. Cross-border collaboration remained possible, sometimes with unexpected consequences: the oldest known book printed in Yiddish in Amsterdam came from the printing press of the Sephardi Elijahu Aboab (fig. 34).

35  
 Romeyn de Hooghe,  
*Begraefnis der Joden buyten  
 Amsterdam* (Funeral of the  
 Jews outside Amsterdam;  
 the Sephardi cemetery Beth  
 Haim in Ouderkerk aan de  
 Amstel), ca. 1680  
 Etching, 23.5 x 28.5 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
 Museum (M001104)



Initially, Amsterdam housed three different Sephardi communities, which opened their doors to some non-Sephardi Jews without offering them membership. They occupied positions in the margins, such as serving in the kashrut sector. This form of integration in the Sephardi infrastructure extended to permission for burial at the prestigious Sephardi cemetery in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, albeit in a separate section (fig. 35).<sup>13</sup> It cannot be said, however, that integration was a guiding principle in itself. As the three Portuguese communities went into a process of unification, resulting in one Sephardi community, the Ashkenazim were being pushed out. It is therefore no coincidence that 1639 saw the founding both of a unified Sephardi community and a distinct Ashkenazi one.

The first recorded Ashkenazi services were held in Anshel Rood's house for the New Year holiday, Rosh Hashanah, in the year 1635. The Torah scrolls were borrowed from Sephardim. In quick steps, the congregants scaled up. The following year they rented from the Sephardim a large building for synagogue services. In 1639, when an autonomous Ashkenazi community came into being, it numbered some five hundred people. Physical separation from the Sephardim took longer than the establishment of corporate structures. Only in 1642, after significant pressure from the Portuguese, did the Ashkenazim open their own cemetery, in Muiderberg, about the same distance to the east of Amsterdam as Ouderkerk lay to the south. Moving from the synagogue rented from the Sephardim to a new synagogue of their own, on the Houtgracht, was not

accomplished until 1649.<sup>14</sup> With this step, the religious borders between the two communities were now clearly marked, and religious spaces mostly disentangled. In daily life, however, Sephardim and Ashkenazim still shared the same space, living together in the same neighborhood, a vicinity they also shared with Rembrandt and many other non-Jews. Not all of the contacts were friendly. The board of the Portuguese community, the Mahamad, issued repeated—thus, insufficiently observed—injunctions to discourage members from giving alms to Ashkenazi shnorrers and beggars who assembled at the gate of the Sephardi synagogue on Fridays and holidays. The Mahamad considered these individuals to be afflicted with vices invidious to the morals and spirit of *bom judesmo*, the healthy brand of civilized Judaism for which they stood.<sup>15</sup> The Ashkenazim were definitely in need of re-education. The Portuguese were generously willing to contribute to the required civilizing offensive, but only on condition that the Ashkenazim stayed in their own distinct community, at a distance from theirs.<sup>16</sup>

### SHARED SPACES, SHARED LIVES

As much as the two Jewish communities were at pains to distinguish themselves from each other, analysis of notarial deeds demonstrates how much more entangled the lives of Ashkenazim were with both Portuguese Jews and non-Jews than has so far been realized.<sup>17</sup> Living together in the same neighborhood, they encountered each other in myriad ways. The presence of the “other” was part of daily lived experience; everyone who lived there had to come to terms with the diversity of the neighborhood. Even if communal authorities tried to keep the borders up, as Bodian rightly stated, this was not the whole story: Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Christians ran into each other continuously.<sup>18</sup> This happened at various levels: in the streets, but also in shared households.

The city islands of Vlooienburg, Uilenburg and Marken, where nearly all Amsterdam Jews lived, were mixed neighborhoods. Jews and non-Jews lived side by side, in unavoidable interaction with each other. Neighborhood quarrels crossed religious and ethnic lines. For instance, in 1658 a certain Gets Naftali attacked his fellow Ashkenazi Jew Moijses Salomons at the corner of Zwanenburger Bridge. First he used a stick, thereafter simply his fists. Two non-Jews witnessed the event and took Salomons’s side, arguing in his favor that Naftali attacked him without any form of provocation. Two years later, when two non-Jews were fighting out a conflict over a fence that presumably altered the property borders, their Jewish neighbors weighed in with eyewitness testimony. In 1672 a certain Roelof killed his mother, and the neighboring Jews and non-Jews all gave witness statements, revealing how well aware they all were of what was going on in each other’s households.<sup>19</sup>

We even encounter cases of Ashkenazim, Portuguese Jews and Christians living not only next to each other, but in a shared household. Not infrequently, we find High German and Christian girls serving as maids in the houses of wealthy Portuguese families.<sup>20</sup> Men were employed as servants, as we find out when they give testimony concerning household incidents. Such relationships could become so cordial that Sephardi masters and ladies would include bequests to their Ashkenazi servants in their wills. Of course there were also problem cases. The Ashkenazi maid Beeli Davidts, for



36  
Rembrandt, *Two Jews in Discussion, Walking*,  
ca. 1640s  
Black chalk and brown ink  
on paper, 9.7 × 8.4 cm

Haarlem, Teylers Museum  
(O+ 070)

instance, was accused of neglecting her mistress Rachel Belmonte, leaving the bedridden lady unattended for two or three days.<sup>21</sup> The High German maid Hester created quite some consternation in 1663 by accusing her master, the Portuguese rabbi Moses d'Aguiar, of trying to force himself upon her. She claimed that all her masters, or their sons, had tried to seduce her. Further investigation, however, indicated that Hester was just as much of a problem, with each of her former masters claiming that she led a dissolute life, stole from them, and had been fired.<sup>22</sup> In other cases, Portuguese men confessed to sleeping with their Ashkenazi or Christian maids, and took responsibility for the children born out of these liaisons. This was the case with Ysak Fonseca and the Ashkenazi maid Maria Hanegum, and Jacob Orobio and the Christian maid Stijntje Thomas van Dithmarschen.<sup>23</sup>

Although it was quite common for Ashkenazim to serve in Portuguese households, sometimes we find the opposite. In 1671 the desperate father of Sara Nietto tried to get his daughter out of the house of Rachel Abrahams, the wife of Jacob Speck Polack. He elicited testimony from Rachel's ex-husband, Levij Davidts, to the effect that she was a nasty, dirty and dishonest woman who kept company with thieves and other unsavory characters. Her present husband had been incarcerated and even temporarily banned from entering the city. In sum, through her employment by Rachel, Sara's honor and virtue were being compromised.<sup>24</sup>



37  
Rembrandt, *Group  
of Orientals*, ca. 1641–42  
Pen and wash on paper,  
14.3 × 18.6 cm

Warsaw, University Library  
Print Room (Gabinet Rycin  
BUW, Inw. zb. d. 4285)

Sexual relations between Jewish men and Christian women were strictly forbidden by the Amsterdam authorities, but as the aforementioned examples unsurprisingly show, much in line with research by Lotte van de Pol, they went on anyway.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, community rules prohibiting marriages between Portuguese and Ashkenazi Jews was sometimes violated. I have encountered at least one such case, when the High German bride Hendel Mayer married Aaron Dias da Fonseca, a marriage that brought forth a daughter and a son. In a second marriage, Hendel was wed to the Ashkenazi Joseph Salomons. Her daughter by her first marriage, Hester Dias da Fonseca, who can be considered a Sephardi, also crossed lines in taking an Ashkenazi man for a husband, David Keizer. In Hendel Mayer's will of 1691 the children from her first and second marriages were treated on equal footing.<sup>26</sup>

Jews of different denominations who shared households acquired cultural and linguistic knowledge of the other. Two Ashkenazim, Aron Levij and Sijmon de Pool, attended services in the Portuguese synagogue in 1670, which we know from an attestation in which they claimed to understand and speak Portuguese and could therefore follow the service. When several members of the Del Soto, alias Delmonte family were put under a ban,<sup>27</sup> Sijmon, a tobacco merchant who worked with one of them, went to Chief Rabbi Aboab da Fonseca asking if he could maintain his employment without being sanctioned himself. The chief rabbi referred him to the Portuguese parnassim, who concluded that it was impossible for him to continue working for his master.<sup>28</sup> This story demonstrates both that some Ashkenazim became sufficiently acquainted with Portuguese culture to understand and speak Portuguese, and that Ashkenazim

might accept the authority of Portuguese officials in matters of faith. If this was an exceptional case, it was an everyday reality that the many Amsterdam Ashkenazim who worked together with Dutch Christians learned the Dutch language. By the late seventeenth century, community documents testify to the growing impact of vernacular Dutch on the Yiddish of Amsterdam Ashkenazim.<sup>29</sup>

Many of the recorded contacts between members of different denominations were of an economic nature. Portuguese Jews, Ashkenazim and Christians did business with each other in numerous sectors. Ashkenazim active in the tin trade would turn to the syndics of the tinsmiths' guild to establish the quality of the tin they acquired.<sup>30</sup> Ashkenazim traded with non-Jewish and Sephardi businessmen in tobacco, gold and jewelry, silk and sheets, and East Indian colonial wares. The high level of intercommunal connection and shared knowledge comes clearly to the fore in the settling of business conflicts. The parties in such a dispute had the option of going to the municipal authorities or to a *beth din* (court of law) of the Jewish community. In some cases, Ashkenazim preferred to bring mutual conflicts to the civic authorities rather than going to the *parnassim* (the powerful administrative board) or the rabbi. In most cases, however, they acceded to the rabbinic court of their own community, as advised by Halakhah. That is what Elias Salomons and Isaack Abrahams did in 1686 when they had a dispute over storage facilities in Dunkirk.<sup>31</sup>

What to do when a Portuguese and a High German merchant are at odds with each other? Attesting to the growing standing of the Ashkenazi rabbinate is the agreement in 1676 by Michiel Worms and Abraham de Luna Montalto, alias Abraham Segenberch, to submit their business conflict to the Ashkenazi *beth din*, on which Chief Rabbi Meir Stern, Abraham Philips and Levij Salomons had seats.<sup>32</sup> In an earlier case, in 1657, the Frankfurt Jew Jacob Mathijsz had a conflict with Rembrandt's Sephardi neighbor Daniel Pinto concerning a chunk of ginger. The non-Jew Gregorius van der Gilt was with them and witnessed the breakdown of their negotiations. After Mathijsz left, van der Gilt and Pinto decided to go to the Portuguese synagogue and ask for arbitration from the community's "good men." This resulted in Pinto reimbursing Mathijsz after returning the ginger.<sup>33</sup> The very fact that a non-Jew was involved in this communal judicial process shows that it was possible for the various judicial spheres to overlap each other, with Ashkenazim, Sephardim and non-Jews using these spaces to maneuver to their best interests.

To find the members of communities emphatically segregated by ethnicity and religion engaging in frequent encounters with each other and inhabiting entangled social spheres might seem paradoxical. Regarded more closely, it is precisely the institutional stability of both communities that made such day-to-day shared lives possible. The institutions defined the parameters within which individuals could form private identities. As long as communal values were secure and guaranteed, individuals were free to develop within or sometimes even outside these borders. The key issue was that they did not challenge the *raison d'être* of the community or breach its borders. When someone did, hard countermeasures could be expected. That is what happened when the physician Joseph Abarbanel Barbosa and others challenged the Portuguese community's 1677 ban on buying chickens and poultry from Ashkenazim. Abarbanel argued that the ban was

contrary to Halakhah (Jewish law), but the *parnassim* decided that it wasn't, and excommunicated him. The effects were too much for him and after five weeks he publicly asked for forgiveness in the synagogue.<sup>34</sup>

For Ashkenazim, the existence of their own community provided a secure social, cultural and economic basis that enabled them to develop economic relations with other Amsterdam citizens. They knew that if they foundered financially, the community would take care of them, providing welfare and medical assistance. If they died poor, any orphans they left behind would be taken care of. Poor relief and care of the sick were among the most vital functions of the communal infrastructure.<sup>35</sup> The membership, after all, consisted in large measure of families living from hand to mouth, on the margins of society.<sup>36</sup> Rembrandt models that look like Ashkenazim will have come from this part of the community, recent immigrants from the wave that expanded the size of the community from five hundred in 1639 to about two and a half thousand in 1670.

The struggle for survival led some of these indigents to cross the line into criminality. The notarial files make mention of Ashkenazi thieves, fences and violent brutes.<sup>37</sup> A certain Moijes Tralowitz gained notoriety for his savage behavior, for instance, when he mistreated several people in the house of the Norwegian lodging-house keeper Cornelis Cornelisz on Geldersekaade in 1677.<sup>38</sup> Another swindled a sick old lady by selling her silver artifacts for far too little money.<sup>39</sup> The records of the Ashkenazi community show the *parnassim* intervening on numerous occasions on behalf of the wives of criminal husbands. Their husbands would be on the road for long periods without leaving household money for their families. There were men who were addicted to dice and lost all their money, sometimes even their clothing.<sup>40</sup> In one case, the *parnassim* summoned a Portuguese Jew, David de Solis, who had gambled with a High German Jew and confessed to using false dice.<sup>41</sup> Worst of all were the husbands who became violent to their wives, beating them severely.

One of the most curious cases to come to the courts concerns a Polish Jew who was arrested in Haarlem in 1656. Acting like a madman, he had been terrorizing local farmers, throwing in windows and smashing roof tiles of their houses. That he was mentally disturbed is made more than likely by another of his perverse provocations. After stepping into a pit latrine up to his chin he entered a farmer's house and lay down on his bed, going on to smear the excrement on the walls and doors of the house. After his arrest, his wife did not want the man back in her house; the Haarlem police ended up taking him to the Ashkenazi synagogue for them to deal with.<sup>42</sup>

While poverty and petty crime were undeniably part of the social profile of the Ashkenazi community, they were fortunately not the norm. In the second half of the seventeenth century a growing number of Ashkenazi families made it into the middle class and even further up the social scale. Amsterdam being a dominant economic center, the city drew translocal Ashkenazi merchant clans.<sup>43</sup> They would make sure to have family members and/or company agents living in the city. Several local Ashkenazim were highly successful and established important family businesses. Typically, these businesses would engage on a local level with Christian and sometimes also Portuguese merchants, while pursuing prosperity in the vast realm known as Ashkenaz—the im-



38  
Romeyn de Hooghe,  
*T Profil van de Kerk*. View of  
the Portuguese (left) and  
Ashkenazi Great Synagogue  
(right), published by Pieter  
Persoy, Amsterdam, ca. 1695  
Etching and engraving,  
23.4 × 56.5 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
Museum (M005395)

aged territory of Ashkenazi Judaism, extending 2,500 kilometers from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the east to London in the west.

Amsterdam became a major hub in the trade networks of such Ashkenazi family businesses as the firms of Goldschmidt (Goldsmid), Oppenheim and Gomperz (Gomperts). Wolf Goldsmid, son of the court Jew of Hessen-Kassel, settled in Amsterdam and married a local Ashkenazi girl. He built up the family business in close contact with his relatives in Kassel and Frankfurt am Main, including the well-known banker Benedict (Meyer Baruch) Goldschmidt. One of his activities was trade in jewelry, a prominent client being the Frankfurt art collector Abraham Schelkens.<sup>44</sup> The Gomperts family, originally from Cleve, Emmerich and Wesel, spread out into the Dutch Republic.<sup>45</sup> In Nijmegen Benedictus Levij Gomperts established himself in the early eighteenth century as banker and financier (*solliciteur-militaire*) of the armies of the Dutch Republic, a role similar to that fulfilled by family members in the Holy German Empire. The Amsterdam branch became the firm Philip Levij Gomperts and Sons, an integral part of the large family network stretching across Western and Central Europe. One of the Amsterdam partners, Cosmanus Elias Gomperts, became a major sponsor of the local Hebrew printing industry. Cosmanus, married to the eldest daughter of the famous woman writer Glikl von Hameln, ran a printing firm himself in 1688–89 and 1692–97. In the interim he sponsored the unsuccessful firm of the convert Moses bar Abraham.<sup>46</sup>

Ashkenazi merchants were likewise embedded in both local Jewish and non-Jewish and translocal Ashkenazi networks. Sadock Salomons Perelsheim, a scion of one of the oldest Ashkenazi families in Amsterdam and frequently serving as a *parnas*, had extensive contacts with the family firms of Oppenheim and Bacharach. The Oppenheims were based in Frankfurt am Main and Coblenz, Bacharach in Frankfurt am Main. Parts of Perelsheim's business correspondence with Samuel Bacharach "zur Rost" is kept in the notarial archives, as is his correspondence with Abraham Tracht, alias Abraham Bacharach "zum Drachen."<sup>47</sup> One of Sadock's sons caused his father quite some distress,



when on a business mission to Frankfurt he decided to run off with the money. He was caught in Wesel, released and again put in prison in Bingen am Rhein. His father, although seriously disappointed, decided to forgive his son for his youthful trespass, on condition that henceforth he abide strictly to his father's strictures.<sup>48</sup>

Some of these Ashkenazim reached a socioeconomic level quite comparable to that of well-established Portuguese families. One such success story is that of Joseph Salomons and his wife Hendel Mayer. Joseph traded in textiles and products from the Dutch East Indies, among other goods. One lively account has him having coffee at his house with two of his Christian clients, a striking instance of social mixing. Upon his death in 1691, Salomons had shares in quite a number of ships. The debtors who owed him money range from prominent Amsterdam firms to Jewish and non-Jewish firms across Central Europe. Most telling, however, is the inventory of Salomons's house on Batavierstraat. The table is of marble, the closet of ebony; the candelabras are of silver, as is an exquisite fruit bowl. Salomons owned a Torah scroll topped by a golden crown with little clocks on it and a shield bearing the name of his deceased son. His collection of Hebrew books was impressive. Among the items stored in the cellar were fifteen barrels of Arnhem tobacco. But most striking is his large collection of paintings, mostly depicting biblical stories. In one room there were paintings of the anointing of King Solomon, Daniel in the lions' den, Queen Esther and seven other large paintings; another held a depiction of David with the head of Goliath, a woman's portrait, flower pots, and nineteen more paintings.<sup>49</sup>

In sum, during Rembrandt's life the Amsterdam Ashkenazim developed from a small, insignificant band of migrants into a sizeable, socially varied community, ranging from petty criminals to respectable business families. This community fitted seamlessly into the mosaic of local society. It maintained extensive ties with Portuguese Jews as with non-Jewish neighbors and business contacts. It was also typical of Amsterdam immigrant society in that it was deeply embedded in translocal Ashkenazi networks. Frankfurt am Main was very significant for the Amsterdam Ashkenazim, but Coblenz, Prague and London were also among the locales where they had significant contacts.

### COMMUNAL CHALLENGES

In the decades when Rembrandt lived in Amsterdam, first on and around Vlooienburg, later on the Rozengracht, the Ashkenazi kehillah faced two major challenges that threatened its internal stability. They were hot topics of conversation in the city and could not have escaped Rembrandt's attention.

The first challenge was the arrival of a new group of Jewish immigrants from 1648 onward. Following on the first wave from western Germany, larger numbers of Ashkenazim, called Polacos, came to Amsterdam from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, driven from their homes by the Khmelnytskyi pogroms, the war with Russia and the invasion of Sweden. They established their own minyan in Amsterdam, with services in the Lithuanian liturgy.<sup>50</sup> To the dismay of the existing Ashkenazi kehillah, the Portuguese supported this split in Ashkenazi worship. Their backing played a role in the official recognition granted in 1660 to this third Amsterdam Jewish Nation by the mu-

39  
 Unknown maker, *Sabetha Sebi, Vermeynden Messias Der Ioden* (Shabbetai Zvi, Alleged Messiah of the Jews), Netherlands, after 1666  
 Engraving, 30.5 x 20.2 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum (Moo7382; Jaap van Velzen Collection)



nicipal authorities. The new immigrants differed from the High German Jews in their customs, their pronunciation of Yiddish and their tradition of learning. Whereas most High German Jews were raised in the Western Ashkenazi traditions of Torah and Talmud study, the East European Jews had developed new, more sophisticated methods of studying Talmud, called pilpul.<sup>51</sup> Their learning was highly regarded by the Amsterdam Sephardim, and proved useful for the expansion of the Jewish printing industry, which acquired a dominant position within the Sephardi and Ashkenazi diasporas. One of these learned individuals was a certain Jecousiël Isaacx, who worked as a corrector for Hebrew books for ten years before deciding in 1665 to return with his family to Poland.<sup>52</sup> The ongoing fights between the two communities, and the growing complexity of relations between three different Jewish communities, led the burgomasters in 1673 to terminate the Polish Jewish Nation, who were forced to give up their autonomy and join the Ashkenazi community.<sup>53</sup>

The second challenge was constituted by the Sabbatean movement. In 1665 the widespread conviction took hold in the Jewish world that a Sephardi from Izmir named Shabbetai Zvi was the long-awaited Messiah (fig. 39). In Amsterdam, the Sephardim embraced this creed in overwhelming numbers. But so did the Ashkenazim, who took pride in the circumstance that the messiah's Ashkenazi wife, Sarah, had lived for a while in Amsterdam. Her brother, who was still living in the city, was later nicknamed Samuel

Mashiach. When in 1666 the news broke that the messiah had converted to Islam, the upheaval was huge. Part of Amsterdam Jewry, however, believed that Shabbetai Zvi's conversion was an ingenious strategy to conquer the world of Islam and lead to the proclamation of the messianic age. Among them were the Ashkenazi parnassim, who in 1667 received a Sabbatean prophet, Shabbetai Raphael, with all honors, and even coerced their rabbi, R. Isaac Dekkingen, to host the prophet in his house. As late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, the shammas—warden and secretary—of the Ashkenazi community, Leib ben Oizer, confessed to having been a secret believer in Shabbetai Zvi for decades. He belonged to a secret society that was in contact with other crypto-Sabbatean circles and that kept the messianic fire alive. It was not until the 1710s that he admitted to having been misled. He composed a history and evaluation of the Sabbatean movement to warn his offspring not to participate in such messianic movements in the future.<sup>54</sup>

## CONCLUSION

During Rembrandt's years on the Sint Antoniesbreestraat, the neighborhood where he spent most of his Amsterdam years, he witnessed at close hand the establishment of a Jewish community markedly different from the prominent Sephardi one with which he was familiar from the start. These new High German and Polish-Lithuanian arrivals were no less colorful, adding Ashkenazi traditions to the multicultural setting of early modern Amsterdam. While the communal borders with the Portuguese community were strictly drawn, in social life Ashkenazim and Sephardim often lived entangled lives. Gradually the Ashkenazi community was woven into the fabric of Amsterdam society, while maintaining intensive contacts with the wider Ashkenazi diaspora.

In the eighteenth century the Ashkenazi community developed into the largest of Europe, with no fewer than twenty-three thousand members, dwarfing the five thousand Sephardim. The demographic balance between both communities had changed forever, and in the course of the eighteenth century the power relations shifted as well, not only between the two Jewish communities but also in their respective status with the municipal authorities. Internal as well as external borders needed to be renegotiated, and a new balance of power had to be struck. The position of the Amsterdam community within the much wider network of the Ashkenazi diaspora added much to its new status.<sup>55</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 I would like to thank the editors of this volume and Maarten Hell for their comments on previous drafts of this paper.
- 2 Vaz Dias 1940.
- 3 Amsterdam City Archives (SAA), OR, entry no. 5001, no. 681, fol. 157, 21 December 1651; entry no. 5001, no. 681, fol. 76, 20 April 1651.
- 4 In another article, to be published in an edited volume by Janne Nijman and Dave De ruyscher, I will analyze the political and juridical status of the High German Jewish and Polish communities in Amsterdam, arguing that its internal structures mirrored the political dynamics of the city.

- 5 Most importantly Sluys 1940; Vaz Dias 1940.
- 6 See, for instance Kaplan 2000, 51–107; Swetschinski 2000, 156–57, 184, 188–89, 202–02, 251–52; Bodian 1997, 125–31.
- 7 In Nadler 2003, see 28–34, 54–55, 83–84, 118, 148, 154–55, 169, 199, 207; Amsterdam 2006.
- 8 Throughout this essay I will use Portuguese Jews and Sephardim, and High German/Polish Jews and Ashkenazim as interchangeable terms.
- 9 Swetschinski 2000, 165–224.
- 10 Wallet 2022.
- 11 For a more general analysis and comparison of several ways of structuring Jewish communities in Europe, see Ruderman 2010, 57–98.
- 12 Davis 2002.
- 13 Hagoort 2005, 41.
- 14 Kaplan 2021, 105–71.
- 15 Kaplan 2002; Kaplan 1987.
- 16 Kaplan 2000, 70–72.
- 17 This is enabled by the large notarial deeds project of the Amsterdam City Archives; see Hell 2022.
- 18 Bodian 1997, 129; for a similar analysis from the perspective of the Portuguese community, see Sutcliffe 2008.
- 19 SAA, archive number 5075 Notarial Archives (NA), no. 2205, notary (not.) Adriaen Lock, 28 November 1658; no. 2209, not. Adriaan Lock, 15 November 1660; no. 4075, not. Dirck van der Groe, 1 December 1672.
- 20 Cf. Levie Bernfeld 2020.
- 21 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, ACA, no. 4084, not. Dirck van der Groe, 8 January 1677.
- 22 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2214a, not. Adriaen Lock, 16 and 17 March 1663.
- 23 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4759, not. David Staffmaker Varlet, 17 March 1693; 4077, not. Dirck van der Groe, 11 December 1673.
- 24 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4073a, not. Dirck van der Groe, 7 April 1671.
- 25 Van de Pol 2001, 173–85.
- 26 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4242, not. Dirck van der Groe, 13 June 1691.
- 27 On this conflict, see Hagoort 2005, 73–75.
- 28 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2233, not. Adriaen Lock, 27 August 1670.
- 29 Sluys 1940.
- 30 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 526, not. Jacobo Westfrisio (Jacob Jansz. Westfrisius), 10 March 1744; 1946, not. David. Doornick, 16 October 1647.
- 31 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4121, not. Dirck van der Groe, 31 May 1686.
- 32 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4082, not. Dirck van der Groe, 2 April 1676.
- 33 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2202, not. Adriaen Lock, 24 April 1657.
- 34 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4085, not. Dirck van der Groe, 30 July 1677; see further on this case Kaplan 2000, 136–39.
- 35 Especially in the first period, the Portuguese Abodat Ahesed society also played an important role in taking care of poor Ashkenazim; see Levie Bernfeld 2012, 117–21.
- 36 Egmond 1993 focuses almost entirely on the eighteenth century.
- 37 For a comparison with Sephardim see Levie Bernfeld 2012, 216–22.
- 38 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4085, not. Dirck van der Groe, 24 March 1676; 2252, not. Adriaen Lock, 16 June 1677.
- 39 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4740, not. David Staffmaecker Varlet, 5 February 1680.
- 40 See e.g. SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4085, not. Dirck van der Groe, 13 September 1677; 4086, not. Dirck van der Groe, 1 April 1678; 4150, not. Dirck van der Groe, 10 April 1691.
- 41 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4075, not. Dirck van der Groe, 29 December 1672.
- 42 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2201, not. Adriaen Lock, 30 September 1656.
- 43 I use *translocal* here as an alternative to *transnational*, as I feel that it helps to write history “beyond the nation-state” and moreover better fits the dynamics of early modern Western Europe. The concept is inspired by Appadurai 1995.
- 44 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4116, not. Dirck van der Groe, 25 July 1685.

- 45 Kaufmann–Freudenthal 1907, 326–69.
- 46 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4146, not. Dirck van der Groe, 30 August 1690; no. 4147, not. Dirck van der Groe, 14 September 1690; no. 4149, not. Dirck van der Groe, 8 August 1691.
- 47 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4086, not. Dirck van der Groe, 3 March 1678; no. 4755, not. David Staffinaker Varlet, 5 September 1692.
- 48 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4095, not. Dirck van der Groe, 9 July 1680.
- 49 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 4243, not. Dirck van der Groe, 25 November 1691.
- 50 Sluys 1940, 319–20.
- 51 Reiner 1993.
- 52 SAA, NA, entry no. 5075, no. 2218b, not. Adriaen Lock, 11 June 1665.
- 53 Teller 2020, 25–71; Kaplan 2000, 78–107.
- 54 Shazar 1978; Radensky 1997.
- 55 For an analysis that takes the eighteenth century as its main point of departure see Wallet and Zwiép 2018.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Bart Wallet** is Professor of Early Modern and Modern Jewish History at the University of Amsterdam. He is co-editor-in-chief of *Studia Rosenthaliana: Journal of the History, Culture and Heritage of the Jews in the Netherlands*, editor of the *European Journal of Jewish Studies* and co-editor and author of *Reappraising the History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (2021). He is currently leading a research project on Jewish urban cultures, especially in Amsterdam.





# Rembrandt and Multi-cultural Amsterdam: Jews and Black People in Rembrandt's Art

MICHAEL ZELL

## ABSTRACT

This chapter revisits Rembrandt's depictions of Jews in light of the recent discovery of a small community of free Black Africans in his Amsterdam neighborhood. Like some Jews, these Black people served as models for Rembrandt. Yet the disturbingly entangled histories of these two communities must be addressed when assessing the neighborhood's impact on the artist. Most Black people arrived in the city as enslaved servants of the Sephardim, and while slavery was illegal in the Republic, it was widely practiced in Dutch trading sites abroad, in which the Sephardim were heavily involved. Echoing the idea that Rembrandt's portrayals of Jews transcended ethnic and religious difference, his sensitive images of Black people have recently been promoted as alternatives to the dominance of their stereotyping in the history of art.

## KEYWORDS

Rembrandt, Sephardim, Black people, slavery, colonialism

45  
Rembrandt, *Two African Drummers*, ca. 1638  
Pen and brown ink and red chalk with brown wash, touched with white and yellow, 23 x 17.1 cm

London, British Museum  
(Oo,10.122; © The Trustees of the British Museum)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_ZELL





40  
 Rembrandt, *Peter and John  
 Healing a Cripple*, 1659  
 Etching and drypoint,  
 17.9 cm × 21.8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-OB-324)

That Rembrandt portrayed the Jews he encountered in the streets of his Amsterdam neighborhood was acknowledged early on. The painter Adriaen van der Werff, a near-contemporary who appears to have been well informed, reported in the early eighteenth century that Rembrandt “turned the picturesque *tronies* [using the Dutch term for paintings of social and ethnic types] of the Jodenbreestraat [the Jews’ Street] to good advantage.”<sup>1</sup> *Tronies*, non-portrait head or half-length studies, usually of a single figure, sometimes dressed in flamboyant costume, constitute a significant proportion of Rembrandt’s production.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, the identification of some if not most of these pictures as Jews—Rabbis, Old Jews, Young Jews, Jewish Merchants and Jewish Brides—became grossly inflated in the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, identifying Jewish sitters on the basis of dress—let alone physiognomy—is notoriously problematic. But two likely candidates, based on modern scholarly consensus, are *Portrait Study of a Young Jew* from about 1657 in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, and especially *Bust of a Young Jew*, dated 1663, in the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (see fig. 134).<sup>4</sup>

That Rembrandt’s contemporaries recognized and collected *tronies* of Jewish subjects is also confirmed by a 1681 inventory description of a painting as “A portrayal of a Polack Jew”—using the derogatory term “smous.”<sup>5</sup> Rembrandt also incorporated his studies of contemporary Jewish models in biblical scenes that blur the distinction between the past and the present: two Ashkenazi Jewish men appear at the left of the 1659 etching *Peter and John Healing a Cripple*, watching from the sidelines as the Christian miracle unfolds (fig. 40).

Rembrandt lived on the “Jodenbreestraat” (the Jews’ Street), as van der Werff called the Sint Antoniesbreestraat, or Breestraat for short, from the early 1630s to 1635, working and residing with the art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh, and returned in 1639 when he purchased a ruinously expensive house, which he was forced to sell in 1658 after his bankruptcy. The period coincides with the street’s emergence as the epicenter of Amsterdam’s Jewish community, initially with Sephardi *ex-converso* immigrants seeking economic opportunity and fleeing persecution from Iberia and other parts of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. By mid-century, growing numbers of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe had become the Jewish majority in the district. While the Breestraat was a fashionable street favored by painters and art dealers, it was already called the “Jews Street” in two English traveler accounts of the city from the first half of the seventeenth century. Sir William Brereton wrote in 1634–35 that the Breestraat was “a street they have called the Jews street; they have three synagogues here”; and in 1640 Peter Mundy called it the “Jooode strate or Jewes streete.”<sup>6</sup> Mundy also commented that the Jews living on the street were mostly Sephardim from Portugal, “Ritch Merchantts, nott evill esteemed off, living in liberty, wealth and ease,” adding that “they allow Pictures in their houses (Not soe att Constantinople)” and that some were themselves artists. Mundy’s reporting is reliable. Archival documentation confirms the presence of paintings in Sephardi households, as Mirjam Knotter details with exciting new evidence in her essay in this volume; the Sephardi physician Dr. Ephraim Bueno, who Knotter shows was Rembrandt’s close neighbor, commissioned portraits of himself from both Rembrandt and Jan Lievens; and the Jewish artist Salom Italia is best known for his engraved portraits of Menasseh ben Israel and Judah Leon Templo.

This much is well-known territory. But the historian Mark Ponte’s remarkable archival discoveries are transforming our image of Rembrandt’s neighborhood from a mixed quarter populated by Jews, artists, dealers and other merchants into an urban landscape increasingly recognized and labeled as “multicultural.”<sup>7</sup> Ponte demonstrated the presence of a small but visible community of free Black Africans living on and in the vicinity of the Jodenbreestraat from the 1630s onwards, which reached its apogee in the late 1650s and therefore coincided exactly with Rembrandt’s residence on the street. Some of these Black people were mariners or soldiers involved in Dutch maritime trade, but most were servants of the Sephardim originally brought to Amsterdam as slaves. Ernst Brinck, later mayor of Harderwijk, recorded in the early seventeenth century that “almost all of the servants” of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam “are slaves and Moors” (a term commonly used to refer to Black Africans).<sup>8</sup> Romeyn de Hooghe’s etching *Hof van de E: Heer de Pinto* (The Pinto House on the Sint Antoniesbreestraat) from about 1695 shows a Black manservant in elegant livery attending the Pinto family as they leave the house for an awaiting carriage (see fig. 29). A second Black manservant is just visible behind the flamboyantly dressed Pinto women.



41  
 Romeyn de Hooghe, *De predikstoel en binnentransen* (The Pulpit and Inner Sanctum), published by Pieter Persoy, Amsterdam ca. 1695  
 Etching, 27.4 × 22.8 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum (M001483; donated in memory of Mr. L. Abas)

In his etched *Pulpit and Inner Sanctum* of the Portuguese-Jewish Synagogue, de Hooghe also included a Black manservant—the only man not wearing a head covering—between two Sephardi Jews conversing in the right foreground (fig. 41).

Slavery was officially and explicitly banned in the Dutch Republic, so from the standpoint of domestic law slaves were in principle free as soon as they set foot in the country.<sup>9</sup> But enslaved people were required to claim their freedom through municipal courts of law, as was the case with a Black woman from Guinea named Zabelinha, who had been brought to Amsterdam by the Sephardi Jew Simon Correa. In 1642 she and her children were officially granted their freedom in a notary's office.<sup>10</sup> Since the initiative lay with the enslaved person, who may not have had the capacity or the compliance of their owner to seek their freedom through legal channels, the status of enslaved people in the Republic remained vulnerable. Some evidently remained enslaved despite the ban, at least early in the century. According to the burial records of Amsterdam's Sephardi cemetery at Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, in 1617 an enslaved woman (*escrava*) belonging to Abraham Aboab, who must have converted to Judaism, was laid to rest next to an enslaved person (*escrava*) of David Netto.<sup>11</sup> Others lived in fear of forced relocation to areas where slavery was legal. In 1656 a twenty-four-year old Black woman named Juliana, purchased by Eliau de Burgos in Brazil for 525 guilders when she was ten or eleven years old, fled rather than move with his family to Barbados, where she would have returned to a life of slavery.<sup>12</sup> In 1659, the Afro-European woman Debora

42  
 Dirck Valkenburg,  
*The Waterland Sugar  
 Plantation in Suriname*,  
 1707–9  
 Oil on canvas,  
 31.5 × 47.5 cm

Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
 Museum (SA-35413)



Nassy, a servant in the household of the ex-*converso* David Nassy, wisely had her freedom certified before accompanying Nassy's daughter to Cayenne, in Guiana. Nassy declared before an Amsterdam notary that Debora, described as "being a brown female or mulatto," was a free woman "conceived and born in freedom and also raised as such, without anyone in the world having any kind of claim on her person."<sup>13</sup> Debora's action was crucial, for despite the fact that slavery was illegal in the Republic, it was widely condoned and practiced throughout the Dutch trading and colonial empire. With the seizure of northeastern Brazil and parts of West Africa from the Portuguese by the West India Company (WIC, *Geötrooieerde West-indische Compagnie*) between 1636 and 1644, the Dutch became actively involved in provisioning the slave labor deemed essential for the hugely profitable sugar industry. For a few decades, the Dutch were the dominant slave traders in the world.<sup>14</sup>

David Nassy, who as we just saw affirmed his Black servant Debora Nassy's freedom in 1659, had been a slaveowner in Brazil in the early 1640s but returned to Amsterdam in 1644, before Brazil's recapture by the Portuguese in 1654.<sup>15</sup> In 1659 the WIC granted him and several Jewish partners the right to establish a settlement in Cayenne, Guiana, then in Dutch hands, triggering Debora's preemptive action to secure her freedom in an Amsterdam court of law. The next year Nassy embarked with his family and Debora for Cayenne and after its fall to France in 1664 moved to neighboring Suriname, which became a Dutch colony in 1667. Nassy did not own a sugar plantation and died in Amsterdam in 1685, having returned from Suriname shortly before; but by 1681 his son Samuel owned eighty enslaved people who labored on his sugar plantations. By 1693 that number had more than doubled.<sup>16</sup> No trace of the brutal and dangerous working conditions of enslaved Africans is visible in Dirck Valkenburg's pastoralized representation of a Surinamese sugar plantation from the early eighteenth century (fig. 42).





44  
Rembrandt, *Bust of an  
African Woman*, ca. 1631  
Etching, 11.2 x 8.4 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-754)



45  
Rembrandt, *Two African  
Drummers*, ca. 1638  
Pen and brown ink and  
red chalk with brown wash,  
touched with white and  
yellow, 23 x 17.1 cm

London, British Museum  
(Oo,10.122; © The Trustees  
of the British Museum)



46  
 Rembrandt, *Two  
 African Men*, 1661  
 Oil on canvas,  
 64.4 × 77.8 cm

The Hague, Mauritshuis  
 (685)

(*servo*)” next to that of his master de Pina and alongside Jacob Israel Belmonte, one of the Sephardi community’s most prominent members.<sup>22</sup> Elieser also attended the funeral of his master’s wife Sarah when she died in 1621, pledging on that occasion to contribute 6 *stuivers* in her memory. As the Netherlands’ oldest known grave of a former enslaved person, Elieser’s grave has since become the site of an annual pilgrimage in his honor, and in 2013 a statue of Elieser by the Surinamese sculptor Erwin de Vries was erected at the entrance to the cemetery. Controversy between Jewish and Black leaders has also flared over whether the site marks the atrocities of slavery or the possibilities of tolerance.<sup>23</sup> While Elieser was assigned a grave in the cemetery’s prestigious section, other converted Black or Mulatto formerly enslaved people or servants were buried in



47  
 Rembrandt, *The Visitation*,  
 1640  
 Oil on panel, 56.5 × 47.9 cm

Detroit, Detroit Institute of  
 Arts (27.200; City of Detroit  
 Purchase)

a part of the cemetery reserved for servants and non-Sephardi Jews. In 1647 a segregated section was designated for Black and Mulatto Jews.<sup>24</sup>

What bearing does awareness of this population of Black Africans—mostly interwoven with the Sephardi Jews—have for our understanding of Rembrandt and the environment in which he lived? As with the Jews he encountered in his neighborhood, Rembrandt was drawn to the Black people he observed in the streets as models for his art.<sup>25</sup> Among these works are the etched *tronie* of an African woman from about 1631 (fig. 44);<sup>26</sup> an unusually elaborate colored drawing of two African drummers in exotic headgear and costumes riding mules in a parade from about 1638 (fig. 45); and several small, informal sketches of Black men and a Black woman. Most extraordinary is *Tivo*





*African Men*, dated 1661, in the Mauritshuis (fig. 46), which like many of Rembrandt's late paintings appears partly unfinished, heightening the impression of immediacy.<sup>27</sup> Rembrandt's exceptionally sensitive, lifelike portrayal of the two men suggests his direct observation of live models, though they wear vaguely antique garb, not contemporary clothing.<sup>28</sup> Ponte has tentatively identified the models as the brothers Bastiaan and Manuel Fernando from the island of São Tomé off the coast of Africa, who served the Amsterdam Admiralty as sailors.<sup>29</sup> In 1657 Bastiaan is recorded as residing at the end of the Jodenbreestraat, down the street from Rembrandt, together with his wife Maria from Angola and their daughter Lucia. It is a stunning possibility, even if impossible to verify. In fact, Rembrandt depicted Black people more often and in more varied ways than any other seventeenth-century European artist.<sup>30</sup> Like the Jewish figures in Rembrandt's work, although less frequently, Black Africans feature most regularly in biblical scenes, including in *The Visitation* of 1640 where a young Black woman servant stands on her toes to remove Mary's mantle (fig. 47). As Shelley Perlove has recently pointed out, the blue-striped textile tied around her waist was commonly worn by West Africans on the

48

Rembrandt, *St. John the Baptist Preaching*, 1634–35  
Oil on canvas stuck on  
panel, 62.7 × 81.1 cm

Berlin, Staatliche Museen  
zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie  
(828K)

Guinean coast.<sup>31</sup> Jews and Black Africans appear together in *St. John Preaching* of about 1634–35, an elaborate grisaille probably painted as the model for a print that was never executed (fig. 48).<sup>32</sup>

Three men in the foreground dressed in orientaling garb are marked explicitly as Jews—one wears a shawl resembling a tallith over his head inscribed with legible Hebrew script.<sup>33</sup> At least two Black men are behind John and another in an exotic headdress is closer to the trio of Jews, next to the recumbent figure of an Indian with a quiver of arrows. In this unprecedented composition containing nearly a hundred figures, Rembrandt also introduced among the crowd a soldier in Japanese armor, a Muslim in a turban, and an Indigenous American identified by his feathered headdress, signifying St. John's preaching to the entire known world. I will return below to the distinctive role he assigned to the Jewish figures.

This convergence of Jews and Black Africans in Rembrandt's art and the disturbing truth of the two communities' ties through the institution of slavery complicates profoundly the application of the label *multicultural* to Rembrandt's neighborhood. Clearly the modern idea of multiculturalism—or the social and political inclusion of people of diverse ethnicities, races and faiths—falls far short of the lived realities of Black Amsterdammers, Black–Jewish relations and the experiences of the Dutch Sephardim. Despite enjoying unparalleled freedoms—they were not confined to a district of the city nor required to wear distinguishing dress—Jews were still prohibited from practicing trades and professions regulated by the guilds, among other restrictions. Jonathan Schorsch has also demonstrated that as Blackness became inextricably linked with slavery and servitude as the century progressed, the Amsterdam Sephardim introduced ordinances precluding Black and Mulatto Jews' access to certain ritual privileges and honors, such as the 1647 segregation of the Beth Haim cemetery mentioned above.<sup>34</sup> The Sephardim's increasing efforts to dissociate themselves from Black people may have been motivated in part by their ambivalent color status in the eyes of non-Jews in Western Europe. William Brereton, who as we saw published his impressions of Amsterdam's Sephardi community in 1634–35, wrote that the Jewish men are “most black [...] and insatiably given unto women”;<sup>35</sup> Peter Mundy, who as we also saw visited the city in 1640, described Sephardi men as “swart [black] and thereby knowen From others: Not by their habitt.”<sup>36</sup> In 1643 the Frenchman Isaac de la Peyrère even predicted that once the Jews convert to Christianity “they will no longer have this dark complexion [...] they will change faces, and the whiteness of their complexion will have the same brightness as [...] an extremely white pigeon.”<sup>37</sup>

It is critical to acknowledge, moreover, that Dutch Jews saw no contradiction between their struggle for equal status and their enslavement of Black Africans. While the exaggerated claims of Jewish representation in the Atlantic slave trade of the 1990s have thankfully receded, the fact remains that Jews participated actively in this barbaric system.<sup>38</sup> Christians overwhelmingly dominated the slave trade, but Jews, who made up about a third of the “White” population in the Dutch colonies of Brazil, Suriname and Curaçao, maintained a high profile in the slave system.<sup>39</sup> Unsurprisingly, the deeply hierarchical social structures of early modern Europe, including the Dutch Republic, were self-perpetuating, and Jewish slaveholding, as Schorsch writes, “marks a superb



49  
Rembrandt, *Portrait of  
Marten Soolmans*, 1634  
Oil on canvas,  
207,5 x 132 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-A-5033; joint acquisition  
by the Dutch State and the  
French Republic, collection  
Rijksmuseum/collection  
Musée du Louvre)



Rembrandt, *Portrait of  
Oopjen Coppit*, 1634  
Oil on canvas,  
207,5 x 132 cm

Paris, Musée du Louvre  
(RF 2016-2; joint acquisition  
by the Dutch State and the  
French Republic, collection  
Rijksmuseum/collection  
Musée du Louvre)

instance of the power of hegemonic discourse at work.”<sup>40</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis has also recently shown that the Sephardim in Suriname made a clear distinction between their own biblical exodus out of slavery and the fate of the Africans they enslaved.<sup>41</sup> While the aforementioned David Nassy criticized the Danes’ “execrable inhumanity” in 1659 for kidnapping and brutalizing the indigenous people (the Kalaallit) of Greenland, he apparently gave no thought to the Black people he had contracted with the WIC to transport forcibly to Cayenne.<sup>42</sup>

How can we accommodate Rembrandt in this emerging picture of Black presence in the Jodenbreestraat area and the disturbingly entangled histories of Dutch Jews and Black people? The stakes are high, given Rembrandt’s continued stature as an artist whose work is believed to transcend stereotyping and social and ethnic difference to reveal the commonalities between all people. However true or untrue, Rembrandt’s reputation for compassion and empathy is bound up with the possibilities of tolerance, as is Moscow’s Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, the institution that initiated the present project *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes*. Such questions have become more urgent in the wake of the important recent exhibitions *Black in Rembrandt’s Time* at the Rembrandt House Museum in 2020 and *Slavery* at the Rijksmuseum in 2021. In these public reckonings with Dutch colonial history and involvement with slavery, Rembrandt and his Amsterdam neighborhood took center stage.

The monumental and opulent pendant portraits of Marten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit from 1634, which commemorate their marriage in the previous year, were displayed prominently in the Slavery exhibition (fig. 49). Marten owned a sugar refinery in Amsterdam, fittingly called “The Fires of Purgatory,” so the couple’s wealth derived from the slave labor used on the sugar plantations of Dutch Brazil. Marten died young in 1641, and six years later Oopjen married Maerten Daey, a soldier who had served in Brazil from 1629 to 1641, during which time he fathered a daughter with an African woman named Francisca, whom he had held captive and raped.<sup>43</sup> In centering the role of slavery in the lives of these people, the exhibition curators hoped to change visitors’ perceptions of Rembrandt’s paintings. “Do we now look differently at the portraits of Oopjen and Marten?” the catalogue asks, and adds in response, “Probably, we do.”<sup>44</sup> That the sitters’ obvious affluence depended upon the slave system is indeed difficult to ignore.

Yet Jonathan Jones, art critic for the *Guardian* newspaper, was shocked by Rembrandt’s inclusion in the exhibition.<sup>45</sup> “After all,” he writes, “there is no artist more overflowing with compassion and empathy than Rembrandt. Yet this exhibition [...] reveals a side of the painter’s career that sits badly with our view of him as an artist with an expansive vision of what it means to be human.” Was Rembrandt in some way complicit by showcasing Marten and Oopjen’s wealth with the blingiest, most extravagantly expensive clothing and jewels, given that they owed their prosperity to the horrors of slavery? Struggling with the implication, Jones appeals to Rembrandt’s depictions of Jews to come to the rescue: “[Rembrandt] is credited with a moral insight that goes beyond the conventions of his day. He portrayed Jewish people with sensitivity in an

age of antisemitism [...]. Surely he didn't just happily take the sugar money and give the couple what they wanted?"

Rembrandt's reputation as a moral exemplar still hinges, then, on his portrayals of and presumed sympathy for Jews, whose history in the Dutch Republic and its colonies is hopelessly intertwined with the slave trade. Jones mobilizes this interrelationship, though he does not acknowledge its complexities, when he turns to *Two African Men* (fig. 46) as evidence of Rembrandt's morality. The subjects, Jones writes, "may be [Rembrandt's] neighbors. Anyway, he portrays them intimately." The two men, he continues, project "an overpowering air of loss, as if [...] trying to find their place in a broken world. Rembrandt never went to Brazil [...] or any of the other sites of Dutch enslavement. But that did not stop him sensing the stain of slavery on Europe and its ramifications. He could see it in these men's eyes [...]." The contrast with Rembrandt's portraits of the "sugar-rich couple" Marten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit, Jones emphasizes, could not be more striking. In these grand assertions of wealth and status derived from slave labor, he writes, "Rembrandt shows us exactly what they are: rich non-entities using the veneer of wealth to conceal their vacuity, or something much worse."

Setting aside for the moment whether Jones's position can be sustained on historical grounds, Rembrandt emerges here as a heroic figure whose images transcend social as well as artistic conventions to reveal a deeper truth beyond religious, ethnic and racial difference and therefore beyond the contingencies of history itself. It is a powerful proposition rooted in the afterlife of Rembrandt's portrayals of and relationship with Jews, especially among German-Jewish scholars before and especially after the Second World War.<sup>46</sup> In a 1920 lecture delivered to the Berlin Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies), published posthumously, Erwin Panofsky transformed Rembrandt into a paragon of humanitarianism whose late images of Jews (see fig. 134) erase ethnic and religious difference to reveal a universal human essence:

Here we see expressed the timeless and unfathomable depth of a soul which, beyond the borders of individual consciousness, has been subsumed into a consciousness of all, now appearing only as a form of that ancient substance which metaphysics, depending on its standpoint, denoted as being or *divinity*. The late Rembrandt *gives the human being such depth* as to make it give up its individuality in God. Conversely, from this time he discovers *God in the human being itself*.<sup>47</sup>

Franz Landsberger made his personal attachment to this construct explicit in the foreword to his *Rembrandt, the Jews, and the Bible*, first published in 1946:

It has often proved a comfort to me, in this era of European Jewish tragedy, to dwell upon the life and work of Rembrandt. Here was a man of German ancestry who did not regard the Jews of the Holland of his day as a "misfortune," but approached them with friendly sentiments, dwelt in their midst, and portrayed their personalities and ways of life [...]. He was the first to have the courage to use the Jews of his environment as models for the heroes of the sacred narratives. I have frequently referred to these remarkable facts in lectures delivered in Germany and later in America, and have felt it incumbent upon me to convey

to others the solace I have experienced in their contemplation. I desired, also, to furnish my coreligionists with an understanding of what Rembrandt had done for them, and to bring to them a recognition of their debt to his art.<sup>48</sup>

Landsberger's book exerted an enormous impact on subsequent Rembrandt scholarship. Writing in 1948, Jakob Rosenberg, another German-Jewish immigrant, championed the "sensitive objectivity" of Rembrandt's portrayals of Jews, stressing that he avoided "caricature as well as idealization" and asserting: "there remains the indisputable fact that the artist's attitude to the Jewish people was an unusually sympathetic one."<sup>49</sup>

The post-Holocaust elevation of Rembrandt as a paragon of morality whose art could serve as a source of consolation and inspiration for Jews resonates strongly with Rembrandt's reception amidst today's effort to highlight dignified portrayals of Black people as alternatives to the dominance of their stereotyping in the history of art. Stephanie Archangel, one of the curators of *Black in Rembrandt's Time*, stated explicitly: "For years I have been searching, from my Curaçao background, in paintings and other art works for Black people in which I could recognize myself. In Rembrandt's work, I finally found them."<sup>50</sup> She concludes that "Although Rembrandt did not record any thoughts about Black people in writing, his paintings, drawings, and prints make it clear that he paid little if any heed to slavery or black humility either."<sup>51</sup> *Two African Men* (fig. 46) presumably epitomizes for Archangel Rembrandt's non-stereotyped, true-to-life, and dignified treatment of Black models. In 1995 Seymour Slive characterized the painting in similar terms, echoing Panofsky, Landsberger and Rosenberg's praise for Rembrandt's capacity to rise above prejudice and convention in his late images of Jewish models: "the magnificent picture of *Two Black Men* [...] brings no suggestion of a stereotyped conception of a black man [...]; in both heads Rembrandt has captured what we feel is the spiritual and moral substance of these men."<sup>52</sup>

Thus, just as the histories of Dutch Jews and Black people are inescapably linked to slavery, the afterlives of Rembrandt's representations of Jews are implicated, consciously or not, in the desire to enlist his work in today's post-colonial project to confront Dutch participation in the slave trade and the enduring effects of racism. Yet while Rembrandt's portrayals of the Jews and Black Africans he encountered in his neighborhood bear witness to the interconnections, however fraught, between these two communities, looking at his artworks from a strictly historical vantage point challenges their utility as paradigms of morality and tolerance. Rembrandt sometimes cast Jews in biblical scenes as hostile to the Christian message of salvation, as is the case in *St. John the Baptist Preaching* of 1634–35 (fig. 48), as we saw earlier. The isolated, caricatured group of three Jews in the foreground are the only figures in the crowd to turn their backs on John and speak conspiratorially among themselves. These are the Pharisees and Sadducees whom the Baptist condemns as "vipers" (Matthew 3:7). The Jews' enmity is reinforced by the Hebrew inscription on one of their shawls which refers, sardonically, to Deuteronomy 6:5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."<sup>53</sup> This alienation of Jews from the Gospel's salvation message persists in the later etching *Peter and John Healing a Cripple* of 1659 (fig. 40), albeit in subdued form. Rembrandt similarly complied with stereotyped convention when depicting Black people as servants to elite whites, as in *The Visitation* from



1640 (fig. 47).<sup>54</sup> As Perlove demonstrates, Rembrandt's novel introduction of the Black maidservant in this painting alludes to the universalist claims of Christianity and resonates with the missionary goals of some Dutch Calvinists, who justified the trafficking in human beings providing that slaves were treated humanely.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, in *St. John the Baptist Preaching* (fig. 48), the Black men in the crowd, unlike the Jews, listen attentively to John's words, signaling their potential incorporation as converts to Christianity within the increasingly interconnected commercial and colonial world of Rembrandt's time.

Paintings such as *Bust of a Young Jew* (see fig. 134) and *Two African Men* (fig. 46) are therefore exceptional, even within Rembrandt's own work. In contrast to other artists' stereotyped renderings of Jews and Black figures, which usually emphasize exoticism and otherness, Rembrandt sensitively focuses on the men's facial expressions and inner lives. Yet this, of course, is a typical feature Rembrandt's later art, exemplified by the so-called *Jewish Bride* (fig. 50), probably the biblical couple Isaac and Rebecca, in which the figures' intimacy and interiority is subtly evoked through their downward gazes and gentle touch of the hands.<sup>56</sup> Both paintings are fully consistent, moreover, with Rembrandt's combination of vivid lifelikeness, based on direct observation of the model rather than

50  
Rembrandt, *Isaac and Rebecca* (known as *The Jewish Bride*), ca. 1665–69  
Oil on canvas,  
121.5 × 166.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-C-216)

convention, and bold painterly virtuosity. To interpret them as uncomplicated evidence of Rembrandt's sensitivity to or compassion for people of color, or his sympathy for Jews, is therefore selective and largely ahistorical.<sup>57</sup>

However, as Elmer Kolfin rightly argues in relation to *Two African Men*, "paintings carry many truths [...]; they have a unique capacity to become a mirror that brightly reflects our own concerns, helping us to deal with them. And that is invaluable."<sup>58</sup> Artworks of this caliber have the power to defy the fixity of their historical origin points and to operate in multiple temporalities. Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood have written compellingly about the capacity of artworks to belong to more than one historical moment simultaneously, functioning as material artefacts that collapse past and present through their effects of immediacy and exercise of agency.<sup>59</sup> Introducing the term "anachronic" as an alternative to "anachronistic" in order to evoke the ability of the work of art to move freely in time, Nagel and Wood challenge the historicist insistence on situating art rigidly within an objective and linear conception of time. We as viewers activate and reactivate the artwork, Nagel and Wood suggest, entering into conversations across time that are potentially "more meaningful than the present's merely forensic reconstruction of the past."<sup>60</sup> If we choose to partner with Rembrandt's exceptionally and inarguably sensitive portrayals of Jews and Black people in works such as these, by suspending an exclusively historicist mindset in favor of one shaped by other priorities, the possibility of their symbolic reach extends beyond seventeenth-century Amsterdam to encompass possibilities unknown even to Rembrandt himself.

### NOTES

- 1 Gaetgens 1987, 438, cited in van der Veen 1997, 73. The statement is from van der Werff's authorized biography written by the artist's son-in-law in about 1720, based on firsthand information, perhaps from Rembrandt's former pupil Cornelis Brouwer.
- 2 On tronies, see in particular Gottwald 2011.
- 3 See in particular Amsterdam 2006, 66–88. As Gary Schwartz notes in his essay in this volume, John Smith included in the first published catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's paintings of 1836 the index category "Portraits of Jews and Rabbis." See Smith 1836, 272–73.
- 4 See Amsterdam 2006, 87–88.
- 5 "Een contrefijtsel van een Polacqse smous," cited in Melbourne 1997, 176, no. 25. Inventory dated 29 September 1681, NAA 2639, notary G. Steeman.
- 6 Brereton 1844, 60; Mundy 1925, 70. My thanks to Mirjam Knotter for the Brereton reference.
- 7 Ponte 2020, 45–57. See further Hondius 2008 and Ponte 2018. For an example of the use of "multicultural" to describe Rembrandt's neighborhood, see Nicholls-Lee 2020.
- 8 Quoted in Ponte 2020, 49: "In die breestrate wonen meest alle Portugijsen, sijnde meest Joden, hebbende oock in een huys haer vergadering. Vast alle hare dienstboden zijn slaven end moren."
- 9 Ponte 2020, 52; Amsterdam 2021, esp. 124.
- 10 Ponte 2020, 52, citing SAA, NA 5075, inv. no. 1555B, fol. 1829.
- 11 Schorsch 2004, 97; Ponte 2020, 49 (with date mistakenly given as 1629). For the burial record, see Pieterse 1970, 91. Hagoort 2005, 38, notes this is the last time the word slave appears in the cemetery's records.
- 12 Hagoort 2005, 57; Ponte 2020, 52, citing SAA, NA 5075, inv. no. 2271, fol. 764–66.
- 13 Bloom 1937, 152; Schorsch 2004, 95; and Ponte 2020, 52, citing SAA, NA 5075, inv. no. 2888, fol. 693: "sijnde een bruijn vrouwspersoon ofte mulata [...] in vrijheijt geteelt & gebooren & als soodanigh oock opgevoet, sonder dat iemand ter werelt op haer persoon iets heeft te preten-deeren."



- 14 See Ponte 2020, 52–53; Amsterdam 2021, esp. 36, 71–83; Postma 1990; and Emmer 2006.
- 15 On David Nassy, see Davis, 2016. For the Jews of Suriname, see Vink 2010.
- 16 Davis 2016, 26.
- 17 On Valkenburg and Witsen, see Kolfin 1997, 23–29, 56; Ford 2002; Brienen 2007–8; and Amsterdam 2021, 94–104.
- 18 Schorsch 2004, esp. 93.
- 19 Ibid., and <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/a-memento-mori-192076>
- 20 Schorsch 2004, 101.
- 21 See in particular Schorsch 2004, 95; Hagoort 2005, 36–38.
- 22 Hagoort 2005, 36.
- 23 Liphshiz 2021.
- 24 Schorsch 2004, 97–101.
- 25 For Rembrandt's depictions of Black people, see in particular Kolfin 2010; Kolfin 2020a; and de Witt 2020. For overviews of Dutch images of Black figures, see Blakely 1993, 78–170; Kolfin 2008; Kolfin 2020b; Kolfin 2021a; and Kolfin 2021b.
- 26 According to Kolfin 2010, 300, the “awkwardly rendered eyes” of the woman in this etching may reveal Rembrandt's familiarity with an ancient stereotyped and racist description of a Black person, published by the artist's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten in his *Inleydinge tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere wereldt* of 1678: “a Moor, even if drawn in white, will appear black because of his flat nose, short hair, fat cheeks and certain stupidity in the eyes.” As Perlove 2022 notes, though, Celeste Brusati and Jaap Jacobs translate van Hoogstraten's “zekere dommicheit ontrent zijn ooggen” as “a dazed look about the eyes.” See Brusati and Jacobs 2021, 79, n. 32, 90–91. DeWitt 2020, 97, suggests the woman's exaggerated facial features indicate that Rembrandt may have based the etching on a bust recorded in his possession in 1656 as “a Moor[’s head] cast from life” (“Een moor nae’t leven afgegooten”). See Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 365, document 1656/12, no. 161. As de Witt also notes, the artist Jacob de Gheyn III owned a bust of a Black man, inherited from his father Jacob de Gheyn II, which he drew several times.
- 27 *Two African Men* is probably the picture recorded as “Twee mooren in een stuck van Rembrandt” (Two Moors in a piece by Rembrandt) in the 1656 inventory drawn up in connection with Rembrandt's bankruptcy. See Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 385, document 1656/12, no. 344; Kolfin 2010, 299; and de Witt 2020, 115. Since the painting bears an authentic signature and the date of 1661, Rembrandt likely kept it in his possession and later added the signature and date, perhaps when he sold it. Although he could have created more than one painting of two Black men, it is unlikely given the very uncommon subject, as pointed out by both Kolfin and de Witt. On the other hand, van de Wetering 2015, 670–71, no. 295, considers it “perfectly conceivable” that Rembrandt painted another picture of two Black men after selling the painting recorded in the 1656 inventory. According to Kolfin, 297–99, the Mauritshuis canvas was intended principally as a study and demonstration piece of how to render Black skin convincingly. Van de Wetering characterizes the painting as part of Rembrandt's “image archive” for historical compositions.
- 28 See in particular Kolfin 2010, 275; Kolfin 2020. Despite the painting's lifelike effect, Kolfin 2010, 297, leaves open the possibility that one or both of the men could have been based on a sculpted bust recorded in the 1656 inventory of Rembrandt's possessions as “a Moor[’s head] cast from life” (“Een moor nae’t leven afgegooten”). See Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 365, document 1656/12, no. 161.
- 29 Ponte 2020, 56–57.
- 30 Kolfin 2020a.
- 31 Perlove 2020 offers a compelling and imaginative exploration of the Black maidservant in this painting.
- 32 For the painting, see Bruyn et al. 1989, 70–88, no. A106; van de Wetering 2015, 533–34, no. 110. The picture was in the possession of Rembrandt's patron Jan Six in 1658. See Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 422, document 1658/18. For the composition's Black and non-European figures, see in particular Kolfin 2010.
- 33 On the Hebrew inscriptions in *St. John the Baptist Preaching* and other works by Rembrandt, see Alexander-Knotter 1999; Sabar 2008; and Alexander-Knotter 2009.

- 34 Schorsch 2004, esp. chap. 7, “Inventing Jewish Whiteness: The Seventeenth-Century Western Sephardic Diaspora, Part I,” 166–91.
- 35 Brereton 1844, 61, cited in Schorsch 2004, 180.
- 36 Mundy 1925, 70.
- 37 La Peyrère 1643, 81, cited in Schorsch 2004, 180.
- 38 The fundamental study of Jewish slave trading in the early modern era is Schorsch 2004. He also addresses the tensions in Black–Jewish relations that followed the “specious” and antisemitic charges of the Nation of Islam’s *Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* of 1991. See *ibid.*, 1–2.
- 39 Schorsch 2004, 7.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Davis 2016, 26.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 20–22. Nassy contributed this comment on Danish mistreatment of Indigenous Greenlanders to Joan Blaeu’s Spanish translation of his *Grand Atlas*, published in Amsterdam in 1659: Joan Blaeu, *Nuevo Atlas o Teatro del Mundo, en en [sic] qual, con gran cuydado, se proponen las Mapas y Descripciones de todo el Universo*, vol. 1, Amsterdam (Joan Blaeu) 1659.
- 43 See Amsterdam 2021, 110–21.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 121.
- 45 Jones 2021.
- 46 See in particular Zell 2000–1 and Perlove 2021. For Aby Warburg’s reflections on Rembrandt in the context of rising German antisemitism, see Schoell-Glass 2008, esp. 126–33.
- 47 Panofsky 1973, 98, quoted and translated in Melbourne 1997, 177. A discussion of the lecture appeared in the *Vossischen Zeitung* on 4 January 1921, and Panofsky repeated the lecture on March 2 of the same year in Gießen for the Vereinigung der Gießener Kunstfreunde (Gießen Art Lovers’ Association).
- 48 Landsberger 1961, ix.
- 49 Rosenberg 1948, vol. 1, 61.
- 50 Amsterdam 2020, 4.
- 51 Archangel 2020, 68.
- 52 Slive 1995, 78; also cited in Kolfin 2010, 271.
- 53 See Alexander-Knotter 1999, 141–44; Sabar 2008, 383–86; and Alexander-Knotter 2009, 25–32. Christ uses these very words to admonish the Pharisees in Matthew 22:37.
- 54 Kolfin 2021a and 2021b.
- 55 Perlove 2022.
- 56 On the compositional and formal parallels between *Two African Men* and *The Jewish Bride*, see de Witt, 113–15; and especially Kolfin 2021b.
- 57 For the complexities of interpreting Rembrandt’s interactions with and portrayals of Jews, see in particular Zell 2002. For an alternative perspective, see Amsterdam 2006.
- 58 Kolfin 2021b.
- 59 Nagel and Wood 2010.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 18.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Michael Zell** is Associate Professor of Art History at Boston University. He is the author of *Rembrandt, Vermeer, and the Gift in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (2021) and *Reframing Rembrandt: Jews and the Christian Image in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (2002), and co-editor of ‘*Ut pictura amor*’ (2017) and *Rethinking Rembrandt* (2002).



# Rembrandt, Menasseh ben Israel and Spinoza

STEVEN NADLER

## ABSTRACT

Many of the romantic notions concerning Rembrandt's relationship to Jews and Judaism have to do with his connections with Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and, by extension, with the philosopher Bento de Spinoza. In this essay I attempt to separate facts from fictions in order to arrive at a more accurate and sober picture of the artist's relationship with these other famous individuals from seventeenth-century Amsterdam.

## KEYWORDS

Menasseh ben Israel, Bento/Baruch de Spinoza, Ephraim Bueno, Vlooienburg, Jodenbreestraat

A major challenge when addressing the topic of Rembrandt and Judaism, including the question of his personal and artistic relationships with his Jewish neighbors in Amsterdam, is separating sober facts from romantic fictions. Myths and exaggerations abound, some based on evidence ranging from meager to compelling, others grounded in mere wishful thinking.<sup>1</sup> To take just one example, the Dutch-Jewish historian Mozes Gans, writing in 1971, insists that Holland's Jews owe Rembrandt "an enormous debt of gratitude," for "there has never been another non-Jewish artist—sculptor, painter or writer—to depict this rejected group of people who, in his own eyes, despite everything,

<sup>51</sup>  
Artist unknown,  
*Portrait of Benedictus  
Spinoza*, last quarter of the  
seventeenth century  
Oil on canvas, 74 × 59.8 cm

remained God's people in exile, as truthfully as did Rembrandt."<sup>2</sup>

The facts, at least, are fairly clear. From 1632 to around 1658, with a brief hiatus during which he decamped to another, nearby part of the city, Rembrandt lived in the neighborhood that included the island called Vlooienburg and the main, more upscale boulevard on which he resided, the Sint Antoniesbreestraat (or just Breestraat, also called the Jodenbreestraat, or Jews' Broad Street). But—as scholars have long recognized (and contrary to what used to be claimed by some promoters of the “Jewish Rembrandt” story)—Rembrandt did not choose to live here *because* it was a Jewish neighborhood. Rather, the Breestraat at the time was the center of Amsterdam's art world and home to many artists and art dealers—including the dealer and workshop master Hendrick van Uylenburgh, with whom Rembrandt worked and lodged on his arrival in Amsterdam from Leiden and whose cousin, Saskia, he would marry in 1634.

We also know (or, in some cases, have at least very compelling reason to believe) that Rembrandt did indeed have artistic and other engagements with some of his Jewish neighbors. There are, for example, the painted and etched portraits of Dr. Ephraim Hiskiau Bueno from Castelo Rodrigo (Portugal) (see cover image and fig. 75), a business dispute with the Portuguese-Jewish artist Samuel d'Orta, and problems between Rembrandt and his Portuguese-Jewish neighbor Daniel Pinto regarding repairs to their joined houses (see Knotter, p. 51).

The individual to whom most studies of Rembrandt's relationship to Jews and Judaism give by far the greatest attention is Menasseh ben Israel (Lisbon, 1604–Middelburg, 1657). Menasseh was among the rabbis of the three Portuguese-Jewish congregations that existed in Amsterdam in the early decades of the seventeenth century. When these congregations united into the single Talmud Torah congregation in 1639, Menasseh was appointed third in rank of the four rabbis, although he had the lowest congregational responsibilities and was the worst paid by some margin. He was also a prolific author and printer/publisher of *Judaica*, and arguably the most famous Jew in Europe in the period. Gentile scholars from the Netherlands, England, Germany, France and elsewhere consulted him for “the Jewish view” on various theological and philosophical topics, such as the human propensity to sin, free will versus determinism, and the timing and nature of the messianic era.<sup>3</sup>



52  
Rembrandt, *Portrait of a Man*, traditionally identified as Menasseh ben Israel, 1636  
Etching, 14.9 × 10.3 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum (MBo1884; L. Schloss-Polak Collection)

53  
Salom Italia,  
*Portrait of Menasseh ben  
Israel*, ca. 1640–49

Engraving, 19.2 x 13 cm  
Amsterdam, Jewish  
Museum (Moo7548)



Now Menasseh was certainly not, as some have asserted, Rembrandt’s “neighbor on the Breestraat” or living “in a house across the street.”<sup>4</sup> However, the two men did live in the same neighborhood and not very far from each other. While after 1639 Rembrandt was living on the Breestraat, Menasseh appears to have resided (and ran his printing business from) a house on the Vlooienburg island. At his betrothal in 1623 he lived at the Nieuwe Houtmarkt, a vague designation for somewhere on the Vlooienburg island. At the betrothal of his daughter Gracia in 1646, the family was living on the Binnen Amstel, also on Vlooienburg (in a house close by the “Suyckerbakkerij” where Rembrandt had lived between 1637 and 1639). This was not a very large quarter

of the city, and thus it is more likely than not that such prominent individuals as Rembrandt and Menasseh knew each other (and certainly knew of each other); no doubt they occasionally passed one another on the street. They also had some mutual acquaintances, including Dr. Bueno, who was a financial supporter of Menasseh’s printing business.

One item typically offered as a reason for thinking there was more than a passing familiarity between the artist and the rabbi is an etching that Rembrandt made in 1636, the one that appears in Edmé-François Gersaint’s 1751 catalogue raisonné with the label “Le portrait du Juif Manassé, Ben-Israel” (fig. 52).<sup>5</sup> The scholarly consensus now, however, is that this is *not* a portrait of Menasseh ben Israel. In fact, there is nothing to indicate that it is a portrait of a rabbi or even a Jew, much less of Menasseh (see also Sigal-Klagsbald, pp. 230–31). The identification comes relatively late, originating with Gersaint himself, who was followed uncritically by later cataloguers.<sup>6</sup> A print that is captioned as a portrait of Menasseh was made by the Jewish artist Salom Italia (fig. 53).

More intriguing, however, is an element in a Rembrandt painting for which Menasseh is, on highly plausible grounds, often said to have provided guidance. Sometime in the mid- to late 1630s, Rembrandt painted the “Belshazzar’s Feast” episode from the Book of Daniel (5:1–30) (fig. 54).<sup>7</sup> In the Bible, Belshazzar is giving a banquet using the vessels of gold and silver that his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the Temple sanctuary in Jerusalem when all of a sudden a very public vision emerges: a hand writing something on the palace wall. Everyone is puzzled by the apparition, and the Israelite exile Daniel is the only member of the court who can read the message and provide an interpretation. The Aramaic text, he tells the king, says “Mene, mene, tekel, ufarsin”: a list of declining units of measure that means, essentially, “Your days are numbered.”



54  
 Rembrandt, *Belshazzar's Feast*, ca. 1636–39  
 Oil on canvas,  
 167.6 × 209.2 cm

National Gallery, London  
 (NG6350; bought with  
 contribution from the Art  
 Fund, 1964)

In Rembrandt's painting, a surprised Belshazzar turns around as a hand emerges from a cloud and writes the message in Hebrew characters. The biblical text does not say *why* none of the king's guests or ministers could read the words, nor does it give any indication as to the form in which the message was written. This gave rise to some debate among the ancient rabbis as to how the writing must have looked to the confused banqueters. Were the words encrypted in some way? Were they written backward, from left to right? Were letters transposed? Or were the words to be read right to left but vertically downward rather than horizontally across?<sup>8</sup>

This last, vertical format of the mysterious text is exactly how it is depicted in Rembrandt's painting. It is also the only one of the rabbinic explanations that is presented by Menasseh in his discussion of Belshazzar in his book *De termino vitae*, where he includes a diagram of the words that resembles perfectly the image in Rembrandt's painting (fig. 55).<sup>9</sup> It thus seems very likely that Rembrandt, wondering just how he should depict the divine message in his painting of a scene from Hebrew Scripture, and perhaps at the recommendation of some acquaintance in the Portuguese-Jewish community, walked down the street and over the Houtgracht (wood canal) bridge to consult with the extroverted rabbi known for his ecumenical, and often very friendly, relationships with non-Jews.

Menasseh's book was published in 1639, and depending on the dating of the painting this could be several years after Rembrandt had finished the work.<sup>10</sup> But the theory about the format of the divine writing would have been on Menasseh's mind for a while, and he certainly could have helped Rembrandt with this in person, before

writing his book. The idea that Menasseh did advise Rembrandt on “Belshazzar’s Feast” is thus fairly compelling, and represents at least one, albeit probably brief, instance of collaboration.<sup>11</sup> (The painting is quite rare in Dutch art, with respect to both its subject and the inclusion of the Aramaic inscription. It seems not to have been commissioned by a Jewish patron, but rather, as John Michael Montias has suggested, was in the possession of one Jean LeBleu, whose 1635 inventory mentions “een stuck daer inne mene, mene, tekel” [a painting in which counted, weighed and divided]. This also puts the dating of work before 1635.)<sup>12</sup>

The project that is most often cited as proof of a working partnership between artist and rabbi is Menasseh’s book *Piedra gloriosa* (full title: *Even yekarah. Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar*—The Glorious Stone, or On the Statue of Nebuchadnesar), a messianic treatise that Menasseh published in 1655, a few months before his departure for England to negotiate the readmission of the Jews to a kingdom from which they had been formally banned since 1290, and just two years before his death.

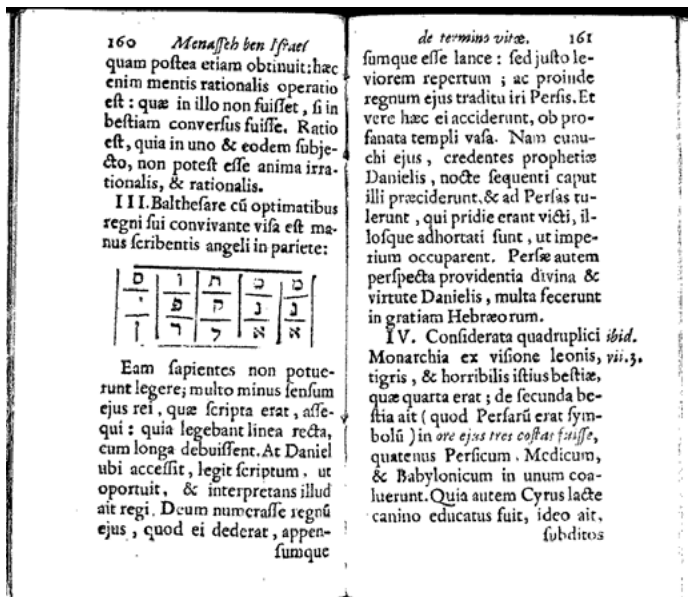
Much of Menasseh’s treatise is a commentary on the Book of Daniel, which, like the story of Esther, was of great importance in the early modern period to both Jews in the Sephardic diaspora and Judaizing *conversos* still living in Spain and Portugal. Among other things, Menasseh offers an interpretation of the episode from Daniel in which Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, dreams of a “huge and dazzling” statue—with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, torso of bronze, legs of iron and feet of clay and iron—that is then toppled and shattered by a boulder (Daniel 2:31–36). In the Bible story, Daniel explains the king’s dream as forecasting the doom facing his and subsequent kingdoms. Daniel then foretells of “a kingdom established by the God of heaven that will never be destroyed [...] it shall shatter and make an end to all those kingdoms, it shall itself endure forever.”

It was not very difficult for Menasseh to find messianic import in Daniel’s dream interpretation. The stone that crushes the king’s statue, “hewn from a mountain without the intervention of human hands,” represents the Messiah sent by God. Having swept away all other empires of the world—the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, represented by the materially composite statue—God will replace them with the Kingdom of Israel. “This stone is the Messiah, a stone that, striking the feet of the statue, will put an end to all the kingdoms of the Fourth Monarchy, will become an immense mountain and will fill the world.”<sup>13</sup>

Not content to provide a reading of these passages from Daniel, Menasseh argues that the same messianic message is present throughout the Hebrew Bible. It is there in the Pentateuch’s narratives of the patriarchs, as well as in the writings of the prophets. It is certain, he says, that “God revealed [to Moses] the entire history of the Jews up to the end of time,”<sup>14</sup> and so the

55  
Menasseh ben Israel,  
*De termino vitae*,  
Amsterdam, 1639, p. 160

Amsterdam, Ets Haim  
– Livraria Montezinos  
(21H31/05)







Rembrandt 655.



Rembrandt 656.



Rembrandt 657.



Rembrandt 7. 10 53.

Torah is full of indications about the fate of the Four Monarchies and the establishment of the Fifth. Indeed, Menasseh says, “there is no prophet to whom God has not revealed this mystery.”<sup>15</sup>

Remarkably, Menasseh argues that the stone that topples the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is in fact identical with stones that appear in two other well-known Bible stories. It is the same exact rock as that on which Jacob’s head rests while he dreams about angels going up and down a ladder and which he then sets up as a sacred pillar onto which he pours oil (Genesis 28:10–19). “We have here the same stone,” Menasseh insists, “the stone of the Messiah.”<sup>16</sup> Then there is the stone with which David, representing the Messiah, slays the Philistine giant Goliath, who stands for both the statue of Nebuchadnezzar and the four captivities of Israel (I Samuel 17). David, Menasseh notes, had five stones in his bag. Four of them are “useless,” and represent the Four Monarchies. “The fifth one stands for the one that shattered the Statue. It is the same stone on which Jacob poured oil, and the same one of which Daniel spoke.”<sup>17</sup>

The finale of the treatise is Menasseh’s extended discussion of Daniel’s vision of the beasts (7:1–27). Daniel relates that during the reign of Belshazzar, “I saw a great sea churned up by the four winds of heaven, and four huge beasts coming up out of the sea.” One of the beasts was a lion with eagle’s wings; a second was a bear; and a third was a four-headed leopard with four bird wings on its back. Most terrifying of all was a fourth beast, “dreadful and grisly, exceedingly strong, with great iron teeth and bronze claws. It crunched and devoured, and then trampled underfoot all that was left. It differed from all the beasts that preceded it in having ten horns.” One of the horns had “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke proud words.” On Menasseh’s reading, the four beasts are, once again, the four doomed kingdoms, while “a man” whom Daniel describes as “coming with the clouds of heaven” is the Messiah. His fifth kingdom will be an everlasting worldly dominion, a monarchy of Israel with the Davidic king sent by God ruling all nations under one law.<sup>18</sup>

Menasseh was ready to publish his book—in Spanish—in early 1655. However, he thought it should contain some illustrations. His analyses of the toppling of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue, Jacob dreaming of the ladder, David felling Goliath, and especially Daniel’s graphic vision of the beasts all demanded visual aids. Menasseh relates that he was responsible for four images of just these episodes for the book. Here is what he says in the preface *Al Lector* (To the Reader): “Iuntamente par mayor claridad de lo que se dize, he hecho en laminas, con grande propiedad, 4. Figuras” (Additionally, for better clarity of what is said, I have done [made] 4 figures [images] on plates, with great propriety).

He then describes the four illustrated scenes in detail, adding that “Todo esto ha costado, y aun algun trabajo y industria” (All of this was costly, and [required] even some work and industry).<sup>19</sup>

Now a number of extant copies of the *Piedra gloriosa* do (or at one time did) contain such illustrations—that is, four separate etched prints of these episodes (fig. 56).<sup>20</sup> But, contrary to what one might expect from what Menasseh says in the preface, the prints are not by Menasseh himself. Rather, they are by Rembrandt.<sup>21</sup> This raises quite a few, still unresolved questions: Why do Rembrandt’s illustrations for this book exist? How

56  
Rembrandt, Four  
illustrations for Menasseh’s  
*Piedra gloriosa*, 1655  
Etching (uncut plate,  
third state), 27.7 x 15.8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-66)

did they end up in some, but not all, of the extant bound volumes?<sup>22</sup> Above all, does this represent a true collaboration between Rembrandt and Menasseh? Many commentators have claimed that the rabbi did indeed directly commission the etchings from the artist.<sup>23</sup> Other scholars, however, have questioned whether Rembrandt produced these images for Menasseh's book at the author's request, or even denied it outright. One scholar sums up the uncertain state of things well: "Taking everything into consideration, did Menasseh and Rembrandt work together or not? If the famous artist was such a good friend, why did Menasseh not name him? Did he turn down his series? Or were Rembrandt's prints bound in at someone else's request?"<sup>24</sup> Given the total lack of documentation concerning any kind of working relationship between Rembrandt and Menasseh on this project, as well as the fact that neither man ever mentions the other, all we can really do is speculate.

And yet, despite skepticism by some scholars, it seems extremely likely that there was indeed a collaboration here.<sup>25</sup> When Menasseh says, in his preface, that "I have done [made] 4 figures [images] on plates," he might seem to be claiming that he himself made etched illustrations for the book. But no prints by his hand appear in any copy or, as far as we know, are extant in any other format. Nor could he, without serious technical training, have produced multiple states of etched plates of such high artistic quality.<sup>26</sup> The more likely reading of the sentence, then, is not that Menasseh made etched plates of four images, but that he had some etched plates made according to his vision of what the illustrations should look like "for better clarity of what is said." That is, Menasseh was responsible for designing, and perhaps even sketching out, what the illustrations should be. He then passed all this along to Rembrandt, who executed the designs in etchings in his own inimitable style, perhaps with Menasseh's input through each state of the etchings.<sup>27</sup> (It was likely Rembrandt's etchings, especially the fourth one, with the anthropomorphic depiction of God, that led to Menasseh's book being censored by the board of directors of the Portuguese-Jewish community.<sup>28</sup>

Rembrandt's alleged personal and intellectual connections with a young man who would go on to become the most famous (and infamous) of Amsterdam's Portuguese Jews have also been the subject of study and speculation (fig. 51). Did Rembrandt and Bento (Baruch) de Spinoza (Amsterdam, 1632–The Hague, 1677), at one point both denizens of the Breestraat neighborhood, have anything to do with each other? Many have thought so, or at least wished it to be the case. Unfortunately, there is no evidence whatsoever for any acquaintance, and in fact it seems highly unlikely.

Spinoza's parents, Miguel d'Espinoza and his second wife Hannah Deborah Senior, were former *conversos* and recent immigrants to the Dutch Republic from Portugal, arriving probably sometime in the early 1620s. The future philosopher himself, however, was born and raised in Amsterdam. The family was relatively well off, and Miguel, an importer of dried fruits, was a prominent member of the Jewish community. They rented a house on the Breestraat side of the Houtgracht, the canal separating Breestraat and the Vlooienburg island (see Knotter, p. 57). (The canal was filled in during the nineteenth century; it is now covered by the Waterlooplein.) Spinoza thus grew up around the corner and down the street from Rembrandt's house on the Breestraat.

After his older brother Isaac died in 1649, Spinoza cut short his schooling and joined the family business; when Miguel then passed away in 1654, Spinoza and his younger brother Gabriel took over running the firm. To all appearances, he was an upstanding member of the Talmud Torah congregation and continued to pay his communal dues and taxes. Until July of 1656, that is, when, for reasons unknown to us, he was issued the most vitriolic *herem* or ban ever pronounced by the parnassim of the Amsterdam Sephardim. On account of his unspecified “abominable heresies” and “monstrous deeds,” the twenty-three-year-old Spinoza was permanently expelled from the city’s Portuguese-Jewish community.<sup>29</sup> The philosophical writings he began just a few years after his ban would scandalize Europe through the final decades of the century.

Now the Rembrandt scholar Wilhelm Valentiner, in his monograph *Rembrandt and Spinoza: A Study of the Spiritual Conflicts in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, notes that “although during a certain period [Rembrandt and Spinoza] lived almost next door to each other, though they had common friends and may well have met at one time or another, they could never have been mutually attracted.” This, he insists, is because “these two geniuses were [...] opposed in their philosophy of life.”<sup>30</sup> He goes on to argue that, in fact, Rembrandt and Spinoza did “likely” meet, with Rembrandt either observing “the boy Spinoza” in the synagogue or Hebrew school; or encountering him at the house of Menasseh ben Israel, who, besides collaborating with Rembrandt, was likely Spinoza’s teacher in the elementary level of the Talmud Torah school; or at the home of Franciscus van den Enden, the former Jesuit priest who was Spinoza’s Latin teacher, where one of Rembrandt’s pupils, Leendert van Beyeren, was a lodger.<sup>31</sup>

This last hypothesis is a non-starter, however, since van Beyeren died in 1649, before van den Enden closed his art and book dealership and opened his Latin school, and thus several years before Spinoza connected with van den Enden, most likely in the early 1650s. Still, Valentiner insists, on the basis of what he claims were overlapping social and intellectual circles, “even if it was not until 1654–5, when Spinoza came to stay with van den Enden, it is most likely that Rembrandt met [Spinoza] there,” and concludes that “it can hardly be doubted that they met more than once, although a closer friendship could probably not develop in view of their fundamentally different conception of religion.”<sup>32</sup>

To all of which I say: This was almost certainly not the case. For most of Rembrandt’s residency on the Breestraat, Spinoza was a child or adolescent; there is no reason why the artist should have taken any special interest in him. Even as a young man in his early twenties, before his *herem*, Spinoza was nothing exceptional; he was, we know (and contrary to the Spinoza mythology), *not* the apple of any rabbi’s eye or being groomed to become a rabbi. He was just another young, Portuguese-Jewish businessman, one of many in Amsterdam. Moreover, within a couple of years of his *herem*, well before beginning his philosophical career, he left Amsterdam altogether. In principle Menasseh could have introduced Rembrandt to Spinoza at some point, but why would he have? Spinoza was, in short, a nobody, and certainly not yet the great philosopher he would later become. I am afraid that the idea that Rembrandt and Spinoza had anything to do with each other, as intriguing and potentially fruitful an idea as it may be, simply must go the way of all the other myths about Rembrandt or Spinoza.<sup>33</sup>

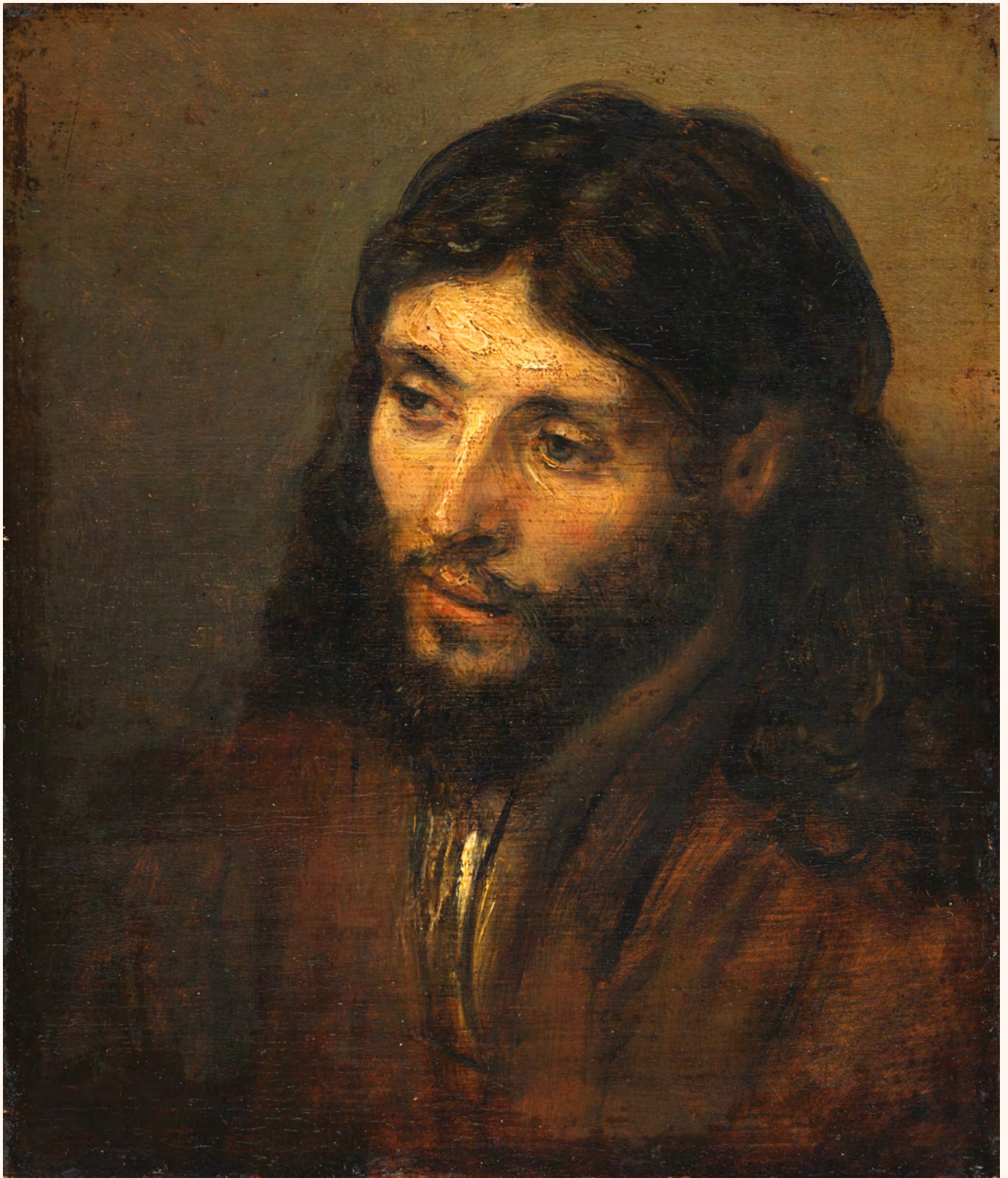
## NOTES

- 1 On the myths around Rembrandt and Judaism, see Schwartz 1985, 284; Zell 2000–1; Nadler 2003; and Amsterdam 2006.
- 2 Gans 1971, 70–71. See also Landsberger 1946.
- 3 Writing in 1915, Frits Lugt refers to Menasseh as Rembrandt’s “intieme en hooggeschatte vriend” (intimate and highly esteemed friend) (87). More recently, Christian Tümpel has claimed that Rembrandt and Menasseh “formed a friendship that lasted more than two decades” (Tümpel 2006, 109); and Simon Schama says that “the relationship with Menasseh was real and it was serious” (Schama 1999, 607). This is, in fact, a very common view. For another example, see van de Waal 1954–55, which describes “a firm and lasting relationship between the artist who showed such an interest in the Jews and the ‘apostle to the Gentiles’ [i.e. Menasseh]” (116). For biographies of Menasseh, see Roth 1945; Ifrah 2001; and Nadler 2018a.
- 4 See Roth 1945, 169; Schwartz 1985, 175; Hausherr 1963; and Schama 1999, 418.
- 5 Gersaint 1751, 195.
- 6 For an assessment of Gersaint’s reasoning, see Dudok van Heel 1994. Offenberg (1992) argues that it is “highly unlikely” that Menasseh would have commissioned a portrait etching from Rembrandt in 1636, given his “dire financial straits.” Schwartz finds it inconceivable that Rembrandt would not have given a book to a sitter who was not only a scholar and a rabbi but a publisher/printer (Schwartz 2006, 302). However, David de Witt, chief curator at the Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam, has argued that the 1636 etching is indeed a portrait of Menasseh.
- 7 The suggestion of a Rembrandt–Menasseh collaboration on this painting was first made by Dyserinck (1904). The argument was expanded by Hausherr (1963) and the thesis has since become a commonplace in the literature.
- 8 See *Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate Sanhedrin, 22a; *Midrash Rabbah*, Song of Songs, III.4.ii.
- 9 Menasseh ben Israel 1639, 160.
- 10 The dating by art historians ranges from 1635 to 1639.
- 11 Zell notes that Protestant and Catholic exegetes generally avoided the issue of the unreadability of the message “by assuming that God had blinded them to the prophecy,” and concludes that “Rembrandt therefore most likely learned the sequence from Menasseh” (2002, 62). On the dating issue, he suggests that “Menasseh might well have written out the inscription in this [vertical] arrangement for Rembrandt before the book appeared” (62). Perlove and Silver regard a collaboration here as “most likely” (2009, 134), while Schama says that Menasseh “almost certainly supplied the painter with the additionally esoteric effect of having the Hebrew/Aramaic letters read in vertical columns rather than horizontally from right to left” (1999, 418). Schwartz initially says that, with respect to this painting, “we must assume that Rembrandt derived his information directly from Menasseh” (1985, 175). In subsequent work, however, he is more skeptical that Rembrandt received any Jewish help here (Schwartz 2006, 301–2); and eventually he outright rejects the idea that Menasseh had any involvement in Rembrandt’s painting, arguing that the Hebrew error in the inscription (a *zayin* instead of a final *nun*) would never have passed muster if Menasseh had been his advisor (Schwartz 2009, 35–36). Alexander-Knotter et al., in keeping with the general tenor of their study, are equally suspicious, saying that “it is not certain that Rembrandt had personal contact with Menasseh in relation to the Hebrew inscription on ‘Belshazzar’s Feast’” (Amsterdam 2007, 20).
- 12 Montias 2002, 204–8.
- 13 Menasseh ben Israel 1655, 25.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 139.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 176.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 164–65.
- 18 Menasseh’s interpretation of these verses from Daniel take up the final ten sections of *Piedra gloriosa* (Menasseh ben Israel 1655, 186–259).
- 19 Menasseh ben Israel 1655, v–vi.
- 20 See Nadler 2021.

- 21 As far as I can determine, there are at least twenty-three extant copies of *Piedra gloriosa*. Fourteen of these copies do *not* have any of Rembrandt's illustrations; of those fourteen, ten do not have any illustrations at all. But I can confirm that there are *seven* copies of the book that have all four Rembrandt illustrations bound within their covers, and another two copies that almost certainly had them. On this, see Nadler 2021.
- 22 There are also illustrations bound in other extant copies of the book—not etchings, however, but engravings; and while they are of inferior artistic quality, they closely resemble those by Rembrandt. The artist responsible for these has often been assumed to be a Jewish artist living in Amsterdam, Salom Italia; this is now a contested claim, with good reason. The catalogue of Italia's work by Narkiss (1956–57) does include the four engravings for Menasseh's book. However, the most recent literature on Italia does not mention them at all; see Amsterdam 2011.
- 23 It seems to have been Gersaint, in his catalogue raisonné, who first suggested that Rembrandt and Menasseh collaborated on “un Livre Espagnol” (1751, 22). There is substantial literature on Rembrandt's four etchings themselves. For discussion of them with regard to their aesthetic dimensions, their composition, and their development over the various states, as well as what they might (or might not) say about Rembrandt's “faith” and his approach to the Book of Daniel, see Zell 2002, 72–84; Perlove and Silver 2009, 134–37; and Paris 2007, 318–23.
- 24 Hillegers 2018, 116.
- 25 I was skeptical of a collaboration, and offered an alternative account, in Nadler 2018a (Appendix), involving Isaac Vossius and Jan Six. However, persuaded by arguments by Victor Tiribás and Gary Schwartz, I no longer believe that complicated hypothesis to be plausible.
- 26 Some of the etchings exist in three to five states. For a detailed study, see Dutuit 1883, vol. 1, 83–87; and Hinterding and Rutgers 2013, vol. 3, 116–23 and vol. 2, 248–51.
- 27 For an extended defense of this thesis, see Nadler and Tiribás 2021.
- 28 See Nadler and Tiribás 2021.
- 29 For Spinoza's biography, see Nadler 2018b.
- 30 Valentiner 1957, 9–10.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 19–20, 30.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 35–36. Valentiner claims that both men had very good friends in Amsterdam's Mennonite and Collegiant circles.
- 33 A less fanciful study of Rembrandt and Spinoza, focused on the two as representative of the religious “Baroque,” is in Gebhardt 1927.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Steven Nadler** is Vilas Research Professor and the William H. Hay II Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His most recent books include *Think Least of Death: Spinoza on How to Live and How to Die* (Princeton, 2020); *Menasseh ben Israel: Rabbi of Amsterdam* (Yale, “Jewish Lives” series, 2018); and *Descartes: The Renewal of Philosophy* (Reaktion, 2023).



# Rembrandt, the Jews and Judaism

SHELLEY PERLOVE

## ABSTRACT

Rembrandt demonstrated interest in Jews throughout his career. This study explores his images of Jews within the setting of the Temple, as well as his formulation of a presumably Jewish Jesus in the Louvre *Supper at Emmaus*. My investigation explores the relative accuracy of these interpretations and their underlying religious meaning. As great as the liberties he took in rendering Hebraic ritual garments and Temple architecture, in certain instances he achieved a degree of authenticity. To this end, he read his Bible and the Jewish histories of Flavius Josephus, and consulted Hebraic texts, as well as a Temple elevation by Villalpando. Most importantly, Rembrandt juxtaposed scenes of Jewish atonement with Christ, thereby asserting the Pauline concept of the superiority of Christian redemption over Judaism.

## KEYWORDS

Rembrandt, Judaic Studies, Temple, Christ, Bible, St. Paul

Any discussion of Rembrandt and the Jews is challenging and fraught with contradictions. The difficulties begin with the attempt to understand Rembrandt's own attitude toward Jews and Judaism. While not a philosemite, as some have suggested, the artist nonetheless had an abiding, lifelong interest in Jews and Judaism. This applied not only to the Hebrews of biblical history, but also to the Jews he saw around him, who came to Amsterdam to escape the Inquisition in Portugal and the pogroms in Eastern Europe. Many resided in his own neighborhood on the Breestraat (by mid-seventeenth century also known as the Jodenbreestraat, Jewish Broad Street). Rembrandt portrayed

57  
Rembrandt, *Head of Christ*, ca. 1648–50  
Oil on panel,  
25 × 21.5 cm

Berlin, Staatliche Museen  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz,  
Gemäldegalerie (811c;  
presented to the museum  
by Mr. and Mrs. Martin  
Bromberg, 1907)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_PERLOVE





foreign, “exotic” elements of Jewish attire, without aiming for accuracy. This was also the case for the architecture in his depictions of the ancient Jerusalem Temple. At best, the Dutch artist achieved what I call “a semblance of authenticity” in his imaginative formulations treating ancient and contemporary Jewry, the Jerusalem Temple and even the face of Jesus. While he may have used Amsterdam Jews as models for depictions of Jesus, these images also answer to a description of the Christian savior found in a letter, that was believed to have been written by a first-century Roman governor named Publius Lentulus. The letter was actually a medieval fabrication, but even though this was suspected in the seventeenth century, it was quoted by Rembrandt’s pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten as an appropriate source for the image of Christ. In his depictions of subjects like the Presentation in the Temple, Rembrandt stressed fundamental differences between Second Temple Judaism and Christianity, especially with regard to the atonement of sin and the role of the priesthood.

Rembrandt’s attraction to Jews and Judaism would have been grounded in the Bible, fundamental reading in a Protestant country. Steeped in the reading of scripture, he portrayed many events of the Hebrew and Christian Testaments. He consulted the copious notes in the Dutch State Bible translation of 1637 and such other sources as Flavius Josephus’s Jewish history (*Antiquities of the Jews*, *Jewish Wars* and *Against Apion*), a copy of which was in his own collection.<sup>1</sup> Josephus was a major source for the artist.

Rembrandt’s approach to Judaism was firmly grounded in the teachings of St. Paul. The artist literally identified himself with the apostle in his *Self-portrait* of 1661, now in the Rijksmuseum, which may be taken as his profound endorsement of Pauline theol-

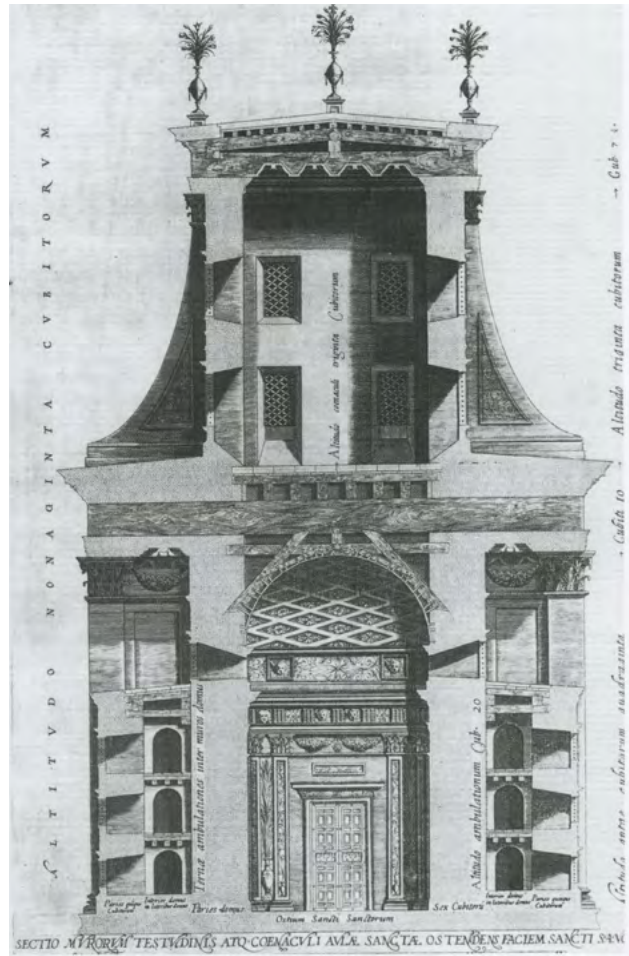
58

Rembrandt, *Pharisees in the Temple*, formerly known as *Jews in the Synagogue*, 1648  
Etching and drypoint,  
7.2 x 13.1 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-1962-60)

59  
 Juan Battista Villalpando,  
*Elevation of the Temple*,  
 from Jerónimo de Prado and  
 Juan Battista Villalpando,  
*In Ezechielem explanationes  
 et apparatus urbis ac templi  
 Hierosolymitani* [...], vol. 2,  
 Rome (Aloysij Zannetti),  
 1604

Private collection



ogy (see frontispiece). The apostle laid out essential differences and oppositions between Judaism and Christianity. Of primary importance were his beliefs that the Covenant between God and the Jews was inherited by Christians (Galatians 3:29), and that Judaism was based upon the Law, whereas Christianity was a religion of Grace. This was conferred through Jesus, who assumed the burden of law for the faithful (cf. Galatians 3:1–22). The Book of Hebrews in the New Testament, attributed to St. Paul in Rembrandt’s time, celebrated Christ as the new High Priest in heaven, who replaced the Jewish High Priest on earth (Hebrews 2:17, 4:14–16). This theology is inferred in many of Rembrandt’s interpretations of biblical subjects.

The artist would have consulted with Christian scholars, whose knowledge of Hebrew sources seems to have informed his religious works. Christian Hebraists held Jewish learning in high regard and studied it assiduously. This point was raised by the famous jurist Hugo Grotius concerning the conditions under which Sephardic Jews who had been expelled from Portugal were to be allowed to live in Amsterdam. In his *Remonstrance Concerning the Regulations to be Imposed upon the Jews in Holland* (1616), Grotius observed that it would be useful to admit them in order to learn Hebrew from them and study Judaism. While calling their religion the “beginning of the Truth,” he propounded the goal of converting them to Christianity, to be accomplished by demonstrating to Jews that

their own testimonies prove his divinity.<sup>2</sup> Around 1640, both Christians and Jews began to be seized by the strong belief that the coming of the Messiah (for Christians the Second Coming) was on hand, ushering in the thousand-year Millennium of Peace before the end of time. For Christians, Jewish conversion was a precondition for this much anticipated eschatological event.

In Rembrandt's etching of 1648, the so-called *Jews in the Synagogue*, the congregants engage in lively dialogue, on either side of a lone, seated man, pensively stroking his beard (fig. 58). The architecture in the print has no resemblance to a contemporary synagogue; the scene rather inflects the earliest title for the print, *Pharisees in the Temple*, listed in the inventory of the dealer Clement de Jonghe.<sup>3</sup> The Jews in the etching have gathered in the *bet midrash* (a space reserved for the study of holy texts) located in a side chamber of the Jerusalem Temple, the place where Christ may have disputed with the doctors.<sup>4</sup> The number of figures in the etching adds up to ten, the minimum number of men, known as a minyan, required for Jewish worship, so they must be there also for daily prayer.<sup>5</sup> The narrow, latticed windows, angled walls and stair landing situate the setting within one of the passageways encompassing the side chambers of the Temple on three sides, as described in 1 Kings 6:4, illustrated in Juan Battista Villalpando's engraved elevation of the Temple (fig. 59).<sup>6</sup>

Notably in the same year that Rembrandt produced this print, an influx of Eastern European Jews came to Amsterdam to escape the Chmielnicki massacres in Ukraine and other persecutions in Eastern and Central Europe. Unlike the Sephardic Jews, who dressed like everyone else, the Ashkenazim had full, untrimmed beards, and wore long caftans and floppy and tall hats. The figures in the print may resemble the Ashkenazi Jews Rembrandt observed in the streets of Amsterdam, as in his drawing, *Two Jews in Discussion, Walking*, in the Teylers Museum (see fig. 36). My discussion will demonstrate how Rembrandt merged lived experience with his own imaginative vision of Jews and the Jerusalem Temple, even while employing textual and visual sources.

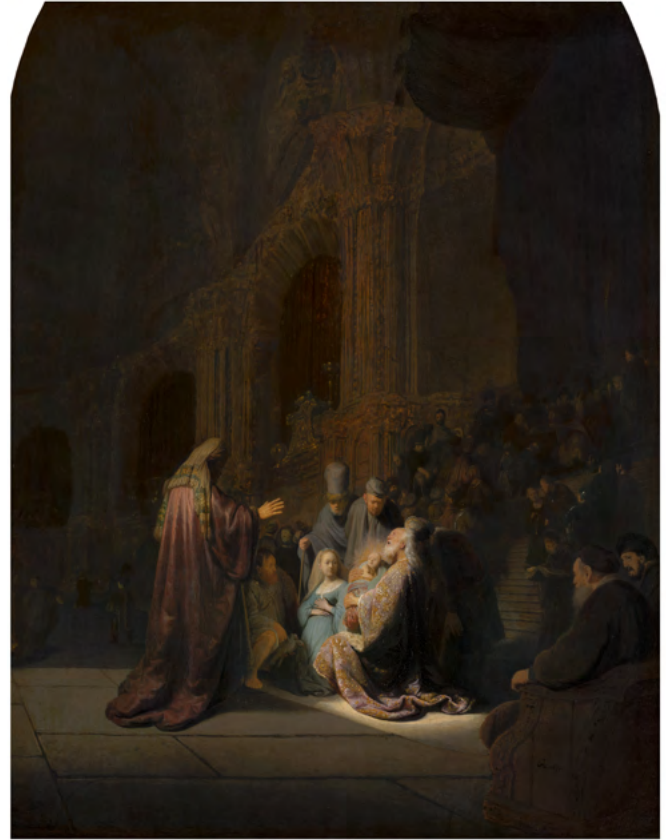
Most particularly, Rembrandt's intense engagement with Judaism is best conveyed through his own distinctive interpretations of subjects that involve the youthful Jesus in relation to the rituals of Judaism in the Herodian Temple. These narratives address a moment of transition between institutions of the Jewish tradition and the New Testament, when the young Jesus, raised as a Jew, is initiated into the laws and ceremonies of his ancient faith within the Temple, but also encounters opposition from Temple officials. St. Paul emphasized the significance of Judaism in Christ's early life in Galatians 4:4–5: "The Lord sent his Son made of a woman, made under the law, that he might deliver them that were under the law."

A biblical event closely related to the initiation of Jesus into Judaism is the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, a subject that Rembrandt returned to again and again throughout his career.<sup>7</sup> The event (Luke 2:22–40) derives from the Jewish requirement that firstborn sons be redeemed by making a payment to a priest. Mary and Joseph comply with this stipulation by coming to the Temple in Jerusalem. While they are there, an old and pious man named Simeon enters the Temple. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, this aged Jew, who had been told that he would live to see the Messiah, suddenly



60  
Rembrandt, *Presentation in  
the Temple with the Angel:*  
*Small Plate*, 1630  
Etching, 10.3 × 7.8 cm

Washington, D.C., National  
Gallery of Art (1943.3.7063;  
Rosenwald Collection)



61  
Rembrandt, *Simeon's Song  
of Praise*, 1631  
Oil on panel, 60.9 × 47.8 cm

The Hague, The Royal  
Cabinet of Painting,  
Mauritshuis

recognizes the infant Jesus as that promised savior and takes him into his arms. Simeon gives expression to his profound feelings with a Song of Praise, also known as the Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:27–32):

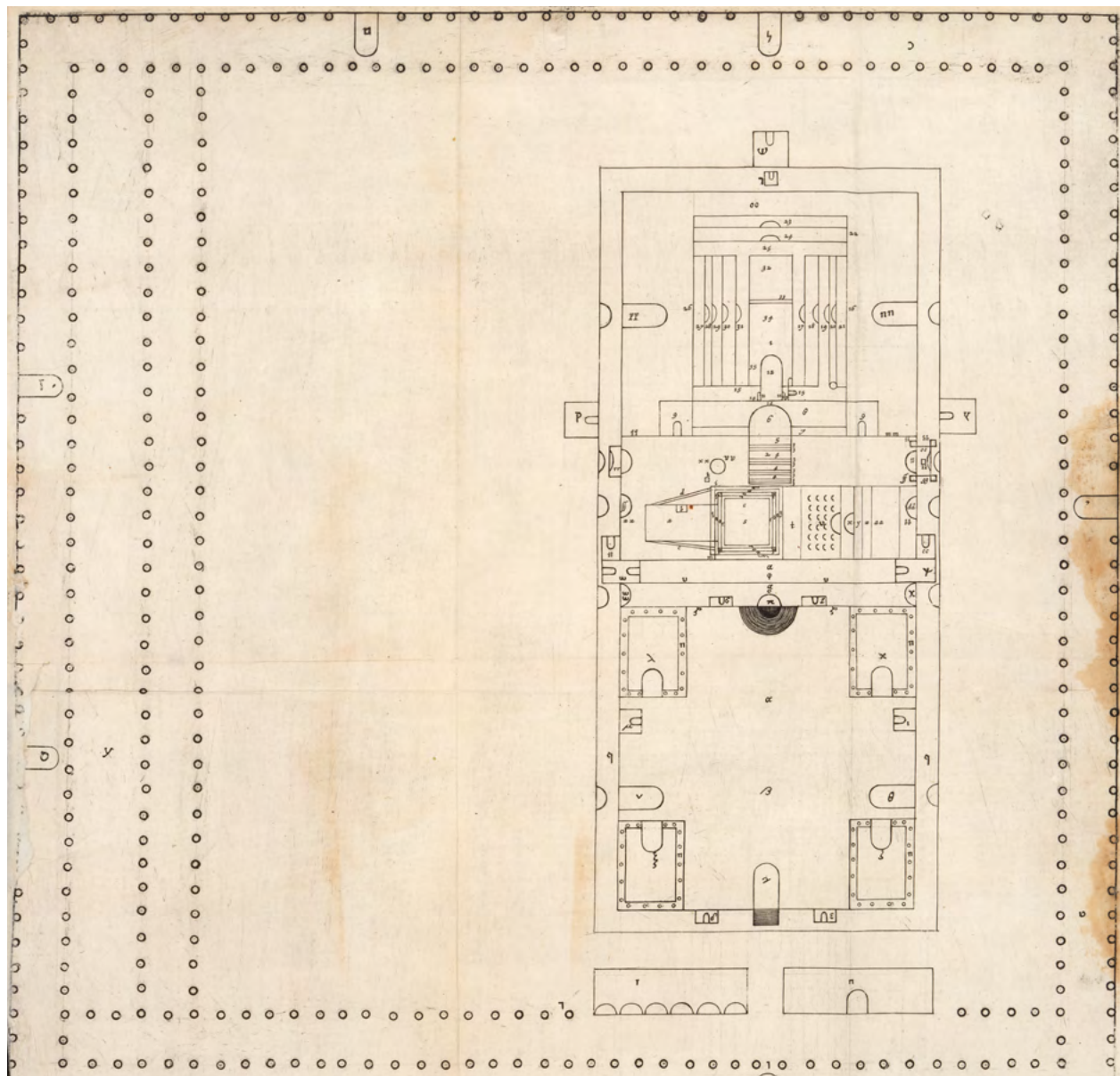
Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for the glory of thy people Israel.

Clearly the text supports an agenda of conversion and embrace of the Gospel for both Jew and Gentile, and Simeon provides a seamless and natural transition anticipating the apostles in his recognition of the new faith. In the narrative Mary and Joseph marvel at Simeon's words praising Jesus, and the prophet responds by blessing Mary, but he also prophesies that a "sword" [of pain] would pass through her soul and that her son would cause "the fall and rising of many in Israel" and would be "a sign that is spoken against" (Luke 2:34). The prophetess Hannah, who fasted and prayed in the Temple night and day for many decades, came to Simeon and the others "at the same hour," and "in like manner confessed the Lord and spoke of him unto all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Two highly detailed portrayals of this subject—Rembrandt's tiny etching of 1630 (fig. 60) and his painting entitled *Simeon's Song of Praise* of 1631 in The Hague (fig. 61)—focus upon the priests, rites and architecture of the Temple. In these works, Rembrandt sets up an opposition between the material splendor of Second Temple Judaism and the humility of the new faith, embodied in the infant Christ surrounded by his humble followers.<sup>8</sup> In this small print, half the size of a postcard, Simeon prophesies that a sword shall pierce Mary's soul and her son will be spoken against. We do not see Mary's face, but the sad reaction of one of the female auditors implies that Simeon is foretelling Mary's suffering. The Israelites at the right "speak" against Jesus as the promised messiah, and others scoff at this pronouncement, precisely as Simeon prophesied.

The print and the painting share details in common, especially their elaborate architectural settings, replete with long staircases, voluminous curtains and high, arched spaces. The sources for these and other details are found in Scripture and Josephus, and to a lesser extent in the Mishnah *Middot* and the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides. According to Aaron Katchen, *Middot* and the *Mishneh Torah* were sources of great interest for seventeenth-century Christian Hebraic scholars in the Dutch provinces.<sup>9</sup>

While Rembrandt was no Hebraist and had no direct knowledge of Jewish sources, he could have gotten information from scholars of Hebrew. The artist was born in Leiden and resided there until about 1630. For two years he was inscribed as a student at Leiden University, a major center for the study of Oriental languages, including Hebrew. Gary Schwartz notes that the artist could have turned for help with Hebrew to Antonius Thysius (1591–1648), professor of theology at Leiden University.<sup>10</sup> Schwartz relates how the stadholder's secretary, Constantijn Huygens, who knew Rembrandt, put another artist, Jacob de Gheyn, in contact with a Hebraist to compose an inscription for a painting of King David.<sup>11</sup>



62  
Plan of Temple Complex, in  
Constantinus L'Empereur ab  
Opwyck, *Massechet Middot  
meTalmud Bavli, hoc est,  
Talmudis Babylonici codex  
Middoth sive De Mensuris  
Templi*, Leiden (Bonaventura  
and Abraham II Elzevier)  
1630

Most important for Temple studies, in 1630 Constantijn L'Empereur, Professor of Hebrew at Leiden University from 1627 to 1646, translated into Latin the Babylonian Mishnah *Middoth*.<sup>12</sup> This Mishnah, which describes the architectural layout and functions of the Temple complex, was an influential Hebraic source on the Temple. L'Empereur's publication would have stirred up excitement among scholars, especially since it appeared with extensive notes and included an architectural plan.<sup>13</sup> The Christian Hebraist Adam Boreel, who later collaborated with Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon on the translation into Latin of all six books of the Mishnah and the construction of a model of the Jerusalem Temple, might have traveled to Leiden to confer with L'Empereur and may have served there as advisor to Rembrandt, although this remains conjecture.

L'Empereur's dedication of this publication suggests the Christian motivations that propelled contemporary studies of the Jerusalem Temple:<sup>14</sup>

The book [*Middot*] had to rush away [be rushed into publication] and not be hidden any longer, [for] it sheds such important light on sacred things. And indeed, not only does it elucidate the religious ceremonies of the Old Testament, when it places clearly before our eyes the place and the several areas of that place where those ceremonies were performed, but it also holds up a bright light before the Gospel narratives, when it shows those who until now did not know these things, exactly in which section our Savior did each thing in the Jerusalem Temple, and where therein he taught.

Rembrandt's etching and painting of the Presentation accomplishes the goals of the dedication by situating the Presentation in the Temple. The two works share such elements as the vast curtain at the top of the steps, where figures kneel before a rotund, seated high priest.<sup>15</sup> Another Jewish source, the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, describes the many curtains of the Temple gates in the Temple.<sup>16</sup> The figures on the staircases have come to the priest to atone for their sins, to settle disputes or to be purified, but their backs are turned away from the Christian savior who brings the gift of salvation. In the print a man, identified only by his crippled leg, hobbles out of the scene at the far left, watched by a young girl. Schwartz considers him the first Jew to reject Jesus.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the disabled man, who was not healed by the high priest in the Temple, does not understand that Christ will accomplish this in the future, as he did for lepers (as in Luke 17:14).

The architectural setting for the print and painting is the Temple Court of Women. The foremost seventeenth-century Temple scholar, John Lightfoot, whose Latin texts on the Temple were highly popular, maintained in his publication of 1649 that the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple took place in the Women's Court.<sup>18</sup> The author also included a plan much like L'Empereur's in his book on the Temple (fig. 52).<sup>19</sup>

The court of women appears as a square on the lower part of L'Empereur's plan, the first space in the east on consecrated ground, reserved solely for Jews. Four corner chambers in the court each had a particular function, but the southwest chamber to the upper left of the court, used to store oil and wine, is most relevant to Rembrandt's etching. A detail in the print, just to the left and behind the young girl, shows three tiny



63  
Rembrandt, *Presentation in the Temple: Oblong Print*, ca. 1639–41  
Etching and drypoint,  
21.2 x 29 cm

Washington, D.C., National  
Gallery of Art (1943.3.7103;  
Rosenwald Collection)

figures walking before a large receptacle topped by an ornate flared object. The tallest man carries a censer on a long chain (cf. 1 Kings 7:50). These figures must be Temple attendants, collecting oil stored in this chamber for the golden incense altar (cf. Deuteronomy 33:10). The curved ornate object may be the *Corban*, the treasure box that may have been stored in the courtyard. Josephus describes this object as an upside-down trumpet, which may be the shape in the etching. Indeed, it would be easy for anyone to miss such minute details without intense magnification.

The Gate at the west end was reached by a semi-circular staircase, shown as a dark half-circle on the plan. This staircase of fifteen steps is also described by Josephus, Johannes Buxtorf, John Lightfoot and Samuel Lee.<sup>20</sup> The vantage point for both of Rembrandt's Temple court settings in these works is situated to the left of the staircase, with the steps on the far right, observed from an oblique angle. This viewpoint emphasizes the grandiosity of the Temple ceremonies in contrast to the intimacy of the group around Jesus.

The Court of Women in the Mauritshuis painting, with its elaborate, eccentric architecture, is ornate and majestic. The Women's Court is defined by a series of arches flanked by stately, fluted columns. Opulent floral forms embellish the "capitals" and the



walls surmounting the arches. The ornate beauty and scale of these columns may have been inspired by Josephus, who praised the excellence of the “very fine and large pillars” of the “cloisters” in the Women’s Court (*Wars* 5.5.2). The columns in the painting with their elaborate fluted carvings, however, are fanciful and have nothing to do with Temple sources. They are fantastical creations, products of the artist’s fertile imagination.

Thus, inspired by many sources, Rembrandt’s conceptions nonetheless lack accuracy. The details that appear in these images were most likely suggested to him by Hebraic scholars but were adjusted to accommodate Rembrandt’s own vision as an artist. The most influential sources for these two works of 1630 and 1631 are the Bible and Josephus.

The artist’s later treatment of the subject, a large undated etching, *The Presentation in the Temple: Oblong Plate*, differs considerably from his earlier representations (fig. 63). The Jews of Amsterdam assume a major role in this print, which resonates with religious conflict.

Kneeling on the ground facing Mary, Simeon prophesies the tribulations she and her son will face. This precise moment of his prophecy is evoked by the somber reactions of the onlookers although two male witnesses turn away or scoff in disbelief. Situated within a space that is unrelated to textual descriptions of Temple architecture, the Jews are attired in garments traditionally worn in the synagogue, although not accurately observed. Some wear a prayer shawl known as a *talit*, such as the man conversing at the far left. Many witnesses around the infant Jesus don fanciful turbans; and the exceedingly tall, extravagant headgear worn by an aged, bearded man may signify his exalted status as a high priest. The widow Hannah, who lived in the Temple and bore witness to the infant Christ as the anticipated messiah, wears a prayer shawl with pendant fringes at the corners reminiscent of the *tzitzit* worn by Jewish men, although they are tightly wrapped, not dangling singly as is correct. Rembrandt never achieved the ethnographic accuracy of such Dutch artists as Jan Luyken (1649–1712) or Romeyn de Hooghe (1645–1708) in his portrayal of Jews; yet his renderings are nonetheless vaguely suggestive of garments he would have observed. His interests in evoking ritual dress may have been intended to emphasize Jewish adherence to the law, as asserted by St. Paul, who said that the burden of the law was assumed by Christ (Galatians 3:1–22).

The two doves that fly over Hannah’s head are not mentioned in scripture, and have been ignored by scholars, even after Schwartz pointed out this detail for the first time. The two doves may inflect the two Dispensations; the dove in the shadows would refer to the Old Testament, veiled and darkened; and the dove filled with resplendent light would adduce Jesus and the onset of Christianity. Interpreted in relation to Covenant theology, the dove of the Hebrew past would signify the Covenant of works rooted in God’s goodness (*bonitas Dei*), while the fully illuminated dove would embody the greater glory of the new Covenant flowing from God’s grace (*gratia Dei*).<sup>21</sup> Here again the assumption that Christianity surpasses Judaism is asserted by the artist.

In the second state of the etching, Simeon, with a full, untrimmed beard, wears a dark skullcap or *yarmulka* that accentuates his presence in the scene, but also under-



64  
Rembrandt, *Peter and John  
Healing a Cripple at the Gate  
of the Temple*, 1659  
Etching and drypoint on  
Japan paper, 18 cm x 21.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-324)

scores his Jewish identity. Calvinist preachers, however, also wore such caps, so this addition may be a subtle reference to Simeon's initiation into Christianity.<sup>22</sup>

Despite Rembrandt's delving into Temple details in the 1630s, the artist never portrayed the structure accurately as a basilican plan. Consistently, he showed it as a round or polygonal structure. Focusing only on the Courtyard of Women, the artist ignored the longitudinal Temple plans of L'Empereur, Villalpando, Lightfoot and others.<sup>23</sup> Schwartz rightly observes that Rembrandt was not really devoted to Temple reconstruction, and oddly enough ignored the model of the Temple complex by Jacob Judah Leon, displayed in 1641 in the nearby house of the rabbi, as well as its accompanying print.<sup>24</sup> The sole feature that might tentatively be traced to the model and its accompanying print is the courtyard of the Gentiles, although the plans by L'Empereur and Lightfoot also included vast courtyards outside the Temple enclosure.



65  
Rembrandt School, *Head  
of Christ*, ca. 1648–54  
Oil on panel, 25.4 × 21.3 cm

Detroit, Detroit Institute  
of Arts (30.370; Founders  
Society Purchase)



66  
Rembrandt, *Supper  
at Emmaus*, 1648  
Oil on panel, 68 × 65 cm

Paris, Musée du Louvre  
(1739)

In Rembrandt's etching of 1659, *Peter and John Healing a Cripple at the Temple Gate*, the two apostles at the left heal a disabled man at the Temple gate, while two officiating priests, oblivious to the miracle, occupy the porch of a large, round Temple (fig. 64). Before the priests stand two Solomonic columns and a round altar of sacrifice ablaze with billowing smoke. The space is difficult to reconcile with Temple plans, but Rembrandt makes sure to include details pertinent to the Christian message. After the miracle of healing, Peter is said to have converted five thousand to Christianity (Acts 4:4); the dense crowd of Jews within the courtyard and the presence of Gentiles in the far distance, where they look over the wall separating them from the Temple precinct, may allude to the conversion of Jews and Gentiles alike. Typical of Rembrandt's approach to the relation between the two faiths, the artist sets Temple rituals (the burning sacrifices) in opposition to the apostles' healing in Christ's name at the gate. Once again, Rembrandt devalues Judaism in favor of Christianity.

Always experimenting with new ideas, Rembrandt fostered a fresh image of the face of Jesus. His search was facilitated by sessions with students in his studio who painted after a living model or perhaps an oil sketch by their teacher. Indeed, Rembrandt's own inventory of 1656 itemizes two heads of Christ by the artist himself (nos. 115, 118), plus an unidentified artist's *tronie* of Christ from life (no. 326, "Een Christus tronie nae't leven").

At least eight study heads of Jesus formed the core of an exhibition in 2011 that opened in the Louvre and traveled to Philadelphia and Detroit.<sup>25</sup> A few years after the exhibition closed, Lloyd DeWitt discovered a *Head of John the Baptist on a Platter* in a private collection that strongly resembles the other heads of Christ produced in Rembrandt's studio.<sup>26</sup> The model for all these heads may have been a Jew in Rembrandt's neighborhood, although the evidence for this is just a likely surmise. Notwithstanding, the notion that the study heads portrayed a Jew as Jesus was dominant in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially among some Jewish collectors in Germany (see the article by Schwartz in this volume).

The heads of Christ clearly resemble each other in physiognomy and technique and offer an image of the savior which is different from others (fig. 65; see also fig. 57).<sup>27</sup> Schwartz quotes a poem by Jan Vos (published 1662) which proves that the practice of using a Jewish model did in fact exist. The poet describes a painting by Rembrandt's early pupil, Govert Flinck, and rails that the Jewish model for the picture would have denounced Christ himself:<sup>28</sup>

All that lacks is speech, but Govert Flinck refused  
To paint an open mouth, despite de Wijze's plea.  
For this Christ would not speak of Christ except in blasphemy.  
The heart is not reflected by the face that shines on you.  
You ask how come? Because the model was a Jew.

Schwartz suggests that the heads of Jesus were based upon a description of Christ in a forged letter of Publius Lentulus, the governor of Judea before Pontius Pilate, which still circulated in Rembrandt's time. Samuel van Hoogstraten, a pupil of Rembrandt, quotes from the letter even though he seems uncertain of its authenticity:<sup>29</sup>

His hair is of the color of a ripe hazelnut, parted on top in the manner of the Nazirites, and falling straight to the ears but curving further, with blond highlights and fanning off his shoulders. He has a fair forehead and no wrinkles or marks on his face, his cheeks are tinged with pink. His nose and mouth are faultless. His beard is large and full but not long and parted in the middle, [...] his eyes are changeable and bright.

I agree with Schwartz that the study heads closely resemble this description; yet at the same time, they are more human and accessible than other images of Christ, such as Dürer's Jesus in *Christ in Emmaus* woodcut discussed below (fig. 67). Rembrandt's model, perhaps Jewish, may account for such differences. Notwithstanding, Schwartz is right—Rembrandt did not portray his Jewish neighbors directly from life but altered their appearance after the description of Lentulus.

The oil sketch of Jesus in the Detroit Institute of Arts most closely resembles the figure of Christ in the Louvre *Supper at Emmaus* of 1648 (fig. 66).<sup>30</sup> The recognition of the Resurrected Christ and the formation of the insider community of the faithful as distinguished from outsiders are major themes the artist pursued in his many interpretations of the Emmaus story. The biblical narrative in Luke 24 begins when two travelers, walking along the road to Emmaus, are joined by the resurrected Jesus, whom they do not recognize. In the conversation that ensues, the two men speak of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, expressing disappointment that Israel had not been redeemed. Jesus answers them by explaining how the savior had to suffer before he could be glorified as messiah, as foretold by the prophets. With the approach of nightfall, the two men invite the stranger to join them for dinner, and when he blesses and breaks the bread, the disciples recognize their companion as the savior, who miraculously disappears. Thus, the story itself dramatizes the metaphoric journey of the Jewish pilgrim from skepticism to faith.

The Louvre *Supper at Emmaus* follows visual tradition in showing a waiter, usually a Jew who brings food to the table but does not recognize Christ. In this case the waiter serves two goat heads for atonement on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:15–34). The presence of two goat heads on the platter evokes the Temple custom on the Day of Atonement of offering one goat to atone the sins of the priest, the other as a “scapegoat” sent out into the wilderness to redeem the sins of the entire community (Leviticus 16; a biblical passage adduced each year in the litany of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement). But Jesus obtained salvation for all believers in one act of sacrifice and thus replaces the high priest and the two goats. Thus, the Jewish atonement of sin is compared with the atonement of Jesus.

As in the biblical narrative, the two disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of bread. As was traditional, the Dürer woodcut shows a typical figure type of Jesus, with a long, narrow face, thin nose, and small mouth. In the woodcut Christ pulls apart a bread roll with a ritualized gesture invoking the eucharist. In Rembrandt's painting a more naturalistic Jesus tears off the end braid of *challah*, a bread especially used by Ashkenazim in Eastern and Central Europe on the Sabbath and holidays, and also used by Jews today.



67  
Albrecht Dürer, *Christ in Emmaus*, *Small Passion* series, ca. 1509/10  
Woodcut, 12.5 × 9.5 cm

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art (W-4277; Rosenwald Collection)

Usually round, it may be elongated with five braids, as it is here. One wonders how the artist came to know this typical Jewish bread.

Rembrandt would have been familiar with the annotation in the Dutch State Bible translation of 1637, which explains that Jesus broke the bread, “after the manner of the Jews in the beginning of their meals whose loaves were so baked, that they could easily be broken” (Luke 24:30). The artist may also have known braided challah from his contacts with Jews in his neighborhood; or perhaps saw loaves displayed in Jewish bakeries. Challah was in general use in Jewish communities, and with the great influx of Ashkenazi refugees from Eastern Europe into Amsterdam around 1648, the year in which the painting was completed, the bread would have been common in his neighborhood.<sup>31</sup> Thus Rembrandt here references Jewish customs he observed around him, as he imagined Jesus as a Jew breaking bread.

Thus, Rembrandt portrayed the physiognomies, ceremonies and dress of the Jews; these exotic details were essential to his picturing of early Christianity in relation to Second Temple Judaism. While Rembrandt had ample opportunity to observe contemporary Jews and Judaism in his neighborhood, he was no ethnographer. His renderings of Jews and Judaism offer only a semblance of authenticity; and even his depictions of the Jerusalem Temple fall short of accurate reconstruction. Yet the foregoing details were employed to signify the primacy of Christianity over the Hebrew Dispensation.

Rooted in the New Testament, this fundamental belief in the triumph of Christianity would have become more compelling in the 1640s and 1650s, with the rise of millenarianism. This movement, followed by Christians and Jews alike, anticipated the imminent coming of the Messiah and the reappearance of the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>32</sup> For Christians, the eschatological events of the thousand-year rule under Christ were predicated upon Jewish conversion. While Rembrandt was not a missionary, the anticipated ingathering of the Jews may have informed his images of them. But he was not a theologian. Rembrandt was entirely an artist who reached out to the world around him and reimagined it, as he formulated his own unique interpretations.

### NOTES

- 1 On Rembrandt's use of Josephus see Tümpel 1984, 173–204, and more recently, Golahny 2003, 164–79.
- 2 Meier 1955, 91–104.
- 3 Hofstede de Groot 1906, 408.
- 4 Amsterdam 2006, 16–17.
- 5 The minyan is noted in Landsberger 1946, 79. Wischnitzer (1955, 160–61) counted only nine men. As revealed by digital magnification, an additional head may be discerned between the two figures walking at the far right.
- 6 Prado and Villalpando 1596–1605, unpaginated.
- 7 On Rembrandt's representations of the subject, consult Haverkamp-Begemann 1992–93, 31–40; Stechow 1940, 364–79. Zell (2002, 99–123) claims that Rembrandt's interpretations of this subject inflect a philosemitic mission to unite Judaism and Christianity into one faith. While I accept his emphasis on millennial thinking that I introduced in Perlove 1993, I do not interpret Rembrandt's reactions as philosemitic. See Perlove 1996, 84–113.
- 8 My study draws upon some material from Perlove and Silver 2009, 200–61.
- 9 Katchen 1984. Authors of Amsterdam 2006, 37–40, 47–49, agree that Rembrandt was influenced by Christian Hebraists.
- 10 Schwartz 2006, 132.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 L'Empereur 1630.
- 13 On L'Empereur, see Schwartz 2008, 111–21; and van Rooden 1989.
- 14 Quoted in Katchen 1984, 80.
- 15 Some of these details are very difficult to discern in the painting, but the use of a magnifying lens and the lightening of the digital image reveal them.
- 16 Maimonides 1957, Book 8.
- 17 The Schwartzlist, 16 February 2022, “Good Jews and bad Jews in 1620 and 1630,” no. 403, and response by Shelley Perlove.
- 18 See also Buxtorf 1603, 52–57.
- 19 Lightfoot 1649, insert.
- 20 The fifteen steps are mentioned in: *Mishnah Middot*, Perek II.5; Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 5.5.3; Lightfoot 1649, 117; Buxtorf 1603, 57; Lee 1659, 107, 351–52.
- 21 For discussion of the two covenants consult van Asselt 2001, 269.
- 22 On the aesthetic aspects of the second state consult White 1999, 44–45.
- 23 See the excellent treatment of the influence of Villalpando's plan on Dutch architecture in Schwartz 2008, 114–20.
- 24 Ibid., 111. Another good source on Jacob Jehuda Leon is Offenbergs 1988, 95–115. For the print see Leon 1642.
- 25 Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 2011.
- 26 DeWitt 2017, 223–29.

- 27 On technical studies, Mark Tucker, Lloyd DeWitt, and Ken Sutherland, “The Heads of Christ: A Technical Survey,” in *Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 2011*, 31–74.
- 28 Schwartz 2006, 284.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 303, translating van Hoogstraten 1678, 105.
- 30 Stechow 1934, 329–41; van Regteren Altena 1948–49, 1–26.
- 31 *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 1972, vol. 6, 839. The Ashkenazi population swelled when they fled from the Cossacks to escape the Chmielnicki massacres in 1648–49, and it continued to increase steadily; by 1674 the number of Ashkenazim was about five thousand.
- 32 On Rembrandt and millenarianism see Perlove 1993 and 1996, and Perlove and Silver 2009, 41–42, 44, 60–67, 105–7, 315–16, 330. For a discussion of millenarianism in the 1650s in the Dutch Republic see Perlove 2021, 234–60.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Shelley Perlove** is Professor Emerita at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and has been teaching at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, since 2012. A specialist in Dutch and Italian art, Dr. Perlove has written more than forty articles and seven books, among them the award-winning *Bernini and the Idealization of Death*, and *Rembrandt's Faith* with Larry Silver. Her current project concerns Rembrandt's Circle.





# Jewish Brides, Rabbis and Sitters in Rembrandt's Prints

ROMAN GRIGORYEV

## ABSTRACT

The article sums up the results of studies of Rembrandt's prints related to Jewish themes: portraits, tronies, genre and narrative subjects alike. Particular attention is paid to the clothes in which Rembrandt dresses his heroes. The traditional view that he borrowed the costumes of Jews in the streets turns out to be unfounded. He began dressing figures in costume that is conventionally called that of Ashkenazi Jews while he was still in Leiden, where there were no Jews at the time. The Sephardi Jews with whom Rembrandt did have contact will have dressed like other wealthy Amsterdam burghers. The clothing he gives to his beggars is more like that of Dutch street figures or older prints rather than of poor Amsterdam Ashkenazim.

## KEYWORDS

Rembrandt, prints, Jews, Ashkenazim, Sephardim, dress, costume

Depictions of Jews as participants in Old and New Testament episodes constantly alternate in Rembrandt's works with depictions of his own contemporaries. In essence, both forms exist in the single realm of Rembrandt's artistic world, where there was no place for the archaeologically precise reproduction of costumes from a given historical era.

68

Rembrandt, "The Great Jewish Bride," 163[5?]  
Etching, engraving and drypoint, 21.9 × 16.8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-724)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_GRIGORYEV



69  
Rembrandt,  
*Christ Before Pilate:*  
*Large Plate*, 1635–36  
Etching, drypoint, engraving,  
54.9 × 44.7 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-1961-1198A; De Bruijn-  
van der Leeuw Bequest)

Rembrandt, whom people are fond of calling a great “realist,” let his personages migrate freely from seventeenth-century Holland to first-century Palestine or even the other way around.

The artist places a young man wearing seventeenth-century Dutch costume, whom he invests with his own facial features, on a square in Jerusalem in the first century CE, where Christ has been brought before Pontius Pilate. As far as the record goes, no early viewer of the enormous print of *Christ Before Pilate*<sup>1</sup> let that bother them in the least. Equally, no one minded that Rembrandt dressed the Roman nobleman Pilate, procurator of the province of Judea, in a long Eastern-style robe, giving him a beard and an Oriental turban. None of Rembrandt’s contemporaries were surprised that the artist kitted Roman legionnaires out in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Western European armor, both in the early *Christ Before Pilate* (1635–36) and in the late *Christ Presented to the People: Oblong Plate* (1655) (figs. 69 and 70).<sup>2</sup>

“Direct” reference to the text of Scripture was clearly a matter of highly selective choice. (An example of how this operated in the instance of *Adam and Eve* was dissected in detail by Christian Tümpel in the catalogue of a 1996 exhibition.<sup>3</sup>) As has been

70  
 Rembrandt, *Christ Presented to the People: Oblong Plate*,  
 1655  
 Etching and drypoint,  
 38.3 x 45.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-1975-1; purchased  
 with the support of the  
 Stichting tot Bevordering  
 van de Belangen van het  
 Rijksmuseum)



shown by our predecessors and colleagues—J.L.A.A.M. van Rijkevorsel, Christian Tümpel, Thomas Campbell, B.P.J. Broos and Peter van der Coelen, to mention but a few—in the great majority of cases Rembrandt was guided not by the biblical text but by previous artistic tradition, embodied chiefly in prints.

When it came to markers of Jewishness in dress, Rembrandt indulged in ambiguity from the very outset of his career as a printmaker. Take the etching now known as *The Little Tobit* (fig. 71).<sup>4</sup> The latest catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt prints, from 2013, puts the date of its creation as “circa 1629,” that is, in the latter years of the artist’s Leiden period. In the first catalogue of Rembrandt’s etchings, by Edmé-François Gersaint, published posthumously in 1751, the work is called *Aveugle, vu par le dos* (G. 146; *Blind Man Seen from Behind*). The author made no connection between the subject of the print and the Book of Tobit, although he did identify the figure as a Jew—“il représente un Vieillard, dans l’habillement d’un Juif” (it represents an old man, dressed as a Jew). While noting all the features that identify the subject as Tobit—(1) an elderly man, (2) blind, (3) in ragged clothing, indicative of poverty, (4) moving by touch towards a door—Gersaint stopped one step short of the presently accepted interpretation. Ignoring these signifiers, he included the print not in the Old Testament section of his catalogue, but among the genre pieces.

To produce what one might term an “Old Testament atmosphere” (let us recall how highly the artist Philips Angel rated his colleague Rembrandt’s ability to engender the



71  
Rembrandt, *The Blindness of Tobit: A Sketch*, ca. 1629  
Etching, engraving and drypoint, 54.9 x 44.7 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-A-4050; bequest of  
Mr. and Mrs. de Bruijn-  
van der Leeuw, Muri,  
Switzerland, 1961)

“spirit” of the Old Testament in his pictures),<sup>5</sup> in the late 1620s Rembrandt, still living in his native Leiden, used a costume like those in which he clad beggars in his prints of these years.<sup>6</sup>

What, we may ask, is the significance of blind Tobit’s tall cap in Rembrandt’s etching? Where did he take it from? From the costume worn by Ashkenazim that he saw in Amsterdam? (In Leiden he would not have seen any Jews in the street. The first documented presence of Jewish immigrants in Rembrandt’s home city comes from much later.) Insofar as Tobit’s clothing was taken from men Rembrandt could see in the street, it is more likely to have been worn by impoverished tramps of the kind who wandered the roads of the United Provinces. Another no less probable source is in graphic imagery, of which *Two Beggars* by Rembrandt’s older contemporary Jacques Callot (1592–1635) is often cited.<sup>7</sup>

In Rembrandt’s 1632 genre print *The Rat Catcher*,<sup>8</sup> the gestures of the main personages—the master of the house and a hawker of rat poison—create the inescapable impression that what we are looking at is a slightly disguised parody of Michelangelo’s famous Sistine Chapel fresco (1508–12), a play on the motif of two open male hands extended towards each other (fig. 72). The coarse humor of the scene, with two live rats perching on the peddler’s shoulder and his cage, next to the dangling bodies of their



72  
 Rembrandt, *The Rat Catcher*,  
 1632  
 Etching, 14.0 x 12.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-1962-59)

less fortunate fellows, is somewhat obscured by the discrepancy between the costumes and what is taking place. Judging by the landscape backdrop, the setting for the print is a Dutch village or urban outskirts. The rat catcher and his assistant conform fully to the “dress code” for Dutch tramps, strolling musicians and beggars, but the clothing of the man with whom they are talking (asking for alms?)—a turban and some loose-fitting garment resembling a Roman toga—is entirely out of place for Holland in the seventeenth century. This personage would be more suitable for a Gospel or Old Testament composition.<sup>9</sup>

Another Rembrandt print traditionally associated with Jewishness is the so-called *Great Jewish Bride* (fig. 68).<sup>10</sup> The absence of any text, apart from the artist’s signature, leaves us uncertain as to the subject, which is true of some of Rembrandt’s history paintings as well. Consequently, most catalogues of Rembrandt prints to this day accept the conventional nickname under which it appeared in auction catalogues from the



73  
Rembrandt, *St. Catherine*  
(*"The Little Jewish Bride"*),  
1638  
Etching and drypoint,  
11 x 7.8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-729)

mid-1700s, without asking what it meant to the creator of the print and his contemporaries. At least one art historian, Madlyn Kahr, thinks they conceived of it as a history subject from the biblical Book of Esther. "This personage in royal robes represents Queen Esther. She holds a copy of the decree setting the date for the slaying of the Jews, which Mordecai had sent her, as she gravely ponders the action she must take (Esther 4:8)."<sup>11</sup> Whichever theory concerning the subject of this remarkable print we favor, however, there remains the apparent fact that the model was Rembrandt's wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh, who came from an influential Frisian family and, as far as we can tell, had no Jewish ancestry whatsoever.<sup>12</sup> This underlines once again the ambivalent nature of the link between the pictures that Rembrandt produced on historical subjects (if we accept Kahr's hypothesis) and the way the artist modeled (depicted) the personages in his prints (and paintings, as well, of course). Indeed, Rembrandt sometimes gave historical personages the features of people recognizable to his contemporaries as his relatives, and even himself. Saskia's readily recognizable features can also be detected in paintings by Rembrandt that are today considered representations of a sibyl, a classical goddess (Flora, Athena) or an Old Testament figure (Esther, Bathsheba).

Astonishingly, in the eighteenth century, an age of great connoisseurs of graphic art, the titles (and thus the subjects) of several Rembrandt prints became lost. In a land of victorious Catholicism, the kingdom of France, the etching of 1638 known today



74  
 Rembrandt, *Three Oriental  
 Figures (Jacob and Laban?)*,  
 1641  
 Etching and drypoint,  
 14.4 × 11.4 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-OB-206)

as *St. Catherine*—on the basis of the attribute of that martyr, an execution wheel, that Rembrandt included in the lower right-hand corner—was listed in the 1751 Gersaint catalogue as “La Petite Mariée, Juive” (The Little Bride, a Jewish Woman) (fig. 73).<sup>13</sup> The grounds for such an identification of the subject were evidently the woman’s hairstyle and adornments—long hair hanging loose over the shoulders and the circlet of pearls(?) around her head, since we find those same figurative motifs in the *Great Jewish Bride* (fig. 68).

The earliest identification of the model of the latter etching as a Jew dates from 1731, in the handwritten catalogue of works owned by the Dutch art collector Valerius Röver—“5 waaronder het Jooden bruijtje, heel en half opgemaakt” (Five [etchings], including The Jewish bride [in a diminutive form], [one] completed and [one] half-finished).<sup>14</sup> The next time we come across this title is in the 1740s, in the inventory of prints connected with Peter Schenk, where we read of “Mahl Juden doctor und Seine Braut” (“2 [prints] Jewish Doctor and his bride”).<sup>15</sup> Most probably “Jewish Doctor” referred to the portrait print of Ephraim Bueno of 1647.<sup>16</sup> Its mention in that list is another written source connecting it with the Jewish legacy seen to reside in Rembrandt’s printmaking.

In 1751, Gersaint alludes directly to a Dutch tradition connecting this female portrait with a Jewish wedding rite—“Le Portrait d’une Femme, appelée en Hollande, la



Grande Mariée, Juive” (The portrait of a woman, called in Holland the Great Bride, a Jewish woman).<sup>17</sup> The catalogue published in The Hague in 1775 for the auction of Amadé de Burgy’s collection<sup>18</sup> (the largest in terms of the number of impressions that any private individual has ever assembled) does indeed call the print *Jewish Bride*, (“La Fiancée Juive (de Joode Bruid)”) no longer connecting it with the portrait of Doctor Bueno. An attribute that none of the interpretations so far published, including the conventional *Great Jewish Bride*, explains satisfactorily is the floor globe that Rembrandt placed to the left behind the seated figure. The same can be said of the books and the scroll hanging off the table in the same part of the picture.

No less mysterious with regard to its subject is a print created in 1641 that since 1751 has been known by the not entirely accurate title of “Trois Figures Orientales” (Three Oriental Figures; B. 118; in point of fact, four personages are shown) (fig. 74).<sup>19</sup> Gersaint correctly noted that the three figures on the right (or at least two of them—the men on either side of the group) are placed in front of the house “in the Flemish manner.”<sup>20</sup> We seem to be faced with a clash of figurative conventions whose nature remains unclear, a situation reminiscent of the issue with *The Rat Catcher*, but the other way around, since now the man inside the house is dressed in Dutch, rather than exotic costume. Leaning on the bottom half of a front door split horizontally in a way typical of the Low Countries, he is obviously set off against the three personages on the right, whose attire is indistinguishable from how Rembrandt dressed his biblical characters. The question arises as to how we should construe this contrast in costumes. Was Rembrandt envisioning an Old Testament scene into which he inserted a Dutch house of his own day and a man whom one might have met on an Amsterdam street in the 1640s? Or are we looking at an encounter between a seventeenth-century Dutchman and three Sephardi Jews (which I find less plausible)? One way or the other, we have to admit that we have no unequivocal explanation of what the artist had in mind.

Uncertainty regarding what (or who) is depicted also applies to the portrait print of 1636 that Gersaint described in his 1751 catalogue (G. 249) as “Le Portrait du Juif Manassé, Ben-Israel” (The Portrait of the Jew Manassé Ben-Israel) (see fig. 124).<sup>21</sup> His identification of the sitter as the most influential Jew in the political world of seventeenth-century Europe was based on Dutch oral tradition. The print is known in two states that are today acknowledged to be by Rembrandt himself.<sup>22</sup> The catalogues of public collections at present contain four impressions belonging to the first state and twenty of the second. The thirty-nine copies of a third “posthumous state” argue against this having been a commissioned representational likeness of the same kind as the portraits of the physician Ephraim Bueno or the artist’s patron Jan Six. The standard practice in seventeenth-century Holland was for the plate of a portrait to remain in the hands of the client who paid for it, as is well indicated by the statistics of the number of impressions of Rembrandt’s commissioned portrait prints that have come down to us.<sup>23</sup>

At present, there is no consensus on the correctness of Gersaint’s identification of the subject of this etching. In the 1990s, the traditional interpretation began to be called into doubt, despite what is in my opinion an obvious resemblance between the man in the Rembrandt print and the depiction in the 1642 portrait of Menasseh by the Jewish engraver from Mantua called Salom (also Shalom or Salomon) Italia, who worked in



75  
Rembrandt, *Ephraim Bueno*,  
1647  
Etching, 24.4 × 17.7 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-1961-1154; bequest  
of Mr. and Mrs. de Bruijn-  
van der Leeuw, Muri,  
Switzerland, 1961)

Amsterdam in the 1640s.<sup>24</sup> The latest catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's prints lists the etching under number 156 as "Menasseh ben Israel," remarking rightly that the grounds put forward by various authors in recent times for different candidates as Rembrandt's subject are no more persuasive than the historical identification.<sup>25</sup>

In the absence of text on the print or other written sources, one might turn to costume as a basis for determining who is depicted in Rembrandt's 1636 etching, but here we encounter all but insurmountable difficulties. The members of the Sephardi community in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, whose interaction with Rembrandt is documented in a variety of ways, were hard to distinguish from other wealthy inhabitants of the city by their dress.<sup>26</sup> This leaves us with very little to go on when it comes to identifying portrait sitters not named in a caption. (Salom Italia's likeness of Menasseh is provided with an inscription that leaves no doubt about who is depicted.) The dress of the Sephardi elite recorded in paintings by Emanuel de Witte and in drawings and prints by Romeyn de Hooghe provides clear visual evidence of this. In depictions of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam it is possible to distinguish the Sephardim who have come there to worship from curious locals only by the the tallithot (prayer shawls) thrown over their broad-brimmed European hats.<sup>27</sup> In all other aspects of their dress, Jewish and Christian Dutchmen are identical.



76  
Rembrandt, *Abraham  
Entertaining the Angels*, 1656  
Etching, 15.9 × 13.1 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-55)

The portrait of the Sephardi physician Ephraim Bueno (signed and dated 1647)<sup>28</sup> is one of the rare instances when the identity of a Jewish portrait sitter is not in doubt (fig. 75). Two impressions made in the artist's lifetime, out of the fifty-five known, carry inscriptions confirming the identity of the sitter: a French text "Buono, docteur juif" on a print bearing the signature of the dealer and connoisseur Pierre Mariette—*P. Mariette 1684* (L. 1789), now in Florence, and another in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum with the Dutch inscription "portugeese docter." Both impressions are of the second (and final) state of the print.

The unusual dynamic quality in the composition of this portrait can only be compared to the painted depiction of Jan Six in the Six Collection in Amsterdam. Statistical analysis of the impressions that have come down to us in public collections confirms that this was a commissioned work. That is to say, the plate probably became the prop-

erty of the client rather than remaining in Rembrandt's hands. Not a single surviving impression of this work would today be considered "posthumous."<sup>29</sup> The number of impressions produced in the artist's lifetime accords fully with the presently known size of the print runs for the majority of Rembrandt's other portrait prints. (Of Rembrandt's two etchings of Saskia's cousin-in-law, the Calvinist preacher Jan Cornelisz Sylvius, forty-eight lifetime impressions of the earlier one are known [1633]<sup>30</sup> and fifty-three of the posthumous portrait [1646],<sup>31</sup> while of that of his son Petrus Sylvius there are sixty-one [1637].<sup>32</sup> There are forty-seven lifetime impressions of the Remonstrant preacher Johannes Wtenbogaert [1635],<sup>33</sup> thirty-seven of the Mennonite preacher Cornelis]Anslo [1641],<sup>34</sup> fifty of Rembrandt's fellow artist Jan Asselyn [ca. 1647],<sup>35</sup> and sixty of the depiction of Rembrandt's patron Jan Six [1647].<sup>36</sup> The list could be continued.)

In contrast to the portrait of Ephraim Bueno, *Jews in the Synagogue*, signed and dated 1648, again poses an unresolved problem concerning the identification of the subject (see fig. 127). In 1731 Valerius Röver termed the subject "de joden tempel" (The Jewish Temple), in which he was followed in 1751 by Gersaint (G. 122; "Synagogue des Juifs"). However, the implication of this time-sanctioned title that the print shows contemporary Jews in a real-life synagogue does not stand up to criticism, either with regard to the clothing (there is not a single tallith in the picture) or the architecture. In terms of mid-seventeenth-century conventions for costuming Jews, the artist brought together in one space Sephardim (wearing berets) and Ashkenazim (with pointed caps). Nor was there a synagogue in Rembrandt's Amsterdam with an interior like this. As we see in Jan Veenhuijzen's depiction of the synagogue of the Sephardi Talmud Torah congregation, the largest synagogue at the time (see fig. 27), the interior bore no resemblance to Rembrandt's print. In this instance, the question of understanding what is depicted is closely bound up with determining the genre—just what do we have here? The curators of the 2006 exhibition in the Jewish Museum of Amsterdam prefer the historicizing title given in 1679 to a printing plate that in all likelihood was that for this print: *Pharisees in the Temple*. The interpretation of the scene put forward by Ludwig Münz in 1939<sup>37</sup>—as the repentance of Judas Iscariot, who has been spurned by his fellow Jews—remains to this day the best argued, although not accepted by any later writer on the print.

A no less ingenious hypothesis regarding Rembrandt's last print of an Old Testament subject—*Abraham Entertaining the Angels* (1656, B. 29, NHD 295)—has also failed to gain acceptance from Rembrandt scholars (fig. 76). Nonetheless, it currently provides the only explanation for the incredibly strange appearance of the Angels of the Lord who visited the patriarch. This is a theory published in 1977 by Emanuel Winternitz, a Jewish immigrant from Austria who became the first curator of musical instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Scripture speaks of Abraham receiving three guests in a tent by the oaks of Mamre, Rembrandt follows iconographic tradition by placing the scene outside a masonry house. The heavenly travelers are characterized in different ways in the Old Testament translations of different confessions. It has long since been noted that in this work the artist took his inspiration from the *Statenbijbel*, the Dutch translation published in 1637, in which one of the three guests is referred to as the *HEERE*, the Lord, in capital

letters. Despite this, Rembrandt's Dutch contemporaries, like the rest of their European colleagues, continued to depict Abraham's three visitors as beautiful and youthful angels. He took his leave from that convention in the 1656 print, giving one of the visitors—an elderly man, unwinged, with a long, broad, white beard—the appearance of God. This has prompted the speculation that the figure is actually a portrait of a real-life Amsterdam Jew, specifically Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel.

What we have here is one more example of a “heterogeneous” (unintegrated) pictorial environment in a Rembrandt work, in which the artist combines the seemingly incompatible—a biblical subject with possible suggestions of the depiction of actual contemporaries (the two angels of the Lord also look like portraits), liberties taken with the scriptural text (a solid house instead of a tent), with an entirely real-life object used daily in Dutch households, the metal wine jug with a long spout. That jug features in many works by Low Countries artists, beginning with the van Eycks in their *Ghent Altarpiece*, the Monogrammist HB (1525–50) and Joachim Beuckelaer (1570) through to Joachim Wtewael (1605), Willem Buytewech (1620s), Jan Steen (1663, 1665, 1668), Gerrit Dou (1646), Frans van Mieris the Elder (1658–59), Adriaen van Ostade (1670), and many others.

The “illogicality” in the interactions of the personages, their costume, objects and attributes within what one might call the artistic world of the Rembrandt print requires further study. Perhaps at some point we shall be able to put this jigsaw together and find the inner pattern, the reasoning behind the creation of all these images, however strange they might seem to us today.

## NOTES

- 1 B. 77, NHD 155. Catalogues of Rembrandt etchings are here abbreviated. G=Gersaint; B = Bartsch; NHD=*The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450–1700*. (Rembrandt, part 1).
- 2 B. 78, NHD 290.
- 3 See Tümpel 1996.
- 4 B. 153, NHD 31.
- 5 Regarding Angel's address, see Angel 1996.
- 6 For instance, the costume of the itinerant (and apparently blind) musician playing the hurdy-gurdy in *The Strolling Musicians* (B. 119, NHD 141, ca. 1635). The same combination of a tall cap and long clothing is found in *Beggar with a Stick, Walking to the Left* (B. 167, NHD 108w, ca. 1631); *A Peasant in a High Cap, Standing Leaning on a Stick* (B. 133, NHD 178, 1639); and even the dress of the aged man in the left background of the portrait of Johannes Wtenbogaert, called *The Goldweigher* (B. 281, NHD 172, 1639). Compare, too, the clothing of male beggars of the early 1630s: *Old Man Seen From Behind, Profile to Right: Half-figure* (B. 143, NHD 33a); *Beggar in a High Cap, Standing and Leaning on a Stick* (B. 162, NHD 41); *Beggar Man and Beggar Woman Conversing* (B. 164, NHD 45); *Beggar with a Crippled Hand Leaning on a Stick* (B. 166, NHD 39); *Beggar Seated Warming His Hands at a Chafing Dish* (B. 173, NHD 44); *Head of a Man in a High Cap* (B. 302, NHD 38). Similar figures in drawings are *Beggar Couple with a Dog* (Benesch 22); *Standing Beggar* (Benesch 30); and *Old Beggar in a Long Cloak and High Cap* (Benesch 32), all dated to the late 1620s.
- 7 From *Les Gueux* (Lieure 487–1(2)). Etching and drypoint, 13.9 × 9.1 cm. An impression in the Rijksmuseum is kept under number RP-P-OB-20.918. This Callot print, like several Rembrandt etchings from the 1620s and 1630s (e.g., *The Strolling Musicians*, B. 119), depicts a pair of itinerant beggars, one of whom is blind. Another source of the high headgear worn by Rembrandt's

beggars can be found in the well-known engraving by his countryman Lucas van Leyden, *The Triumph of Mordechai* (1515), which was one of the sources of Rembrandt's own work on the same subject. (The fourth male figure from the left in the background of the engraving wears a high hat that looks like that of Rembrandt's rat-catcher.)

- 8 B. 121; NHD 111.
- 9 There are, admittedly, exceptions—certain individuals dressed similarly to this figure (turban, beard, a long garment over a white undershirt) do appear in works such as Emanuel de Witte's *Interior of the Church in Delft with the Tomb of William the Silent* (1656, oil on canvas, 97 × 85 cm, Lille) or *Courtyard of the Beurs in Amsterdam* (1653, oil on panel, 49 × 47.5 cm, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen), where they are placed in distinctly peripheral positions, marking them out as exotic exceptions. It must be stated that we see the same costume semiotics—turban, beard and long clothing—in an exceptionally rare depiction of Jews on the Purim scroll of the Book of Esther produced for the Sephardim of Amsterdam in Rembrandt's day by the Italian-born Jewish artist Salom (Shalom) Italia in 1640–41. See Sabar 2012 and Knotter, p. 30 and fig. 12.
- 10 B. 340, NHD 154.
- 11 Kahr 1966, 241.
- 12 In 1859 Charles Blanc, the author of another Rembrandt catalogue raisonné, identified the woman depicted as Saskia (Blanc 1859–61, vol. 2, 126–30, no. 199). In Charles Middleton's 1878 catalogue, it is no. 108, dated to 1634 and captioned "Study of Saskia; called 'The Great Jewish Bride' (*La femme de Rembrandt*)."
- 13 B. 342, NHD 169. In the English translation of Gersaint of 1752 with the title "*The Little Jewish Bride*."
- 14 Van Gelder and van Gelder-Schrijver 1938, 12.
- 15 Dittrich 1971, 68.
- 16 B. 278, NHD 237.
- 17 G. 311, p. 244. In the English translation of 1752: "*The Great Jewish Bride*."
- 18 *Catalogue de l'incomparable et la seule complete collection des estampes de Rembrandt, avec toutes leurs variations, gravées par sa propre main. Contenant 257 portraits, 161 histoires, 152 figures, et 85 paysages: faisant ensemble 655 estampes, entre lesquelles sont 165 pièces qu'on n'a pas trouvées ailleurs. Toutes des plus anciennes, belles, & mieux conditionnées éprouvées. Recueilli depuis l'an 1728 jusqu'à présent, par M. Amadé de Burgy. Dont la vente publique se fera dans sa maison à La Haye, lundi le 16 juin 1755.* The Hague (Pierre Gérard van Baalen) 1755.
- 19 B. 118, NHD 190. The French title is from Gersaint's 1751 catalogue (G. 114).
- 20 "On voit à la gauche de l'Estampe, une maison à la Flamande; [...] il y a trois Figures habillées à la manière Orientale." G. 114, p. 101.
- 21 Regarding the iconography of this important figure, see Behr 1955–59.
- 22 Hinterding and Rutgers 2013, vol. 2, 2–4, cat. no. 156.
- 23 The general pattern is for only a few posthumous impressions to have survived. The reason is that the plate was kept within the family and did not fall after Rembrandt's bankruptcy and death into the possession of publishers who continued to pull copies from the plate. Take, for instance, the portrait of the Remonstrant minister Johannes Wtenbogaert (1635, B. 279, NHD 153), of which there are forty-seven catalogued impressions made during the artist's lifetime compared to only four posthumous ones. That of the younger Sylvius, Petrus (1637, B. 268) has sixty-one catalogued lifetime impressions and not a single posthumous one. For the second portrait of the older Jan Cornelisz Sylvius (1646, B. 280), made after his death, the corresponding figures are fifty-three and zero; for that of Ephraim Bueno (1647, B. 278), fifty-four and zero; for the portrait of Jan Six (1647, B. 285) sixty and, once again, zero. A significant exception is the early portrait of Jan Cornelisz Sylvius (1633, B. 266), of which the forty-eight lifetime impressions in public collections are opposed to twenty-nine later, posthumous, ones. See the observations about the plates for Rembrandt's print portraits in van Gelder and van Gelder-Schrijver 1938, 4.
- 24 Salom (Shalom) Italia, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 1642. Engraving, 18.8 × 12.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (RP-P-1882-A-5911).
- 25 Hinterding and Rutgers 2013, vol. 2, 3.
- 26 In keeping both with Christian fears that their society would be infiltrated by Jews and with the Jewish practice of dressing differently than the people among whom they lived, in the early seven-

teenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, both the Christian ecclesiastical authorities and “rabbinical circles,” “in particular R[abbi Moshe ben Israel] Isserles,” were concerned that many Polish Jews did not differ in appearance from the Christians. While from the Middle Ages onwards, there had been church-made rules requiring Jews and Muslims to wear special distinguishing badges on their clothing (we shall leave aside here the question of the degree to which they were observed; the important thing is that they are recorded in documents), the *Wa’ad Arba’ Aratzot*, the central body of Jewish authority in the country, also passed a special resolution in 1607 banning both men and women from wearing non-Jewish clothing. See Machalova 2016, 111.)

- 27 Emanuel de Witte, *Interior of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam*, ca. 1680. Oil on canvas, 100 × 99 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A-3738); Romeyn de Hooghe, *Inauguration of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam*, 1675. Brush on parchment, 55.5 × 68.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (RP-T-00-381).
- 28 B. 278, NHD 237.
- 29 Public collections contain three impressions of the first state (referred to in Röver’s inventory as “with a black ring”) and fifty-two impressions of the second state (“with a white ring”). The watermarks on the paper clearly indicate that the printing runs of the two states followed directly one after the other. The paper is the same, belonging to just two sorts—*Basilisk, A’.a.* and *Strasbourg lily, C’.a* or *Strasbourg lily, D.c.*, all dating from around the year 1647. No posthumous states showing work done on the plate by anyone other than Rembrandt have come down to us.
- 30 B. 266
- 31 B. 280.
- 32 B. 268.
- 33 B. 279.
- 34 B. 271.
- 35 B. 277.
- 36 B. 285.
- 37 Münz 1939–40.
- 38 Winternitz 1977.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Roman Grigoryev** is an art historian and museum curator. He holds an MA (1983) in Russian Philology (Tartu State University) and a doctorate in Art History (1996) from State St. Petersburg University, and has been curator of Netherlandish prints in the Hermitage (1992–2022), head of the Hermitage Western print room (1998–2022), professor of Art History at the European University at St. Petersburg (2000–23). He is a member of CODART and CAA.







# Modern Jewish Artists Discover Rembrandt

LARRY SILVER

## ABSTRACT

Jewish artists found professional inspiration and pictorial models in Rembrandt's life and work. But each modern Jewish artist who turned to Rembrandt made his own individual response to that artistic stimulus. Rembrandt's distinctive personal style and his misidentified Jewish sitters provided a starting point, especially for late nineteenth-century painters. Rembrandt's individuality, generally celebrated in the later nineteenth century, inspired Jewish painters without other models. Other artists (Liebermann, Soyer) emulated his lifelong self-portraits. Rembrandt's imagery also influenced both "raw truth" for Soutine paintings and biblical humanity in Chagall's etchings. His artistic freedom was praised by Jozef Israëls and by Leonid Pasternak in Russia as well as by twentieth-century Jewish scholars (Landsberger and Panofsky).

## KEYWORDS

Jewish artist, Eastern Europe, etching, diaspora, Dutchness

"I can tell at a glance what Fabritius is doing, but I am spending my life trying to find out what Rembrandt was up to."

Philip Guston, "Faith, Hope, and Impossibility" (1965/66)<sup>1</sup>

Few Jews aspired to be professional artists until the early era of Emancipation in the nineteenth century. The period when Jews first began to look to art as a way to make a living coincided with a time, beginning with the Romantic era, when Rembrandt's reputation was on the rise, after a decline in the eighteenth century. Ever since, he has been acclaimed as a powerful, independent painter of human individuality and inner life as well as a painter of unadorned daily life, for which the Dutch school was gener-

77  
Jozef Israëls, *A Son of the Ancient Race*, ca. 1889  
Oil on canvas,  
111.4 × 85.7 cm

New York, The Jewish  
Museum (1985-123)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_SILVER

ally celebrated throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Part of Rembrandt's rehabilitation for Jewish artists stemmed from his allegedly sympathetic attitude toward his Jewish neighbors around the Sint Antoniesbreestraat of Amsterdam, also known as the Jodenbreestraat.

During the same nineteenth century, paintings of thoughtful, bearded, old philosopher types were often construed as "rabbis." This claim that has been repeatedly debunked, climaxing in 2006 in an exhibition in the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam that firmly dismissed the entire picture group: "Not all shabbily dressed men with fur hats or turbans need necessarily be Jews: there were sufficient immigrants in Amsterdam to attract Rembrandt's attention."<sup>3</sup> But the myth persists: a series of *Heads of Jesus*, produced within the Rembrandt circle, at least some of them surely by the artist himself, formed the basis of a 2011 exhibition<sup>4</sup> which blithely claimed that Rembrandt used as his model a young, long-haired Jewish man from his neighborhood, rather than the more likely possibility that the paintings were repetitions of a popular type of close-up head study.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, the same positive spin on Rembrandt's relationship to Amsterdam's Jews persisted throughout the nineteenth century and even well into the twentieth century, exemplified by two scholars, German Jews who emigrated to the United States. Erwin Panofsky's 1920 lecture, published posthumously in 1973, "Rembrandt und das Judentum" (Rembrandt and Judaism), surveys the evidence of contacts with actual Dutch Jews, especially the prominent figures of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and the physician Ephraim Bueno.<sup>6</sup> Right after the Second World War, Franz Landsberger's book-length study, *Rembrandt, the Jews, and the Bible*, continues to argue for what has been characterized as "philosemitism" by Rembrandt (see Zell, p. 105).<sup>7</sup>

### EASTERN EUROPEAN ARTISTS

This background helps us understand how Rembrandt could serve as a model for an aspiring young Jewish painter in Poland during the 1870s. The first of these was Maurycy Gottlieb (1856–79), a short-lived but productive and influential artist.<sup>8</sup> A protégé of Poland's leading history painter, Jan Matejko, at the Kraków Academy, Gottlieb worked hard to establish his Jewish as well as his Polish identity in his art. In doing so, he departed conspicuously from the practice of leading Polish artists, such as Aleksander Gierymski and Piotr Michalowski, whose representations of Jews tended to show them as picturesque stereotypes of ghetto life.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, Gottlieb's ambitions, like Rembrandt's own, featured work on large-scale history paintings. Foremost were biblical subjects, but Gottlieb also painted subjects with Jews from canonical works of literature, including Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*.<sup>10</sup> His early self-portrait from 1876 with a diadem-like crown is actually designated as *Ahasuerus*, the king in the Book of Esther who reversed his own planned genocidal persecution of the Jews of ancient Persia (fig. 78).<sup>11</sup> This heavily shadowed close-up of the artist's face likely comes from Gottlieb's direct exposure to Rembrandt during his later training in 1875 under Karl von Piloty at

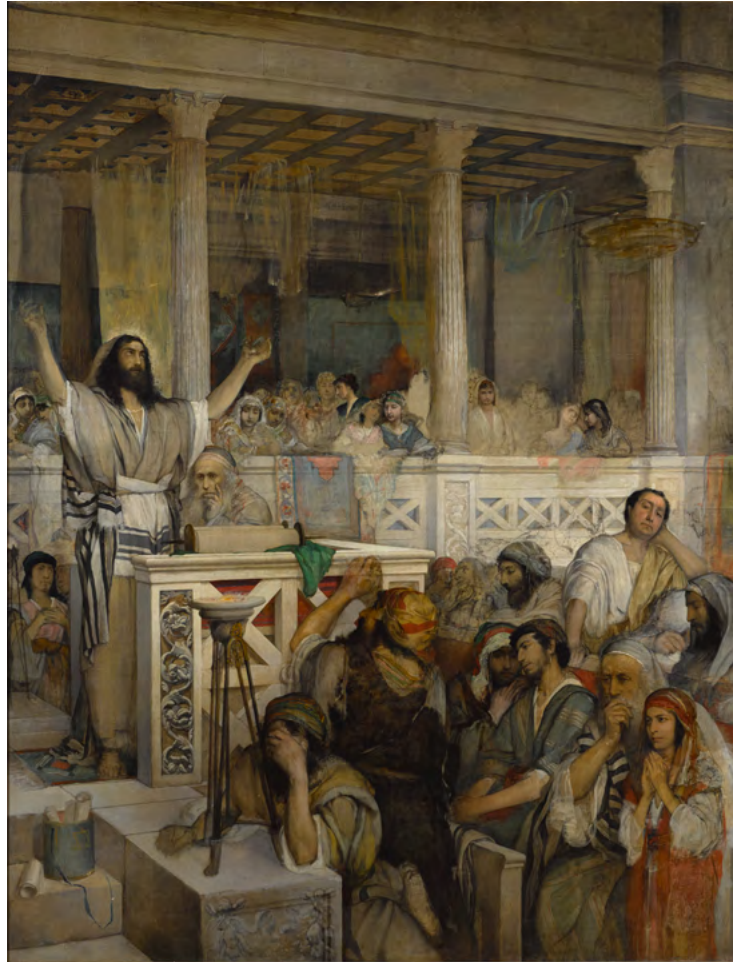


78  
Maurycy Gottlieb, *Self-portrait as Ahasuerus*, 1876  
Oil on canvas,  
63 × 53 cm

Kraków, National Museum

the Munich academy. In the Alte Pinakothek Gottlieb would have studied a similarly moody, contrast-filled Rembrandt *Self-portrait* from 1629. Surely some of the influence we observe stemmed from affinities between two young, ambitious artists: Gottlieb at age twenty; Rembrandt, still learning his own craft in Leiden at twenty-three. But the name Ahasuerus was deliberately chosen. As the ruler who finally rescued the Persian Jews, the choice of this king could also subtly express Gottlieb's wishful plea for Jewish political liberation of the Jews in occupied Poland, especially in his native region of Galicia.<sup>12</sup>

Even more striking among Gottlieb's large-scale paintings are New Testament scenes where he depicted Jesus expressly as a Jew. Two large, unfinished images stand out. The first depicts *Jesus Before his Judges* (1877–79; Jerusalem, Israel Museum) in the setting of the Sanhedrin.<sup>13</sup> At center stands a bearded, dark-haired Jesus, marked as Jewish by his costume: tallit (prayer shawl), *kippa* (skullcap) with *payot* (sidecurls) and a robe-like *kittel*, a loose white surplice worn on solemn occasions and used at the end of life as a burial garment. Around him various older bearded men, like the numerous "rabbis" then ascribed to Rembrandt, look on. Meanwhile, the high priest Caiaphas, wearing the breastplate of Aaron, sits opposite Jesus; his throne is backed by an outstretched open Torah at the upper left, whose Ten Commandments, in accurate Hebrew, features the



79  
 Maurycy Gottlieb, *Jesus Preaching at the Synagogue in Capernaum*, ca. 1878–79  
 Oil on canvas,  
 271.5 × 209 cm

Warsaw, National Museum  
 (MP 431 MNW)

key initial stricture, “You shall have no other gods before me,” as well as the subsequent prohibition on the making of images (Exodus 20:3–4), an ironic inclusion for a Jewish painter. On the shadowy opposite side of Jesus sits Pontius Pilate, leader of the Roman imperial state, in silent contemplation. Gottlieb also inserts a small self-portrait as a witness, directly behind Jesus at the right center, like the Wandering Jew who according to legend was a witness at the Passion.

Rembrandt’s 1635–36 etching *Christ before Pilate* (see fig. 69) certainly provided a precedent for this Passion scene. It focuses on Pilate’s presentation of scourged Jesus before a hostile crowd, featuring costumed Jews in the foreground. Rembrandt also provides accurate Hebrew from a daily prayer, the *Keri’at Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:5),<sup>14</sup> worn on a tallit prayer-shawl above their hats, as was done by the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam. Jewish details such as these, even within a hostile crowd, could convince a Jew like Gottlieb that Rembrandt, while representing Christian narrative, was engaging with his surrounding Jewish culture. For his own New Testament Sanhedrin narrative, Gottlieb thus included Jewish religious dress and Torah scrolls, providing his ambitious biblical painting with nineteenth-century insider authenticity.



80  
 Maurycy Gottlieb, *Uriel da Costa in the Synagogue Abjuring his Beliefs*, 1877  
 Oil on canvas,  
 40 × 31 cm

Jerusalem, Israel Museum  
 (B90.0444O.S.)

Gottlieb's other large New Testament canvas, which is unfinished, depicts *Jesus Preaching at the Synagogue in Capernaum* (1878–79) (fig. 79). Once more this Jewish Jesus wears a tallit around his waist as he preaches with an open Torah scroll on the *bimah* (lectern). Here, however, a halo's golden glow surrounds his head, suggesting that Gottlieb was also trying to reach the dominant Catholic audience in Poland. As Gottlieb declared in a letter to a friend from a trip to Rome in 1878,

How deeply I wish to eradicate all the prejudices against my people! How avidly I desire to uproot the hatred enveloping the oppressed and tormented nation and to bring peace between the Poles and the Jews, for the history of both people is a chronicle of grief and anguish.<sup>15</sup>

Again he includes himself within the congregation, repeating the tilted profile and gold earring of *Ahasuerus*. Also incorporating Jewish synagogue custom, Gottlieb shows a women's gallery, isolated above and behind the main sanctuary.

The latter half of the nineteenth century turned decisively toward a human image of the historical Jesus. A major milestone was the Paris publication by Ernst Renan, *The Life of Jesus* (1863). But during his Munich stay Gottlieb could also have accessed



81  
 Samuel Hirszenberg,  
*Spinoza, Excommunicated*,  
 1907  
 Oil on canvas,  
 160.5 x 212 cm

Kursk, State Art Gallery  
 A.A. Deineka (N Ж – 459)

an eleven-volume *History of the Jews* (1856–76) by Heinrich Graetz, who emphasized Roman, secular responsibility for punishing Jesus rather than traditional Christian attribution of blame to the Jews, derived from the Gospels.<sup>16</sup> Like Rembrandt, Gottlieb portrayed a believably human, but also authentically Jewish Jesus.<sup>17</sup>

How would he have known these Rembrandt models? For Gottlieb and contemporaries the later nineteenth-century convergence of photolithographic reproduction technologies with an emerging art publishing industry led to standardized series of illustrated artbooks devoted to the works of single, canonical masters. These books—“synchronized and exported”—began to appear across Europe, as Friedrike Kitschen’s groundbreaking study reveals, and Rembrandt was among the first northern artists to be published.<sup>18</sup> These same artists, particularly Renaissance Italian masters, were precisely those figures celebrated and imitated in art academies.

But Gottlieb also engaged with Rembrandt by painting subjects drawn from Rembrandt’s Amsterdam. The Portuguese Jews who were Rembrandt’s neighbors surely held significance for Gottlieb,<sup>19</sup> himself a member of a minority population in Catholic Galicia and imperial Austria-Hungary. He foregrounded one Dutch-Jewish history, the tragic story of Uriel da Costa, made current by a recent German play, “Uriel Acosta” (1846) by Karl Gutzkow. In a haunting echo of *Jesus before his Judges*, da Costa, accused of religious heresy for rejecting Talmudic authority by his own, rabbinic community, was forced to recant his views in the synagogue. After the excommunication that ensued he committed suicide (1640). Among Gottlieb’s sketches illustrating canonical



82  
Samuel Hirszenberg,  
*The Black Banner*, 1905  
Oil on canvas,  
71.6 × 192 cm

New York, The Jewish  
Museum (JM 63-67a)

literary works about Jews, he made a small oil study for the Gutzkow play, *Uriel da Costa in the Synagogue* (ca. 1877), providing the protagonist with Dutch period dress (fig. 80).<sup>20</sup> As in the Sanhedrin picture, Jews are shown by Gottlieb as harsh judges of their own community, and the artist seems to plead for a more openly liberal religion and toleration of differences of conscience. Again, the figure of Ahasuerus provides a model of enlightened leadership.<sup>21</sup>

The next outstanding Polish-Jewish artist, also short-lived, was Samuel Hirszenberg (1856–1908), who like Gottlieb studied at art academies in Kraków and Munich. He, too, drew on Rembrandt’s Dutch surroundings for another period image of an Amsterdam Jew, *Spinoza, Excommunicated* (fig. 81).<sup>22</sup> This painting’s beardless Spinoza, in period costume, is lost in thought as he walks with a book, oblivious to a group of other Jewish men who are staring at him. They act as if they fear any contact with Spinoza, obliged as they were under the terms of his excommunication to shun him as a heretic. One additional irony is that the group behind Spinoza’s right, including one man who picks up a stone to throw, numbers nine, so with Spinoza they could make a minyan, a prayer group requiring ten Jewish male adults. At left, a lone man hesitates, isolated in an intellectual or moral dilemma, which Hirszenberg suggests might show sympathy with the philosopher, who is often considered the harbinger of modern, emancipated Judaism.<sup>23</sup>

Hirszenberg emigrated to Palestine in 1907, but his last, dark paintings from Galicia, such as *The Black Banner* (1905) (fig. 82) and *Exile* (1904; location unknown), suggest his profound sympathy for downtrodden Jews during an era of pogroms in partitioned Poland and the Pale of Settlement.<sup>24</sup> *Exile* shows its title in correct Hebrew, *Galut*, also meaning “diaspora” or “dispersion.” *Black Banner* shows both broad brushwork and dark pigments that echo Rembrandt’s own later works; moreover, these aged, bearded Jewish faces surely stem from those “rabbis” by Rembrandt, especially the authentic, signed and dated 1654 *Old Jew in an Armchair* (fig. 83). The grim subject of Hirszenberg’s painting, however, was the Hasidic burial of a pogrom victim, which accounts for its dark colors





83

Rembrandt, *Old Jew**in an Armchair*, 1654

Oil on canvas, 109 x 85 cm

St. Petersburg, State

Hermitage Museum

(ГЭ-737)

and facial expressions. Of course, those dark costumes and beards are hallmarks of Eastern European Jewish men in general, and Hirszenberg showed them as such in a masterpiece of prolonged suffering, the *Wandering Jew* (1899; Jerusalem, Israel Museum).<sup>25</sup>

Beyond painting, Dutch culture exerted a similar influence on a late nineteenth-century Jewish sculptor, the cosmopolitan Russian-Jewish carver Mark (born Mordekai) Antokolsky (1843–1902). He also participated in the revived interest in both a Jewish Jesus and Spinoza.<sup>26</sup> Sensitive to deep-seated antisemitism in Russia, which suspended him between two cultures, Antokolsky, who never hid his Jewish identity, readily identified with the outcast Jewish philosopher, whose own moral courage showed in his steadfast adherence to his own beliefs, despite opposition from religious authorities. More controversial and more connected to Rembrandt's image of the Jewish Jesus, is Antokolsky's *Christ Before the People* (1878; Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery).<sup>27</sup> Antokolsky's writings declared his ecumenical purpose in choosing, as a Jewish artist, to depict Jesus as Jewish. His motivations accorded well with his view of Spinoza, because Antokolsky also considered Jesus as a moral and spiritual model of strength and fidelity to his personal faith, even when adversity cut him off from the heritage of his own people.

84  
 Johan Braakensiek,  
*Bij Jozef Israëls' feest* (At  
 Jozef Israëls's Party), 1895  
 Lithograph,  
 43.9 × 29.5 cm



Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
 (RP-P-1907-1432)

### WESTERN EUROPEAN ARTISTS

Perhaps the nineteenth century's greatest Rembrandt acolyte was the Dutch Jewish painter Jozef Israëls (1824–1911).<sup>28</sup> Trained at the Amsterdam Royal Academy (Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten) and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he adopted the current French fascination with humble peasant figures, finding in his native Holland the equivalent in poor fishermen and farmers. Israëls's dark tones and bold brushwork were inspired by both Rembrandt and Dutch peasant paintings.<sup>29</sup> In large-scale images Israëls often featured scenes of human suffering.

A signature work with an expressly Jewish subject and title, *A Son of the Ancient Race* (ca. 1889), depicts a downtrodden peddler of secondhand objects sitting forlornly on his stoop beside his wares (fig. 77). Large, expressive hands and a shadowed, craggy face draw on late Rembrandt works. Israëls even became known as a “second Rembrandt.” In the words of French critic Edmond Duranty (1878): “A man with his heart in the right place, a moved and moving artist, Israëls [...] adds to the genius of the Dutch School something that, among the old masters, is to be found only in the great spirit of Rembrandt.”<sup>30</sup> An 1895 print by Dutch artist Johan Braakensiek, on the occasion of Israëls's seventieth birthday, shows Rembrandt himself placing a laurel wreath on the head



of an aged Israëls, standing with palette in hand before an easel, as Rembrandt declares: “In the name of Dutch painting, I pay you tribute”(fig. 84).

Also explicitly Jewish with its inclusion of a *chuppah* (wedding canopy) made from a white tallit, Israëls’s *Jewish Wedding* (1903) draws on the tender couple of Rembrandt’s late work, known as the *Jewish Bride* (Amsterdam; likely a couple portrayed as Isaac and Rebecca) (fig. 50). Its subtle chiaroscuro and broad brushwork echo that Rembrandt canvas. Late Israëls self-portraits with a frank depiction of his aged features and white beard clearly draw on Rembrandt’s numerous self-portraits. One of them, on paper (Toledo, 1908), shows the artist well dressed, with bowler hat; his prominent gold watch fob simulates Rembrandt’s own tactile representation of such chains in several self-port-

85  
Jozef Israëls, *Jewish Wedding*,  
1903  
Oil on canvas,  
137 x 148 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-A-2598)

traits across his career.<sup>31</sup> Behind him we see a painting of *Saul and David*, referring to two Rembrandt works of the same subject (Frankfurt, 1629/31; and The Hague, ca. 1651/58), and acknowledging the history painting road not taken by this native Dutch painter of genre subjects. A very successful painter with numerous exhibitions in the Paris Salon and even in the 1878 Paris World's Fair, Israëls was buried—after a state funeral—in the Jewish cemetery of The Hague.

Moreover, Israëls wrote his own appreciation of Rembrandt, particularly about those paintings that he knew firsthand from Amsterdam.<sup>32</sup> His book concludes with his own Dutch-oriented thoughts about his painter model, a summation of nineteenth-century views of “this unequaled genius to whom Holland proudly points as one of her own sons”:

[N]ever was Rembrandt's art valued so highly as it is now. [...] During his lifetime there were people who condemned Rembrandt because he refused to follow in the footsteps of the old Italian painters, because he persisted in painting nature as he saw it. [...] It was fortunate, indeed, that Rembrandt always felt strong in his own conviction and only followed his own views. [...] The more liberal feelings of the modern world have achieved some victories in the realm of art. [...] May these pages convey to the reader the fact that I have always looked upon Rembrandt as the true type of an artist, free, untrammelled by traditions, genial in all he did; in short, a figure in whom all the great qualities of the old Republic of the United Provinces were concentrated and reflected.

The German painter Max Liebermann (1847–1935), a life-long friend of Jozef Israëls, enjoyed the greatest prominence and success of any Jewish painter during his long, Berlin-based career. He even became president of the Prussian Academy of Arts (1920) and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Berlin (1912) as well as major retrospective exhibitions (1917, 1927). However, he also lived long enough to suffer for his background under the Nazis and to see his early work criticized for being “non-German.”

Jewish biblical subjects are rare in Liebermann's work, largely because he generated an early firestorm of criticism when he painted *Jesus among the Rabbis in the Temple* (1879) (fig. 86). Here the precocious twelve-year-old Jesus is already debating biblical passages before astonished Jewish elders, clad in characteristic dark Ashkenazi dress with fur hats and tallitot. Initially, Liebermann gave the boy Jewish features and omitted any halo; after this work was removed from its Munich exhibition and called blasphemous by Christian critics, the artist relented and altered the features of young Jesus. But afterwards he avoided religious subjects.

As official taste in German museums took on an increasingly nationalistic cast, Liebermann became an independent leader of the Berlin Secession art resistance movement, even being selected as its first president in 1898. He arranged for Israëls to show in Berlin and made him an honorary member of that group, which was branded by one hostile critic, poet Ernst Schnur, as “an art movement of specifically Jewish character.”<sup>33</sup>



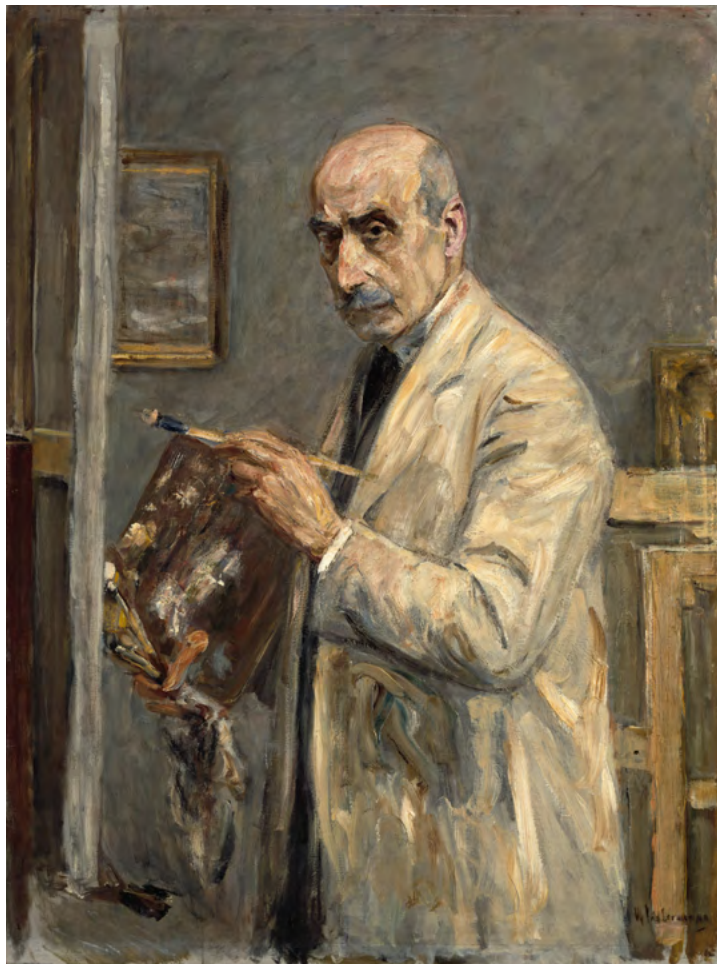
86

Max Liebermann,  
*Jesus Among the Rabbis*  
 in the Temple, 1879  
 Oil on canvas,  
 149.6 x 130.8 cm

Hamburg, Kunsthalle  
 (HK-5424)

While his direct reliance on Rembrandt through imitation is less overt than that of Israëls, Liebermann, like Rembrandt, produced self-portraits across his career, usually with brush in hand, but always dressed fashionably (e.g. 1922) (fig. 87). Liebermann also painted portraits of other prominent cosmopolitan persons from Berlin's cultural life, many of them Jews.

More subtly, Liebermann occasionally responded in his drawings to Rembrandt's figure studies, especially of women and children, a few of which he owned.<sup>34</sup> He is also quoted as saying, "Whenever I see a Frans Hals I feel like painting, but when I see a Rembrandt I feel like giving up!" In effect, as Jürgen Müller recognizes, Rembrandt served less as a literal model for Liebermann's own art making and more as a prototype for modern art—imagery with a universal human dimension, conveyed without sentimentality. Berlin was ground zero for Rembrandt research at the turn of the century,



87  
Max Liebermann, *Self-  
portrait at an Easel*, 1922  
Oil on canvas,  
113.5 × 85.2 cm

Munich, Neue Pinakothek  
(12421)

and not only did Liebermann own most of the important publications about the artist, but he also knew the scholars themselves, starting with Wilhelm von Bode of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, whose portrait he painted (1904; Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie).<sup>35</sup>

Liebermann also engaged with Israël's Holland, choosing local picturesque sites for his own works. He made several oil sketches of the busy Jewish Street in Amsterdam (e.g. 1908; Frankfurt, Stadel Museum), with bustling crowds around pushcarts filled with colorful produce. One small early canvas depicts a corner view of the *Synagogue in Amsterdam* with a few dark-clad figures (1876; Zurich, collection of the late Marianne Feilchenfeldt).<sup>36</sup>

Like Rembrandt, German-born Hermann Struck (1876–1944) devoted great care to his lifelong career as an etcher.<sup>37</sup> Through Max Liebermann, he participated in the Berlin Secession and also met and studied with Jozef Israël, who became his artistic mentor. In 1907 he etched a copy after Israël's *Son of the Ancient Race*. Thus his artistic formation pulled together the main Jewish artists from the turn of the twentieth century as well as Rembrandt. An ardent Zionist, Struck also took part in numerous Zionist congresses and traveled several times to Palestine, first in 1903, before moving there in 1922. He signed some works with his Hebrew name and a star of David. Also known as a teacher of printmaking in Berlin, he even tutored Marc Chagall in etching for a year



88  
Hermann Struck, *Old Jew from Jaffa*, 1905  
Etching on paper,  
21 x 14.8 cm

London, British Museum  
(1909,0807.2)

in 1922. Struck literally wrote the book, his 1908 *The Art of Etching*, on his printmaking technique. In Palestine, he taught at the Bezalel Academy and helped to establish the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Struck's art concentrated on two basic subjects. He most often made portraits, including expressly Eastern European Jewish figures and character head studies like Rembrandt tronies, such as this bearded *Old Jew from Jaffa* (1919) (fig. 88). Obviously, for such tronie-like close ups of picturesque Jewish heads, the model of Rembrandt was formative in both medium and subject matter. But he also etched likenesses of numerous famous contemporaries, including an iconic 1903 profile image of Herzl; that work was later accompanied by the founder of Zionism from several other angles.<sup>38</sup> Struck's other major print subjects featured etched landscapes, often based on his extensive travels, including Palestine. And like Rembrandt's own landscape etchings, Struck's settings feature open stretches, punctuated by isolated houses or towers and occasional framing trees.



89  
 Marc Chagall,  
*Sacrifice of Manoah*,  
 published 1956  
 Etching, 33.1 × 24.2 cm

By the courtesy of Kedem  
 Auction House

### TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRANCE

Despite the late nineteenth-century decline of art academies as taste-makers, Rembrandt was celebrated anew for his independence from convention and fidelity to nature. However, for Jewish artists, especially in picturesque figure studies or in biblical histories, Rembrandt still loomed large as an inspiration.

Marc Chagall's (1887–1985) first autobiography (1925) was dedicated to “Rembrandt, Cézanne, My mother, My wife.” He invokes the same litany again later in the same work: “I think with more joy about my family: Rembrandt, Leonardo, Manet, Cézanne, Picasso, and my wife.”<sup>39</sup> Just as art history infuses and defines his family history, Chagall conceives of Rembrandt through the metaphor of family, a concept still bearing the indelible imprint of his own identity as a White Russian Jew in Paris.

The only peers Chagall's ego permitted him to embrace fully were the old masters. Suffering pangs of homesickness when he first moved to Paris, the Louvre, he writes, welcomed him with open arms and convinced him to stay. About his origins, fusing both the temperament and Jewishness that he associates with the Dutch painter, Chagall asserts, “Only Rembrandt knows what my old grandfather—butcher, shopkeeper, cantor—was thinking.” But his most assertive *cri de coeur* about the Dutch painter was a



sudden outburst near the end of his later autobiography, *My Life* (1947), “I am certain that Rembrandt loves me.”<sup>40</sup> Whereas Chagall felt that Russia had rejected him as both artist and Jew, in his imagination Rembrandt accepted him unconditionally on both counts.

Although best known for his evocation of an imagined youthful *shtetl* environment, the latter half of Chagall’s long career was almost entirely devoted to biblical imagery (including a Jewish Jesus in a number of Crucifixion scenes, both before and during the Second World War).<sup>41</sup> Some of his sentiments as both Jew and artist he folded into a speech before the Jewish Writers Committee (summer 1947), which refers to several artists but touches particularly on his sentiments about Rembrandt and the Bible:

Rembrandt, unrecognized, “without power,” closed himself in his Biblical vision [...] But humanity was truly touched by the creators who touched its soul [...] Rembrandt’s texture—the rays of light. An artist is one who provides “texture” in his art—as natural as the earth. An expression of the soul, independent of the subject matter.<sup>42</sup>

A decade later, in a lecture at the University of Chicago (March 1958), he made explicit what the Bible meant to him during this period: “In the course of these last ten years, I have worked a great deal. Joy came to me in the form of [illustrated] books being published, and among them, the Bible.”<sup>43</sup> In his Bible prints, Chagall comes the closest to emulating the prior example that he found in Rembrandt (“Except for Rembrandt, I wonder whether there was ever a greater master, and at the same time a greater man”).<sup>44</sup>

In 1930, Parisian dealer Ambroise Vollard commissioned from Chagall illustrations for the Hebrew Bible, a dramatic new turn toward biblical subjects for the artist.<sup>45</sup> After Vollard’s death, the project was assumed by the publishing house Tériade, but progress was slow: sixty-six plates were made between 1932 and 1939, but the rest were completed only between 1952 and 1956, after the artist returned from his wartime exile in America. Thus the project began to assume a role in asserting the artist’s own Jewish identity and the survival of his people in the wake of the Holocaust. Later images of the series depict heroic wartime leaders (Joshua, Samson, David, Solomon) as well as prophets, whom Meyer Schapiro eloquently characterizes in “their integrity and solitude, their vision of God and prophecies of the misfortunes and consolations of Israel.” Chagall’s choices not only record his sentiments as Jewish artist in the present but also connect his own biblical imagery with art historical tradition, particularly Rembrandt.

As Schapiro notes, “It is clear that Chagall has read the text for himself [but] his *Sacrifice of Manoah* (fig. 89) is reminiscent of Rembrandt’s painting in the Louvre of the *Angel Leaving Tobias*; and the *David Playing before Saul* seems to be a reversal of Rembrandt’s great painting of this scene.”<sup>46</sup> Chagall’s, like Rembrandt’s, is a human Bible, reduced to a few large-scale figures with vivid gestures, akin to Rembrandt’s *Moses with the Tablets of the Law* or *Jacob Wrestling the Angel*, both works familiar to Chagall from the Berlin museum. Chagall avoids the miracles and spectacle in nineteenth-century biblical images, even though his earlier paintings of Vitebsk had already emphasized the visionary. Like



90  
Chaim Soutine,  
*Flayed Ox*, ca. 1925  
Oil on canvas,  
210 × 125 cm

Amsterdam, Stedelijk  
Museum (A 6835)

Rembrandt, Chagall also emphasizes the presence of winged angels as figures of light, drawing here upon his own previous renderings of Russian flying figures. Angels serve as mediators to the Godhead, which (in good Jewish tradition) Chagall does not represent.<sup>47</sup> Also like Rembrandt, Chagall inserts appropriate regional costume of the Middle East, including turbans but also often actual Bedouin headdress, observed firsthand during his 1931 visit to Palestine.<sup>48</sup> Following Rembrandt's etchings, Chagall's prints assert the hand of the artist, achieved through the etching process (which he learned from Struck), particularly through graphic effects of dramatic lighting and darkness—presumably with a shared theological point about divine light.

Chaim Soutine (1893–1943), born near Minsk in Belarus, also made his career in Paris, in the circle of Jacques Lipchitz and Amadeo Modigliani. From visits to the Louvre he became obsessed with Rembrandt, particularly his painting of *The Flayed Ox* (1655). According to Chana Orloff, a contemporary Jewish sculptor, “I can still see him gazing at the canvases of Rembrandt with respectful awe. He would contemplate them for a long time, go into a trance, then suddenly stamp his foot and explain, ‘This is so beautiful it drives me mad.’”<sup>49</sup> Soutine also said to dealer René Gimpel that “for him, Rem-



91  
 Raphael Soyer, *Self-portrait  
 at Easel*, 1980  
 Oil on canvas,  
 61 × 51.8 cm

Madrid, Museo Nacional  
 Thyssen-Bornemisza  
 (762 (1981.41))

brandt is the idol, excelling all painters. Velázquez is nothing beside him,” and he praised *The Jewish Bride* in particular as “probably the most beautiful canvas in existence, with its penetrating study of the clothing, and the hands, which are so beautiful.”

Around 1925 Soutine began to paint in earnest the same *Flayed Ox* (e.g. fig. 110); with an even greater personal love of impasto brushwork, now heightened in blood-red color harmonies against a blue backdrop (fig. 90). Except for a copy after Rembrandt’s *Hendrickje Bathing*, this was Soutine’s only direct evocation of a Rembrandt model, but a heartfelt testament to his enduring admiration of his Dutch hero during his own artistic formation. Ironically, as Soutine knew well, Jewish kosher law forbids any consumption of animal blood.

92

Larry Rivers, *Dutch Masters President's Relief*, 1964  
Oil and collage on canvas,  
mounted on wood box,  
248.3 x 176.8 x 36.2 cm

New York, Solomon R.  
Guggenheim Museum  
(86.3485; gift Stanley  
and Alice Bard, 1986. Art  
© Estate of Larry Rivers/  
Licensed by VAGA at Artists  
Rights Society (ARS),  
New York)



### MODERN AMERICANS

Russian-born immigrant American painter Raphael Soyer (1899–1987) sketched old master works, including Rembrandt’s *Jewish Bride*, during his extensive travels in Europe, and he dedicated a substantial portion of his journal opinions to artists, including Rembrandt: “I consider the Sistine Chapel one of the three high points of my art pilgrimage—the other two being Rembrandt in Holland and van Eyck in Belgium.” Soyer often wrote about Rembrandt with unalloyed admiration, including a full chapter on Rembrandt in his *Homage to Thomas Eakins, Etc.* Soyer wrote, among other things, that “I have seen many paintings these months, yet here I was in the Rembrandt Room, gaping as though I had never seen a painting before.”

In 1959 Soyer painted a self-portrait (lost), where he pictured himself in the company of three of his favorite artists’ own self-portraits: Rembrandt, Corot and Degas.<sup>50</sup> His Rembrandt is based on the forthright, frontal Vienna self-portrait (1652). Toward the end of his life Soyer wrote: “Usually I draw and paint myself when I am alone, moody and unshaven, recalling mentally self-portraits by favorite masters—Rembrandt as St. Paul.”<sup>51</sup> About the hands in the *Prodigal Son* and the “*Jewish Bride*” Soyer waxes eloquent: “These hands [...] symbolize for me the phenomenon of the old Rembrandt: his



93  
R.B. Kitaj,  
*The Jewish Rider*, 1984–85  
Oil on canvas,  
152.4 × 152.4 cm

Oslo, Astrup Fearnley  
Museum (1836)

feeling for people, his acceptance of life and awareness and acceptance of death. How deep the sympathy in his portrayals of people.”<sup>52</sup>

Like Rembrandt, Soyer was a prolific self-portraitist, with over forty examples known. Soyer’s earliest self-representation, a 1917 etching, is modeled after a frontal Rembrandt print, *Self-portrait with a Broad Nose* (1628): “When I did it I thought of Rembrandt, of Rembrandt’s early etchings of himself, but I didn’t consider it successful.”<sup>53</sup> Another frontal-painted self-portrait, at age eighty-one (1980), resembles both Rembrandt and Liebermann, as Soyer shows himself at work, with a large easel at the right edge and a huge palette in his hand (fig. 91).

By the latter half of the twentieth century, artists in the Pop Art movement, exemplified by Andy Warhol, often made refashioned replicas of everyday objects or public celebrities. But whereas Warhol depended on silkscreen reproductions, his fellow Pop artist Larry Rivers (1923–2002, born Yitzroch Loiza Grossberg) asserted his own individual hand while he referenced famous artworks, refashioned into what one exhibition ap-

94  
Rembrandt,  
*The Polish Rider*, ca. 1655  
Oil on canvas,  
116.8 × 134.9 cm

New York, The Frick  
Collection (1910.1.98; photo:  
Joseph Coscia Jr. © The  
Frick Collection, New York)



appropriately dubbed “hand-painted Pop.”<sup>54</sup> For Rivers, Rembrandt remained a particular favorite to copy and adapt.<sup>55</sup> He most frequently used *The Syndics of the Drapers’ Guild* (1661; Amsterdam), which had already become commodified as the advertising image for Dutch Masters cigars. Rivers first appropriated that image via Dutch Masters Cigars in a painting of 1963. A lithographic version (1964–68) shows him replicating, in his distinctive outline drawing style, not only that iconic Rembrandt work but also the cigars enclosed in their box, thus underscoring how Rembrandt’s artwork was already debased as a tool of commerce. Rivers would produce numerous variations on this basic Rembrandt theme, with varying degrees of finish; along with screen prints, he even featured mixed-media versions, which simulated both the cardboard box and cigars, while always signed and dated (fig. 92). He also included the Dutch Masters in a late-career compiled retrospective, which he titled *Greatest Hits*, like long-play anthologies by popular musicians.

Rivers also played with Rembrandt’s *Polish Rider* (fig. 94) by repeating its familiar form with radiating rainbow colors overlaid on it. Finally, a commissioned work, his three-canvas *History of Matzah (The Story of the Jews)* (1982; New Haven, Yale Art



95

R.B. Kitaj, *Los Angeles #26*  
(*Nose Kiss*), 2003Oil on canvas,  
91.4 × 91.4 cmLondon, Piano Nobile  
© R.B. Kitaj Estate

Gallery), provides a visual chronology replete with quotes of famous images.<sup>56</sup> In Part I, near a reinterpretation of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, Rivers included another famous Rembrandt quote, based on *Moses with the Tablets of the Law* (Berlin), to which he gave the ironic caption "Moses was an Egyptian?" And Rivers could not leave his model intact; instead of Rembrandt's imagined face of the patriarch, Rivers inserted the features of his cousin, Aaron Hochberg, bringing the patriarch down to earth. Thus, while still paying homage to both the fame and familiarity of Rembrandt images, and, unlike Soutine's serious repaintings of his model, Larry Rivers instead underscores his personal artistic reuse, within the wryly self-aware, late twentieth-century process of visual appropriation.

Very few twentieth-century painters have embraced both aspects of Rembrandt—a commitment to the Hebrew Bible and an intense self-reference—as fiercely as R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007). The expatriate son of a Viennese immigrant, born in Cleveland, Kitaj worked primarily in London and finally in Los Angeles. A self-proclaimed Jewish artist, Kitaj asserted himself through his publication of two *Diasporist Manifestos*, commenting

on his own professed “*Midrash* in paint.”<sup>57</sup> His allegiance to Rembrandt is emphatic, but it appears within his wide-ranging influence from old master artists as well as modernists. For example, in his *Second Diasporist Manifesto* (2007), published in the year that he died, he asserts: “There are, of course, many NON-JEWISH PROPHETS of my new religion. These are my DIASPORA HOST PROPHETS from Giotto to Rembrandt to Nietzsche to Cézanne to Degas to Matisse to my best man under the chuppah Hockney.”<sup>58</sup> He even ranks his artistic influences: “Cézanne is my siddur (my prayer book), my favorite painter. No Jew is among my top 12, alas. As of 1 April 2004, in no great order [...] Rembrandt [is number 8].”<sup>59</sup> Or this claim: “MAY I WELCOME particularly into MY VARIANT JEWISH ART TRADITION [...] Much, much Rembrandt, as good as any artist ever.”<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps the most familiar of these is his characteristically color-rich *Jewish Rider* (1984–85; part of what the artist called a “Passion series” (fig. 93). In this work, clearly derived from Rembrandt’s *Polish Rider* (fig. 94), Kitaj shifts his figure to a train, while retaining the sidesaddle pose and suggestion of a horse beneath him. His destination, however, presumably leads to a concentration camp with an ominous smoking chimney on the horizon, beneath a cross.<sup>61</sup> Along a blood-red, receding corridor at right, the dark silhouetted conductor brandishes a coercive whip.

A more positive image excerpts and enlarges the glowing central angel from a small 1646 Rembrandt panel, *Abraham and the Three Angels* (private collection).<sup>62</sup> In *Abraham’s God* (*After Rembrandt*) Kitaj again retains his posture but transforms the figure into a large, red seraph who causes a bearded Abraham, shown in profile, to gape in wonder as Sarah looks on from the open doorway (2005–6; London, Tate Gallery). Kitaj also made numerous lithographic “religious portraits” of Jewish biblical figures such as Abraham and Isaac, but also of heroic women—Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Ruth, the ultimate wanderer.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1997, he paid posthumous homage to his late wife Sarah Fisher (d. 2002) in works, such as *Los Angeles #26 (Nose Kiss)* (fig. 95), another variation on Rembrandt’s “*Jewish Bride*” but with altered faces and the bride in the form of an angel. In his posthumously published *Confessions* (2017), Kitaj conveys both his love of Rembrandt and his profound personal Jewish identity:

As you know, Sandra is in our studio with me. I’m painting us every day at Los Angeles (#26). This painting was inspired by an etching by the Judeophile Rembrandt, blessed be he, of 2 old Jews shmoozing in their Synagogue [...] The 2 Jews are now Sandra and me bewinged, Los Angeles. The Kitaj Angel, after Rembrandt’s old Jew [...] looks by chance like a cross between myself and the Lubavitcher Messiah Schneerson, grabbing Sandra’s right breast. My shoulder-insignia [a yellow badge] is that of a self-awarded Jewish General. [...] This painting is the latest episode in my Greatest Story Ever Told, The Woman-Man Story.<sup>63</sup>



## CONCLUSIONS

Inspiration as well as direct influence from Rembrandt variously shaped modern Jewish artists, who also occasionally invoked his halcyon Dutch period of Jewish history: toleration in Amsterdam. Features of Rembrandt's distinctive personal style, such as dark colors, bold brushwork, or close focus on ordinary individuals—often taken, mistakenly, to be Jewish sitters—sometimes provided a starting point, especially for nineteenth-century painters, such as Gottlieb or Israëls. Some artists (Liebermann, Soyer) turned for inspiration to his varied, lifelong production of self-portraits.

Later twentieth-century artists adapted Rembrandt imagery for their own demonstrations. Striking examples of bold translations can be found in the “raw truth” in paintings by Chaim Soutine or as biblical humanity in Marc Chagall's etchings. Sometimes, as with Larry Rivers, individual Rembrandt pictures could signify larger agendas about modernity itself. Or, for R.B. Kitaj, Rembrandt could evoke a self-consciously personalized “Diasporic” Jewish agenda.

For many aspiring modern Jewish artists, the very concept of Rembrandt's artistic individuality, generally celebrated by the later nineteenth century, provided a model, especially when the first Jewish painters had few others. His freedom, praised in prose by Jozef Israëls (and by Leonid Pasternak, in exile from Russia), was surely over-celebrated, as was his Jewish sympathy. But Rembrandt also prompted Jewish biblical imagery from Gottlieb to Chagall to Kitaj.

Readily available to all artists as he was, from the nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, Rembrandt van Rijn appealed to Jewish artists as an inspiring model but also as a token for their own free play as they struggled to reconcile their own Jewish identities with his multivalent precedent. Though identifiably Christian,<sup>64</sup> Rembrandt continually provided his own special, if varied, attraction for Jewish artists. Fittingly, one late twentieth-century, post-war Jewish American artist, Leonard Baskin, could still declare that he knew of no truly Jewish artists from history except for Käthe Kollwitz and Rembrandt.<sup>65</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 Guston 2002, 30.
- 2 Blanc 2021; Perlove 2001; McQueen 2003. A related phenomenon is the rehabilitation of Spinoza; Schwartz 2012.
- 3 Amsterdam 2006, 89–93, esp. 17 for the quotation.
- 4 Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 2011, esp. 111–12.
- 5 Known known in Dutch art as a *tronie*, such head studies suggest a portrait likeness, but—like similar repeatable head studies of major religious figures in late medieval modelbooks—they also provided templates for reuses in history paintings. Gottwald 2011; for later Netherlandish instances see Hirschfelder 2008; also Hirschfelder and Krempel 2014.
- 6 Panofsky 1973.
- 7 Landsberger 1946. The term “Philo-Semitism” comes from the historical studies by Popkin 1989 and 1990. See also Zell 2002.
- 8 Mendelsohn 2002; Silver 1999; Tel Aviv, 1991.
- 9 Mendelsohn 2002, 71–82; Nelken 1991.

- 10 The context of nineteenth-century ambitions toward history paintings and their influence on emerging Jewish painters is well sketched by Cohen 2012.
- 11 Mendelsohn, 2002, 109–10, fig. 66; Silver 1999, 90–92; Tel Aviv 1991, 36–37, cat. no. 7. While the name Ahasuerus is also connected with the protagonist of the legend of the Wandering Jew, his crown here surely denotes royalty and thus the ruler from the Hebrew Bible. For the legend of the Wandering Jew, see Cohen 2008.
- 12 Engel 2017; Wistrich 1989.
- 13 Matthew 16: 56–67; Mark 14; John 18.
- 14 Sabar 2008, 383–86, fig. 5. The same prayer is also inscribed on Jewish ritual objects, such as the doorpost *mezuzah*.
- 15 Tel Aviv 1991, 51; Narkiss 1956, 55–56. In 1879, the last year of his life, on the suggestion of his mentor Matejko, Gottlieb was working in Kraków on a major work from medieval Polish history that epitomized the possibility of such a Polish-Jewish reconciliation: *Casimir the Great Granting Rights to the Jews*.
- 16 In the English language, Graetz 1893, the passage about the accusation of Jesus appears in vol. 2, 155–56, 229–30.
- 17 Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 2011.
- 18 Kitschen (2019, 219) notes that out of the seventeen folio “albums” produced in Berlin by publisher Gustav Schauer in the 1860s, Rembrandt was featured along with Rubens, van Dyck, and earlier Northern painters: the van Eycks, Dürer, and Holbein. An early reviewer praised those volumes as “comprehensive” and accompanied by texts from “the most serious art scholars of Germany.” Schauer was followed in Germany by Robert Dohme (Leipzig, 1877–86) and in France by another bestselling series, edited by Charles Blanc (Paris, 1861–77). For early scholarly compilations of Rembrandt’s painted oeuvre, among the first made for any artist, see Scallen 2004.
- 19 Nadler 2003; Bodian 1997; Kaplan 2002, esp. 644–48 for Uriel da Costa.
- 20 Mendelsohn 2002, 120–22; Silver 1999, 94–97; Tel Aviv 1991, 57–59, no. 32. See also Cohen 2012, 58–59.
- 21 This argument stems from stimulating discussions with my colleague Shelley Perlove. See also Mendelsohn 2002, 120–24 for da Costa, and 132–34 for *Jesus before his Judges*, though he still uncritically reads the *Ahasuerus* as the Wandering Jew, 110–12. He insightfully discusses the implications of painting a Jewish Jesus in relation to Catholic Poland as an “ideal of universalism,” 136–38.
- 22 Cohen 2012, 54–55, fig. 10; Cohen and Rajner 2022, 240–42, fig. 7.25.
- 23 Schwartz 2012, which even uses the Hirszenberg painting as its cover image.
- 24 Cohen and Rajner 2022, 233–37, fig. 7.21, and for the missing *Exile*, *ibid.*, 147–61, figs. 5.17–5.19; Cohen and Rajner 2015, 1: “His more dramatic creations, which deal with Jewish themes, highlight the sense of dispossession, suffering, and agony that remain at the heart of his cultural legacy.” See also Cohen 1998, 223–35. I am grateful to Profs. Cohen and Rajner for their guidance on this artist, the subject of their recent book, and more generally on this topic.
- 25 Cohen 1998, 216–17, 223–36; Cohen 2008, 147–75.
- 26 Glants 2010; Rajner (1990–91, 99) calls Antokolsky “the first Russian Jewish artist” and shows an early high relief at bust-length of a *Jewish Tailor* (1864; St. Petersburg, Russian Museum; fig. 2).
- 27 Glants 2010, 145–65; Litvak 2008, 237; Amishai-Maisels 1982.
- 28 Groningen-Amsterdam, 1999, esp. de Leeuw 199, 42–53; and van Voolen 1999, 54–70.
- 29 Boston 2015, 210–19.
- 30 Quoted in London 1983, 81, n. 15.
- 31 Held 1969, 32–41; Peacock 2006, 177–215. For Rembrandt self-portraits with chains, see, for example: 1629, Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; 1633, Paris, Louvre; or ca. 1662, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum.
- 32 Original English translation published in London (T.C. and E.C. Jack) and New York (Frederick Stokes, n.d., but 1906 or later). Translation available online by Project Gutenberg.
- 33 Paret 1980, 170–82; see also Matthias Eberle in Berlin 1979, esp. 36–37; Schutz 1999.

- 34 Müller 2013, cites numerous references to Rembrandt in Liebermann's letters and notes (67) that the artist was also dubbed the "German Rembrandt" in the Dutch daily *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*. The artist kept his distance from contemporary attempts, led by Julius Langbehn, to see Rembrandt as Germanic and race-conscious. See also Müller 2015, 54–59.
- 35 On Bode, see Scallen 2004.
- 36 Cahn 2008; Berlin 1979, 192–93, no. 26.
- 37 Berlin–Tefen, 2007.
- 38 Highlights include: Ibsen, Nietzsche, Freud, Einstein, and, significantly, Jozef Israëls (1905) and Herzl, both in profile (1903) as well as *en face* (1907).
- 39 Harshav 2004, 72, 85, 162.
- 40 First published in Russian 1947; translation to French by Bella Chagall, 1957, English translation by Dorothy Williams, 1965. Quote from Oxford edition (Oxford University Press, 1989), 170.
- 41 New York 2013.
- 42 Harshav 2003, 110–11.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 135.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 139, response on receiving the Erasmus Prize, 1960. See also Schapiro 1978.
- 45 Schapiro 1978 (orig. 1956); Liebelt 1994, esp. 145 for Rembrandt as a model.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 125–26.
- 47 On angels in Rembrandt, see Silver 2018. Even in Chagall's *Death of Moses* or *Prophecy of Jerusalem to Elijah*, the Michelangelesque bearded figure in the cloud above displays wings of an angel. In a few other cases, such as *Moses Receiving the Tablets of the Law* or *Ezekiel Receiving the Scroll*, Chagall reverts to medieval Jewish precedent to show a hand emerging from Heaven, depositing a Torah scroll above the inverted head of the prophet. Occasionally, as in the first image, the *Creation of Man* or *The Burning Bush*, the Godhead appears in a glowing aureole, with the Hebrew Tetragrammaton written out correctly.
- 48 On Rembrandt's use of exotic costume, see Schwartz 2020; also Slatkes 1983.
- 49 Quotes from Meisler 2015, 91, 113. See also New York 1998, 42–45; also Poseq 1990–91.
- 50 Baskind 2004, 43, fig. 11; present location unknown.
- 51 Cited by Baskind 2004, 43, after Washington 1974, 164, from a letter by Soyer to Alfred Frankenstein in response to a question about his use of self-portraiture. Soyer's appreciation for traditions of art history continued throughout his life. *A Painter's Pilgrimage* compiles a catalogue's worth of sketches made of old master paintings. In Soyer's own notes about visits to European museums, he mentions *Bathsheba* as a "unique masterpiece" (1966, 13) and he praises Rembrandt's Munich Passion series for being devoid of sermonizing and symbolism (53). In Berlin, he marvels at "a deep, psychological portrait of a young Jew, [small] but huge in execution" (60), and in Dresden he includes a sketch after *Manoah's Sacrifice* (61, 65). About the Hermitage (87–88) he devotes an entire section to Rembrandt, including the *Prodigal Son* and *Danaë*. Another sketch (ca. 1963/64; p. 93, present location unknown) shows the female head from Rembrandt's *Jewish Bride*.
- 52 Soyer 1966, 87. About the Hermitage *Danaë*, he enthuses, "It is truthful, touching, and human" (*ibid.*).
- 53 Baskind 2004, 44, fig. 12. Here I want to thank my former co-author for specific help with both Soyer and Kitaj as well as all things Jewish American over the years.
- 54 Los Angeles 1992.
- 55 Hunter 1989.
- 56 New York 1984.
- 57 Kitaj 1989, 29–31.
- 58 Kitaj 2007, no. 117.
- 59 *Ibid.*, no. 287.
- 60 *Ibid.*, no. 330.
- 61 Cohen 2008; Baskind 2014, 143–44; Zemel 2008.
- 62 New York 2017; Silver 2018, esp. 11–12.
- 63 Cited by Mirjam Knotter (correspondence); see also her study, Amsterdam 2015, esp. 24–28, 38–41, "Jew on the Brain" and "Diasporism." Knotter also notes (*ibid.*, 74–76) that the Second Diasporist Manifesto records a 2005 *Self-portrait with the Baal Shem [Tov]* with the following re-

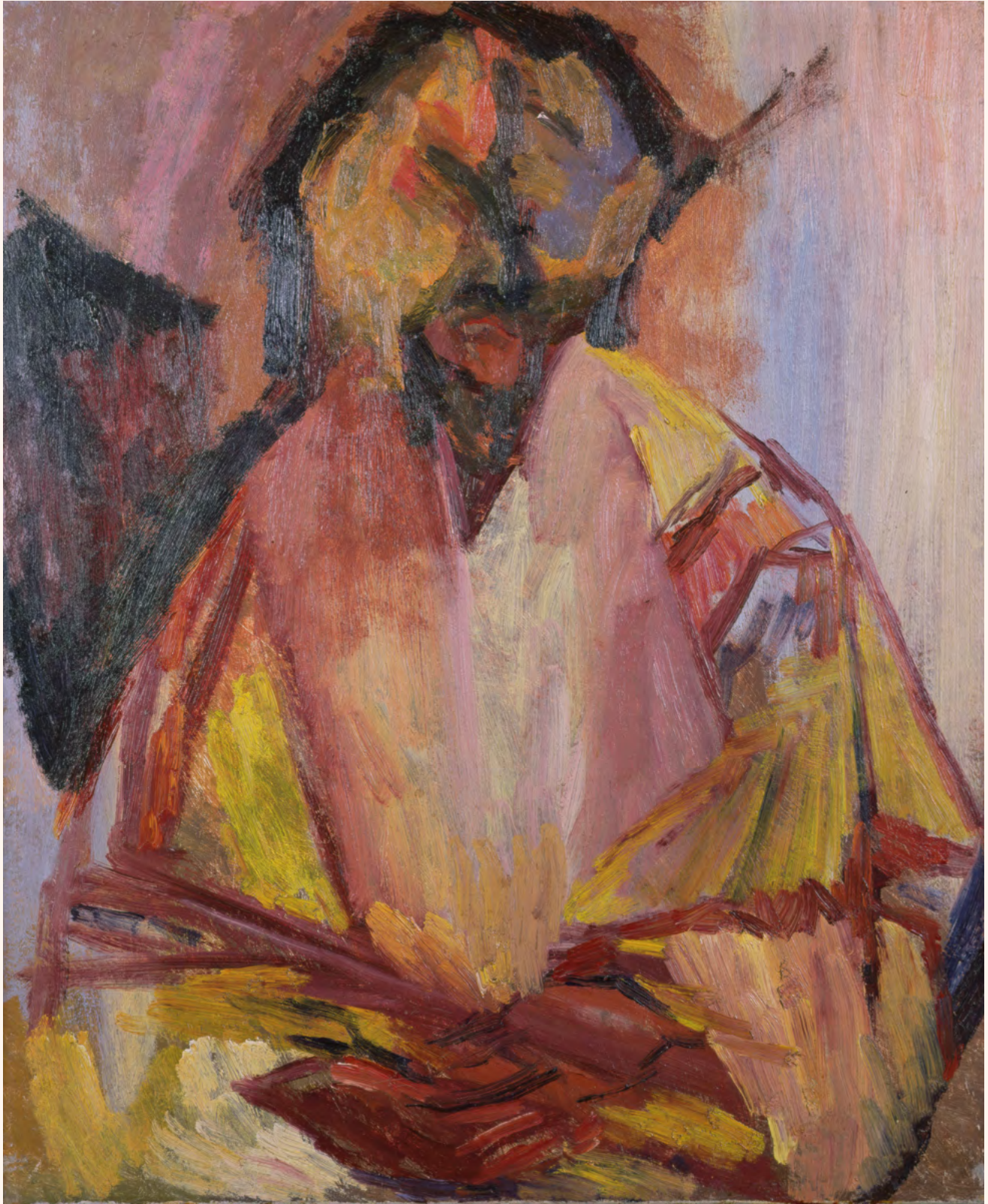
mark, “I am no saint, but I pretend in a small canvas: SELF-PORTRAIT AS THE MASTER OF GOD’S NAME (BAAL SHEM TOV).” Rembrandt did it of course (as St. Paul, etc.).”

64 Perlove and Silver 2009. This is the appropriate place to thank my dear colleague for our collaboration and our inspiring, ongoing dialogues, along with those of Gary Schwartz, Mirjam Knotter, Michael Zell, and the other Rembrandt scholars who contributed to this volume. See also Notre Dame 2017.

65 Baigell 2006, 7.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Larry Silver** is the Farquhar Professor of Art History Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania. He previously taught at Berkeley and Northwestern University. He is the author of several books about Rembrandt, including *Rembrandt’s Faith* (with Shelley Perlove) as well as publications about modern Jewish art, notably *Jewish Art: A Modern History* (with Samantha Baskind).



# Laying it on Thick: British (Immigrant) Artists and Their Rembrandt

SIMON SCHAMA

## ABSTRACT

This is an essay about a haunting: the adoption by Jewish modernists, above all the Anglo-Jewish painter David Bomberg, of an imagined biography of Rembrandt's life and work in which he features as the epitome of the outsider artist: temperamentally hostile to academic classicism; uninhibitedly and theatrically expressive; increasingly engaged with interiority and spirituality, and above all a dramatist of the paint surface. Not all of this narrative was imaginary. That artists like Soutine, Auerbach and Kossoff saw in him a thick describer the paradigmatic virtuoso of tactile density and pigment glow, only intensified the haunting. Their own alienation (as they saw it), from institutional and critical convention tightened that heroic identification and generated some of the most powerful achievements of modern painting.

## KEYWORDS

Rembrandt van Rijn, David Bomberg, Chaim Soutine, Lucian Freud, British painters

96  
David Bomberg,  
*Last Self Portrait*, 1956  
Oil on canvas,  
76 × 63.5 cm

Chichester, Pallant House  
Gallery (CHCPH 1233;  
© Pallant House Gallery /  
Wilson Gift through The Art  
Fund / Bridgeman Images)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt: Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_SCHAMA



97  
Rembrandt,  
*Self-portrait*,  
ca. 1665–68  
Oil on canvas,  
119.4 × 93 cm

London, Kenwood  
House (57)

You don't, I think, have to subscribe to the full-on postmodernist nostrum of the Death of the Author to acknowledge that a writer's or a painter's enduring mark on the world lives on independently from their precise historical intentions (supposing it's possible to nail those down). Few would contest that an oeuvre is a poetic sum of what the artist meant to say or draw, an intention refracted through the prism of readers or beholders. Like Beethoven or van Gogh, Rembrandt is an artist who lives on as much through resonance as historical actuality. The question implicit in the framework of "Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes" is whether, for the Jewish modernist painters that are the subject of this essay, artists with a shared antipathy to classicism, his work resonates with particular power. Did they take him as the epitome of anti-academicism? Or is the thought merely idle Romanticism, on their part or ours? However much Rembrandt may or may not have been an outsider, someone as likely to break the rules of art as observe them; someone who began by constructing a persona, or rather shape-shifting, protean *personae*; who understood that paint could be used theatrically to generate drama from how the paint landed and was handled on a surface; that its density could become a kind of surrogate for the reanimated flesh of the body; and who ended up marginalized by the indifferent guardians of orthodoxy, as well as impoverished—

98  
 David Bomberg,  
*Hear O Israel*, 1955  
 Oil on panel,  
 91.4 × 71.1 cm

New York, Jewish Museum  
 (1995-33; purchase: Oscar  
 and Regina Gruss Charitable  
 Foundation)



whether or not that is the artist he was, it was the way he was seen and internalized by a succession of British modernists for whom, among other qualities, impasto ruled.

Here is the last picture, made in 1956, by the greatest of all British painters in the first half of the twentieth century, David Bomberg (1890–1957) (fig. 96). The artist mantled—literally, in this work—the tools of his craft: palette, maulstick, brushes, in hand and painted with the utmost and loosest freedom. Work unworked, you might say. Inevitably, the picture, at once stupendously beautiful and, even were one not to know it was the last cry of pain from a dying man, also deeply unsettling, has been related to Rembrandt's Kenwood masterpiece (fig. 97).

But of course the differences are in the end more telling than the affinities. However freely Rembrandt painted his working tools and materials, his gaze is lynx-eyed. The gaze and the head from which it springs are as tightly described as the mysterious hemi-circle behind the master, drawn in perfect freehand. Bomberg's face, on the other hand, Bomberg's head, Bomberg's mind, the seat of his phenomenal creativity, are in process of disintegration. Where the cap (itself a tour de force of Rembrandtian illusionist handling; the epitome of the imaginatively disciplined hand) sits on the head of the Dutch master, Bomberg offers a monstrous, uncased representation of the brain, di-





99 (see also frontispiece)  
Rembrandt, *Self-portrait as  
the Apostle Paul*, 1661  
Oil on canvas, 91 x 77 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-A-4050; bequest of Mr.  
and Mrs. de Bruijn-van der  
Leeuw, Muri, Switzerland,  
1961)



100  
Rembrandt,  
*Simeon in the Temple*,  
ca. 1669  
Oil on canvas,  
122 x 103 cm

Stockholm, National-  
museum (NM 4567; gift of  
Mr. Nils B. Hersloff, 1949)

vided into its lobes, the whole undifferentiated mass extruded from its protective skull; the anatomy subject of Dr. Deijman turned upright. And the vivid colors of his smock, transferred to that extruded brain, become sickly: the expression of irreversible disorder.

But what did this expressively rendered pathos have to do with being Jewish? Bomberg—for most of his life an irreligious Jew, though never an apologetic one—gives us the answer. To another of his unsparing self-portraits, all painted within a year or so of Bomberg's end (in destitution, crushingly humiliating indifference by most of the art world, and terrible sickness), and thus in some of those respects at least, twinned with Rembrandt's late self-portraits, to this painting Bomberg gave the title *Hear O Israel*, a prayer, the *Shema*, that is recited out loud, with feeling, three times a day in every Jewish service (fig. 98). But instead of a representation of the recital, a prayer that would be much on the mind of a mortally sick man, Bomberg shows himself draped in the tallit, carrying a Torah on his shoulder. You could, I suppose, compare it with Rembrandt's almost quizzical *Self-portrait as St. Paul* (fig. 99), but while the Bible is in the apostle's hands, Bomberg holds the Jewish sacred book close to his body—penitently perhaps, but certainly not triumphantly, either in the manner of the *Hagbah*, the demonstrative raising of the scroll, or its procession round the synagogue. The fall of intense light, reflected from the Torah, puts me in mind of another redemptive, near-deathbed cradling: that of *Simeon in the Temple with the Infant Christ* (fig. 100), a canvas left unfinished on Rembrandt's easel when he died. In it, the light goes the other way, from the *lux* of the baby Savior to the head of the old man whose unseeing eyes have been given back illumination. Bomberg, as he approached the oncoming darkness, became obsessed with light; expressionist chiaroscuro turning spiritual.

His *Soliloquy: Noonday Sun*, painted in the artist's second home in Ronda, Spain, has hot radiance strike the shoulder of his tallit-mantled persona (fig. 101). *The Talmudist* slices the head between dark and lit zones, as if in perpetual argument, like disputing rabbis (fig. 102). It's said by those who want to see it that way that Bomberg has given himself a crown of thorns puncturing the headgear worn by pious Jewish men, and while I'm not entirely persuaded by that reading, there is something to be said for it. The painting was done in 1953, the year Bomberg was fired from his post as teacher at the Borough Polytechnic in Southwark, not least because he had defied all the conventions of academic instruction. His version of Talmudism, then—not far from the mark, it must be admitted—was of perpetual and obstinate argument. If this is more than a coincidence, then Bomberg would have seen himself as a martyr to the importance of disputation.

A reputation for obstinate argumentativeness was just one of the reasons the modernist art establishment in England held their noses when it came to Jewish artists and especially David Bomberg. All the usual tropes of genteel antisemitism were at play in the wretched record of repeated rejection. When, in October 1939, Bomberg offered his services as an official war artist, writing that “the spiritual and cultural need that art alone can satisfy is greater now than in peace time,” Kenneth Clark, who presided over the War Artists Advisory Committee, declined to take him up. Too showy, too histrionic, too gesturally pushy, too emotionally expressive... i.e., too Jewish. Not at all in the English tradition. In a private letter Clark wrote that Bomberg's work, like that “of so



101  
David Bomberg,  
*Soliloquy Noonday Sun*,  
*Ronda, Spain*, 1954  
Oil on canvas,  
89 x 79 cm

Chichester, Pallant House  
Gallery (CHCPH 1430; on  
loan since 2004 from Colin  
St John Wilson © Private  
collection / Bridgeman  
Images)



102  
David Bomberg,  
*The Talmudist*, 1953  
Oil on canvas,  
76.2 x 63.6 cm

Chichester, Pallant House  
Gallery (CHCPH 1241; gift  
from Colin St John Wilson  
through the Art Fund  
© Pallant House Gallery /  
Bridgeman Images)



103  
David Bomberg,  
*Self-portrait*, 14 March 1909  
Pencil on paper, 17.2 x 12 cm

Private collection  
© Bridgeman Images

many of his race [...] looks artificial and done for effect. [...] If only it were possible to discourage Jews from painting.”

There was never any time during his entire sixty-seven years of life when Bomberg was not conscious of being Jewish, knowing that that would always make him an outsider. His parents were poor immigrants from Poland, his father's trade the toxically unhealthy one of leather-working. He grew up in Birmingham and then in the East End of London at a time when the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was matched by the rising tide of anti-immigrant xenophobia, leading to the passage of the restrictive Aliens Act of 1905.

Four years later, still a teenager, Bomberg drew a self-portrait in the image of the outsider artist, perhaps with Rembrandt in mind (fig. 103). Rembrandt's early flood of confrontational, role-playing etched selfies were, after all, so often taken to be the very face of bohemian rebellion. In Whitechapel it was a Jewish arts and cultural organization (along with the devoted belief of his mother Rebecca) that gave him the means, in company with other Jewish artists and poets like Mark Gertler (1891–1931) and Isaac Rosenberg (1890–1918), to pursue his vocation. When Bomberg did win a precious scholarship to the Slade in 1911, he ran straight into the conservative academicism of Henry Tonks (1862–1937), a surgeon anatomist as well as art teacher. Despite the incompatibility of their temperaments, Bomberg, who throughout his impasto-heavy career remained a fine draughtsman, won a school prize for drawing. But there were moments—for a notable example when he broke a palette over the head of his tutor Wilson Steer—when the Whitechapel boy could not keep himself from acting out his hostility to the conventions of art instruction. He and the Slade tolerated each other for all of two years, but in 1913 he was expelled for being a disruptive influence in and out



104  
David Bomberg,  
*The Mud Bath*, 1914  
Oil on canvas,  
152.4 × 224.2 cm

London, Tate Modern  
(Too656; purchased 1964)

of class. Forty plus years later, Bomberg's own art teaching at the Borough Polytechnic in Southwark, where his students included Frank Auerbach (b. 1931) and Leon Kossoff (1926–2019), would represent the pedagogic overthrow of much that Tonks stood for: constantly interactive with his students, mutually argumentative, technically liberated, insisting on the force of one's particular artistic personality (with Rembrandt back in mind); the indispensability of obstinate integrity.

Bomberg had no Huygens to act as his breakthrough patron, but for better or worse he did have Wyndham Lewis, who saw in him the potential for a fellow-Vorticist. This promise was spectacularly (too spectacularly for Lewis's liking) manifest in masterpieces like *The Mud Bath*, where the clamberings of a Whitechapel *shvitzbad* were translated into geometric forms, as per the Vorticist rubric (fig. 104). But instead of being bolted to an engineered design, Bomberg's elements were dynamically restless, animated, fidgety, mobile. Like Rembrandt, Bomberg was hailed as the coming prodigy; see his inclusion in May–June 1914 in the Whitechapel Art Gallery's exhibition *Twentieth-century Art: A Review of Modern Movements*. His one-man show at the Chenil Gallery that followed on it that summer was star-crossed by the outbreak of the First World War at the end of July. Unlike Rembrandt, the acclaim didn't last. Always restive, disliking accommodation to any kind of "ism" or deference, whether to Bloomsburys like Roger Fry, who had become the showcaser of post-impressionist modernism, or to the dispensations of Lewis himself, Bomberg went his own way and paid a price for it. Suspecting Lewis's sneering (the Vorticist capo would famously become an enthusiast of fascism), the two very nearly came to blows. A devotee of physical self-defense, learned in Whitechapel, Bomberg was often on a hair trigger.



105  
David Bomberg,  
*Ghetto Theatre*, 1920  
Oil on canvas,  
74.4 x 62 cm

London, Ben Uri Gallery  
and Museum (1987–46;  
purchased 1920)



106  
David Bomberg,  
*Rooftops of Jerusalem*, 1923  
Oil on canvas, 67,5 x 86 cm

Private Collection  
© Photo: Ben Uri Gallery  
and Museum



107  
David Bomberg,  
*Self-portrait*, 1931  
Oil on canvas

England, Private collection  
© The estate of David  
Bomberg/the Bridgeman  
Art Library. Photo: Justin  
Piperger

After the war he returned, albeit in startlingly different painterly idioms, to Jewish subjects. In *Ghetto Theatre*, he grafted the disrupted planes, distorted perspective and gloomy palette of the darker realms of German expressionism (Dix, Grosz and Kollwitz) onto an image of seemingly discontented Jewish theatergoers (fig. 105).

Yet 1923 saw a counterintuitive return to topographical literalness. The newly founded fundraising agency for Jewish Palestine, Keren Hayesod, hired him to paint scenes from the Zionist settlements, edifying images of *chalutz* agrarianism. Bomberg did in fact manage at least two watercolors of fruit pickers and, more to his taste, dock workers and laborers. But for the most part his landscapes and townscapes were largely empty of figures. Thus disembodied, they eventually evolved into exercises in architectural quasi-cubism, involving much flattening and patterning, sometimes, as in *Rooftops of Jerusalem*, producing work of startling formal rhythm and beauty (fig. 106).

Much good it did him. Abandoning his Palestine job, without anything or anyone to replace it, Bomberg's reputation as a leaver (including an exit from his marriage) and a loner, followed him back to Britain. The 1930s saw him and his second wife, the artist Lilian Holt, in Fordwych Road, NW2. (Very close, as it happens, to where I grew up, riding to school on the smoky tops of buses.) The area was favored by a new generation of Jewish refugees from Nazism. It had much in the way of *Konditoreien*, chamber music and chess, sometimes all three on the same premises. By this time the Whitechapel boys were scattered to the wind. Mark Gertler had de-Judaized himself enough to pass for native in Bloomsbury; Isaac Rosenberg was tragically killed in the war. Bomberg,

108  
 David Bomberg,  
*Evening in the City of  
 London*, 1944  
 Oil on canvas,  
 86.5 × 106.8 cm

London, Museum of London  
 (85,219; purchased with the  
 assistance of the National  
 Heritage Memorial Fund  
 and the V&A Purchase Grant  
 Fund)



not unlike Rembrandt in the 1650s, and at about the same age, set out to refashion his self-image. Like Rembrandt, too, he was handling his paint more densely yet more freely. In instinctively liberated, expressive impasto, local passages of brilliance emerge from layered and slathered grounds. He was also dressing up, using his personal props and wardrobe to role-playing. More Rembrandt.

The tour de force of this transitional period was the wonderful seated—or you might say of the crowned figure, enthroned—*Self-portrait* from 1931; paint applied in Cézanne-like patches and *taches*, face lost in creative reflection (fig. 107). The deep shadows about the eyes give it the air of a modernized *melancholia*; the work clothes turn into sovereign apparel. Unlike Rembrandt in the Frick Collection self-portrait of 1658, Bomberg doesn't bother with eyeballing the beholder—he's off somewhere where he's appreciated; but wholly like Rembrandt at that moment, he's at a crossroads, aggressively aware of the disconnect between self-valuation and public esteem.

Rejected as an official war artist, Bomberg nonetheless paints what ought to be the great icon of blitzed London, the badly damaged but miraculously standing St. Paul's at its heart, numinously lit through the filter of smoky late afternoon mist, as the emblem of survival and salvation, not altogether unlike Rembrandt's spiritually lit windmill (fig. 108). To get the Battle of Britain airborne angle of vision right Bomberg went home to the East End and climbed the tower of a church in Cheapside to make his study drawings.

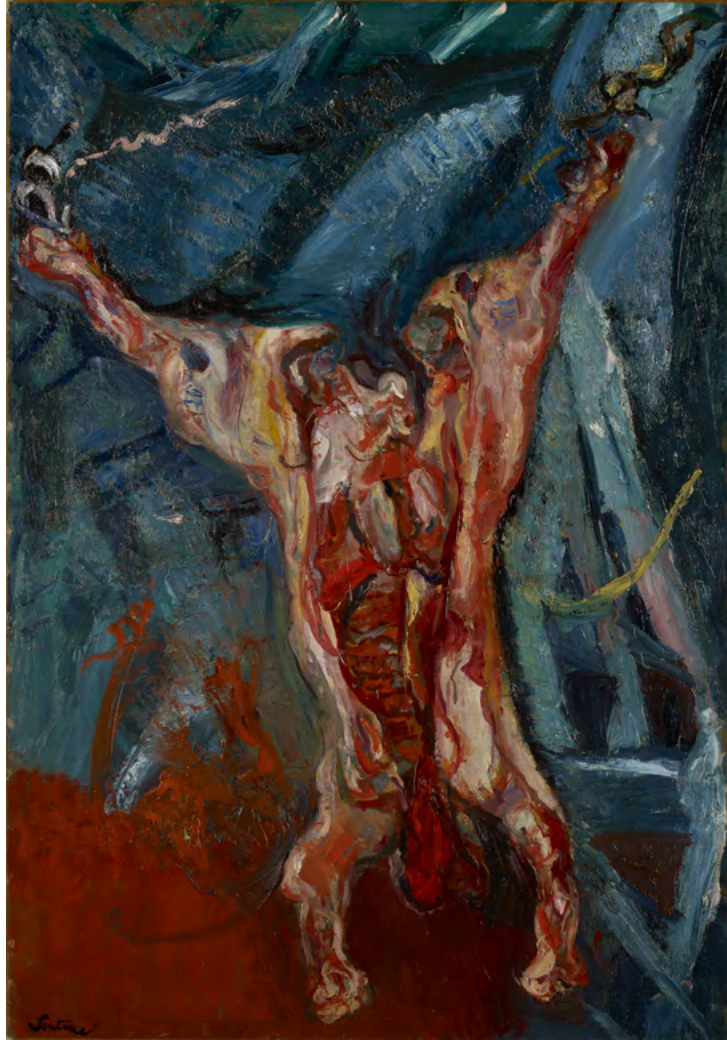




109  
Rembrandt,  
*The Flayed Ox*, 1655  
Oil on panel, 94 × 69 cm

Paris, Musée du Louvre  
(MI 169)

Like Rembrandt mythology, one can overdo the image of Bomberg as a loner. Though he was never in funds, he managed to keep the wolf from the door. An improbable job teaching drawing at the Bartlett School of Architecture was followed by something more to his liking, teaching evening classes at Borough Polytechnic. Far from repudiating group identity, Bomberg encouraged it, and a number of his students, including Leslie Marr (1922–2021) and Dennis Creffield (1931–2018), went on to form the “Borough Group.” After he lost the Borough Polytechnic position in 1953, Bomberg retreated to Ronda in Andalusia, where he had also lived for some time before the war. It was there that he had developed the rich, theatrically gestural expressionism that was so out of synch from the cool linearity of much British modernism. After the war, with the beginnings of 1950s BritPop in the work of Richard Hamilton (1922–2011) and Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005), this was even more out of step. Even then his wish was to gather pupils around him, but only one came. His only deep subject became himself, viewed and painted in that terrible self-annihilating mode that characterizes the last series of self-portraits and which drew him further and further into the interior recesses of his Jewish torment.



110  
Chaim Soutine,  
*Slaughtered Ox*, 1925  
Oil on canvas,  
116.21 × 80.65 cm

Minneapolis, Minneapolis  
Museum of Art (57.12: gift  
of Mr. and Mrs. Donald  
Winston and an anonymous  
donor)

In the manner of another outsider—van Gogh rather than Rembrandt—the artist’s death turned out to be the condition of Bomberg’s recognition, even, eventually, his vindication. (Though of these ostensible temples of modernism—the Stedelijk, MoMA, Centre Pompidou, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art—only MoMA has work by Bomberg, a book and two drawings, listed in its online catalogue.) In 1958, a bare year after he had died, the Arts Council mounted a “memorial show.” Even then, some of the belated compliments were grudgingly backhanded. “He might have been our English Soutine” ran one such comment, “if the passion of his handling did not so often override the subject.”

But of course Soutine was the very epitome of a painter for whom passion and subject treatment were functionally inseparable. And like Bomberg, he took that working principle to be an inheritance from old masters famous or notorious for the obstinacy of their personal *maniera*: Rembrandt, of course, but above all Michelangelo. Soutine’s relationship with Rembrandt is explicit and well-documented. In the 1920s he made four trips from Paris to Amsterdam expressly to commune with him, in particular with *The Jewish Bride*. As it appears, he was not out to identify with the supposed Jewishness

of the subject as much as to take in its stupendous demonstration of the material drama of thick paint.

According to his friend and fellow-graduate of the Vilna art academy, Michel Kikoine (1892–1968), Soutine would be thrown into a state of trance-like distraction by total immersion in Rembrandt's late work, seeing in it a demonstration of heroic, Promethean, physicality. In particular, he was obsessed by Rembrandt's *Flayed Ox* in the Louvre (fig. 109). While his close friend and fellow Jew Modigliani described bodies through a voluptuous line, Soutine eschewed that kind of draughtsmanship for dense impasto, a sedimentation of paint that clotted, heaved, writhed and pulsed with organically throbbing energy. What he saw in Rembrandt's carcass was, paradoxically, something un-dead, or at least not altogether dead, its viscera gleaming, slippery and viscous. The boy from Smilovichi and Vilna was enough of a Jew to know all about the tradition of temple sacrifice, of penitential oblation, some of which he projected onto Rembrandt's quasi-crucified redemptive carcass (fig. 110). Famously, when his own carcass, bought from a Paris butcher, dried out, stank and attracted great clouds of flies, his long-suffering dealer Leopold Wroblewski helped Soutine acquire pails of blood fresh from the abattoir with which to lave the carcass, refreshing its not quite dead sanguinary brightness. Painterly brilliance, even at its most lurid, thus became the meat of art.

This engorged materiality put Soutine at odds with Paris-based modernism in the late 1920s and 1930s, which was increasingly engaged with line, in Picasso's case the classical line and the print-making which signaled his periodic indifference to painting at all. For Mondrian, the ontological integrity of art was conditional on an uncompromising devotion to flatness, to line and plane alone, on which were hung skeins of dead-flat color. The same sense of being out of step with post-war avant-garde authority was common to Bomberg's two aforementioned Jewish students, Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff. Their upheavals in paint could scarcely be more removed from the formal, cerebrally mapped linearity in the abstractions of Victor Pasmore (1908–98) and Naum Gabo (1890–1977). They called themselves The School of London, meaning not just the place where they happened to work, but the bombed out, soot-darkened smashed-up houses and streets, constantly in states of demolition and reconstruction in the 1950s. Their preoccupation with building, then, was translated into the mortary build-up of impasto, and though their views of Mornington Crescent, Euston, Camden Town and Paddington were gathered under the heading of "Building Sites," their real building site was of course the canvas.

Likewise, taking their cue more directly from Rembrandt's candidly flesh-heavy nudes, Auerbach and Kossoff, and after them their friend Lucian Freud, all pursued the ultimately unattainable end of an equivalence, even an interchangeability between flesh and paint. In headlong flight from his own skeletal linearity of the 1950s and 1960s, Lucian Freud (1922–2011) often used to insist that he was not *representing* nude bodies so much as *creating* them in paint. Characteristically, this was to award himself God-like powers of creation, paint layers bulked up to match the heft of the sitters. Freud's late and repeated return to painterly (and etched) unsparing, almost obsessive self-inspection, has often been compared to Rembrandt's late self-portraits, but there is an impor-



111  
 Lucian Freud,  
*Painter Working, Reflection*  
 1993  
 Oil on canvas,  
 81.7 × 101.2 cm

Private Collection  
 © The Lucian Freud Archive.  
 All Rights Reserved 2023/  
 Bridgeman Images

tant difference. While the Dutch master's face crumples into doughy softness, Freud's (as indeed was the case) retained to the end the gaunt bone structure out of which his eagle eyes continued to stare.

The extraordinary 1993 full-length nude, *Reflection*, with its central focal point, the Freudian genitals tendered in a knotted clot of pigment, might, I suppose, be seen as unsparing, an old pair of sandals protecting his feet from floor splinters, were it not for the fact that the artist is in fact rendering himself as a makeover of the Apollo Belvedere; either a fine professional in-joke or else, even by his standards, an act of defiant hubris (fig. 111).

Rembrandt's imprint and imagery resonate strongly in the work of Freud's contemporary, the American-born R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007), who proudly called himself a Londoner. Kitaj appropriates Rembrandt biblical figures as well as sketches of Jews in the street. For *Los Angeles #26 (Nose Kiss)* (see fig. 95), Kitaj modeled a self-portrait with



112  
Rembrandt, *Self-portrait  
as Zeuxis*, ca. 1668  
Oil on canvas,  
82.5 × 65 cm

Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz  
Museum (WRM 2526)



113  
R.B. Kitaj, *Self-portrait  
After Rembrandt's Last  
Self-portrait*, 2004  
Oil on canvas,  
61 × 61 cm

Private collection,  
courtesy R.B. Kitaj Estate  
© R.B. Kitaj Estate

his deceased wife Sandra Fisher on what he called “two schmoozing Jews,” from the Rembrandt etching he knew as *Jews in the Synagogue* (fig. 58). His adulation of the master had a personal as well as an artistic dimension. (see Silver, p. 178). While Kitaj often enthused over past masters, it is only the painter he called “the Judeophile Rembrandt” with whom he identified to the point of substituting his own likeness for the Dutch artist’s in his *Self-Portrait After Rembrandt’s Last Self-Portrait* (2004) (see figs. 112 and 113). Both artists confront us with grimacing hilarity; Kitaj crowned with L.A. Dodgers baseball cap. Neither Rembrandt nor Kitaj had much to laugh about when they painted these self-portraits shortly before their deaths. Biographical presumption aside, knowing that adds to the power the paintings have over us.

In the end, though, Rembrandt will get to you, chasten and move even the most ironclad of artistic egos. Especially, perhaps, if you’re Jewish. Taco Dibbits tells us that Lucian Freud’s last project was to be some version of *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem*. The project was unrealized at the time of his death in July 2011. But Freud made the pilgrimage to the Rijksmuseum to see the perfect masterpiece, in its exquisitely polished renderings of velvet, gold and beard, so unlike the stabbings and slatherings of Freud’s brushes, and there before the old man depicted and the young man who did the depiction, the emotionally imperturbable Lucian Freud sat down and wept.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Simon Schama**, University Professor at Columbia University, is the author of *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, *Landscape and Memory*, *The Power of Art*, *Rembrandt’s Eyes*, *The Story of the Jews* and other critically acclaimed books. His art columns for *The New Yorker* won the National Magazine Award for criticism.



# Rembrandt and Russian Jewish artists

NINA GETASHVILI

## ABSTRACT

Rembrandt's oeuvre occupies an exceptional place within the history of Russian culture, its Jewish component in particular. The memoirs and biographical studies of Jewish artists who worked in imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, as well as an analysis of their works, reveal not only the influence of Rembrandt's paintings and prints during the formation of their creative identity, but an enduring, lifelong veneration. From the late nineteenth century on, when academic canons were shaken, the great Dutchman's authority as an artist has proved unassailable. Many of Rembrandt's images resonate with profound personal impressions in the lives of artists who, in one way or another, translated and interpreted his art in their own programmatic works, and with their "Jewish experience."

## KEYWORDS

Leonid Pasternak, Marc Chagall, Alexander Tyshler, Robert Falk, Lev Aronov, Dima Gutov, Eva Levina-Rosengolts (Rosenholz)

The new perspective opened by *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes* invites us to take a fresh look at the reflections of and references to the Dutch master in the work of Russian artists. As a project of the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow, it speaks for itself that it explores the "Jewish experience" in the lives and art of the artists concerned.

It is by no means clear how to take on this challenge. Subtle definitions are called for if we are to examine the role of culture as an intermediary between private and na-

114  
Marc Chagall, *Red Jew*, 1915  
Oil on canvas,  
100 x 80,5 cm

St. Petersburg, Russian State  
Museum (ЖБ-1708)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_GETASHVILI





115  
Ilya Repin,  
*Jew Praying*, 1875  
Oil on canvas, 80 x 64 cm

Moscow, State Tretyakov  
Gallery (ИИВ. 711)

tional memory. To begin with, what criteria should we employ for calling any particular element in Russian art Jewish? Next, how do we determine the cultural identity of artists we assume to embody a form of “Jewish experience”? Finally, how can we even start on the aforementioned issues without first coming to terms with the seemingly unsolvable problem of defining the essence of Russian art?<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that the “Jewish aspect” in Russian art has drawn increasing attention from art historians and cultural studies scholars over the past decades. This development is unprecedented and would certainly not have been possible in the imperial period or during the Soviet decades. Without a doubt, the Jewish Museum has contributed significantly to researching the history of Jewish avant-garde artists,<sup>2</sup> a tack that has also been taken by a number of other institutions.<sup>3</sup> Vera Chaikovskaya’s volume *On the History of Russian Art: The Jewish Aspect* has likewise been very well received. These landmark events indicate a significant shift in the Russian academic and cultural community. While European, American and Israeli scholars in cultural studies enjoy a broad spectrum of research areas and opportunities to present their findings, among Russian researchers the “Jewish experience” has never been studied and presented to the same extent.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, when the foundations of academic art were questioned for the first time, Rembrandt’s artistic authority has remained indisputable

for Russian cultural elites. Even in the present, Jewish, context, it would be remiss not to mention the Russian (in the “narrow ethnic sense”) artists who were powerfully moved by Rembrandt’s art. The most prominent names among them are Ilya Repin, who according to the Russian art historian Abram Efros was amazed by Rembrandt (fig. 115) and Valentin Serov. The latter, whose pianist mother was Jewish, was specifically linked to the Dutch master by that same Repin, who was briefly his tutor and wrote: “Serov had a style of his own, but his artistic nature gravitated towards Rembrandt,” adding, “As I was digging around in old folders, I came across a bunch of drawings by V. Serov. Some were studies made from paintings, e.g. Rembrandt’s *Old Mother* and others.”<sup>5</sup>

Another Russian artistic genius, Vasily Surikov, was amazed by *Joseph Accused by Potiphar’s Wife* when he saw it for the first time in Berlin. When he returned to the Gemäldegalerie twenty years later, he went straight to his favorite piece, bringing along his son-in-law, Pyotr Konchalovskiy, a major Russian modernist painter and the founder of the Jack of Diamonds art group.<sup>6</sup> Surikov wrote to his teacher Pavel Chistyakov in 1884: “they have one precious piece that I will never forget—it is a Rembrandt (woman in a rose-red dress by the bed) [...] The green drapery and her dress, the contours of her face and flowers—all absolutely stunning. The woman’s figure is almost twinkling/sparkling.”<sup>7</sup> Following his first Berlin trip in the 1880s and his admiration of Rembrandt’s rosy hues, Surikov paid a visit to Italy. His biographer mentions the studies he made there: “Never before had Surikov achieved such virtuoso lightness and artistic brilliance, such power and intensity in color. [...] The vibrant tones anticipate the coloristic richness of his later *Boyarina Morozova*.”<sup>8</sup> It is tempting to assume that it was Rembrandt’s depiction of the unfaithful wife of the captain of the Egyptian pharaoh’s guard that inspired the Russian artist to internalize the following concept: “Where there is color—there is an artist.”<sup>9</sup> After all, Surikov was quite accepting and, unlike his peers, often encouraging of the ambitious coloristic experiments conducted by his son-in-law’s artistic group in the 1910s.

Coming back to the main topic of the present essay, let us discuss in detail the works of one so-called “Russian impressionist,” Leonid (Avrum Yitzhok–Leib) Pasternak (1862–1945). The Pasternak name has an iconic, practically mythological aura for anyone dealing with Russian culture. Leonid’s son, Boris Pasternak, was awarded a Nobel Prize in literature for his spectacular novel *Doctor Zhivago*, a prize with that much more meaning in Russia because the Soviet authorities prevented him from accepting it.

Boris Pasternak was an obstinate proponent of the idea of assimilating Jewry into the “titular nation,” or “host state.” Boris’s choice to follow the path of a Russian patriot was conscious and deliberate. His father, however, expressed a different opinion. A factoid from the family past comes to mind: Leonid’s grandfather, Kiva–Yitzhok Posternak, was one of the founders of the Hevra Kadisha in Odesa, a pious society dedicated to caring for the bodies of deceased members of the Jewish congregation. More relevant is a charged moment in Leonid’s own life. When he was being considered for a teaching position at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture,<sup>10</sup> the condition was imposed that he undergo baptism as part of the recruitment process. Unwilling to accept this, Pasternak managed to negotiate special terms allowing him to forego this

requirement and to be appointed to a teaching post in 1894. His tenacity in this matter commands respect. It took real courage to publicly refuse baptism at a time when more than twenty thousand Jews had just been evicted from Moscow by a special decree of the governor-general. In addition to that, new work regulations for different categories of Jewry were announced, leaving thousands of people without any means to support themselves. Adding to the damage, the newly constructed Moscow Choral Synagogue, a major facility for the community, was closed. Despite all the difficulties it entailed, Pasternak maintained unwavering acknowledgement of his identity as a Jew, his sense of belonging to the “chosen people.” In part, this may have been a pure act of protest against discrimination and repression, but it also drew on the substance and ideals of the Haskalah movement (Jewish Enlightenment) spreading across Europe.

In 1905, ten years after he entered public service, Pasternak became a proud member of the Imperial Academy of Arts. It was a tragic year in Russian history, as the First Russian Revolution broke out, to be met with severe countermeasures, resulting in over ten thousand deaths. Antisemitism took on virulent form in pogroms costing thousands of Jewish lives. In January 1906 Pasternak left for Berlin with his family, hoping to escape the oppressive atmosphere, if only for a short time. In Germany he became friends with Hermann Struck (1876–1944),<sup>11</sup> who taught Pasternak etching technique and drew his attention to Jewish motifs in Rembrandt’s paintings. (When he returned to Berlin in 1921 as an immigrant,<sup>12</sup> Pasternak painted Struck’s portrait, while the latter returned the favor in a drawing.)

In 1923 a certain book by Pasternak, the text of which he dated 1918, was published by two different printing houses (fig. 6). The Solomon Salzmänn printing house<sup>13</sup> published the book in Russian, while the Berlin branch of the Yavne publishing house brought out an edition in Hebrew, as the first in a series of Hebrew-language monographs on artists.<sup>14</sup> Pasternak was the editor of the art book series for both firms. The cover of the Hebrew edition reads: “Academician L. Pasternak. Rembrandt: His Creations and his Value for Judaism. Translated from the manuscript by Y. Koplivitz, with preface by H.N. Bialik.”<sup>15</sup> The author of the preface was the writer and poet Chaim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), a pioneer in the revival of the Hebrew language. Bialik was a friend of both Pasternak and the head of the Yavne publishing house, so we have here a close network of Jewish writers and publishers, with an artist as central figure.

The text by Bialik in the Hebrew edition is an extract from an article he wrote for the Jewish weekly *Haolam* (The World), in the fourth issue for 1923.<sup>16</sup> The closing paragraph contains this ringing praise: “Rembrandt—a genius among artists, a non-Jew—miraculously managed to perceive the true Jewish spirit, penetrating its depths as no Jewish artist had.”<sup>17</sup> A whole page in the preface is lavished on Pasternak, complimenting the publisher on having found the perfect person to launch a series on artists. But in *Haolam*, this commendation is tempered by a criticism of Pasternak, as a member of a generation of treacherous apostates and outcasts. Pasternak defended himself in a letter to Bialik, saying that Russian society offered opportunities for the Jewish youth to receive artistic education, whereas the Jewish community was absolutely indifferent towards even the best Jewish artists.<sup>18</sup> “Not a single Jewish wealthy patron” offered the

artist their support, he wrote.<sup>19</sup> Bialik's article, despite its attack, concluded with a statement free of reproach: "And we shall speak out: you are our brother. Come in peace. May your coming be a blessing upon us all!"<sup>20</sup> It is significant for our discussion that Rembrandt acts as a trigger for both prominent figures of Jewish culture, prompting them to reconsider their ideological stances.

The very first pages of the "Author's Preface" present the idea that lay behind Pasternak's monograph: it is his "first attempt to introduce fine arts to the Jewish masses!"<sup>21</sup> The main chapter, "Rembrandt, his art, and the concept of Jewry in his works," sees Pasternak agreeing with Bialik and stating that "after his own native Holland, Rembrandt ought to be most highly appreciated and treasured by the Jews."<sup>22</sup> Curiously enough, Pasternak's high opinion of Rembrandt comes with a put-down of the author's fellow Jews. He writes that his awareness that Rembrandt was the artist best capable of conveying the "authentic lyricism of the Bible"<sup>23</sup> dawned on him when he compared the figures in *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph* of 1656, which amazed Pasternak when he visited the Kassel gallery, to the rich Jews he saw at the spa town of Bad Kissingen, who made a rather negative impression on him.

Reviewing the most prominent depictions of Jewish motifs in Rembrandt's work, Pasternak mentions the paintings of *Saul and David* in the Mauritshuis and in the Städel Museum, and the *Return of the Prodigal Son* in the Hermitage. To Pasternak, the latter was not only Rembrandt's best work: he actually calls it the greatest painting in history. Pasternak analyzes the compositional aspects of the three paintings, claiming that "these three masterpieces would have been enough to [...] conclude that [Rembrandt] was absolutely crucial for Jewish culture."<sup>24</sup>

George Gibian, a scholar of Russian and comparative literature, has compared the views of the Pasternaks (father and son), the artist and the writer. Gibian highlighted Leonid's remarks on the shift in Rembrandt's concept of the biblical God, from a deity that inflicts severe punishment on his people for their sins towards a merciful Father providing solace to those who repent and follow the path of righteousness. To quote Gibian:

In Leonid Pasternak's interpretation of Rembrandt, Jewish cultural values were based on humility, spirituality and disdain for luxury and pretentiousness. The Jewish people have suffered a lot and have endured much. The faces of Jewish youths in Rembrandt's paintings are bright with curiosity, while Jewish mothers look at their children with love and affection. The solemn Jewish elders bear marks of anguish endured, transformed into wisdom.<sup>25</sup>

Gibian notes that *Doctor Zhivago* in its turn attributes all these traits to the Russian people. The comparisons are archetypal. Having identified a "Jewish note" in Russian art, Vera Chaikovskaya finds in it, in contrast to the Russian mentality, "joy." In Jewish art she detects a striving to plumb the depths of existence, and in doing so to retrieve a measure of relief from the tragedies of life. And she points to the spark of joy present in the late Rembrandt's tragic canvases.<sup>26</sup>

Leonid Pasternak's book became popular, in no small part due to his anticipatory afterword which predicted that there would come a time when "Every Jewish home will



116  
Konstantin Istomin,  
*Woman Reading*, 1931  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm

Moscow, State Tretyakov  
Gallery (ЖК-1525)

have on its wall, perhaps alongside portraits of Montefiore and Herzl, a reproduction of one of the paintings emerging from the depths of Rembrandt's exalted soul, transmitting with so much love and such depth the spiritual inspiration nestling in the depths of the Jewish nation."<sup>27</sup> With almost a thousand copies published in Russian, the book secured a special place within the Jewish cultural paradigm. Without overstating the importance of Pasternak's input in the general context of Rembrandt studies, his remarks are undoubtedly useful for understanding the Jewish perspective on Rembrandt and his works.

The institution where Leonid Pasternak taught in the early twentieth century, the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, later attracted many Russian revolutionary artists. This new generation moved on to teach at the Vkhutemas-Vkhutein,<sup>28</sup> an art school that was established in the same building and that implemented educational principles similar to those of the Bauhaus in Germany. What should be noted here is that the majority of modernist artists firmly adhered in their work to the biblical ideal (Colossians 11:3) of being "neither Hellenic, nor Jewish." The scope of their artistic endeavors extended beyond the internal issues of any one nation or state into the metaphysical plane of universal concepts.

Rembrandt's art also caught the eye of these artists as a potential playground for creative experiments. This can be adduced from incidental information concerning Alexander Rodchenko, Vasily Chekrygin, Tatiana Lebedeva and Wassily Kandinsky. The artist Varvara Stepanova noted in her diary that Rodchenko assiduously studied the rules of

composition employed by Dutch painters (including, of course, Rembrandt) in order to compare them with his own.<sup>29</sup> Lev Zhegin recalled how his friend Vasily Chekrygin (a talented painter who died at the age of twenty-five, leaving a profound and important legacy) used to admire Rembrandt, an observation readily confirmed by even a brief look at Chekrygin's art.<sup>30</sup> Tatiana Lebedeva offers recollections concerning her own experience: "The first powerful impression—the magic of Rembrandt's *Ahasuerus, Haman and Esther* in the little cramped hall of the [Rumiantsev] museum appearing like some miracle, and so it remained for me the whole of my life. I would go there just for the sake of that one small picture."<sup>31</sup> Kandinsky made no secret of his high opinion of Rembrandt's artistic mastery. As his wife Nina Kandinskaya noted: "Kandinsky first saw Rembrandt's works in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, quite early in his career, making an impression that had significant impact on the formation of his artistic identity."<sup>32</sup> The artist himself was more succinct: "I was absolutely astounded by Rembrandt."<sup>33</sup>

These were far from the only aspiring artists for whom Rembrandt was a model. Lev Zevin recalls:

Being young Vkhutemas students, we used to look down on the old masters, skeptical of whether it was worth our time to study their paintings. Then I took a closer look at the [Velasquez] portrait of Pope Innocent X, in which the vivid vermilion reflection on the nose instantly evoked a parallel with the rich golden background in Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Polish Nobleman* [considered back then to perhaps be a portrait of Jan Sobieski]. I came to realize at that moment that we know nothing about the art of painting.<sup>34</sup>

Anton Chirkov<sup>35</sup> used to conduct Moscow art students on their study trips to Leningrad, seeing to it that their first visit was always to the Hermitage, to see Rembrandt. "[Chirkov's] former student, Rafail Zaikin, recalled how the professor fell silent as they approached Rembrandt's works. Chirkov let out a gasp of astonishment—'Ooooh'—and continued after a long pause: 'Now this is a grand master! What inner life, what energy he must have possessed in order to paint this.'"<sup>36</sup>

Rembrandt accompanied Russian artists out of the museum into their homes. The door to Kazimir Malevich's room was adorned with a reproduction of the *Portrait of a Scholar* in the Hermitage.<sup>37</sup> Konstantin Istomin, a gentile of noble descent, was one of the most beloved Vkhutemas-Vkhutein professors. His only room, which served both as a studio and living quarters, was always open to visits from his students. But what did his students, including the Jewish ones, proponents of new art as they were, notice right away when entering the room? Rembrandt on the wall. One of them was Viktor Elkonin: "Looking at paintings by him [i.e. Istomin] brings to mind each and every detail in the room, including a reproduction of Rembrandt's *Night Watch*."<sup>38</sup> Istomin's *Woman Reading* (1931) (fig. 116) depicts not only his beloved model Lidochka Korotkova, but also that very same *Night Watch*.<sup>39</sup>

Marc Chagall, "The leading man in Jewish arts,"<sup>40</sup> counted Rembrandt among his own archetypes. The famous "flight triptych"—*The Promenade* and *Over the Town*, flanking the dominant vertically oriented *Double Portrait with a Glass of Wine* (fig. 117)—is



117  
 Marc Chagall, *Double  
 Portrait with a Glass of  
 Wine*, 1918  
 Oil on canvas,  
 233 × 136 cm

Paris, Centre Pompidou  
 (AM 2774 P)

Chagall's vivid response to a visit to the Dresden Gallery, where he saw Rembrandt's *Self-portrait with Saskia*, referencing its motif of the tall glass. Needless to say, Rembrandt was not Chagall's only source of inspiration. However, features of his art that found their way into Chagall's work can reverberate with added meaning. One such phenomenon is the color red. While to many Russians, red was the color of the coming Revolution, this is not what it meant to Chagall, who was not at all revolutionary-minded. The red that emanates from Rembrandt's *Portrait of an Old Man in Red* in the Hermitage (fig. 118) and impinges itself onto Chagall's *Red Jew* (fig. 114) has quite a different significance. The background in the *Red Jew* contains a fragment of Torah text, a passage about Jacob and Esau. Maxim Kantor elaborates on this detail: "Esau was begging his



118  
 Rembrandt, *Portrait of an  
 Old Man in Red*, 1652–54  
 Oil on canvas,  
 108 × 86 cm

St. Petersburg, State  
 Hermitage Museum  
 (ГЭ-745)

brother for ‘red pottage’; he himself was red [...] and his whole body was like a hairy garment. The figure in Chagall’s painting is bare-chested, with long thick strands of bright red hair. Chagall’s own unique adopted system of chromatic iconography defines red as the color of sin, peril and pain.”<sup>41</sup> The historical context adds relevance to this association. The painting was produced in 1915, a year of catastrophe and turmoil, especially for the Jewish population in the western parts of the war-torn Russian Empire. Jews were evicted en masse from frontline regions as “a people capable of betrayal.” Measures taken to resolve the “Jewish problem” included not only deportation but also frequent pogroms. Rembrandt’s red was actualized by Chagall not as a harbinger of Bolshevik triumph, but a marker of Jewish tragedy.

When he left Russia for Berlin, Chagall studied etching technique with Hermann Struck from May 1922 to August 1923. Struck, we recall, had inspired Pasternak to explore Jewish motifs in Rembrandt’s paintings, and we may be sure that he and Chagall shared the same views regarding the Jewish accents in the Dutch master’s prints. This added fresh context to Chagall’s absorption of Rembrandt and played a role in a further development. After having viewed and admired Rembrandt in the Hermitage and in German collections, in 1932 Chagall visited Amsterdam to see a solo exhibition of Rembrandt’s work in the Rijksmuseum. There he resolved to delve further into Rembrandt’s technique, which again left him amazed. Among the elements from Rembrandt’s works of which scholars have found traces in Chagall, aside from the use



of chiaroscuro, is the deeply psychological and personal approach to depicting biblical characters.

In 1931, a year prior to Chagall's Amsterdam visit, his autobiography, with the concise title *My Life*, was published in Paris in the French translation made by the artist's daughter Ida. He had begun working on the memoirs back in Russia, finishing them in 1923 in Paris. The book contains quite a revelation for us: Chagall tells us that Rembrandt came to him in his dreams! By the end of the tale, the Dutch master has entered the circle of Chagall's closest friends and relatives. "I should rather think about my loved ones: about Rembrandt, my mother, Cézanne, my grandfather, and my wife."<sup>42</sup> Note that Rembrandt comes first in the list. In the epilogue Chagall writes: "I am wanted neither by Tsarist, nor by Soviet Russia. I am misunderstood, I am but a stranger here. Only Rembrandt loves me."<sup>43</sup> These were his parting words to his home country!<sup>44</sup>

Maxim Kantor concludes his essay on Chagall with a comparative allusion to Rembrandt:

In that Jewish stereotype that is the butt of jokes, there is a love of children exaggerated to the point of babying and a mawkish veneration of parents that rises to the level of the sickly sweet—but then that babying and saccharinity suddenly present their flip side in the drama of Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son* and Picasso's *Old Jew and a Boy*. This is that ultimate degree of babying, when someone lets their entire being dissolve in love, and there is nothing more sublime than that. Marc Chagall was able—through somewhat banal, melodramatic, overweening love—to attain such sublimity. And that touching, unguarded love proved more powerful than dictatorships.<sup>45</sup>

As if echoing the last lines of Chagall's autobiography, quoted above, Vera Chaikovskaya concludes her own book about the Russian modernist painter, graphic artist and stage designer Alexander Tyshler (1898–1980) with the description of a peculiar, imagined, meeting. In a piece of pure fiction, the internationally recognized artist Marc Chagall, an emigré from Liozna, meets Alexander Tyshler, a Melitopol-born Moscovite who enjoys the respect of experts. "A winding path leads deeper into the leafy shadows of the park, while the two are lost in conversation. What do they discuss? Russia, of course, so unwelcoming and at the same time so magnetic. As well as art, painting, Jews, revolution, Rembrandt, and, naturally, women, always women..."<sup>46</sup>

In 1921, Chagall began working at the GOSEKT, the State Jewish Chamber Theatre.<sup>47</sup> Under its founding director Alexander Granowsky, the theatre staged plays in Yiddish. Chagall created panels to decorate the modest auditorium, while also working on sets and costumes. Later Tyshler, too, would collaborate closely with the theatre. In the late 1940s, when the theatre was closed following a wave of repression and its director Solomon Mikhoels was killed by the state, it was Tyshler who managed to save Chagall's decorations. In Tyshler's own approach to set design we can see a homage to Rembrandt, in the free-flowing plasticity of the costume designs. This observation is supported by a cursory comparison between the Dutch master's engravings and designs such as those for *King Lear* (fig. 119) or *Old Pauper*. Rembrandt remained a source of inspiration for Tyshler throughout his life, both on a subconscious level and in expressions of admiration for his work. Tyshler's output encompassed a variety of art forms, from

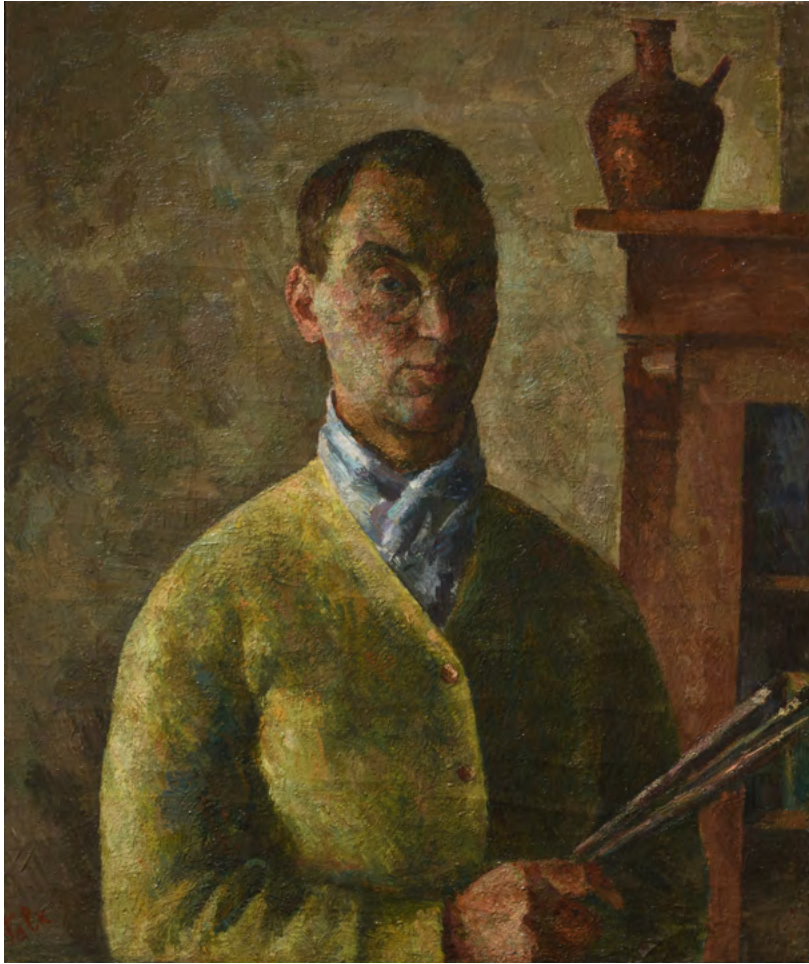
119  
 Alexander Tyshler,  
*King Lear*, 1934–35  
 Ink on paper, 24,6 × 20 cm

Moscow, Pushkin Museum  
 of Fine Arts (КП-301098,  
 P-13822)



decorative art and set design to painting and graphic art. It is populated with characters derived from the great Dutchman’s oeuvre. A “Rembrandtesque old man” is a typical phrase applied by art historians to images of a certain kind. This visual trope is easily recognizable in Tyshler’s 1943 watercolor *Jewish Wedding*, as well as in the 1946 *Prodigal Son* series.

In 1924, twenty years before those saw the light of day, Tyshler had presented abstract works from his “Color and Form in Space” series at the First Discussional Exhibition of Active Revolutionary Art Associations in Moscow. They were noticed by the radical avant-garde artist Solomon Nikritin (1898–1965), who was called the Robespierre of Vkhutemas. Young as he was, Nikritin was a credible and respected professional, and the leader of the “projectionist” group.<sup>48</sup> At one of the meetings devoted to the Discussion exhibition in 1924 Nikritin compared Tyshler to Rembrandt, an honor that took Tyshler by surprise.<sup>49</sup> Critics around them also pondered the meaning of his words. What exactly was the analytically-minded Nikritin thinking of when he made this seemingly far-fetched comparison? Vera Chaikovskaya has an explanation. Tyshler’s understanding of human nature, she writes, coupled with his interest in cosmic mysticism and “his otherworldly light, gleaming colors, or, in other works, mysterious faces (particularly female)—these details connect him with Rembrandt.”<sup>50</sup>



120

Robert Falk, *Self-portrait in Yellow*, 1924

Oil on canvas, 100 x 83 cm

St. Petersburg, Russian State Museum (ЖС-9)

This brings us to another prominent Russian Jewish artist with special interest in Rembrandt, Tyshler's senior contemporary Robert Falk (1886–1958). Falk studied at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and from 1918 to 1928 he taught at the GSHM<sup>51</sup>—Vkhutemas-Vkhutein. In his pedagogy he cited the Venetian masters and Rembrandt when discussing the problems of color and light. One of his students was Semyon Chuikov (1902–80), a future People's Artist of the USSR. He later recalled how “Falk used to tell us about Rembrandt—yes, not just about Cézanne, but Rembrandt too!”<sup>52</sup> As noted by Angelina Shchekin-Krotova, Falk “realized that Rembrandt was essential to him, much more than Cézanne had ever been, a true guiding light.” In 1956, two years before his death, Falk wrote about Rembrandt in his memoirs:

You asked me to name the artists who have had the most significant impact on my work. Of the old masters it would have been Rembrandt [...] When I was young, I did not understand him fully, and therefore could not admire his technique. Now I am certain that his art is the greatest of all time. His *Return of the Prodigal Son* [in the Hermitage] and *Evangelist* (a work in a Dutch museum that I recently saw at a Moscow exhibition), as well as other portraits and paintings, are absolutely stunning [...] I can say just three words about Rembrandt: ‘He is the grand!’<sup>53</sup>

121  
Eva Levina-Rozengolts,  
*No. 24 from the cycle "People  
(Rembrandt series),"* 1958  
Gouache on paper,  
28.8 x 20.6 cm

Moscow, Pushkin Museum of  
Fine Arts (КП-386858,  
P-21016)



122  
Dima Gutov, *An  
Old Man*, 2015  
Metal installation,  
120 x 110 x 50 cm

Private collection



Indeed, Falk's fascination with Rembrandt began early, in the 1920s, an influence evident in his first works (fig. 120). He undertook a task of monumental difficulty—combining the artistic discoveries of Cézanne and Rembrandt.

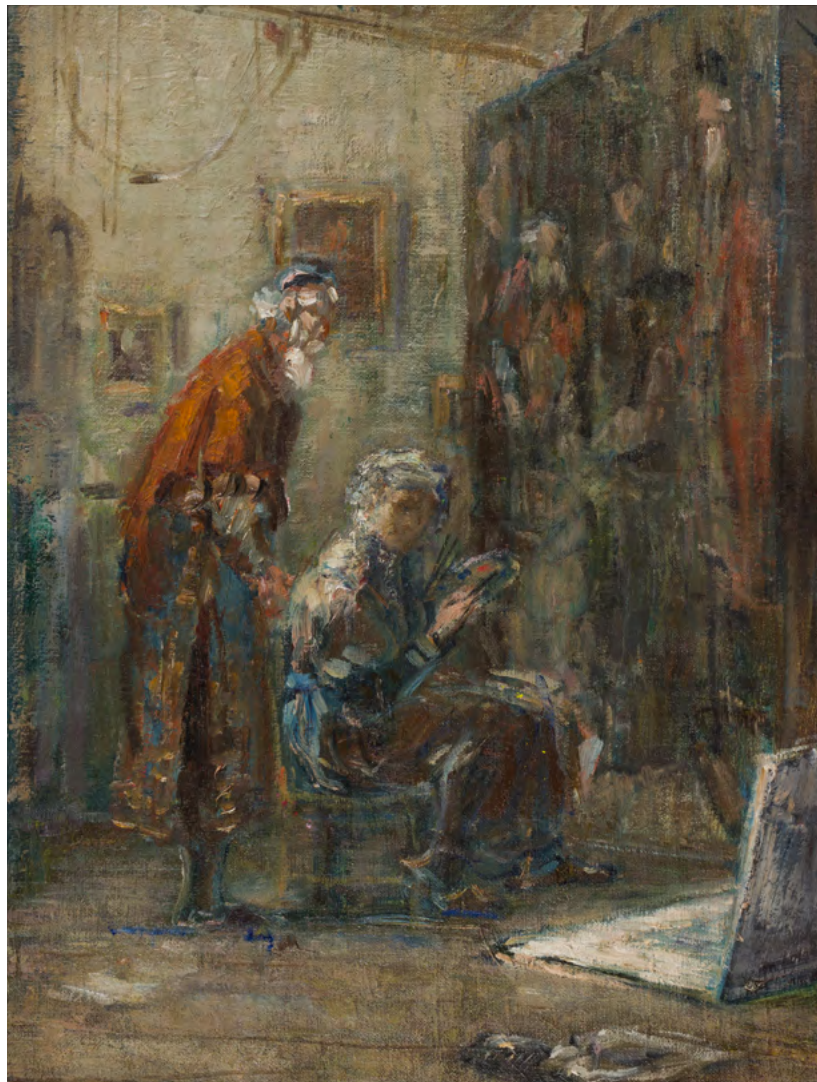
Another Jewish contemporary of Tyshler, Eva Levina-Rozengolts, was born in Vitebsk, which happened to be Chagall's hometown as well, and studied under Robert Falk. Her print series *People* (also known as the *Rembrandt Series*) manifests her utmost respect towards Rembrandt, adopted from her mentor (fig. 121).

Our own contemporary Dmitry Gutov (b. 1960) declares that “Rembrandt marks a turning point not only in human history, but, more importantly, in the history of all creation.” Presented at the 2015 exhibition at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, “Rembrandt: A Different Perspective”—Rembrandt's drawings as interpreted by Gutov, who recreates the scenes out of metal rods—acquire a sense of volume and 3D-dimensionality (fig. 122). Gutov's cast-iron installations resonate deeply with the high art of old masters. One inspiration, fittingly, is Rembrandt's *Ahasuerus and Haman at the Feast of Esther* from the collection of the same museum.

The instances listed relate to just a fraction of the artists who at some point in their careers were taken with Rembrandt's genius. The master's influence often went beyond their artistic education or formative periods, evolving into a lifelong personal devotion, indicated in their memoirs and biographies. With the Soviet Union remaining a country of militant atheism for many decades, the Jewish intelligentsia turned to Rembrandt's paintings in museum halls and album reproductions. For them it was a source of biblical visual narrative, giving a glimpse of their ethnic history and identity. *Rembrandt and Model* (1938, private collection), one of the surviving sketches for Lev Aronov's unfinished piece *Rembrandt in His Studio*, shows Rembrandt as a stately figure, reminiscent of an ancient patriarch (fig. 123). He is enshrouded in the solemn atmosphere of his studio, “a dismal historical locus of the seventeenth century, resonating deeply with Soviet reality in the 1930s.”<sup>54</sup>

As we continue studying artists' biographies in search of interpretative receptions of Rembrandt, it becomes evident that the master's imagery is often employed to convey private impressions and experiences. Chagall's *Red Jew*, as we have seen, is both a homage to Rembrandt and a tragic echo of contemporary reality. Tyshler's *Prodigal Son* series contains numerous allusions not only to the relationship between Tyshler and Mikhoels, but even to the artist's family affairs. His personal memories of the pogroms and a particular “butcher shop” coalesce in his painting *Slaughterhouse*, with Rembrandt-related impressions.

The most famous instance of this association are Chaim Soutine's paintings of slaughtered cattle, responses to Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* in the Louvre.<sup>55</sup> In addition to being expressions of artistic indebtedness, they are also visual manifestations of acoustic memories: the horrible ambient sounds emerging from the slaughterhouses near the La Ruche residence, a lodging house for poor artists in Montparnasse with a reputation that has become rather romanticized. The image also embodies the artist's own personal memories of witnessing a pogrom in his native Smilovichi. Soutine's Rembrandt was



123  
 Lev Aronov, *Study for  
 Rembrandt in His Studio*,  
 1938  
 Oil on canvas,  
 18.5 x 15 cm

Private collection

not all tragic. In his memoirs Falk recalls visiting Soutine in his six-room apartment. Although he had by then become a successful artist, Soutine still kept his living quarters in absolute disarray. He was happy to see Falk, and when it was time to bid farewell, decided to see him off and “spent the entire walk home talking about Rembrandt.” This was all the more fitting since both artists had been bitten by the Rembrandt bug.

In a letter to his third wife Raisa Idelson, Falk wrote: “I continue [writing] this letter in a lovely place. Namely, at the [Kaiser] Friedrich Museum, in one of the Rembrandt rooms [...] I am sitting by the portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels. And I see that you have a lot in common. The same warmth and affection in her eyes and in her entire face—the same as yours, my love.”<sup>56</sup>

Returning to Leonid Pasternak in Kassel, he was particularly impressed by the mother figure in *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph*. “My God, what an Asenath! A Jewish woman! A mother! I cannot help but think of mine... O holy Jewish mothers! [...] Truly, your maternal love knows no equal!”<sup>57</sup> The 1871 pogrom in Odesa was still fresh in the artist’s memory. When the riot had reached their house,

my mother, a thin, sickly woman, opened the ground floor window and jumped out into the street, kneeling before the rampaging mob and begging them with tears in her eyes to spare her children [...] This bizarre and unexpected scene of a woman pleading for the lives of her children left everyone in shock—the riot “leaders” ordered the mob to “move along.” We were spared, thanks to our mother’s courage and heroism.<sup>58</sup>

Since the above only skims the surface of all that Rembrandt has meant to Russian Jewish artists, it is strange, in closing, to note that this has not been recognized by everyone. The 11 March 1936 issue of the periodical *Soviet Art* featured an article by Alfred Bassekhes about the Rembrandt exhibition at the State Museum of Fine Arts (present Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts). The article was titled “Our Rembrandt.” Bassekhes, a popular art critic, discussed the importance of Rembrandt for international culture, to which he added, in order to legitimize him in terms of the dominant paradigm of the workers’ and peasants’ state, that his art had a uniquely democratic essence. Since everyone is entitled to their own perception of Rembrandt, there is no need to argue against Bassekhes’s conclusions, except for the following: “Despite his many pupils, Rembrandt left no followers.”<sup>59</sup> This observation is belied by the numerous examples cited above, as well as so many other artists outside Russia.

## NOTES

- 1 To what extent one can refer to artists born in Ukraine or Belarus and other former territories of Russian Empire as “Russian” (Malevich, Chagall, Ekster, the Burliuk brothers and Chekrygin, along with other major names connected with Russian modernism) is a question that has been raised again and again.
- 2 See Moscow 2015.
- 3 Moscow 2021.
- 4 However, Sergei Makovsky offers a different perspective on Repin’s attitude towards Rembrandt: “So often have I heard Repin’s remarks on how Fortuny surpasses Rembrandt in respect to the quality of his drawings. But Repin himself used to copy Rembrandt’s works—he should have refrained from criticizing the Dutch master for his ‘carelessness’ in detailing the feet of the inspected body in the ‘Anatomy Lesson’ (Mauritshuis, The Hague). However, Repin went on with his argument in a discussion with ‘Mir Iskusstva’. His rash comments about ‘Rembrandt’s careless and faulty technique’ is a testament to the perception of art during that period. A good technique implied following the tenets of academic painting.” Makovsky 1999, 13–14.
- 5 Repin’s letter to Pyotr Neradovsky, in Zilbertshtein and Samkov 1971, 56. The letter refers to *Portrait of a Woman Seated*, 1643, in the Hermitage.
- 6 “[L]et me show you something really amazing! And he led him to one of Rembrandt’s pieces—‘Joseph Accused by Potiphar’s Wife.’” A most curious episode, since both Surikov and Konchalovsky, an Imperial Academy of Arts graduate, must have seen another variant of this painting in the Hermitage, where it was displayed at the time. In 1937 the painting was gifted to Andrew Mellon and is currently displayed at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
- 7 <http://artsurikov.ru/pisma27.php>.
- 8 See Berlin 1980, 179–80.
- 9 Gor and Petrov 1955.
- 10 By that period Pasternak was head of a private art school, having already established himself as a skillful portraitist. He produced thirty-six portraits of Lev Tolstoy, sketches of the writer’s family, and the first illustration sketches for Tolstoy’s novels *War and Peace* and *Resurrection*.
- 11 Hermann Struck (Chaim Aaron ben David), born in 1876, Berlin, died in 1944 in Haifa. He was an illustrious German-Israeli artist, best known for his etchings. A fervent Zionist, founder of the Mizrahi Religious Zionist movement, Struck produced a series of sketches that were

- later turned into a book titled *The Face of East European Jewry*. In 1908 he published a work on etching technique: *Die Kunst des Radierens*. Struck helped establish the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and taught at the Bezalel Academy. His experience as a mentee of the Dutch artist Jozef Israëls, as well as his friendship with Max Liebermann, both had significant impact on Struck's respect for the "Jewish" elements in Rembrandt's art.
- 12 As the revolution unfurled in February 1917, Pasternak became inspired by the sudden emergence of Jewish cultural initiatives: there was an influx of newly printed Jewish magazines and published books and the Habima Theatre was opened. These initiatives were heavily opposed by the proponents of Yiddish in Russia, who saw Hebrew as "archaic" and advocated bans on these projects. Exile did not slow Pasternak down. In 1924 he visited Palestine, where he once again met Struck, who had recently immigrated there. The same year Pasternak painted the first large-scale portrait of Albert Einstein, currently on display in the mathematics library of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He also produced a drawing of Einstein holding a violin. Leonid Pasternak died in 1945 at the house of his daughter Lydia in Oxford. A museum devoted to him opened in the house in 1999.
  - 13 Pasternak was head of the visual arts department of the Salzmann printing house.
  - 14 On the first pages of the Russian edition, Pasternak wrote that the text "was to be translated into 'ancient Hebrew.'" Pasternak 1923, 11.
  - 15 Pasternak 1923b.
  - 16 This weekly newspaper was the official organ of the World Zionist Organization, established in 1907 and published until 1950. In 1921–24 it was printed in Berlin.
  - 17 Bialik's text was written in Hebrew. See Gass 1990.
  - 18 He refers to Isaak Levitan (1860–1900), the prominent landscape artist, whose works project a quintessential image of Russia. Only recently have a number of art historians paid attention to his Jewish background.
  - 19 Cited from Pasternak's unsent letter to Bialik, which was found in the artist's archive in London. See Gass 1990.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 Pasternak 1923a, 11.
  - 22 Ibid., 12.
  - 23 Ibid., 18.
  - 24 Ibid., 28.
  - 25 Gibian 1988, 36.
  - 26 Ibid.
  - 27 Pasternak 1923B, 46. The prophecy came true: albums of Rembrandt reproductions became a typical wedding gift in Israel by the middle of the twentieth century.
  - 28 Vkhutemas is an acronym for Vysshiiye Khudozhestvenno-Tekhnicheskiye Masterskiye (Higher Art and Technical Studios). Upon a reorganization, it was renamed Vkhutein, substituting "Studios" for "institute."
  - 29 Karasik 2001, 198.
  - 30 Zhegin 1987, 214.
  - 31 Lebedeva 1983, 186.
  - 32 Kandinsky 2017, 39.
  - 33 Kandinsky 2003, 11.
  - 34 Rotenberg 2008, 377–78.
  - 35 Anton Chirkov (1902–46), avant-garde painter and graphic artist.
  - 36 Rotenberg 2008, 438.
  - 37 Although Kazimir Malevich rejected the classic masters (with Rembrandt's name being among the first in the list), he nevertheless advised his students (e.g. Alexander Lozovoy or Lev Yudin) to pay close attention to the structure of certain paintings, including Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son*. See Malevich 2004, vol. 1, 160, 240. By the end of his life Malevich changed his views towards the Dutch master. In a eulogy dedicated to his talented student Ilya Chashnik, Malevich reaches the following conclusion: "In spite of Rembrandt's death, of deterioration of his physical form and reflexology, his energy lives on in our time." Malevich 2004, vol. 2, 300.



- 38 Elkonin 1989, 125.
- 39 Istomin acquired a fascination with Rembrandt from his mentor, the Hungarian artist Simon Hollósy: “Hollósy used to say that Rembrandt was the most difficult artist to understand. Nevertheless, he singled out Rembrandt among the other old masters, praising his mastery and always speaking of him with excitement [...] Once I heard Hollósy offer his rather harsh opinion on Dürer: ‘Compare [Dürer’s] rhinoceros with [Rembrandt’s] elephant. The former is purely ornamental, the latter—lifelike.’” See Yablonskay 1972, 93. For years Istomin remained a tutor at the Vkhutemas, where he was able to impart his own esteem towards the old master to his students.
- 40 This description was coined by our contemporary, the painter and writer Maxim Kantor, who wrote brilliant essays on Chagall (“The Painter of Paradise”) and Rembrandt (“European Alchemy”).
- 41 Kantor n.d.
- 42 Shagall 2000, 348.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 For as long as fifty-one years. In 1973 he returned to the Soviet Union for a short visit.
- 45 Kantor n.d.
- 46 Chaikovskaya 2010, 320.
- 47 In 1925, when Chagall left the theatre, its name was changed to GOSET, leaving out the word *kamerniy* or “chamber theatre.”
- 48 Solomon Nikritin became the head of the Analytical department at the Museum of Pictorial Culture in Moscow.
- 49 Chaikovskaya 2010, 320.
- 50 Ibid., 320.
- 51 An abbreviation for Svobodnye gosudarstvennye khudozhestvennye masterskiye—Free State Art Studios (also abbreviated as SvoMas). This was the first name of the new art school that replaced the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and the Stroganov Art School. It was later renamed Vysshiey Khudozhestvenno-Tekhnicheskoye Masterskiye—Higher Art and Technical Studios, followed by Vkhutein, which substituted “Studios” for “Institute” in the name.
- 52 Falk 1981, 163.
- 53 Ibid., 12–13.
- 54 Plungian 2021, 195.
- 55 Falk 1981, 63.
- 56 Ibid., 109.
- 57 Pasternak 1923a, 24.
- 58 Vernikova 2019.
- 59 Bassehes 1976, 223.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Nina Getashvili** was Professor and Dean of the Department of Art History at the Russian Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. She was an Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts, Member of the Board and Chairperson of the Terminology Commission of the All-Russian Association of Art Critics and Art Historians (AIS), Co-President of the Russian branch of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), and an Honored Worker in Russian Higher Education. As well as sitting on the editorial board of the journal *The Art of Eurasia*, Prof. Getashvili was the author of a number of books, scholarly papers and popular articles on the history of art. She passed away, after submitting her contribution to this volume, on 20 May 2023.





# Rembrandt as Seen by Jewish Museums

LAURENCE SIGAL-KLAGSBALD

## ABSTRACT

This paper compares two exhibitions dedicated to Rembrandt held at the Jewish Historical Museum (JHM) in Amsterdam and the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ) in Paris, in 2007, and their forerunners. The JHM challenged the idealized notion of Rembrandt's connection with his Jewish environment and dismissed many portraits of Jews, while the Paris exhibition explored the reinvention of Judaism in seventeenth-century Amsterdam and Rembrandt's allegorical approaches to biblical themes, influenced by millenarianism.

The current publication adds new investigations into Rembrandt's reception by Jewish collectors, artists, and art historians. Archival research sheds light on the Jewish Quarter's social reality. The present volume offers a comprehensive understanding of Rembrandt's art and its connection to the Jewish imagination.

## KEYWORDS

Rembrandt exhibitions, Jewish perspectives, iconography, sources, identification

In the framework of the four-hundredth anniversary of Rembrandt's birth, the Jewish Historical Museum (JHM) in Amsterdam (now the Jewish Museum) and the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ) in Paris almost simultaneously devoted an exhibition to the master (figs. 125 and 126).

The curators of both exhibitions agreed that the time had come for a reappraisal of the all too rose-colored view of Jewish society in Amsterdam, and of the exaggerated story of the love between Rembrandt and the Jews and vice versa. Although there was a great

124

Rembrandt, *Portrait of a Man*, traditionally identified as Menasseh ben Israel, 1636  
Etching, 14.9 × 10.3 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish Museum (MBo1884; L. Schloss-Polak Collection)

---

Mirjam Knotter and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_SIGAL

deal of overlap between the two exhibitions, they took different approaches. In Amsterdam, Mirjam Knotter, Jasper Hillegers and Edward van Voolen undertook, with the encouragement of advisers who were not the least in the field—Bob van den Boogert, Doron Lurië, Gary Schwartz and Jaap van der Veen—to re-examine the commonly held view of Rembrandt's sympathy for the Jews. The curators of the exhibition were convinced that only a Jewish museum could engage in such a re-examination without being suspected of malicious or even antisemitic intentions.

By the turn of our century, the number of Rembrandt sitters and models that were said to be Jewish individuals had been radically pruned, in correction of the situation prevailing in the nineteenth century. Almost all “Rabbis” and “Old Jews” had been assigned to their rightful place as anonymous figures or tronies. In a rather daring move, the Jewish Museum of Amsterdam proposed a revised history of the “Judaization” of Rembrandt through an interrogation of the grounds on which this construction was based. The title of the exhibition was quite provocative: *The “Jewish” Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*. The JHM undertook a step-by-step investigation into the relationship between Rembrandt and what is summarily referred to as his Jewish environment; was it reality, exaggeration or even legend? The short multimedia presentation and the map that opened the exhibition perfectly illustrated this meticulous fact-checking approach, a kind of Jewish Rembrandt Research Project.

Re-examining the legend of an overly Judaized Rembrandt required a precise methodological framework. The exhibition was constructed around a series of questions scrutinizing all the themes that had been developed about Rembrandt and Jewish figures from the end of the seventeenth century to the seminal work published in 1946 by Franz Landsberger, *Rembrandt, the Jews and the Bible*:

- Rembrandt's neighborhood being a Jewish neighborhood;
- Rembrandt's conflicts with his Jewish fellow Amsterdammers;
- his relationships with Menasseh ben Israel and other rabbis, with Ephraim Bueno and his putative relation to Spinoza;
- his use of Jewish models for images of Christ;
- portraits said to depict old Jews and rabbis.

The exhibition also dealt with the master's impact on Jewish artists during the nineteenth century, notably Maurycy Gottlieb and the great Dutch painter Jozef Israëls. (There are many others, as Larry Silver and Simon Schama show in their contributions to the present volume.)

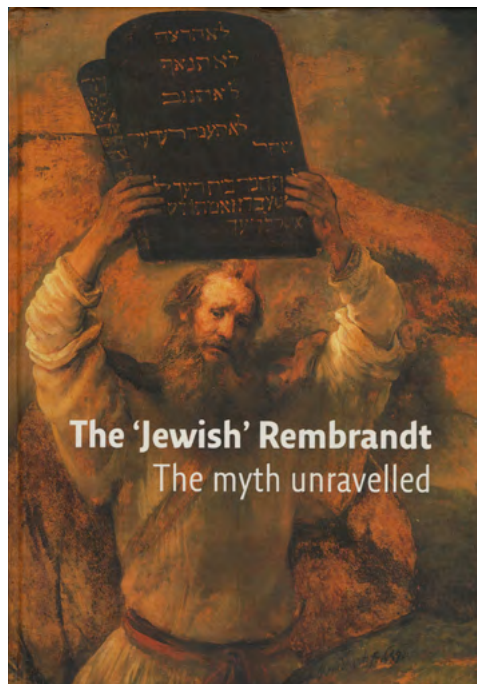
The opening section was centered around a map of the Jewish quarter, which set the tone for the museum's method. Mirjam Knotter's study in this publication goes even deeper into the matter, drawing a fascinating portrait of the Jewish quarter based on the incisive use of archival documents and topography.

In Paris, the exhibition entitled *Rembrandt and the New Jerusalem: Jews and Christians in Amsterdam Golden Age* implemented a different approach, nourished by major scholars, of whom I name Yosef Kaplan, Christian Tümpel, Albert Blankert and our Amsterdam colleague Mirjam Knotter herself, all of whom contributed to the comprehensive catalogue. With my co-curator, Alexis Merle du Bourg, we wanted to examine the

125

Exhib. cat. *The "Jewish" Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*

Amsterdam, Jewish Historical Museum, 2006 [English edition 2008]



126

Exhib. cat. *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem: Juifs et Chrétiens à Amsterdam au Siècle d'Or*

Paris, Musée d'art et histoire du Judaïsme, 2006



biblical and Jewish elements in Rembrandt's work as symptoms of the encounter of old with new religions, and of the widening of the universe, both geographical and mental, in which it developed. This context was essential, we felt, for a correct understanding of the resurrected Judaism in Rembrandt's Amsterdam, and what made it modern.

In more ways than one, the ideas behind the project at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme coincided with issues raised in recent publications, in particular Michael Zell's *Reframing Rembrandt: Jews and the Christian Image in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (2002) and Steven Nadler's *Rembrandt's Jews* (2003). The exhibition was greatly indebted to their analyses.

Our main interest was in demonstrating, through the paintings of Rembrandt and his contemporaries, the centrality of religious and patriotic effervescence in the Netherlands. Rembrandt's work, we felt, offered a unique distillation of the values involved. In contrast to the Jewish Historical Museum, where the permanent display deals with the history of the Jews in Amsterdam and the Netherlands, Paris could not proceed without telling the story of how new Christians became new Jews and of, in the apt words of Yosef Kaplan, the reinvention of Judaism in Amsterdam.

This led us to divide the exhibition into four distinct parts:

- Being Jewish in Amsterdam in Rembrandt's time;
- The Jews as seen by Rembrandt (in the Gospels, portraits and expressive figures);
- Rembrandt and his contemporaries as interpreters of the Old Testament;
- Rembrandt and images of the Messiah.

The closest and apparently only predecessor of these two projects was *The Jews in the Age of Rembrandt*, an exhibition curated in 1981 by Susan W. Morgenstein and Ruth E. Levine for the Judaic Museum of Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington,



127  
Rembrandt, *Pharisees in the Temple*, formerly known as *Jews in the Synagogue*, 1648  
Etching, 7.2 x 12.9 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(RP-P-OB-342)

which toured to the Jewish museums of Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. This precursor was far less ambitious than its two followers. It was limited to etchings by Rembrandt purporting to depict Jews or Jewish types, and to some prints by the master's contemporaries illustrating Old Testament scenes. The catalogue included a seminal paper by Simon Schama, opening with the following words:

Michelangelo's Moses has horns; Rembrandt's does not. With this minor act of iconographical surgery, the image of the Jew was translated from the realm of monsters to the realm of men. In Dutch art, unlike any other Christian art before it, the Jew is readmitted to the company of humanity.

Schama concludes: Jews loved Rembrandt because the master depicted them as they *wished* to be represented. Forty years later, Gary Schwartz and Mirjam Knotter still refer to this striking overture. Schama's essay was the first text in a museum publication to revisit the so-called empathy of Rembrandt towards Amsterdam Jews. He carefully examined the supposed "polyglot humanism" of Amsterdam and reviewed the economic facts and figures that call for a reconsideration of the true role of Jews in the bustling commercial development of the city.

Whether idealized or not, Schama quotes the words of praise in 1616 by Rabbi Isaac Uziel, the Moroccan rabbi who was called to the rabbinate in Amsterdam in 1610: "At present people live peaceably in Amsterdam. The inhabitants of this city, mindful of the increase in population, make laws and ordinances whereby the freedom of religions may be upheld. Each may follow his own belief, but may not openly show that he is a different faith from the inhabitants of the city."<sup>1</sup>

Although Schwartz and Knotter cite Schama approvingly, there is a wide gap between his balanced analysis, which focused mostly on Amsterdam economy and society, and their more revisionist approach, which, except for crediting a handful of paintings, virtually undoes the documented and certified Jewish dimension in Rembrandt's oeuvre.



128

Detail from: Yaakov ben Abraham Tsaddiq (Jacob Justo) and Abraham Goos, *Palestine or the Holy Land* (Hebrew), 1621

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des cartes et plans (GE C 4921 rés)

### A NEW PASSION FOR IMAGES AND SELF-REPRESENTATION SHARED BY JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

In a novelty for both the Jewish and the Protestant worlds, which are principally antagonistic to images, portraits of Jewish rabbis and Calvinist theologians begin to appear in the early seventeenth century. In 1621, the first map of the Holy Land in Hebrew included a self-portrait of its author, Jacob Justo (Yaakov ben Abraham Tsaddiq), who justifies himself saying that since his publication was “a great innovation, [...] I decided to include my portrait” (fig. 128).<sup>2</sup> A section in the Paris exhibition and catalogue presented portraits commissioned by rabbis: Leon Templo, Menasseh ben Israel, Isaac Aboab, Jacob Sasportas; and physicians: Joseph Delmedigo, Abraham Zacuto, Ephraim Bueno, all men of learning, who could have seen themselves as borrowing a trick from the well-established tradition, practiced with great success by Luther, of publishing printed portraits of leading Protestants (fig. 129).

### THE REINVENTION OF JUDAISM AND PREMODERNITY

The forced conversion of Jews in the Iberian Peninsula had naturally created a deep hostility towards Catholicism, and possibly affinities with Amsterdam Christians. Amsterdam may not have been the heaven that some authors have described (Panofsky for instance), but Portuguese Jews had truly escaped from hell and its flames. We tried to put the famous phenomenon known as “La Convivencia,” the (supposedly) peaceful coexistence of faiths in Muslim Spain and Portugal, into perspective.

### READING AND REINTERPRETING THE BIBLE

Looking back at the catalogue, one of the key points in the Paris exhibition was the examination of the principle of “identification.” We looked at it from all directions: the identification of Portuguese Jews with the ancient Hebrews and the Judean exiles in

One more significant detail: the Washington catalogue had a detail of the etching known as *Jews in the Synagogue* on its cover, with the entire etching opposite the title page, as if the whole “family” of supposedly Jewish types were gathered there. And opposite the beginning of Simon Schama’s essay is the so-called portrait of Menasseh ben Israel. Forty years ago, we were still far from a reappraisal of Rembrandt’s affinity with the Jews.

While exhibiting and providing in-depth discussion of Rembrandt’s works in the catalogue, the Paris project laid down some guiding principles with regard to the relevant intellectual and religious context.



Babylon, of the Dutch with figures of the Old and New Testaments, and on a different level the way art historians identified images of old men as Jews. Insofar as we were making an argument, it was to show how these different readings were constructed.

The Rembrandt paintings and etchings in the exhibition were displayed and described in the catalogue mainly through the prism of Bible interpretation. The desire to see Rembrandt's compositions as sophisticated hermeneutic images may have led to an exaggeration of his status as *pictor doctus*.

For the interpretations of some art historians to be true, Rembrandt will have had to have read more deeply than a student of theology at a Dutch university or a rabbinical seminary, or to have consulted their teachers. Shelley Perlove's essay in the present book takes this tack.



129  
View of the section displaying documented portraits of Jewish rabbis, doctors and scholars

Paris, Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, 2007

### MILLENARIANISM AND MESSIANISM

Another key argument structuring our approach to Rembrandt's work was its relation to millenarianism in seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Several of his works, we felt, reflected the impact of this messianic atmosphere on various religious denominations in the Low Countries. Inspired by Shelley Perlove's illuminating article "Perceptions of Otherness: Critical Responses to the Jews of Rembrandt's Art and Milieu (1836–1945),"<sup>3</sup> we tried to single out which personages from the Old Testament—in particular Daniel, Esther and Mordecai, all heroes of the Portuguese Jews—were seen as figures of salvation. Insofar as these figures allow for personal and religious identification by Christians as well as Jews, they transcend their immediate iconography.

Though Paris and Amsterdam showed some similar works, Amsterdam concentrated on a different and more focused demonstration. By gathering works that had been falsely referred to as Jewish portraits, it traced the process by which Rembrandt's work became Judaized. A spectacular series of more than a dozen paintings of this kind was the climax of the exhibition. Interestingly, none of them are still regarded as works by Rembrandt himself. Seven are now given to his circle and two to his atelier, one being by Willem Drost (figs. 130 and 131). These paintings, as well as some etchings, were titled in catalogues from the eighteenth century onward, mainly those of Edmé-François Gersaint and Charles Blanc, as portraits of rabbis and old Jews. The curators took radical exception to these assertions, in the spirit of, and accepting, Adri Offenbergs's disqualification of the supposed portrait etching of Menasseh ben Israel (fig. 124).<sup>4</sup>

The Paris exhibition too devoted a section to the Judaization of Rembrandt since the seventeenth century, mostly based on what has been written about the etchings. Fol-

lowing Michael Zell, the exhibition included the etching by J.G. van Vliet after Rembrandt's *Man with a Turban*, which is inscribed "Philon le Juif" in the plate. Though it was not the central topic of our exhibition, in the foreword to the catalogue my co-author Alexis Merle du Bourg and I referred cautiously to what is called Rembrandt's "empathy," stressing the psychological dimension as a driving force of the Judaization process:

Since the nineteenth century, those involved with Jewish art—artists, historians, collectors and museums alike—have shown a particular predilection for Rembrandt's work because of the empathy with the Jews the master was supposed to have had. It seemed to be taken as a given that Rembrandt had lived among Jews, had loved them, and that their presence permeated his work [...]. This perception was fueled by a surge of gratitude from those who were aware of the many pejorative representations of the Jewish people in Western art and who wanted to see in the paintings of this genius a reflection of benevolent humanism on the part of a Christian artist.<sup>5</sup>

In analyzing the variety of motivations that brought different authors to assert that Rembrandt found Jewish models appealing, it is interesting to go back to the strong impact of Panofsky's lecture "Rembrandt und das Judentum," which he gave on 4 January 1921 at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. He stated his case quite strongly:

Rembrandt seems to be the only artist of whom it can be said that he was a pioneer in this Judaizing trend [...]. His need for an art that would be religious as well as realistic, historical as well as tangible, led Rembrandt with a certain inevitability, and from the beginning of his career, to pay attention to the Jewish essence. [...] As early as 1636 we encounter the portrait of a man who seems to have remained a good friend for the rest of his life and who was one of the foremost figures in the Amsterdam [Sephardi] community: Menasseh ben Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Panofsky then offers a reading of the evolution of the painter's work through three stages, from a strong characterization of Jews by features, gestures and the picturesque, to psychological and dramatic portraits, and finally to metaphysical meanings. He evokes a process by which the idea itself transcends the individual. He uses the supposed portraits of Jews, overdetermined by details, to show that in his late work the genius reaches a point where he is able to capture in paint the very essence of the human being, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

In Panofsky, this great mind, we find the perfect embodiment of the strong desire to see Jewish figures in Rembrandt's work. As an epitome of his thinking, he uses *The Disgrace of Haman* (ca. 1665), from which, he wrote, all narrative aspects have faded, along with the psychological and dramatic elements we are used to in Rembrandt's biblical paintings: "there is no longer a villain, nor an angry

130  
View of the section  
dedicated to portraits of old  
bearded men once attributed  
to Rembrandt

Amsterdam, Jewish  
Historical Museum, 2006





131  
 Willem Drost, *Bust of a Man  
 Wearing a Large-brimmed  
 Hat*, 1654 or 1655  
 Oil on canvas,  
 73.1 × 62 cm

Dublin, National Gallery  
 of Ireland (NGI 107)

character, nor a triumphant one” (fig. 132).<sup>7</sup> Iconology as a method was certainly at the core of Paris exhibition, and many of our choices resonated with it. Nevertheless, when it came to *The Disgrace of Haman*, which was shown as the conclusion and the climax of the exhibition, we related it to the central narrative of Esther, with its resonance for Protestants as well as Jews, and not to the mystery that radiates from this painting and that inspired Panofsky.

We wish to turn attention to how the critical method used by the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam has renewed the debate concerning the etched portrait that for several centuries has been identified as Menasseh ben Israel. The exhibition credits the doubts that had been cast on the identification by several authors, based on discrepancies with Salom Italia’s captioned portrait of Menasseh. The curators stressed the lack of evidence concerning the actual interaction between the famous rabbi-philosopher and Rembrandt.

As frustrating as it is not to be able to resolve the central question of the relationship between the two heroes of this story, the discussion can be fed with a few remarks. As we noted, one objection to the identification of Rembrandt’s etching as Menasseh ben Israel is its limited resemblance to Salom Italia’s portrait, which is taken to be the only proven likeness of the rabbi. How valid is this argument? It can be said that Salom Italia’s portrait of Menasseh (like the one of Leon Templo) is too naïve to be faithfully realistic (fig. 133). The fact that Menasseh had sent it to his German correspondence

132  
 Rembrandt, *The Disgrace  
 of Haman*, ca. 1665  
 Oil on canvas,  
 128 × 116.5 cm

St. Petersburg, State  
 Hermitage Museum (752)



friend, the mystic Abraham von Frankenburg, might be a sign of approval but not as proof that it was the only one he accepted as a portrait of himself.

Not enough attention has been paid to the closeness of the dates of the portrait etching, 1636, and the publication of Menasseh's treatise *De creatione problemata*, his first philosophical work in Latin, in 1635. Dealing with the question of creation ex nihilo, it was clearly intended for Christians, as evidenced by Menasseh's dedicatory epistle to David de Wilhem.

The book included an *Epigramma in problemata clarissimi viri Menassis ben Israel de creatione* by Caspar Barlaeus, whom Schama calls "an immensely influential [...] writer and orator."<sup>8</sup> As early as 1985, Gary Schwartz suggests in his *Rembrandt, His Life, His Paintings* that Caspar Barlaeus was Rembrandt's adviser on religious matters.<sup>9</sup> Does this not add to the plausibility of the 1636 portrait being Menasseh?

Steven Nadler has just published an exhaustive article with Victor Tiribàs on Rembrandt's indisputable tie to Menasseh, which has major difficulties of its own: "Rembrandt's Etchings for Menasseh ben Israel's *Piedra gloriosa: A Mystery Solved?*"<sup>10</sup> The authors quote a document dated 6 May 1655, in which the Mahamad, the board of the Amsterdam Sephardi community, formally forbids Menasseh to print any more copies of his book. The reason is not specified, but the prohibition is taken to have been occasioned by the inclusion in the book of an etching by Rembrandt showing God

with recognizable features, as the “Atiq Yomin,” the Ancient of Days. As the authors admit, this wonderful source does not really solve the problem of the anteriority of the Rembrandt series or the engravings found in other copies. One indication that Rembrandt’s came first is that uncut sheets of all four etchings for *Piedra gloriosa* are preserved. (They are not rare. There are impressions in the Dutuit collection in the Petit Palais, the Edmond de Rothschild collection in the Louvre, the British Museum, the Rembrandt House Museum and other repositories.) It seems like a reasonable assumption that these sheets had been printed but not yet inserted into copies of the book when the Mahamad issued its decree, and that they remained unused.

The attribution of the engraved series to Salom Italia having been rejected, the search is on for another name, which may be found among other engravers who worked on subjects of Jewish interest or who had contact with Jews. It should also be kept in mind that these engravings were an unusual move on the part of Rembrandt, who was not keen on producing etched illustrations for books. Apart from the *Piedra gloriosa*, he made a total of three prints for books, including the one for *Medea or the Marriage of Jason and Creusa* by his eminent and dear friend Jan Six in 1648 (B 112).

The exhibition that was scheduled to open in October 2022, made impossible by the Russian “special military action” against Ukraine, would undoubtedly have decisively brought to the fore the issues outlined by the previous three exhibitions we have discussed here. The present publication bears witness to the rich possibilities that archival research provides for nailing down the topography and social realities of the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam. Bringing to light the details of the lawsuits, harassments and rivalries marking relations between the master and his neighbors in the Jodenbreestraat district deals an additional blow to the idea that Rembrandt’s relation with his Jewish neighbors was harmonious, even blended.

This approach, as meticulous as it is essential, does not impinge on a fact of a different order—the painter’s truly extraordinary attraction to allegorical and mystical understandings of biblical motifs. That aspect is dealt with through attention to the millenarianism and mysticism that so strongly penetrated Jewish and Protestant communities, features that underlie Rembrandt’s fascination with images of divine revelation and of the messiah. The corpus of painted and etched works adumbrating this phenomenon was defined by the 2007 Paris exhibition and the previous works of Perlove, Zell and Nadler, as well as their contributions to the present book. The work of these three authors confirms once again the vitality of theological debate in the crucible that was pre-Enlightenment Amsterdam. Their emphasis on Rembrandt’s choice and treatment of biblical themes, and the depth of interpretation contained in his representations, raise the master’s encounter with the Jewish world to a higher conceptual level.

In this light, the disqualification of pseudo-portraits of Jews or rabbis, boldly insisted on by the Jewish Historical Museum in 2006, is not all that relevant. The real innovation of the present volume lies in the comprehensive view of Rembrandt’s reception



133  
Salom Italia, *Portrait of the Rabbi, Diplomat and Printer Menasseh ben Israel*, 1642  
Engraving, 19.2 x 13 cm

Amsterdam, Jewish  
Museum (M007548)

by generations of Jews, collectors and dealers, artists and art historians. In his article, Gary Schwartz sketches the personalities of some Portuguese Jewish collectors of Rembrandt's time, extending his examination to the present day. Dominated by such memorable figures as Sampson Gideon and the Rothschilds, this fastidious overview becomes fascinating when it meets up with the antisemitism expressed by German and French art historians. The impression left by Schwartz's research is that, a small number of specific documented cases aside, Jewish collectors showed no lasting interest in biblical subjects or Jewish portraits or themes. They were guided, like other buyers, by the search for excellence in the work of the greatest of Northern European painters.

This broadening of perspective includes Larry Silver's article on the master's marked influence on Jewish artists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Jozef Israëls to R.B. Kitaj, Maurycy Gottlieb to Soutine. The very naming of their names conjures up a concept of what Rembrandt represented for them: the pinnacle of painting, not only because of his genius, but also because of his treatment of Jewish figures and religious scenes, in a way they did not find in the art of other European masters.

This publication (and the exhibition it should have accompanied) has the virtue of offering a kaleidoscopic view, starting from documented *facts* about Rembrandt's urban and social environment, to the—sometimes fantastical—*constructions* of those who seized upon his work to laud or malign its supposedly omnipresent Jewishness. This back and forth in time and space, between subjects and models, dealers and clients, collectors and art historians or curators, between Jews and antisemites, helps us to appreciate in an all-encompassing way a monument of European art and of the Jewish imagination.

### NOTES

- 1 Los Angeles-Chicago-New York 1981–82, 5.
- 2 Paris 2007, 194, cat. no. 88.
- 3 Perlove 2001.
- 4 Offenberg 1992a.
- 5 Paris 2007, 8.
- 6 Panofsky 1973, 79.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 104.
- 8 Los Angeles-Chicago-New York 1981–82, 10.
- 9 Schwartz 1985b, 123.
- 10 Nadler and Tiribàs 2021.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald** graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure and Sorbonne University. She was the founding director of the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, where she curated the exhibition *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem*. After 2012 she led the Department of Education at the Centre des Monuments nationaux and was the general manager of the Fondation du Judaïsme Français.



# Jewish Collectors Take Rembrandt to their Hearts

GARY SCHWARTZ

## ABSTRACT

From his day to ours, Rembrandt has exerted a notable draw on Jewish art collectors. In part, their interest is more than a matter of taste. Certain patterns can be detected in the timing and nature of their purchases. This article reviews the main features concerned, with particular emphasis on the fraught period of heightened antisemitism in France and Germany from the 1880s until the First World War, a period when the purchase of Rembrandt paintings by Jewish collectors took a quantum leap. Several of their acquisitions they donated to the most prestigious museums in their countries, thus calling attention to themselves as benefactors of their nation, and to the high status of an artist felt to be friendly toward the Jews.

## KEYWORDS

Art collecting, ethnic preference in art, antisemitism, Alfonso Lopez

Evidence concerning the ownership by Jews of works by Rembrandt extends from his time to the present day. Until 1900 we find major paintings by Rembrandt in the hands of Jewish collectors in France, Germany and Britain (not the Netherlands), and from 1900 on in the United States. Is this significant? After all, non-Jews, too, were buying work by Rembrandt throughout these years, in larger numbers. Yet there are circum-

134  
Rembrandt, *Bust of a  
Young Jew*, 1663  
Oil on canvas,  
65,8 × 57,5 cm

Fort Worth, Kimbell Art  
Museum (AP1977.04)

---

Knotter, Mirjam and Gary Schwartz (eds.), *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes: The Artist's Meaning to Jews from His Time to Ours*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024  
DOI 10.5117/9789463728188\_SCHWARTZ



stances that cast Jewish collecting in a certain light, having to do with Rembrandt's reputation and subject matter on the one hand, and the social circumstances of the collectors on the other. There is no overall count of Rembrandt owners that would allow for a comparison of Jewish with non-Jewish owners, but there is one statistic that, even if it is extreme rather than typical, demonstrates how dramatic the relationship can be. In 1969, when Horst Gerson published a revised version of Abraham Bredius's popular catalogue of Rembrandt paintings, Rembrandt (or ex-Rembrandt) paintings were in the hands of thirty-three American owners. Twenty-two were not Jewish, and eleven were. That is 33%, in a country where Jews made up 2.63% of the general population.<sup>1</sup> It makes sense, then, to look for patterns and motives in this phenomenon.

The two earliest known Jewish owners of work by Rembrandt were Sephardim with documented ties to Rembrandt himself and whose choice of works by him seems significant. Samuel d'Orta, who in 1637 called himself a "Portuguese painter," living in Amsterdam,<sup>2</sup> must have been a print publisher as well, since he bought from Rembrandt an etching plate on the understanding that he was to have the exclusive right to print impressions for sale. (For more on Samuel d'Orta, see Knotter, p. 30.) That he chose one of Rembrandt's first Old Testament subjects suggests that he anticipated sales in the Sephardi community. The specific subject—Abraham's choice of Isaac above Ishmael, a Jew above a Muslim—will have added resonance to that audience and perhaps to d'Orta personally.

A stronger supposition of that kind attends to the purchase from Rembrandt by Alfonso Lopez (1572–1649) of the early painting *Bileam's Ass Balks at the Angel* (fig. 135).<sup>3</sup> This extraordinary man was the foremost jeweler in France, with the best diamond cutter in the country in his service; the founder of the first auction house in Paris; and the trusted agent of Cardinal Richelieu. Regarded as a Portuguese Jew, he was actually born in Granada, with close ties to the Moriscos of that province, a tribe of Berber descent which, although its members had converted to Catholicism, was on the suspect list of the Inquisition. In 1604 he came to France as an emissary of that persecuted minority. When they were expelled from Spain in 1609, his efforts resulted in the admission of a certain number of them to France. Gaining high court access through his personal abilities and command of the jewel trade, he became a familiar of Cardinal Richelieu. From 1627 to 1629 and again from 1636 to 1640 he lived in the Netherlands, buying strategic supplies for the French navy. Although it is usually supposed that he bought the *Bileam* on his earlier stay, though it seems unlikely that he would have made the acquaintance of a young Leiden painter at that time. We know for a fact, however, that the two of them were both at an important Amsterdam auction in April 1639, where Rembrandt sketched a portrait by Raphael that was bought by Lopez. In that year, Rembrandt modeled a self-portrait etching on a painting by Titian that Lopez bought at the auction. If, as I now believe, it was in 1639 that Lopez bought the *Bileam*, the choice of this early, somewhat ungainly painting, was more likely to have been dictated by the subject than by artistic excellence. Like Lopez, the biblical Bileam, the subject of chapters 22–24 in Numbers, was a man who operated at the interstices of different tribes and religions. Although Bileam blessed the Jews, and although one phrase in that



135  
Rembrandt, *Bileam's Ass  
Balks at the Angel*, 1626  
Oil on panel, 63 × 46.5 cm

Paris, Musée Cognacq-Jay  
(J 95)

blessing was seen by Christians as a prediction of the coming of Christ, he was regarded in Jewish as well as Christian tradition as a negative model of untrustworthiness.

In an effort to defuse the anti-Jewish prejudice from which he suffered, Lopez converted to Catholicism. This only made things worse. In a gossipy notice about him written by someone who knew him we read the following vicious quip: "Lopez sold a crucifix for a pretty steep price. 'Hey,' they said to him, 'you delivered the original so cheaply.'" To which the writer added: "I would burst out laughing (my father was his neighbor) to see him eating pork just about every day. No one thought that made him a better Christian."<sup>4</sup> I cannot shake the conviction that Lopez saw in Bileam someone who suffered the kind of humiliation he did, and that this was his motive for buying the painting.

This early occurrence provides an unfortunate precedent for much of what was to come. In the centuries that followed, the Jewish buyers of work by Rembrandt were the subject of scorn in gentile society, with a persistent suspicion that these matters were not unrelated. Concerning the antisemitic prejudice that soured the lives of wealthy French Jews at the end of the nineteenth century, James McAuley wrote that it had a "uniquely material" dimension.<sup>5</sup> Actually, it was not that unique. Even that jibe about Lopez's crucifix feeds into a strain of abuse that indeed climaxes in fin-de-siècle France, but which can be detected much earlier.



136  
Rembrandt, *Portrait of  
an Elderly Man*, 1667  
Oil on canvas,  
67.7 × 81.9 cm

The Hague, Mauritshuis  
(1118)

The following major instance of which we know also looks like a reaction to social antagonism. Two late Rembrandt portraits that did not command proper appreciation from connoisseurs until the twentieth century were bought in the mid-eighteenth century by a prominent British Jew, a Sephardi financier and banker in London named Sampson Gideon (1699–1762). With one of the largest fortunes in Britain, Gideon was the financial power behind the throne itself. In 1745 he raised a million pounds to help the Hanoverian-Whig government suppress a revolution by supporters of the Scottish Stuarts. This did not spare him the ignominy of being satirized for his Jewishness when in 1753 an aborted attempt was made to pass a law allowing Jews to become naturalized British citizens. This should have gained him the peerage for which he lobbied, but, as Simon Schama wrote, “notwithstanding its obligations [to him], the quality looked at Gideon and saw the coarsely pretentious stockjobber of the Exchange and passed him over.”<sup>6</sup> Building an art collection was a way for Sampson Gideon, using only the money and taste at his disposal, to vie with the quality on its own terms. Another way of meeting those terms was to convert. Although he married a Christian woman, Sampson did not take this step. He did, however, raise his children as Anglicans, paving the way for his son, also named Sampson, to become the 1st Baron Eardly.<sup>7</sup>

Considering the patchiness of the evidence, it is all the more striking that all three of the first known Jewish owners of Rembrandt paintings had connections to the dia-



137  
Rembrandt, *The Standard Bearer*, 1636  
Oil on canvas,  
111.8 × 96.8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
(SK-A-5092)

mond trade. Alfonso Lopez practiced it, as did Sampson Gideon's father, and so did the following documented Jewish owner of a Rembrandt painting, a Dutchman in London named Henry Isaac or Isaacs. In 1765 he owned a portrait of a young man with sword now in the Leiden Collection,<sup>8</sup> and in 1766 a painting of a lord paying his laborers, now lost, which was engraved by William Pether.<sup>9</sup> Dealing in diamonds put one at the top of what the historian Jonathan Israel calls the "rich trade." The work of these men brought them into the homes of the pinnacle of society, giving them insight into the way things were done and defining goals for themselves, goals that included the collecting and display of art. A century later this was to repeat itself, as the Jewish owners of gold and diamond mines in South Africa—Alfred and Otto Beit, Max Michaelis and Jules Porgès—accumulated Rembrandts of their own.

Sampson Gideon has been called "the Rothschild of his day." And the Rothschilds of their own day—days extending from 1836 to the present—were, taken as a family conglomerate, the principal Jewish collectors of Rembrandt paintings. When in 1836 the London art dealer John Smith published the first catalogue of Rembrandt's paintings, he listed only one owned by a Jewish collector, belonging to Baron James Mayer de Rothschild (1792–1868). As it happens, the painting in question, *Woman With Three Children and a Goat*, now in the Leiden Collection, was not by Rembrandt at all,<sup>10</sup> but Baron James made up for this brilliantly in 1840, with his purchase of the *Standard Bearer*,

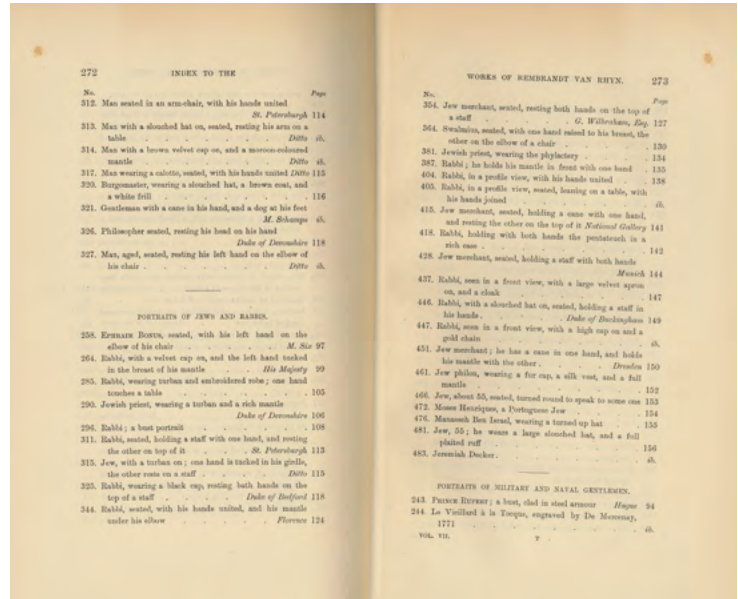
as of this moment, having been sold in 2021 by the Rothschild descendants to the Rijksmuseum, the second most expensive old master for which a price is known (fig. 137). The next two most expensive old masters are the Rembrandt portraits of Marten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit, bought in 1877 with the van Winter collection in Amsterdam by Gustave de Rothschild (1829–1911) (see fig. 49). Except, perhaps, for ongoing purchases of prints by Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934), all of the Rothschild acquisitions were made in the nineteenth century, mainly by members of the family in Paris. The interests of the Rothschilds in art and its meaning to them are too diverse to be reduced to a single factor. In his history of the family, Niall Ferguson

covers this side of their story in a section entitled “Investing in art,” which cannot be altogether wrong.<sup>11</sup> But there were other, far larger ambitions in play. Baron Alphonse de Rothschild (1827–1905), wrote James McAuley, “represented an important shift in the family’s relation to the material things and their use. It was Alphonse who ushered in an era in which art itself became a synonym for Rothschild patriotism and philanthropic largesse.”<sup>12</sup>

Concerning the question of whether the Rothschilds associated their collecting of Rembrandt with being Jewish, I consulted a present member of the family. Eric de Rothschild was kind enough to answer my direct query in this matter. In an email of 14 October 2018, he wrote “I have no recollection of any specific Jewish approach to Rembrandt in my family. The collected art was very diverse but [we were] always trying to get the best. It was I am sure at that time both between family members but also other collectors very competitive. And what was higher on the scale than Rembrandt?” This is revealing, and I cannot doubt it. But even if Baron James Mayer, Gustave and Alphonse were not thinking of a Jewish connection when they bought their Rembrandts, it was already a prominent part of Rembrandt’s image when they started.

Look only at these pages in John Smith’s volume on Rembrandt, of 1836 (fig. 138).<sup>13</sup> Uniquely in his catalogues of Dutch and Flemish paintings, he devotes an entire section of his indexes to Rembrandt’s “Portraits of Jews and Rabbis.” The Rembrandt literature was to be endowed with another quotable quote, when the German writer and political activist Eduard Kolloff wrote in 1854 of Rembrandt’s biblical figures that they display a “strong touch of the Judaic.”<sup>14</sup>

What may have been a relatively innocuous remark in 1854 became, by 1890, an instrument of vicious antisemitism. Ingeniously, the perceived tie between Rembrandt and Jews was now interpreted to the credit of Rembrandt and the vilification of the Jews. Rembrandt came to stand for a model of the Nordic spirit, a true German of the blood. This notion was propagated in a tractate of unequalled popularity that was first



138  
John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters*, vol. 7, *Rembrandt van Rhyen*, London (Smith and Son) 1836, 272–73

Maarsssen, Loekie and Gary Schwartz

published in 1890 and was reprinted more than a hundred times, through to the end of the Third Reich. The title itself was legendary—*Rembrandt als Erzieher*, Rembrandt as Teacher. The author signed not with his name, which was Julius Langbehn, but “Von einem Deutschen,” by a German claiming to represent Germanness itself. Writing about Rembrandt’s relation to Jews, Langbehn draws a distinction between praiseworthy Rembrandt Jews and the contemptible Jews of Langbehn’s own time.

In the final result, Rembrandt’s nobility shows itself, weirdly enough, in his predilection for Jews. [...] A genuine Jew who adheres to the old faith has something unmistakably noble about him. He belongs to the age-old moral and spiritual aristocracy from which most modern Jews have taken their leave. [...] Rembrandt’s Jews were real Jews who wanted to be nothing but Jews, which gave them character. The opposite is true of almost all Jews today, who want to be German, English, French, whatever, making them characterless. And nothing is worse than lack of character. It is the crime of crimes, the sin against the Holy Ghost—individualism—and unforgiveable.<sup>15</sup>

This was the spirit of the day when in 1897 the upper crust of Jewish Berlin banded together to help found an elite civil institution, very expensive to join, the still extant and active Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein, a society of patrons to the leading museum of northern Germany. In 2018 the Verein published a small book of capsule biographies of its Jewish members.<sup>16</sup> In it we read that at the end of the 1920s the society had about 120 members. Of the 120, seventy were Jewish, many of them founding members from 1897 on. Fifty-eight percent, in a country where Jews constituted less than one percent of the population. Plainly, the Verein served as a vehicle by which wealthy Jews, without needing the approval of a sometimes hostile social milieu, could participate in the higher realms of German culture. The group was encouraged, abetted and cultivated by the foremost personality in the museum, Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929). Two of the members who made Rembrandt purchases were Leopold Kappel (1843–1933), who owned *The Rape of Europa*, now in the Getty Museum, and the *Portrait of Gerard de Lairesse*, in the Robert Lehman collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Otto Kahn (1867–1934), whose *Philemon and Baucis* is in the National Gallery of Art.

In the same year as the Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein was founded, a parallel effort was undertaken in Paris, with the establishment of the Société des amis du Louvre. This body is framed differently than the Verein, more popular than elite. In the late 1920s it numbered nearly three thousand members. Were the Société to publish a book on its Jewish members, they would surely not have been in the majority. But their impact would be highly visible. In 1913 the chairmanship was offered to Isaac de Camondo, of the Camondo-Ephrussi clan made famous by Edmund de Waal. Camondo, who had made a donation of 808 works to the Louvre, turned the honor down, because it was accompanied by an antisemitic slur. James McAuley’s analysis of the situation of French Jewish collectors is trenchant and very much to the point.

For my research, I built a table with the names, dates and a few words of description of all the Jewish collectors I have found, with the titles of their paintings, references to the catalogues of Hofstede de Groot (1915) and Bredius-Gerson (1969), and when identifiable the present location of the work. I had intended to publish it in this article, but the list kept growing, and I had to realize that it was still too incomplete to put into print. From 1639 to 1969, I counted eighty-nine individual Jewish owners of 172 paintings. These include some duplications, when a painting was bequeathed to a family member or bought by another Jewish collector. However, I have counted these cases as full instances of Jewish ownership of a Rembrandt painting.

In order to find out whether there were particular preferences at play in the choice of subjects by Jewish collectors, I compared the percentage of paintings per genre in their choices against those in Horst Gerson's revision of Abraham Bredius's catalogue of 1969. The results are strikingly similar. In the table below I count all rankings within one position of each other as equal.

	BREDIUS-GERSON				JEWISH COLLECTORS		
	NUMBER	%	RANK		RANK	NUMBER	%
Self-portraits	62	10%	5	FEWER	7	11	6%
Portraits of family	70	11%	3	EQUAL	3	20	12%
Portraits: male	91	14%	2	EQUAL	2	31	18%
Portraits: female	49	8%	6	EQUAL	6	12	7%
Two or three figures	7	1%	13	EQUAL	12	1	1%
Portraits: groups	5	1%	14	FEWER	0	0	0%
Tronies: male	106	17%	1	EQUAL	1	32	19%
Tronies: female	25	4%	11	MORE	4	17	10%
Landscape, towns	16	3%	12	EQUAL	13	1	1%
Still life, animals, genre	31	5%	9	EQUAL	9	8	5%
Old Testament	44	7%	7	FEWER	11	7	4%
New Testament	67	11%	4	FEWER	8	11	6%
Holy figures	34	5%	8	MORE	5	14	8%
Mythology	26	4%	10	EQUAL	10	7	4%
	<b>633</b>	<b>100%</b>				<b>172</b>	<b>100%</b>

That the collectors owned fewer self-portraits and group portraits and more female tronies can be called a question of availability in the market. More interesting is that the Jewish collectors shied away from biblical subjects, while showing more interest in paintings of holy figures. Of the fourteen in that category, five (with one duplication) are heads of Christ. Another choice that I found significant is that within the group of eleven paintings from the New Testament, none are depictions of the Nativity or events in the Passion. Rather, they are parables and upbeat incidents like the Supper at Emmaus.



139  
Rembrandt, *Head of Christ*, ca. 1650  
Oil on panel,  
25 × 21.5 cm

Berlin, Staatliche Museen  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz,  
Gemäldegalerie (811C)

There may not have been anything significantly “Jewish” about the art in the collections they amassed, but [...] the donations they made and the museums they left behind were subtle attempts to respond to the antisemitism of the fin de siècle, to show that Jews could indeed curate a genuine, authentic image of France and shape its national patrimony. [...] The bequests these collectors made, [...] also became political statements, arguments in favor of the eternal compatibility of Frenchness and Jewishness.<sup>17</sup>

One donation in particular to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum commands attention in the context of our theme.<sup>18</sup> In the 1890s, a major Jewish art collector, Rodolphe Kann (1845–1905), a German-born French banker, bought a painting of the *Head of Christ*, in Paris (fig. 139). After Kann’s death, his entire collection was bought, in 1907, for \$4.5 million, by one of the leading galleries in old masters, Duveen Brothers. This was front-page news all over the world. From Duveen the *Head of Christ* was bought for £2,000 sterling by the Hamburg entrepreneur Martin Bromberg and his wife Eleanor, or Laura. Laura was the sister of the deceased Rodolphe Kann, so that the couple knew very well what they were buying. They bought it however not for themselves. The painting never went to Hamburg. On 17 December 1907 the Brombergs signed a paper by which they donated it to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. On 21 December 1907 it was sent by train from Paris to Berlin, where on 6 February 1908 it was inscribed in the museum books, at an evaluation of 20,500 marks.



In the museum the painting took its place in a corner of one of the Dutch galleries, which we see here in a photo taken in 1917 (fig. 140). This display is a veritable paean to Jewish subject matter, Jewish patronage and Jewish collecting. The two large paintings show the virtuous and clever young biblical heroes Daniel and Joseph, both of whom rise to high court positions in foreign countries without abandoning their religion. It was happenstance that they were in the collection, but their placing calls attention to the success of smart Jews in mighty kingdoms—Daniel in Cyrus’s Persia, Joseph in the Egypt of the Pharaohs, with overtones of the Jewish grandees in the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm. Two of the smaller paintings show a young and an old man, both seen as Jews, the old man as the patriarch Jacob.

Jewish *patronage* is exemplified by the *Man with the Golden Helmet* in the upper left and the *Portrait of a Young Jew* in the lower tier. These were two of the very first paintings acquired by the Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein, the *Young Jew* in 1896 and the *Man with the Golden Helmet* in 1897. Jewish *collecting* would have been apparent to anyone in the know. *Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, on the lower left, and the *Head of Christ* were from the collection of Rodolphe Kann, the latter as a donation of the Brombergs. Both came in on the same train from Paris. Although Martin Bromberg was not a member of the Verein, he, too, consulted Bode on his purchases. The Bromberg donation embodied an implicit, mutually beneficial link between the upper reaches of German culture and Jewish philanthropy, with Rembrandt and Jesus serving as interdenominational tokens of the bond.

Following the Holocaust, it is easy to forget that European antisemitism was more rampant and more socially discriminating in France than in Germany, and that it spread more virulently into judgments concerning art and collectors. Preceding the Dreyfus affair, but preparing the ground for it, was an extraordinary, highly acclaimed and phenomenally successful book, *La France juive* (1886), by Edouard Drumont.<sup>19</sup> The aim of this two-volume, twelve-hundred-page tome was to Make France Great Again by excising the dire, all-pervasive Jewish influence that had corrupted the pure French race. This had to do with aesthetics as well as everything else. Semites lack the power of creation, Drumont wrote; they subsist by exploiting the inventions of the Aryans. In Drumont’s dream of a France rid of Jews, Rembrandt has his part to play.



140  
Photograph of gallery 57  
in the Gemäldegalerie,  
Berlin, 1917

It's Rembrandt that one must, I would not say look at, but contemplate, study, scrutinize, search, analyze, if we really want to see the Jew. [...] Rembrandt was always living with Israel. His studio itself [...] resembled those shops of second-hand goods in the back of which the disoriented eye finally catches sight of a sordid old man with a hooked nose. His work has a Jewish color. It is yellow, in that intense, warm yellow that seems like the reflection of gold playing on an old yellow badge from the Middle Ages, forgotten in a corner.

In such a toxic environment, we cannot but take special notice of the burst of collecting activity in this period among wealthy French Jews. Between 1883 and 1908, the catalogued ownership of Rembrandt paintings in this group rose from ten paintings owned by six collectors to thirty-four owned by thirteen.<sup>20</sup> Even most of the dealers serving them, in Paris and London, were Jewish: Wildenstein, Gimpel, Duveen, Kleinberger, Goudstikker, Lesser. The most outstanding among the collectors, without rivals, even among the Rothschilds of this period, were Rodolphe Kann and his older brother Maurice (1839–1906), who between them owned twenty-one paintings by Rembrandt. If not all are accepted today, suffice it to say that Maurice owned the late pendant portraits of a *Man With a Magnifying Glass* and *Woman With a Carnation* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, while Rodolphe was the proud possessor of *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*. Two of Eric de Rothschild's remarks about collecting in his family are illuminating here. Mutual competition between the brothers, who lived in joined mansions on the Avenue d'Iéna, was a driving force in their collection, leading even to estrangement between them.

And although they might have denied that their being Jewish had anything to do with their collecting Rembrandt, one outsider did make that connection, in pertinent terms. This was the young Dutch art historian and writer Fritz Schmidt-Degener, later to become director of the Rijksmuseum. In an article on his visit to Rodolphe's collection following his death, he wrote:

to begin with the works which most touch one's humanity [...], most moving is the [...] young, melancholy [...] Jewish scholar, with his bashful yet gently penetrating gaze, his features bespeaking resignation. The refined cultivation he draws on from deep within, perhaps reinforced by the semi-circular skullcap covering his copious head of dark red hair, gives the likeness the air of a Jewish abbot, a lonely, modest scholar, steeped in issues of textual explication and Talmudic metaphysics. His clothing, a nearly black dark brown, shows no detailing, so that this Jewish portrait is not confined to the seventeenth century, but seems to belong to all the ages. Strikingly, the Kann collections [including that of Rodolphe's late brother Maurice] contain four depictions of Christ, all of them related more or less to this type. Did these collectors realize what an honorable distinction it is for the Jewish race to be represented by this exquisite, noble character?<sup>21</sup>

If I may answer Schmidt-Degener's question: of course those collectors realized it. My conviction is that the Jewish-looking Christ in Rembrandt's paintings was felt by Jewish collectors, even if they did not say it aloud or even to themselves, to be a distinction for the Jewish race. With the messages of peace and love they saw in his New Testament compositions, Rembrandt bridged a gap between them and the Christian cultures of



141  
Rembrandt (attributed to),  
*Head of a Bearded Man:*  
*Study for St. Matthew*, 1657  
Oil on panel, 24.5 × 19.7 cm

Kingston, Ontario, Agnes  
Etherington Art Centre  
(62-002; gift of Linda and  
Daniel Bader, 2019)

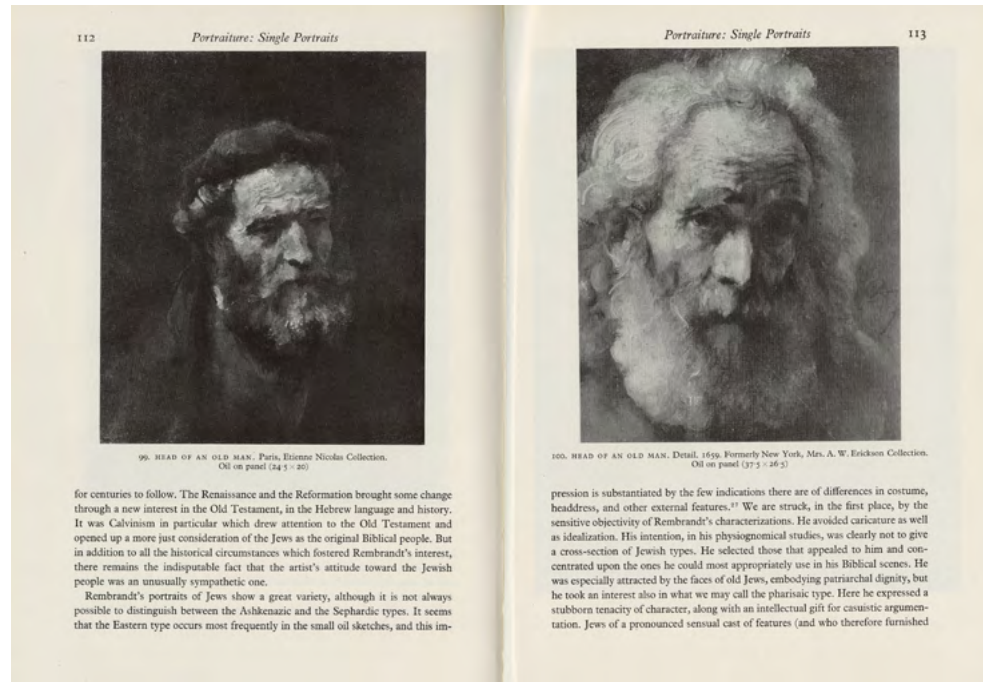


142  
Rembrandt, *Head of an Old  
Man with Curly Hair*, 1659  
Oil on panel, 38.1 × 26.7 cm

Kingston, Ontario, Agnes  
Etherington Art Centre (62-  
017.06; gift of Isabel Bader,  
2019)

143  
 Jakob Rosenberg,  
*Rembrandt: Life and Work*,  
 revised edition, London  
 (Phaidon Press) 1964, 112–13

Maarszen, Loekie and  
 Gary Schwartz



Germany and France. There were surely Christians like Schmidt-Degener who would agree. But Jews who thought that their collecting was winning them approval from all French art lovers were deceiving themselves. After the death of Maurice Kann, when in 1909 his collection was put up for auction, it was commented on by a prominent French art historian, Louis Dimier. He wrote an article in the right-wing, antisemitic journal *L'Action française*, with the title “Les collections juives.”

Taste in art is fundamentally foreign to the formation of these collections. In the Jewish collection—and I’m talking about the best ones—there is in general nothing more than a need for dealing, some mercantile savoir faire, knowledge of superficialities. That’s all there is, that’s all. [...] As for those who buy a Rembrandt, they think of themselves as performing a great deed. They appear to themselves as serious people, protectors of the arts, even thinkers and philosophers. [...] Rembrandt is admirable, and there is enough taste in the world to preserve him for sincere art lovers. But I assure you that they are not the ones buying Kann’s Rembrandts. These were picked up in the flea market and are being sold to snobs.<sup>22</sup>

Jewish collecting of Rembrandt, in sum, cannot be seen merely or mainly as an exercise of taste. The collectors knew that they were entering into a high-stakes game of art marketing and social, religious and ethnic contention as well as history and connoisseurship, a game in which they looked like expert players to some and cheaters to others. In Germany and France, where this collecting largely took place, only the Rothschilds can be said to have won the game.

Most private and museum purchasers of Rembrandt paintings in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries were and are American.<sup>23</sup> The main buyer of paintings from the Kann collections was a New Yorker whose name became synonymous with the good

life for the middle class, Benjamin Altman. Upon his death in 1913 he bequeathed thirteen Rembrandts to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as part of the largest single donation ever received by the museum.

Two post-war collecting couples who related their collecting of Rembrandt paintings to their Jewishness were the late Alfred Bader (1924–2018) and his wife Isabel, and Tom Kaplan (b. 1962) and his wife Daphne Recanati. As a student at Harvard in the 1940s, Alfred Bader attended art history classes by Jakob Rosenberg (1893–1980), the former director of the print room of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, who had come to America fleeing Nazi persecution in 1937. Bader heard Rosenberg praise Rembrandt as an artist whose “attitude to the Jews was an unusually sympathetic one.”

In his monograph on Rembrandt of 1948, which remained the standard text on the artist for more than twenty years, Rosenberg illustrated the point with these examples, as illustrated in the second edition of 1973 (fig. 143). These faces, Rosenberg wrote, embody “patriarchal dignity,” while expressing “a stubborn tenacity of character, along with an intellectual gift for casuistic argumentation.”<sup>24</sup> No one can imagine that it was coincidental that when Bader had earned his millions and began to buy art, those two paintings were among his acquisitions (figs. 141 and 142).

What makes this example exceptional are only two things: that the collector embraced Jewishness publicly and prominently, and that he put into words Rembrandt’s attraction to him for the artist’s sympathy for Jews, not only in a book of memoirs but also in a lecture that he delivered widely. As I see it, the attraction is there for most or all Jewish collectors of Rembrandt, even if it is not made explicit or was foremost in their minds. The message was all the stronger for not having to be argued. A quality of a more universal kind was attributed to Rembrandt by Tom Kaplan. In a speech at the opening of an exhibition of his collection at the Louvre in 2017, Kaplan drew on a concept from Lurianic kabbalah: “While art that touches the soul may not alone be able to save the world, perhaps Rembrandt has a tangible role to play in what the Jews call ‘tikkun olam’, ‘repairing the world.’” As the Jews also say, “Halevei”—would that it were so.

## NOTES

- 1 From the Wikipedia entry *Historical Jewish population comparisons*.
- 2 Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 145–46, document 1637/7.
- 3 The letter was written by the French artist Claude Vignon to the traveling dealer François Langlois. Strauss and van der Meulen 1979, 212, doc. 1641/6. For Lopez, see Baraude 1933; Hildesheimer 1985, 293–99. A discussion of the meaning to him of Bileam is in Schwartz 2020, 56–71, esp. 58–60.
- 4 “Lopès vendoit un crucifix bien cher: ‘Ha, lui dit-on, vous avez livré l’original à si bon marché.’” “Je me crevois de rire, car mon père étoit son voisin, de le voir manger du pourceau quasi tous les jours. On ne l’en croyoit meilleur chrétien pour cela.” Tallement de Réaux 1834, 46.
- 5 McAuley 2021, 53.
- 6 Schama 2017, 327.
- 7 [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sampson\\_Gideon](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Sampson_Gideon).
- 8 <https://www.theleidencollection.com/artwork/man-with-a-sword/>.

- 9 <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/548344>.
- 10 <https://www.theleidencollection.com/artwork/a-woman-with-three-children-and-a-goat-2/>.
- 11 Ferguson 1998, 358–63.
- 12 McAuley 2021, 165–66.
- 13 Smith 1836, 272–73.
- 14 “Ein starke Anflug von Jüdelei.” Quoted in Zell 2001, 43, with a good discussion.
- 15 “Eigenthümlich genug zeigt sich endlich die Vornehmheit Rembrandt’s in—seiner Vorliebe für die Juden. [...] Ein echter und altgläubiger Jude hat unverkennbar etwas Vornehmes an sich; er gehört zu jener uralten sittlichen und geistigen Aristokratie, von der die meisten modernen Juden afgewichen sind; [...] Rembrandt’s Juden waren echte Juden; die nichts Anderes sein wollten als Juden; und die also Charakter hatten. Von fast allen heutigen Juden gilt das Gegentheil; sie wollen Deutsche Engländer Franzosen u.s.w. sein; und werden dadurch nur charakterlos. Nichts aber ist schlimmer als Charakterlosigkeit; sie ist das Verbrechen aller Verbrechen; sie ist die Sünde gegen den heiligen Geist—das Individualismus—die nicht vergeben wird.” Langbehn 1890, in a copy of the 28th printing, my copy, 41–42.
- 16 Jahn 2018.
- 17 McAuley 2021, 188.
- 18 I was led to the detailed information on this painting by Katja Kleinert, curator of Dutch and Flemish painting of the seventeenth century at the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, to whom kind thanks.
- 19 Drumont 1886.
- 20 Schwartz 2019, 31–42.
- 21 Schmidt-Degener 1908.
- 22 “On vient de vendre la collection Kann, l’une des plus célèbres de Paris. Elle a dépassé les deux millions. L’organe de la brocante international, partant des marchands juifs surtout, le New-York Herald, célèbre avec bruit ce ‘record.’  
 “Cependant, les gens raisonnables ne regarderont cette vente comme un record ni de bon goût chez les acheteurs, ni de choix de la part du collectionneur. Ce que nous avons vu mercredi exposé chez Petit, était quelque chose d’abominablement mêlé quant au mérite, quant à l’état, même quant à l’authenticité des pièces.  
 “C’était tout à fait cela. Le goût des arts au fond est étranger à la formation de ces collections. Un besoin de trafiquer, quelque pratique de marchand, une expérience de surface: tout tout. Dans la collection juive, j’entends dans la meilleure, rien davantage en général. [...] Quant aux ceux qui achètent un Rembrandt, ceux-là ont dans l’idée qu’ils accomplissent un grand acte. Ils se font à eux-mêmes l’effet de gens sérieux, de protecteurs des arts, de penseurs même et de philosophes.  
 “Je ne dis pas que tel soit nécessairement le cas. Rembrandt est admirable, et il reste assez de goût dans le monde pour lui maintenir des amateurs sincères. Mais je jure bien que ceux-là n’achètent pas les Rembrandt de Kann. La brocante l’a choisi, le snobisme l’achète.” Dimier 1911.
- 23 Holler and Klose-Ullman 2010.
- 24 Rosenberg 1964, 113.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Gary Schwartz** attended Jewish day schools in New York before he took up the study of art history in US universities. He moved to the Netherlands in 1965, where he has been active as a publisher as well as an art historian. Rembrandt has been a major focus of his attention since the 1960s. In 2009 he was awarded the triannual Prince Bernhard Culture Fund Prize for the Humanities.

# Acknowledgments

The idea of holding an exhibition on Rembrandt and things Jewish came up in the minds of two curators of the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow not long after its founding in 2013. And so, in 2017, Maria Nasimova and Liya Chechik approached Mirjam Knotter, chief curator of the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam, with the request that she take on the guest curatorship of an exhibition on Rembrandt and his relationship to Jews and Judaism. Having long collaborated on this subject with Gary Schwartz, Mirjam suggested to the museum that he take on the main curatorial task. In order to create an exhibition that would not be a repetition of *The “Jewish” Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*, held in the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam in 2007, Gary proposed to reverse the viewpoint and thus consider *Rembrandt Seen Through Jewish Eyes*. This approach opened exciting new opportunities.

At the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, under the leadership of Alexander Boroda and Kristina Krasnyanskaya, it was Liya Chechik who held the reins, with the excellent assistance of Maria Tarasevich as registrar. Kira Kheyfets, Maria Gadas and Marina Bragina made key contributions at various stages in the work. We drew on our research over the past decades and on the network of colleagues we had built up, to assemble an advisory board of specialists in Rembrandt research and Jewish studies. It cost us no trouble to enlist the aid of those we approached. We met with universal interest and enthusiasm, which extended to the curators and museum directors from whom we requested loans. By the original schedule, the exhibition was to open in the fall of 2020. Because construction of the new hall in the museum for which the exhibition was planned was delayed, in 2019 the opening date was extended by a year. Then, in March 2020, came the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, with its lockdowns and disturbances. Another year was added, for an opening date of 19 October 2022.

As work proceeded, the project took on a larger form than an exhibition and catalogue. It was decided that the actual catalogue would be brought out only in Russian, for home visitors. For the worldwide audience we anticipate for the subject, we decided to assemble a volume of essays in English, the publication you have in hand. A four-part plan for discussing the materials was drafted, and several members of the advisory board were asked to join us in writing essays on the themes within them. To help things along, and to generate outside interest, the authors were invited to deliver the gist of what they had to say in an online webinar, which was held on four consecutive Mondays, from 24 January to 14 February 2022. It was attended by hundreds of

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

viewers, from whom we received heartwarming thanks. The sessions were recorded and can be viewed on the YouTube page of the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center. The three sessions delivered in English can be listened to with a Russian voice-over, and the Russian session with English.

After two years of travel restrictions, Liya Chechik was finally able to come to the Netherlands for a meeting on 23 February 2022. That night saw the launch of what Russian officials insist on calling a “special military operation” in Ukraine, and the environment in which we had been working harmoniously for five years was shattered. On 28 February the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center decided not to cancel the exhibition, nor to wait for withdrawals of all the loan consents we had brought in, but to postpone the exhibition indefinitely. Work on the English- and Russian-language publications continued, as did preparations for the exhibition. What will become of these plans, only time will tell. In the meanwhile, we are highly gratified that the project has borne fruit in the webinar and the present volume.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many colleagues, collectors and museums who have supported this project from the start: in the first place, the boards and directors of the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center and the Jewish Cultural Quarter, and the authors of the present volume. In the person of publisher Anja van Leusden of Amsterdam University Press, we immediately found an enthusiastic partner for the publication of this book with a selection of essays as the result of the 2022 webinar, beautifully designed by Margreet van de Burgt.

Rembrandt studies and Jewish studies are fields full of contention. In linking them, we took the risk of multiplying these effects. To our great relief and satisfaction, this has not happened. In part this was because the concept of our book called on us to inspect the opinions and doings of the Jews we cite without criticizing or contradicting them. In greater measure, as we see it, polemics were avoided because the authors and others we consulted entered into the spirit of our enquiry in a positive frame of mind and sympathy for the subject. It has been a pleasure.



# Bibliography\*

- A**
- van Agt 1974**  
J.F. van Agt, *Synagogen in Amsterdam*, The Hague (Staatsuitgeverij) 1974
- Alexander-Knotter 1999**  
Mirjam Alexander-Knotter, "An Ingenious Device: Rembrandt's Use of Hebrew Inscriptions," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 33 (1999), 131–59
- Alexander-Knotter 2009**  
Mirjam Alexander-Knotter, "Rembrandt's Hebrew," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 51 (2009), 25–32
- Amishai-Maisels 1982**  
Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "The Jewish Jesus," *Journal of Jewish Art* 9 (1982), 84–104
- Amsterdam 1987**  
Renée Kistemaker, Tirtsah Levie, Jan Baart, eds., exhib. cat. *Exodo: Portugezen in Amsterdam 1600–1680*, Amsterdam (Amsterdams Historisch Museum and De Bataafsche Leeuw) 1987
- Amsterdam 1996**  
Peter van der Coelen, ed., exhib. cat. *Patriarchs, Angels and Prophets: The Old Testament in Netherlandish Printmaking from Lucas van Leyden to Rembrandt*, Amsterdam (Museum het Rembrandthuis) 1996
- Amsterdam 2007**  
Mirjam Alexander-Knotter, Jasper Hillegers and Edward van Voolen, eds., with an afterword by Gary Schwartz, exhib. cat. *The "Jewish" Rembrandt: The Myth Unravelling*, Amsterdam (Jewish Historical Museum) and Zwolle (Uitgeverij Waanders) 2007
- Amsterdam 2008**  
Vincent Boele, Esther Schreuder and Elmer Kolfin, eds., exhib. cat. *Black is Beautiful: Rubens to Dumas*, Amsterdam (Nieuwe Kerk) and Zwolle (Waanders) 2008
- Amsterdam 2011**  
Sharon Assaf and Emily D. Bilski, exhib. cat. *Salom Italia's Esther Scrolls and the Dutch Golden Age*, Amsterdam (Joods Historisch Museum and Menasseh ben Israel Instituut) 2011
- Amsterdam 2015**  
Mirjam Knotter, exhib. cat. *R. B. Kitaj. Unpacking my Library*, Amsterdam (Jewish Historical Museum) 2015
- Amsterdam 2020**  
Elmer Kolfin and Epcó Runia, eds., exhib. cat. *Black in Rembrandt's Time*, Amsterdam (Museum het Rembrandthuis) and Zwolle (WBooks) 2020
- Amsterdam 2021**  
Eveline Sint Nicolaas and Valika Smeulders et al., exhib. cat. *Slavery: The Story of João, Wally, Oopen, Paulus, van Bengalen, Surapati, Sapali, Tula, Dirk, Lohkay*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) and Amsterdam/Antwerp (Atlas Contact) 2021
- Angel 1996**  
"Philips Angel, Praise of Painting," trans. Michael Hoyle, with an introduction and commentary by Hessel Miedema, *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 24/2–3 (1996), 227–74
- Appadurai 1995**  
Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis/London (University of Minnesota Press) 1995, 178–204
- Archangel 2020**  
Stephanie Archangel, "As If They Were Mere Beasts," in *Amsterdam 2020*, 66–79
- van Asselt 2001**  
Willem J. van Asselt, *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603–69)*, trans. Raymond A. Blacketer, Leiden (Brill) 2001
- B**
- Baigell 2006**  
Matthew Baigell, *American Artists, Jewish Images*, Syracuse (Syracuse University Press) 2006
- Baraude 1933**  
Henri Baraude, *Lopez: Agent financier et confident de Richelieu*, Paris (Editions de la "Revue Mondiale") 1933
- Baskind 2004**  
Samantha Baskind, *Raphael Soyfer and the Search for Modern Jewish Art*, Chapel Hill, NC (North Carolina University Press) 2004
- Baskind 2014**  
Samantha Baskind, *Jewish Artists and the Bible in Twentieth-Century America*, University Park, PA (Penn State University Press) 2014
- Bassehes 1976**  
A. Bassehes, *Nash Rembrandt, Za sorok let: Sbornik izbrannih iskusstvedcheskih rabot* (Our Rembrandt: A Collection of Essays on Art History), Moscow (Sovetsky hudojnik) 1976

\* An increasing number of titles is available online, some exclusively so. In the Bibliography we signal those we have consulted online, but have not printed their urls since they tend to lose their validity. We advise readers to perform searches of their own for publications that interest them.

- Beelthouwer 1666**  
Jan Pietersz. Beelthouwer, *Schuld der Christenen tegen alle onchristenen*, 2d ed., Amsterdam (Nicolaes van Ravensteyn) 1666
- Behr 1955–59**  
Alexander Behr, “The Iconography of Menasseh Ben Israel,” *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 19 (1955–59), ii, 191–98
- Benesch 1973**  
Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt: Complete Edition in Six Volumes*, enlarged and edited by Eva Benesch, London (Phaidon) 1973
- Berlin 1979**  
Sigrid Achenbach and Matthias Eberle, eds., exhib. cat. *Max Liebermann in seiner Zeit*, Berlin (Nationalgalerie) 1979
- Berlin 1980**  
Isaiah Berlin, *Meetings with Russian Writers in 1945 and 1956*, London (The Hogarth Press) 1980
- Berlin-Tefen 2007**  
Ruthi Ofek and Chana Schütz, eds., exhib. cat. *Hermann Struck (1876–1944)*, Berlin (Stiftung Neue Synagoge) and Tefen, Israel (Open Museum) 2007
- Blakely 1993**  
Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World: The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society*, Bloomington, IN (Indiana University Press) 1993
- Blanc 1853**  
Charles Blanc, *L'oeuvre de Rembrandt reproduit par la photographie*, Paris (Gide et J. Baudry) 1853 (online on inha.fr, the website of the Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris.)
- Blanc 1859–61**  
Charles Blanc, *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt*, 2 vols., Paris (Gide) 1859–61
- Blanc 2021**  
Jan Blanc, “Why Rembrandt?,” in Stephanie Dickey and Jochen Sander, eds., exhib. cat. *Rembrandt in Amsterdam*, Ottawa (National Gallery of Canada) and Frankfurt (Städel Museum) 2021, 347–55
- Bloom 1937**  
Herbert Ivan Bloom, *The Economic Activity of the Jews of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Port Washington, NY (Bayard Press) 1937
- Bodian 1997**  
Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam*, Bloomington, IN (Indiana University Press) 1997
- Boston 2015**  
Ronni Baer, ed., exhib. cat. *Class Distinctions: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer*, Boston (Museum of Fine Arts) 2015
- Bray 1819**  
William Bray, ed., *Memoirs, Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Evelyn, Comprising his Diary, from ... 1641 to 1705–6, and a Selection of his Familiar Letters*, 2nd ed., London (H. Colburn) 1819
- Bredius 1915–21**  
Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare: Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, 6 vols., The Hague (Martinus Nijhoff) 1915–21
- Bredius [1937]**  
A. [Abraham] Bredius, *The Paintings of Rembrandt*, Vienna (Phaidon) and New York (Oxford University Press) undated but published ca. 1937
- Bredius 1939**  
Abraham Bredius, “Archiefsprokkelingen: Symon Jansz.,” *Oud Holland* 56 (1939), 198
- Bredius and de Roever 1886**  
Abraham Bredius and Nicolaes de Roever, “Pieter Lastman en François Venant,” *Oud-Holland* 4 (1886), 1–23
- Bredius-Gerson 1969**  
A. [Abraham] Bredius, *Rembrandt: The Complete Edition of the Paintings*, revised by H. [Horst] Gerson, London (Phaidon) 1969
- Brereton 1844**  
William Brereton, *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1634–1635*, vol. 1, ed. Edward Hawkins, London (Chetham Society) 1844
- Brienen 2007–8**  
Rebecca Parker-Brienen, “Embodying Race and Pleasure: Dirk Valkenburg’s Slave Dance,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 58 (2007–8), 242–64
- Brusati and Jacobs 2021**  
Celeste Brusati, ed., *Samuel van Hoogstraten’s Introduction to the Academy of Painting; or, The Visible World*, trans. Jaap Jacobs, Los Angeles (Getty Research Institute) 2021
- Bruyn et al. 1989**  
Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 3, 1635–1642, trans. D. Cook–Radmore, Dordrecht/Boston/London (Martinus Nijhoff) 1989
- Buxtorf 1603**  
Johannes Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica: das ist, Jüden Schul darinnen der gantz Jüdische Glaub und Glaubensubung*, Basel (S. Henricpetri) 1603
- C**
- Cahn 2008**  
Walter Cahn, “Max Liebermann and the Amsterdam Jewish Quarter,” in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp 2008, 208–27
- Chagall 1989**  
Marc Chagall, *My Life (Oxford Letters & Memoirs)*, trans. Dorothy Williams, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1989
- Chagall 2000**  
Marc Chagall, *Moya jizn (My Life)*, St. Petersburg (Azбуka), 2000
- Cohen 1998**  
Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe*, Berkeley, CA (University of California Press) 1998
- Cohen 2004**  
Julie-Marthe Cohen, “The Inventory of Ceremonial Objects of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam of 1640,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 37 (2004), 225–307
- Cohen 2008**  
Richard I. Cohen, “The ‘Wandering Jew’ from Medieval Legend to Modern Metaphor,” in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp 2008, 147–75
- Cohen 2012**  
Richard I. Cohen, “Authority and its Discontent in 17th-Century Amsterdam Jewry: Fin-de-Siècle Interpretations,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 44 (2012), 45–77
- Cohen, Kröger and Schrijver 2004**  
Julie-Marthe Cohen, Jelka Kröger and Emile Schrijver, eds., *Gifts from the Heart: Jewish Ceremonial Objects from the Jewish Historical Museum*, Amsterdam (Joods Historisch Museum) and Zwolle (Waanders) 2004
- Cohen and Rajner 2015**  
Richard I. Cohen and Mirjam Rajner, “Invoking Samuel Hirszenberg’s Artis-

- tic Legacy: Encountering *Exile*,” *Images* 8 (2015), 1–19
- Cohen and Rajner 2022**  
Richard I. Cohan and Mirjam Rajner, *Samuel Hirszenberg, 1865–1908*, London (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization) 2022
- Crenshaw 2006**  
Paul Crenshaw, *Rembrandt’s Bankruptcy: The Artist, His Patrons, and the Art Market in Seventeenth-Century Netherlands*, Cambridge/New York (Cambridge University Press) 2006
- D**
- Davis 2002**  
Joseph Davis, “The Reception of the “Shulhan Arukh” and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity,” *AJS Review* 26 (2002), 251–76
- Davis 2016**  
Natalie Zemon Davis, “Regaining Jerusalem: Eschatology and Slavery in Jewish Colonization in Seventeenth-Century Suriname,” *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 3 (2016), 11–38
- DeWitt 2017**  
Lloyd DeWitt, “A Rediscovered Head of John the Baptist on a Platter from Rembrandt’s Studio,” in Stephanie S. Dickey, ed., *Rembrandt and his Circle: Insights and Discoveries*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2017, 223–29
- Dimier 1911**  
L. [Louis] Dimier, “Les collections juives,” *L’Action française*, 11 June 1911
- Dittrich 1971**  
Christian Dittrich, “Der ‘Rembrandt graveur’ des Johan Heinrich von Heucher,” *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* 25 (1971), 53–78
- Drumont 1886**  
Edouard Dumont, *La France juive: essai d’histoire contemporaine*, Paris (C. Marpon et E. Flammarion) 1886. Online
- Dudok van Heel 1985**  
S.A.C. [Sebastien] Dudok van Heel, “De schilder Nicolaes Elias. Pickenoy (1588–1650/56) en zijn familie: Een geslacht van wapensteensnijders, gouden zilvermeden te Amsterdam,” in C.P. Briët and N. Plomp, eds., *Liber amicorum jhr. mr. C. C. van Valkenburg*, The Hague (Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie) 1985, 152–60
- Dudok van Heel 1990**  
S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, “In de kelder van Rembrandt: Bij een nieuw Rembrandt document,” *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* 90 (1990), 3–4
- Dudok van Heel 1991**  
S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, “Gestommel in het huis van Rembrandt van Rijn: Bij twee nieuwe Rembrandt-akten over het opvijzelen van het huis van zijn buurman Daniel Pinto in 1653,” *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* 91 (1991), 3–13
- Dudok van Heel 1994**  
S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, “Rembrandt en Menasseh ben Israel,” *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* 93, 22–29
- Dudok van Heel 2006**  
S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt onder tijdgenoten: Godsdienst en schilderkunst in Leiden en Amsterdam*, PhD dissertation, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen, Rotterdam (Veenman) 2006
- Duffy and Hedley 2004**  
Stephen Duffy and Jo Hedley, *The Wallace Collection’s Pictures: A Complete Catalogue*, London (Unicorn) 2004
- Dutuit 1883**  
Eugène Dutuit, *L’Oeuvre complet de Rembrandt*, 2 vols., Paris (A. Lévy) 1883
- Dyserinck 1904**  
Johannes Dyserinck, “Eene Hebreuwsche inscriptie op eene schilderij van Rembrandt,” *De Nederlandsche Spectator* 49 (1904), 160–61
- E**
- Eberle 1979**  
Matthias Eberle, “Max Liebermann zwischen Tradition und Opposition,” in Berlin 1979, 11–40
- van Eeghen 1959**  
I.H. [Isabelle Henriëtta] van Eeghen, “Waar woonde Rembrandt in zijn eerste Amsterdamse jaren?,” *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 46 (1959), 151–53
- van Eeghen 1986**  
I.H. van Eeghen, “Over Rembrandt de schilder,” *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 73 (1986), 23
- Egmond 1993**  
Florike Egmond, “Contours of Identity: Poor Ashkenazim in the Dutch Re-public,” in Jozeph Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History III*, Jerusalem (Institute for Research on Dutch Jewry) and Assen/Maastricht (Van Gorcum) 1993, 205–25
- Elkonin 1989**  
Victor Elkonin, “Vospominania” (Memories), *Panorama 3: Sovetsky hudojnik* (The Soviet Artist), 1989
- Emmer 2006**  
Pieter C. Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500–1850*, trans. Chris Emery, New York/Oxford (Berghahn Books) 2006
- L’Empereur de Oppyck 1630**  
Constantinus L’Empereur de Oppyck, *Masekhet middot mitalmud bavli: hoc est, Talmudis Babylonici codex Middoth sive De mensuris templi*, Leiden (Bonaventura and Abraham II Elzevier) 1630 (Hebrew)
- Encyclopedia Judaica 1972**  
*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, New York (Macmillan) 1972
- Engel 2017**  
David Engel, “The New Jewish Politics,” in Mitchell Hart and Tony Michels, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 8: *The Modern World, 1815–2000*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2017, 363–89
- F**
- Falk 1981**  
Robert Falk, *Besedi o iskusstve. Pisma: Vospominania o hudojnikе* (Conversations about Art. Letters: Memories of an Artist), ed. A. Shekin-Krotova, Moscow (Sovetsky hudojnik) 1981
- Ferguson 1998**  
Niall Ferguson, *The World’s Banker: The History of the House of Rothschild*, London (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) 1998
- Fisher 2012**  
Benjamin Fisher, “Opening the Eyes of the ‘Novos Reformados’: Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira, Radical Christianity, and the Jewish Reclamation of Jesus, 1620–1660,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 44 (2012): *Mapping Jewish Amsterdam: The Early Modern Perspective*, 117–48
- Ford 2002**  
Charles Ford, “People as Property,” *Oxford Art Journal* 25 (2002), 1–16
- Frederiks and Frederiks 1890**  
J.G. Frederiks and P.J. Frederiks P.J., *Kohier van den tweehonderdsten penning*

- voor Amsterdam en onderhoorige plaatsen over 1631, Amsterdam (Koninklijk Oudeheidkundig Genootschap te Amsterdam) 1890
- G**
- Gaehtgens 1987**  
Barbara Gaehtgens, *Adriaen van der Werff*, Munich (Deutscher Kunstverlag) 1987
- Gans 1971a**  
Moses Gans, *Memorboek: Platenatlas van het leven der joden in Nederland van de middeleeuwen tot 1940*, Baarn (Bosch & Keuning) 1971
- Gans 1971b**  
Mozes Heiman Gans, *Memorboek: History of Dutch Jewry from the Renaissance to 1940*, Baarn (Bosch & Keuning) 1971
- Garel 1987**  
Michel Garel, "De eerste in het Hebreuws gedrukte kaart van het Heilige Land (Amsterdam, 1620/21)," in Renée Kistemaker and Tirtsah Levi, exhib. cat. *Exodo: Portugezen in Amsterdam 1600–1680*, Amsterdam (Amsterdams Historisch Museum and De Bataafsche Leeuw) 1987, 64–69
- Gass 1990**  
Boris Gass, "Ch. N. Bialik and L.O. Pasternak," in *Pasinki vremennih otchizn* (Stepchildren of Temporary Homelands), Tel Aviv 1990. Online
- Gebhardt 1927**  
Carl Gebhardt, "Rembrandt und Spinoza: Stilgeschichtliche Betrachtungen zum Barock-Problem," *Kant-Studien* 32 (1927), 161–81
- van Gelder and van Gelder-Schrijver 1938**  
J.G. van Gelder and N.F. van Gelder-Schrijver, "De 'Memorie' van Rembrandt's prenten in het bezit van Valerius Röver," *Oud Holland* 55 (1938), 1–16
- Georgi 1794**  
Johann Gottlieb Georgi, *Opisanie Rossijsko-imperatorskogo stolichnogo goroda Sankt-Peterburga...* (A Description of the Russian Imperial Capital City of St. Petersburg [...]), Part II, St. Petersburg 1794, 484f.
- Gersaint 1751**  
Edmé-François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné de toutes les pièces qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt*, Paris (Helle & Glomy) 1751
- Gibian 1988**  
George Gibian, "Leonid Pasternak i Boris Pasternak: polemika otza i sina" (Leonid Pasternak and Boris Pasternak: The Father and Son Controversy), *Voprosy literatury* (Problems of Literature) 9 (1988)
- Glants 2010**  
Musya Glants, *Where Is My Home? The Art and Life of the Russian Jewish Sculptor Mark Antokolsky, 1843–1902*, Lanham, MD (Lexington Books) 2010
- Golahny 2003**  
Amy Golahny, *Rembrandt's Reading: The Artist's Bookshelf of Ancient Poetry and History*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2003
- Goldish 2010–11**  
Matt Goldish, "Perspectives on Uriel da Costa's 'Example of a Human Life,'" *Studia Rosenthaliana* 42/43 (2010–11): *Reading Texts on Jews and Judaism in the Low Countries*, 1–23
- Gor and Petrov 1955**  
G.S. (Gennady) Gor and V. (Vsevolod) Petrov, *Vasily Surikov, 1848–1916*, Moscow (Molodaya Gvardiya) 1955
- Gottwald 2011**  
Franziska Gottwald, *Das Tronie. Muster, Studie und Meisterwerk: Die Genese einer Gattung der Malerei vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zu Rembrandt*, Munich (Deutscher Kunstverlag) 2011
- Graetz 1893**  
Heinrich Graetz, *The History of the Jews*, 5 vols., Philadelphia (Jewish Publication Society of America) 1893
- Grafmann and Mann 1996**  
Rafi Grafmann, Vivian Mann, ed., *Crowning Glory: Silver Torah Ornaments of the Jewish Museum, New York*, Boston (David R. Godine) 1996
- Groningen-Amsterdam 1999**  
Dieuwertje Dekkers, ed., exhib. cat. *Jozef Israëls, 1824–1911*, Groningen (Groningen Museum) and Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) 1999
- De Groot (1976)**  
D. de Groot, "Een archiefvondst," *Jaarboek Amstelodamum*, 68 (1976), 73–77
- Guston 2022**  
Philip Guston, *I Paint What I Want to See*, Harmondsworth (Penguin Classic) 2022
- H**
- Hagoort 2005**  
Lydia Hagoort, *Het Beth Haim in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel: De begraaftplaats van de Portugese Joden in Amsterdam 1614–1945*, Hilversum (Verloren) 2005
- Hagoort and Pieterse n.d.**  
Lydia Hagoort and Wilhelmina Chr. Pieterse, eds., *Livro de Bet-Haim do Kahal Kados de Talmud-Torah*, Stadsarchief Amsterdam: online on the website of the Amsterdam city archive, www.amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief
- Hall 1994**  
Michael Hall, "The English Rothschilds as Collectors," in Georg Heuberger, ed., *The Rothschilds: Essays on the History of a European Family*, Rochester, NY (University of Rochester Press) 1994
- Harshav 2003**  
Benjamin Harshav, *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture*, Stanford, CA (Stanford University Press) 2003
- Harshav 2004**  
Benjamin Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times: A Documentary Narrative*, Stanford, CA (Stanford University Press) 2004
- Hausherr 1963**  
Reiner Hausherr, "Zur Menetekel-Inschrift auf Rembrandt's Belsazarbild," *Oud Holland* 78 (1963), 142–49
- Haverkamp-Begemann 1992–93**  
Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, "Rembrandt's Simeon and the Christ Child," in exhib. cat. *Rembrandt och hans tid: Människan i centrum/Rembrandt and His Age: Focus on Man*, Stockholm (National Museum) 1992–93
- Hekman and de Ligt 2011**  
Bauke Hekman and Bas de Ligt, "De inventaris van de boedel in het woonhuis van Focquenbrochs vader (1649)," *Fumus* 9 (2011), 19–27
- Hell 2022a**  
Maarten Hell, ed., *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 114: *Alle Amsterdamse akten: Ruzie, rouw en roddels bij de notaris, 1578–1915*, Amsterdam (Virtùmedia/Genootschap Amstelodamum) 2022
- Hell 2022b**  
Maarten Hell, "A Walk Around the Block on Vlooienburg (1650–1700): People, Places and Property in the Jewish Neighborhood of Amsterdam," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 48 (2022) 53–79

**Hillegers 2018**

Jasper Hillegers, “A Painter Goes to the Rabbi: Rembrandt and Menasseh ben Israel,” in exhib. cat. *In Rembrandt’s Social Network: Family, Friends and Acquaintances*, Amsterdam (Museum het Rembrandthuis), 113–17

**Hinterding and Rutgers 2013**

Erik Hinterding and Jaco Rutgers, *Rembrandt*, 7 vols., *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450–1700*, Amsterdam (Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum) and Ouderkerk aan den IJssel (Sound & Vision Publishers) 2013

**Hildesheimer 1985**

Françoise Hildesheimer, “Une créature de Richelieu: Alphonse Lopez, le ‘Seigneur Hebreo,’” in Gilbert Dahan, ed., *Les Juifs au regard de l’histoire: mélanges en honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz*, Paris (Picard) 1985, 293–99

**Hirschfelder 2008**

Dagmar Hirschfelder, *Tronie und Porträt in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin (Gebr. Mann) 2008

**Hirschfelder and Krempel 2014**

Dagmar Hirschfelder and León Krempel, eds., *Tronies: das Gesicht in der frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin (Gebr. Mann) 2014

**Hofstede de Groot 1906**

Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *Urkunden über Rembrandt: Neu Herausgegeben und Commentirt*, The Hague (Nijhoff) 1906

**Holler and Klose-Ullman 2010**

Manfred J. Holler and Barbara Klose-Ullman, “Art Goes America,” *Journal of Economic Issues* 44 (2010), 89–112

**Hondius 2008**

Dienke Hondius, “Black Africans in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” in *Sub-Saharan Africa and Renaissance and Reformation Europe: New Findings and New Perspectives*, ed. Kate Lowe, special issue, *Renaissance and Reformation* 31 (2008), 89–109

**van Hoogstraten 1678**

Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilder-konst: anders de zichtbare werelt*, Rotterdam (François van Hoogstraeten) 1678

**Howell/Jacobs 1890**

Joseph Jacobs, *Epistolae Ho-Elianae; The Familiar Letters of James Howell*, London (Davis Nutt) 1890

**Hunter 1989**

Sam Hunter, *Larry Rivers*, New York (Rizzoli) 1989

**I**

**Ifrah 2001**

Lionel Ifrah, *L’Aigle d’Amsterdam: Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657)*, Paris (Honoré Champion) 2001

**Israel 2017**

Jonathan Israel, “De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden tot omstreeks 1750: demografie en economische activiteit,” *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, 2nd ed., Amsterdam (Balans) 2017

**Israëls 1906**

Jozef Israëls, *Rembrandt*, London (T.C. & E.C. Jack) 1906 or later

**J**

**Jacobsen Jensen 1912**

Jens Nicolaas Jacobsen Jensen, “Hoe een franschman ons land in 1636 zag,” *Onze Eeuw* 12 (1912), 97–115

**de Jager 1990**

Ronald de Jager, “Meester, leerjungen, leertijd: Een analyse van zeventiende-eeuwse Noord-Nederlandse leerlingcontracten van kunstschilders, goud- en zilversmeden,” *Oud Holland* 104/2 (1990), 69–111

**Jahn 2018**

Bruno Jahn, *Der Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein und seine ehemaligen jüdischen Mitglieder/Mitglieder jüdischer Herkunft*, Berlin 2018

**Jones 2021**

Jonathan Jones, “Rembrandt and Slavery: Did the Great Painter Have Links to this Abhorrent Trade?,” *The Guardian*, 9 February 2021. Online

**de Jong 1956**

David de Jong, *Rembrandt, Vorst der schilders*, Amsterdam (Contact) 1956

**K**

**Kahr 1966**

Madlyn Kahr, “Rembrandt’s Esther: A Painting and an Etching Newly Interpreted and Dated,” *Oud Holland* 81/4 (1966), 228–44

**Kandinsky (Nina) 2017**

Nina Kandinsky, *Kandinsky i ya* (Kandinsky and Me), Moscow (Iskusstvo – XXI vek) 2017

**Kandinsky (Wassily) 2003**

Wassily Kandinsky, *Stupeni: Tochka i linia na ploskosti* (Steps: Point and Line to Plane), Moscow (Azbuka-klassika) 2003

**Kantor 2016**

Maxim Kantor, *Chertopoloh: Filosofia jivopisi* (The Thistle: A Philosophy of Painting), Moscow (AST) 2016

**Kaplan 1987**

Yosef Kaplan, “The Attitude of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews to the Ashkenazic Jews in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam,” in Shmuel Almog, Israel Bartal Michael Graetz, eds., *Transition and Change in Modern Jewish History: Essays Presented in Honor of Shmuel Eitinger*, Jerusalem (Zalman Shazar Center/Historical Society of Israel) 1987, 389–412 (Hebrew)

**Kaplan 1998**

Yosef Kaplan, “For Whom did Emanuel de Witte Paint his Three Pictures of the Sephardic Synagogue in Amsterdam?,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 32/2 (1998), 133–54

**Kaplan 2000**

Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe*, Leiden/Boston/Cologne (Brill) 2000

**Kaplan 2002**

Yosef Kaplan, “Bom Judesmo: The Western Sephardic Diaspora,” in David Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, New York (Schocken Books) 2002, 639–70

**Kaplan 2021**

Yosef Kaplan, “The Jews in the Republic Until About 1750: Religious, Cultural, and Social Life,” in Hans Blom, David J. Wertheim, Hetty Berg and Bart T. Wallet, eds., *Reappraising the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, London (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization) 2021, 105–71

**Kaplan, Méchoulán and Popkin 1989**

Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulán and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Menasseh ben Israel and his World*, Leiden (Brill) 1989

**Karasik 2001**

Irina Karasik, ed., *Russky avantgarde: problem reprezentazii I interpreta-zii*, *Sbornik po materialam konferenzii, posviashennoi vistavke “Muzei v muzee. Russky avantgarde iz Muzeia hudozhestvennoy kulturi v Sobranie Gosudarstven-*

- nogo Russkogo muzeya* (The Objectives of Representation and Interpretation: [the collected conference materials]), St. Petersburg (Russian Museum and Palace Editions) 2001
- Katchen 1984**  
Aaron Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth-Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides* "Mishneh Torah," Cambridge, MA (Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies) 1984
- Katz and Israel 1990**  
Daniel S. Katz, Jonathan I. Israel and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews*, Leiden (Brill) 1990
- Kaufmann and Freudenthal 1907**  
David Kaufmann and Max Freudenthal, *Die Familie Gomperz: Zur Geschichte jüdischer Familien III*, Frankfurt am Main (J. Kaufmann) 1907
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp 2008**  
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp, eds., *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania Press) 2008
- Kitaj 1984**  
R.B. Kitaj, *First Diasporist Manifesto*, London (Thames & Hudson) 1989
- Kitaj 2007**  
R.B. Kitaj, *Second Diasporist Manifesto*, New Haven, CT (Yale University Press) 2007
- Kitaj 2017**  
R.B. Kitaj, *Confessions of an Old Jewish Painter*, Munich (Schirmer-Mozel) 2017
- Kitschen 2019**  
Friederike Kitschen, "Making the Canon Visible: Art Historical Book Series in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Larry Silver and Kevin Terraciano, eds., *Canons and Values*, Los Angeles (Getty Publications) 2019, 216–44
- Kolfin 1997**  
Elmer Kolfin, "Van de slavenzweep en de muzen: Twee eeuwen verbeeldingen van slavernij in Suriname," Leiden (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Press) 1997
- Kolfin 2008**  
Elmer Kolfin, "Black Models in Dutch Art between 1580 and 1800: Fact and Fiction," in Amsterdam 2008, 70–87
- Kolfin 2010**  
Elmer Kolfin, "Rembrandt's Africans," in David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds., *The Image of the Black in Western Art, From the "Age of Discovery" to the Age of Abolition: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque*, Vol. III, part 1, Cambridge, MA/London (Belknap Press) 2010, 271–306
- Kolfin 2020a**  
"Black by Rembrandt," in Amsterdam 2020, 10–11
- Kolfin 2020b**  
"Black in the Art of Rembrandt's Time," in Amsterdam 2020, 12–42
- Kolfin 2021a**  
Elmer Kolfin, "Reflections on the Black Servant in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and History," in Harvard Art Museums, "De-centering/Re-centering: Forging New Museological and Historical Narratives—the Art Museum and the Legacies of the Dutch Slave Trade: Curating Histories, Envisioning Futures: Part 2," 16 April 2021. (online on harvardartmuseums.org)
- Kolfin 2021b**  
Elmer Kolfin, "Out of the Shadows and Into the Light: Black Figures in the Art of Rembrandt's Time," The 2021 Isabel and Alfred Bader Lecture in European Art, 4 June 2021, The Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queens University, Kingston, ON, Canada. Online
- Konchalovskaya 1969**  
Natalya Konchalovskaya, *Dar bestsennyj* (Priceless gift), Moscow 1969 (online at <https://www.rulit.me/books/dar-bestsennyj-read-199935-135.html>)
- L**
- Lammertse and van der Veen 2006**  
Uylenburgh & Son: *Art and Commerce from Rembrandt to De Laïresse, 1625-1675*, Amsterdam (The Rembrandthouse Museum) and Zwolle (Waanders) 2006
- Landsberger 1943**  
Franz Landsberger, "New Studies in Early Jewish Artists," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 18 (1943), 279–318
- Landsberger 1946**  
Franz Landsberger, *Rembrandt, the Jews, and the Bible*, Philadelphia (Jewish Publication Society of America) 1946
- Landsberger 1946/1961**  
Franz Landsberger, *Rembrandt, the Jews, and the Bible*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia (Jewish Publication Society of America) 1961
- Langbehn 1890**  
[Julius Langbehn] Von einem Deutschen, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, Leipzig (Verlag von G.L. Hirschfeld) 1890
- Lebedeva 1983**  
Tatyana Lebedeva, "Kartini I hudojniki: Nabroski vospominanij" (Paintings and Artists: Sketches of Memoirs), *Panorama iskusstv* (Panorama of the Arts) 5 (1983), 179–210
- Lee 1659**  
Samuel Lee, *Orbis Miraculum or The Temple of Solomon pourtrayed by Scripture-Light*, London (Printed by John Streater for Thomas Basset) 1659
- de Leeuw 1999**  
Ronald de Leeuw, "Jozef Israëls and Rembrandt," in Groningen-Amsterdam 1999, 42–53
- Leon 1642**  
Iacob Iehvda Leon Ebreo, *Afbeeldinghe vanden Tempel Salomonis [...]*, Middelburg (Symon Moulert) 1642
- Levie Bernfeld 2012a**  
Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare Among the Portuguese Jews in Early Modern Amsterdam*, Oxford/Portland, OR (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization) 2012
- Levie Bernfeld 2012b**  
Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, "Matters Matter: Material Culture of Dutch Sephardim (1600–1750)," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 44 (2012): *Mapping Jewish Amsterdam: The Early Modern Perspective*, 191–216
- Levie Bernfeld 2020**  
Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, "Masters, Maids and Mistresses: Aspects of Domestic Life among the Portuguese Jews in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic," in Sina Rauschenbach, ed., *Sefardische Perspektiven | Sephardic Perspectives, 4. Jahrbuch Selma Stern Zentrum für Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg*, Leipzig 2020, 11–40
- Liebelt 1994**  
Udo Liebelt, "Anmerkungen zu Jüdischen Erbe und zur Bibel von Marc Chagall," in Ernst-Gerhard Güse,

- exhib. cat. *Marc Chagall*, Druckgraphik, Saarbrücken (Saarland-Museum) 1994, 137–53
- Lightfoot 1649**  
 John Lightfoot, *The Temple Service, as it stood in days of our Saviour*, London (printed by Richard Cotes for Andrew Crook) 1649
- Liphshiz 2021**  
 Cnaan Liphshiz, “Dutch Jewish Cemetery has become Black Pilgrimage Site,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 20 January 2021 (online at jta.org)
- Litvak 2008**  
 Olga Litvak, “Rome and Jerusalem: The Figure of Jesus in the Creation of Mark Antokolsky,” in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp 2008
- London 1983**  
 Ronald de Leeuw et al., exhib. cat. *The Hague School: Dutch Masters of the Nineteenth Century*, London (Royal Academy) 1983
- Los Angeles 1992**  
 Donna M. De Salvo and Paul Schimmel, exhib. cat. *Hand Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955–1962*, Los Angeles (Museum of Contemporary Art) 1992
- Los Angeles-Chicago-New York 1981–82**  
 Susan W. Morgenstein and Ruth E. Levine, exhib. cat. *The Jews in the Age of Rembrandt*, Los Angeles (The Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum), Chicago (The Maurice Spertus Museum of Judaica) and New York (The Jewish Museum) 1981–82
- Lugt 1915**  
 Frits Lugt, *Wandelingen met Rembrandt in en om Amsterdam*, Amsterdam (P.N. van Kampen en Zoon) 1915
- M**
- Makovsky 1999**  
 Sergey Makovsky, *Na smenu peredvijnikam* (Replacing the Itinerants) and *Silueti russkikh hudojnikov* (Silhouettes of Russian artists), Moscow (Respublika) 1999
- Malevich 2004**  
 Kazimir Malevich, *Malevich o sebe: Sovremenniki o Malevich* (Malevich about Himself: Contemporaries about Malevich), 2 vols., Moscow (RA) 2004
- Maimonides 1957**  
 Moses Maimonides, *The Code of Maimonides*, Book 8, *The Book of Temple Service*, trans. Mendell Lewittes, New Haven, CT (Yale University Press) 1957
- Manuth 1987**  
 Volker Manuth, “Amsterdamer Juden als Auftraggeber alttestamentlicher Historien,” chapter IV, *Ikono-graphische Studien zu den Historien des Alten Testaments bei Rembrandt und seiner frühen Amsterdamer Schule. Mit einem kritische Katalog der biblischen Gemälde des Amsterdamer Malers Jan Victors, 1619–um 1676*, PhD dissertation, Freie Universität, Berlin 1987
- McAuley 2021**  
 James McAuley, *The House of Fragile Things: Jewish Art Collections and the Fall of France*, New Haven, CT/London (Yale University Press) 2021
- McQueen 2003**  
 Alison McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt: Reinvention of an Old Master in Nineteenth-Century France*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2003
- Meier 1955**  
 Jacob Meier, “Hugo Grotius’s ‘Remonstrantie,’” *Jewish Social Studies* 17 (1955), 91–104
- Meijer 1949**  
 Jaap Meijer, *Encyclopaedia sefardica neerlandica*, Amsterdam (Portugees–Israëlietische Gemeente te Amsterdam) 5709 [1949]
- Meijer 1958**  
 Jaap Meijer, *Het verdwenen ghetto: wandelingen door de Amsterdamse Jodenbuurt*, 2nd ed., Amsterdam (Joachimsthal) 1958
- Meischke 1956**  
 R. [Rudolph] Meischke, “Het Rembrandthuis,” *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 48 (1956), 1–27
- Meisler 2015**  
 Stanley Meisler, *Shocking Paris: Soutine, Chagall and the Outsiders of Montparnasse*, New York (St. Martin’s Press) 2015
- Melbourne 1997**  
 Albert Blankert et al., exhib. cat. *Rembrandt: A Genius and His Impact*, Melbourne (National Gallery of Victoria), Sydney (Art Exhibitions Australia Limited) and Zwolle (Waanders) 1997
- Melnikoff 1935**  
 A. [Avraham] Melnikoff, “Rabbi Kook on Art: [...] Rembrandt and Divine Light,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 13 September 1935, 21
- Menasseh ben Israel 1639**  
 Menasseh ben Israel, *De termino vitae*, Amsterdam (Menasseh ben Israel) 1639
- Menasseh ben Israel 1642**  
 Menasseh ben Israel, *VVelkomst, uyt sijns Volcks naem, aen de Hoogh-gebooren, Prince van Oranjen Frederic Henric, als hy met de Doorluchtigste Koningin Henriette Maria, Gemalin des Hoogh-gebiedende Karolvs, Koninghs van Engelandt, Vrankrijck ende Yrlandt, onse Synagoge besocht*, Amsterdam (Roelof Joosten) 1642
- Menasseh ben Israel 1655**  
 Menasseh ben Israel, *Even yekarah: Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar*, Amsterdam (Menasseh ben Israel) 1655
- Mendelsohn 2002**  
 Ezra Mendelsohn, *Painting a People: Maurycy Gottlieb and Jewish Art*, Hanover, NH (University Press of New England) 2002
- Mochalova 2016**  
 Viktoria Mochalova, “Reprehensible Sexual Contact as a Source of Conflict,” in *Contacts and Conflicts in Slavic and Jewish Cultural Tradition: A Collection of Articles*, Moscow 2016
- Mourits 2016**  
 Esther Mourits, *Een kamer gevuld met de mooiste boeken: De bibliotheek van Johannes Thysius*, Nijmegen (Vantilt) 2016
- Moscow 2015**  
 Ekaterina Allenova, ed., exhib. cat. *Contemporaries of the Future: Jewish Artists in the Russian Avant-Garde, 1910s–1980s*, Moscow (Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center) and Prague (ArtGuide Editions) 2015
- Moscow 2021**  
 Exhib. cat. *Blujdashnie zvezdi: sovetskoe evreistvo v dovoennov iskusstve* (Wandering Stars: Soviet Jewry in Pre-war Art), Moscow (Na Shabolovke Gallery and Kuchkovo pole Muzeon) 2021
- Müller 2013**  
 Jürgen Müller, “Liebermann und Rembrandt—Eine Skizze,” in Bärbel Hedinger et al., eds., *Max Liebermann—Die Kunstsammlung: Von*

- Rembrandt bis Manet*, Munich (Hirmer) 2013, 65–72
- Müller 2015**  
Jürgen Müller, *Der sokratische Künstler: Studien zu Rembrandts Nachtwache*, Leiden (Brill) 2015
- Mundy 1925**  
Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608–1667*, ed. Richard Carnac Temple, vol. 4, London (Hakluyt Society) 1925
- Münz 1939–40**  
Ludwig Münz, “Rembrandt’s ‘Synagogue’ and Some Problems of Nomenclature,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 3/1–2 (Oct. 1939–Jan. 1940), 119–26
- N**
- Nadler 2003**  
Steven Nadler, *Rembrandt’s Jews*, Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 2003
- Nadler 2018a**  
Steven Nadler, *Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbi of Amsterdam*, New Haven, CT/London (Yale University Press) 2018
- Nadler 2018b**  
Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life*, 2nd ed., Cambridge and New York (Cambridge University Press) 2018
- Nadler 2021**  
Steven Nadler, “Rembrandt and the Illustrations for Menasseh ben Israel’s *Piedra Gloriosa* (1655): A Reckoning,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 47 (2021), 27–47
- Nadler and Tiribás 2021**  
Steven Nadler and Victor Tiribás, “Rembrandt’s Etchings for Menasseh ben Israel’s *Piedra Gloriosa*: A Mystery Solved?” *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis*, 1–17. Online only, at <https://doi.org/10.48296/KvHR2021.01>
- Nagel and Wood 2010**  
Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, New York (Zone Books) 2010
- Narkiss 1955–57**  
M[ordechai] Narkiss, “The Oeuvre of the Jewish Engraver Salom Italia,” *Tarbiz* 25 (1955–56), 441–51; 26 (1956–57), 87–101 (Hebrew)
- Narkiss 1956**  
Mordechai Narkiss, *Maurycy Gottlieb, Letters and Diary* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1956
- Nelken 1991**  
Halina Nelken, *Images of a Lost World: Jewish Motifs in Polish Painting 1770–1945*, London (Earth Quest) 1991
- New York 1984**  
Norman Kleeblatt, exhib. cat. *Larry Rivers’ History of Matzah (The Story of the Jews)*, New York (Jewish Museum) 1984
- New York 1998**  
Norman Kleeblatt and Kenneth Silver, exhib. cat. *The Paintings of Chaim Soutine*, New York (Jewish Museum) 1998
- New York 2013**  
Susan Tumarkin Goodman, exhib. cat. *Love, War, and Exile*, New York (Jewish Museum) 2013
- New York 2017**  
Joanna Sheers-Seidenstein, exhib. cat. *Divine Encounter: Rembrandt’s Abraham and the Angels*, New York (Frick Collection) 2017
- Nicholls-Lee 2020**  
Deborah Nicholls-Lee, “Black in Rembrandt’s Time: A Myth-Shattering Exhibition on Identity and Truth,” *DutchNews.nl*, 11 March 2020 (online at [dutchnews.nl](http://dutchnews.nl))
- van Nierop 2018**  
Henk van Nierop, *The Life of Romeyn de Hooghe, 1645–1708: Prints, Pamphlets, and Politics in the Dutch Golden Age*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2018
- Notarial records**  
“Notarial records relating to the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam up to 1639,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 12/1–2 (1978), 158–79
- Notre Dame 2017**  
Charles Rosenberg, exhib. cat. *Rembrandt’s Religious Prints*, Notre Dame, IN (Snite Museum) 2017
- O**
- Offenberg 1988**  
Adri K. Offenberg, “Jacob Jehuda Leon (1602–1675) and his Model of the Temple,” in Johannes van den Berg and Ernestine G.E. van der Wall, eds., *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents*, Dordrecht (Kluwer Academic Publishers) 1988, 95–115
- Offenberg 1992a**  
Adri Offenberg, “Nogmaals Rembrandt en de rabbijn—rabbijn?” *Vrij Nederland*, 15 August 1991, 6
- Offenberg 1992b**  
Adri K. Offenberg, “Een vrijwel onbekende, ingekleurde prent op groot formaat van Jacob Juda Leon Templo,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26 (1992), 125–31
- Offenberg 1993**  
Adri K. Offenberg, “Jacob Jehudah Leon en zijn tempelmodel: Een joods-christelijk project,” *De zeventiende eeuw* 9 (1993), 35–50. Online
- P**
- Panofsky 1973**  
Erwin Panofsky, “Rembrandt und das Judentum,” *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 18 (1973), 75–108
- Paret 1980**  
Peter Paret, *Berlin Secession: Modernism and its Enemies in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge, MA (Belknap Press) 1980
- Paris 2007**  
Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald and Alexis Merle du Bourg, exhib. cat. *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem: Juifs et Chrétiens à Amsterdam au Siècle d’Or*, Paris (Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme) 2007
- Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 2011**  
Lloyd DeWitt, ed., exhib. cat. *Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus*, with contributions by Lloyd DeWitt, Blaise Ducos, Franziska Gottwald, George S. Keyes, Shelley Perlove, Larry Silver, Ken Sutherland and Mark Tucker, Paris (Musée du Louvre), Philadelphia (Philadelphia Museum of Art) and Detroit (Detroit Institute of Arts) 2011
- Pasternak 1923A**  
Leonid Pasternak, *Rembrandt i evreivsti v ego tvorchestve* (Rembrandt and Jewry in his Art), Berlin (S.D. Saltzmann Verlag) 1923
- Pasternak 1923B**  
Akademikon L. (Leonid) Pasternak, *Rembrandt: yetzirato ve-erucho layehadut* (Rembrandt: His Creations and His Value for Judaism), Jerusalem and Berlin (Yavneh) 1923
- Pastoor 1991**  
Gabriël M.C. Pastoor, “Bijbelse historiëstukken in particulier bezit,” in Christian Tümpel et al., exhib. cat. *Het Oude Testament in de schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam (Joods



- Historisch Museum), Jerusalem (Israel Museum) and Zwolle (Waanders) 1991, 122–33
- de la Peyrère 1643**  
Isaac de la Peyrère, *Du Rappel des Juifs*, Paris (n.p.) 1643
- Perlove 1993**  
Shelley Perlove, “An Irenic Vision of Utopia: Rembrandt’s ‘Triumph of Mordecai’ and the New Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993), 38–60
- Perlove 1995**  
Shelley Perlove, “Templum Christianum: Rembrandt’s Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem (1630),” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 126/1523 (November 1995), 159–70
- Perlove 1996**  
Shelley Perlove, “Awaiting the Messiah: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Late Work of Rembrandt,” *Bulletin of the University of Michigan Museum of Art* 11 (Spring 1996), 84–113
- Perlove 2001**  
Shelley Perlove, “Perceptions of Otherness: Critical Responses to the Jews of Rembrandt’s Art and Milieu (1836–1945),” *Dutch Crossing* 25 (2001), 243–90
- Perlove 2009**  
Shelley Perlove, “The Jerusalem Temple: Rembrandt’s Faith and Fantasy,” in *Faith and Fantasy in the Renaissance: Texts, Images, and Religious Practices*, Olga Pugliese and Matt Kavalier, eds., Toronto (Centre for Renaissance and Reformation, University of Toronto) 2009, 291–313
- Perlove 2021**  
Shelley Perlove, “Jacob van Ruisdael’s Jewish Cemetery, c. 1654–1655: Religious Toleration, Dutch Identity, and Divine Time,” in Karl A.E. Enenkel and Walter S. Melion, eds., *Landscape and the Visual Hermeneutics of Place, 1500–1700*, Leiden (Brill) 2021, 234–60
- Perlove 2022**  
Shelley Perlove, “Rembrandt’s *Visitation*: The African Woman at the Dawn of Christianity and Colonialism,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 14/1 (Winter 2022) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2022.14.1.3.
- Perlove and Silver 2009**  
Shelley Perlove and Larry Silver, *Rembrandt’s Faith: Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age*, University Park, PA (Penn State University Press) 2009
- Pieterse 1968**  
Wilhelmina Chr. Pieterse, *Daniel Levi de Barrios als geschiedschrijver van de Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente te Amsterdam in zijn “Triumpho del gobierno popular,”* Amsterdam (Scheltema & Holkema) 1968
- Pieterse 1970**  
Wilhelmina C. Pieterse, *Livro de Bet Haim do Kahal Kados de Bet Yahacob*, Assen (Van Gorcum) 1970
- Pinson 1996**  
Yona Pinson, “The Iconography of the Temple in Northern Renaissance Art,” *Assaph: Studies in Art History* 2 (1996), 147–74
- Plungian 2021**  
Nadia Plungian, ed., exhib. publication *Blujdaushie zvezdi; sovetskoe evreistvo v dovoennov iskusstve* (Wandering Stars: Soviet Jewry in Pre-war Art), Moscow (Kuchkovo pole Muzeon), 2021
- van de Pol 2001**  
Lotte C. van de Pol, “Amsterdam Jews and Amsterdam Prostitution, 1650–1750,” in Chaja Brasz and Yosef Kaplan, eds., *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others*, Leiden (Brill) 2001, 173–85
- Ponte 2018**  
Mark Ponte, “‘Al de swarten die hier ter stede comen’: Een Afro-Atlantische gemeenschap in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam,” *TSEG/The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 15 (2018) 33–62
- Ponte 2020a**  
Mark Ponte, 9 January 2020 (online at [alleamsterdamseacten.nl](http://alleamsterdamseacten.nl))
- Ponte 2020b**  
Mark Ponte, “Black in Amsterdam Around 1650,” in *Amsterdam 2020*, 44–64
- Ponte 2022**  
Mark Ponte, “De kelder van Rembrandt,” *Ons Amsterdam*, March 2022 (online at [onsamsterdam.nl](http://onsamsterdam.nl))
- Ponte 2023**  
Mark Ponte, “Another Brawl in the Jodenbreestraat,” 23 January 2023 (online at [voetnoot.org](http://voetnoot.org))
- Posèq 1990–91**  
Avigdor Posèq, “The Hanging Carcass Motif and Jewish Art,” *Jewish Art* 16–17 (1990–91), 139–56
- Postma 1990**  
Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, New York (Cambridge University Press) 1990
- Prado and Villalpando 1596–1605**  
Jerónimo de Prado and Juan Bautista Villalpando, *Ezechielem Explanaciones et Apparatus Urbis ac Templi Hierosolymitani* [...], 3 vols., Rome (Aloysij Zannetti) 1596–1605
- Prins 1936**  
Izak Prins, “Gegevens betreffende de ‘Oprechte Hollandsche civet,’” *Economisch Historisch Jaarboek* 20 (1936), 3–211
- R**
- Radensky 1997**  
Paul Ira Radensky, “Leyb ben Ozer’s ‘Baschraybung fun Shabsai Tsvi,’: An Ashkenazic Appropriation of Sabbatianism,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 88 (1997) 1/2, 43–56
- Rajner 1990–91**  
Mirjam Rajner, “The Awakening of Jewish National Art in Russia,” *Jewish Art* 16–17 (1990–91), 99–116
- van Regteren Altena 1948–49**  
J.Q. van Regteren Altena, “Rembrandt’s Way to Emmaus,” *Kunstmuseets Arsskrift* 35–36 (1948–49), 1–26
- Reichman 2022**  
Edward Reichman, “A ‘Haro’ing Tale of a Jewish Medical Student. Notes on David de Haro (1611–1636): The First Jewish Medical Graduate of the University of Leiden,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 48/1 (2022), 30–52
- Reiner 1993**  
Elchanan Reiner, “Offerings in the Ashkenazi Synagogues of Poland and Ashkenaz in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Controversy Concerning Pilpul,” in *Ke-minhag Ashkenaz u-Polin*, ed. Israel Bartal, Chava Turniansky and Ezra Mendelson, Jerusalem (Zalman Shazar Center) 1993, 9–80 (Hebrew)
- Révah 1960**  
I.S. Révah, “La famille de Garcia de Orta,” *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*, 19 (1960), 407–20

**Rogge 1880**

Hendrik Cornelis Rogge, "Nicolaas Tulp," *De Gids* 44 (1880), 77–125

**Rosenberg 1948**

Jakob Rosenberg, *Rembrandt*, 2 vols., Cambridge, MA (Harvard University Press), 1948

**Rosenberg 1964**

Jakob Rosenberg, *Rembrandt: Life and Work*, rev. ed., London (Phaidon Press) 1964

**Rotenberg 2008**

Olga Rotenberg, *Neujeli kto-to vspomnil, chto mi bili: Iz istorii hudojestvennoi jizni 1925–1935* (Did Anyone Remember that We Existed? From the History of Artistic Life, 1925–1935), Moscow (Galart) 2008

**Roth 1945**

Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel: Rabbi, Printer, and Diplomat*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia (Jewish Publication Society) 1945

**Ruderman 2010**

David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History*, Princeton/Oxford (Princeton University Press) 2010

**S****Sabar 2008**

Shalom Sabar, "Between Calvinists and Jews: Hebrew Script in Rembrandt's Art," in Mitchell Merback, ed., *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early European Modern Visual Culture*, Leiden (Brill) 2008, 371–404

**Sabar 2012**

Shalom Sabar, "A New Discovery: The Earliest Illustrated Esther Scroll by Shalom Italia," *Ars Judaica* 8 (2012), 1–18

**Sacks 2011**

Jonathan Sacks, video sermon "God's Shadow," 8 March 2011 (online at www.rabbisacks.org)

**Salomon 1975**

Herman Prins Salomon, "The 'De Pinto' Manuscript: A 17th-century Marrano Family History," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 9 (1975), 1–62

**Salomon 1983**

Herman Prins Salomon, "The Portuguese Background of Menasseh ben

Israel's Parents as Revealed through the Inquisitorial Archives at Lisbon," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 17/2 (1983), 105–46

**Scallen 2004**

Catherine Scallen, *Rembrandt, Reputation and the Practice of Connoisseurship*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 2004

**Schama 1999**

Simon Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*, New York (Knopf) 1999

**Schama 2017**

Simon Schama, *Belonging: The Story of the Jews, 1492–1900*, London (The Bodley Head) 2017

**Schapiro 1956**

Meyer Schapiro, "Chagall's Illustrations to the Bible," in *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries: Selected Papers*, New York (George Braziller) 1978, 121–34 (essay first published in 1956)

**Scheller 1995**

Robert Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900–ca. 1470)*, Amsterdam (Amsterdam University Press) 1995

**Schmidt-Degener 2008**

F. Schmidt-Degener, "Een laatste bezoek aan de verzameling Rodolphe Kann," *De Gids* 72 (1908), 342–53. The Dutch text can be accessed at [https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_gid001190801\\_01/\\_gid001190801\\_01\\_0017.php](https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gid001190801_01/_gid001190801_01_0017.php)

**Schoell-Glass 2008**

Charlotte Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg and Anti-Semitism: Political Perspectives on Images and Culture*, trans. Samuel Pakucs Willcocks, Detroit (Wayne State University Press) 2008

**Schorsch 2004**

Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2004

**Schrijver 2017**

Emile G.L. Schrijver, "Jewish Book Culture Since the Invention of Printing (1469–c. 1815)," in Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 7, *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2017, 291–315

**Schutz 1999**

Chana Schutz, "Max Liebermann as a

'Jewish' Painter: The Artist's Reception in His Time," in Emily Bilski, ed., exhib. cat. *Berlin Metropolis*, New York (Jewish Museum) 1999, 146–64

**Schwartz 1977**

Gary Schwartz, *The Complete Etchings of Rembrandt*, Reproduced in Original Size, ed. New York (Dover Books) 1994

**Schwartz 1984**

Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt zijn leven, zijn schilderijen*, Maarssen (Gary Schwartz) 1984

**Schwartz 1985a**

Gary Schwartz, "Rembrandt's 'David and Mephiboseth': a forgotten subject from Vondel," in *Tribute to Lotte Brand Philip, Art Historian and Detective*, New York (Abaris Books) 1985, 166–74 (online at [garyschwartzarthistorian.nl](http://garyschwartzarthistorian.nl))

**Schwartz 1985b**

Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt, His Life, His Paintings*, New York (Viking) 1985

**Schwartz 2006**

Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt's Universe*, London (Thames & Hudson) 2006

**Schwartz 2008**

Gary Schwartz, "The Temple Mount in the Lowlands," in Yosef Kaplan, ed., *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, Leiden and Boston (Brill) 2008, 111–23 (online at [garyschwartzarthistorian.nl](http://garyschwartzarthistorian.nl))

**Schwartz 2009**

Gary Schwartz, "Rembrandt's Hebrews," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 51 (2009), 33–38 (online at [garyschwartzarthistorian.nl](http://garyschwartzarthistorian.nl))

**Schwartz 2012**

Daniel Schwartz, *The First Modern Jew: Spinoza and the History of an Image*, Princeton (Princeton University Press) 2012

**Schwartz 2019**

Gary Schwartz, "The Dreyfus Rembrandts: Smoke With No Gun," in Laurinda S. Dixon and Gabriel P. Weisberg, eds., *Making Waves: Crosscurrents in the Study of Nineteenth-Century Art, Essays in Honour of Petra ten-Doesschate Chu*, Turnhout (Brepols) 2019, 31–40

**Schwartz 2020**

Gary Schwartz, "Convention and Uniqueness in Rembrandt's Response to the East," in exhib. cat. *Rembrandt's Orient: West Meets East in Dutch Art of*

- the Seventeenth Century*, Potsdam (Museum Barberini) and Basel (Kunstmuseum Basel) 2020, 56–73
- Schwartz 2022**  
Gary Schwartz, Schwartzlist 403, “Good Jews and Bad Jews in 1620 and 1630,” 26 February 2022, with response by Shelley Perlove (online at garyschwartzarthistorian.nl)
- Shazar 1978**  
Zalman Shazar, ed., *The Story of the Doings of Shabtai Zvi: Beshraybung fun Shabse Tsvi*, Jerusalem (Zalman Shazar Center) 1978 (Hebrew and Yiddish)
- Sijes-Hagoort 1995**  
Lydia Sijes-Hagoort, “Leven en werk van A.M. Vaz Dias,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 29 (1995), 170–89
- Silver 1999**  
Larry Silver, “Jewish Identity in Art and History: Maurycy Gottlieb as Early Jewish Artist,” in Catherine Soussloff, ed., *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, Berkeley, CA (University of California Press) 1999, 87–113
- Silver 2018**  
Larry Silver, *Rembrandt and the Divine*, Louvain (Peeters) 2018
- Slatkes 1983**  
Leonard Slatkes, *Rembrandt and Persia*, New York (Abaris Books) 1983
- Slive 1995**  
Seymour Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600–1800*, New Haven, CT/London (Yale University Press) 1995
- Sluys 1940**  
David Mozes Sluys, “Hoogduits-Joods Amsterdam van 1635 tot 1795,” in Hendrik Brugmans and Abraham Frank, eds., *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, Amsterdam (Van Holkema & Warendorf) 1940, 306–81
- Smith 1836**  
John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters*, vol. 7, London (Smith and Son) 1836
- Stechow 1934**  
Wolfgang Stechow, “Rembrandts Darstellungen des Emmausmahles,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 3 (1934), 329–41
- Stechow 1940**  
Wolfgang Stechow, “Rembrandt’s ‘Presentation in the Dark Manner,’” *The Print Collector’s Quarterly* 27 (1940), 364–79
- Strauss and van der Meulen 1979**  
Walter L. Strauss and Marjon van der Meulen, *The Rembrandt Documents*, New York (Abaris Books) 1979
- Soyer 1966**  
Rebecca Soyer, ed., *Homage to Thomas Eakins, Etc.*, South Brunswick, NJ (Thomas Yoseloff) 1966
- Sutcliffe 2008**  
Adam Sutcliffe, “The Boundaries of Community: Urban Space and Intercultural Interaction in Early Modern, Sephardi Amsterdam and London,” in Yosef Kaplan, ed., *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, Leiden/Boston (Brill) 2008, 19–31
- Swetschinski 2000**  
Daniel Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, Oxford/Portland, OR (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization) 2000
- Swetschinski 2004**  
Daniel M. Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, 2nd ed., Oxford/Portland, OR (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization) 2004
- T**
- Tallement de Réaux 1834**  
Gédéon Tallement de Réaux, *Les historiettes, mémoire pour servir à l’histoire du XVIIe siècle*, vol. 2, Paris (Le Vavasseur) 1834
- Tel Aviv 1991**  
Nehama Guralnik, exhib. cat. *In the Flower of Youth: Maurycy Gottlieb, 1856–1879*, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv Museum of Art) 1991
- Teller 2020**  
Adam Teller, *Rescue the Surviving Souls: The Great Jewish Refugee Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton/Oxford (Princeton University Press) 2020
- van Tricht 1979**  
H.W. van Tricht, ed., *De briefwisseling van P.C. Hooff*, vol. 3: 1638–1647, Culemborg (Tjeenk Willink) 1979
- Tümpel 1984**  
Christian Tümpel, “Die Rezeption der Jüdischen Altertümer des Flavius Josephus in den holländischen Historiendarstellungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Wort und Bild in der niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. H. Vekemann and J. Müller-Hofstede, Erfstadt (Lukaszen) 1984, 173–204
- Tümpel 1996**  
Christian Tümpel, “Rembrandt’s Old Testament Etchings,” in Amsterdam 1996, 31–36
- Tümpel 2006**  
Christian Tümpel, *Rembrandt: Images and Metaphors*, London (Haus Publishing) 2006
- V**
- Valentiner 1957**  
W.R. [Wilhelm Rheinhold Otto] Valentiner, *Rembrandt and Spinoza: A Study of the Spiritual Conflicts in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, London (Phaidon Press) 1957
- Vaz Dias 1930a**  
A.M. [Abraham (de) Mordechai] Vaz Dias, “Wie waren Rembrandt’s Joodsche Buren?,” *De Vrijdagavond*, 10 October 1930, 28–29
- Vaz Dias 1930b**  
A.M. Vaz Dias, “Rembrandt en zijn Portugeesch-Joodsche buurtgenoten: Naar nieuwe gegevens uit het oud notariëel archief te Amsterdam,” *De Vrijdagavond* 8 (1930), 34
- Vaz Dias 1936a**  
A.M. Vaz Dias, “Rembrandt in conflict met zijn buurman Daniel Pinto,” *Oud Holland* 53 (1936), 33–36
- Vaz Dias 1936b**  
A.M. Vaz Dias, *Uriel da Costa: Nieuwe bijdrage tot diens levensgeschiedenis*, Mededeelingen van wege Het Spinozahuis 2, Leiden (Brill) 1936
- Vaz Dias 1940**  
Abraham Mordechai Vaz Dias, “Nieuwe bijdragen tot de geschiedenis der Amsterdamsche Hoogduitsch-Joodsche gemeente,” *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor Joodsche Wetenschap in Nederland* 6 (1940), 153–58
- van der Veen 1997**  
Jaap van der Veen, “Faces from Life: *Tronies* and Portraits in Rembrandt’s Painted Oeuvre,” in Melbourne 1997, 69–80

**Vernikova 2019**

Bella Vernikova, "Vospominania Leonida Pasternaka" (Memories of Leonid Pasternak), *Literaturny Ierusalim* 21 (2019) (online)

**Vink 2010**

Wieke Vink, *Creole Jews Negotiating Community in Colonial Suriname*, Leiden (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Press) 2010

**Vlessing 1996**

Odetta Vlessing, "The Jewish Community in Transition: From Acceptance to Emancipation," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 30 (1996), 195–212

**van Voolen 1999**

Edward van Voolen, "Israël's: Son of the Ancient People," in Groningen-Amsterdam 1999, 54–70

**de Vries and de Roever 1886**

Adriaan D. de Vries and Nicolaas de Roever, *Biografische aantekeningen betreffende voornamelijk Amsterdamsche schilders, plaatsnijders, enz. en hunne verwanten*, Amsterdam (Binger) 1886

**van de Waal 1954–55**

H[enri] van de Waal, "Rembrandt's Radierungen zur Piedra Gloriosa des Menasseh ben Israel," *Imprimatur: Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde* 12 (1954–55), 52–61. Republished in English in van de Waal 1974, 113–32

**van de Waal 1974**

H[enri] van de Waal, *Steps Toward Rembrandt: Collected Articles 1937–1972*, trans. Patricia Wardle and Alan Griffiths, Amsterdam (North-Holland Publishing Company) 1974

**W****Wallet 2022**

Bart Wallet, *De lucht van Amsterdam maakt wijs: grondlijnen voor een kritische joodse stadsgeschiedenis* (inaugural lecture) Amsterdam (University of Amsterdam) 2022

**Wallet and Zwiep 2018**

Bart T. Wallet and Irene E. Zwiep, "Locals: Jews in the Early Modern Dutch Republic," in Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 7: *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2018, 894–922

**Washington 1974**

Ann C. Van Devanter and Alfred V. Frankenstein, exhib. cat. *American Self-Portraits, 1670–1973*, Washington (International Exhibitions) 1974

**van de Wetering 2015**

Ernst van de Wetering, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 6: *Rembrandt's Paintings Revisited: A Complete Survey* Dordrecht (Springer) 2015

**White 1999**

Christopher White, *Rembrandt as an Etcher: A Study of the Artist at Work*, 2nd ed., New Haven, CT (Yale University Press) 1999

**Wijnman 1956**

H.F. [Hendrik Fredrik] Wijnman, "Rembrandt en Hendrick Uylenburgh te Amsterdam," *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 43 (1956), 94–102

**Wijnman 1968**

H.F. Wijnman, "Een episode uit het leven van Rembrandt: De geschiedenis van Geertje Dircks," *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 60 (1968), 106–19

**Wilson 1975**

William H. Wilson, "The Circumcision, a Drawing by Romeyn de Hooghe," *Master Drawings* 13/3 (Autumn 1975), 250–58

**Winternitz 1977**

Emanuel Winternitz, "A Rabbi with Wings: Remarks on Rembrandt's Etching 'Abraham Entertaining the Angels,'" *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 12 (1977), 101–6

**Wischnitzer 1990**

Rachel Wischnitzer, "Rembrandt's So-Called Synagogue in Light of Synagogue Architecture," in *From Dura to Rembrandt: Studies in the History of Art*, Milwaukee (Aldrich) 1990

**Wistrich 2006**

Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, Liverpool (Liverpool University Press) 2006

**de Witt 2020**

David de Witt, "The Black Presence in the Art of Rembrandt and His Circle," in Amsterdam 2020, 88–119

**Worp 1917**

J.A. [Jacob Adolf] Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens (1608–1687)*, vol. 6: 1663–1687, The Hague (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën 32) 1917, 356, no. 6954

**Y****Yablonskay 1972**

Muda Yablonskay, *Konstantin Istomin*, Moscow (Sovetsky hudojnik) 1972

**Z****Zell 2000–1**

Michael Zell, "Eduard Kolloff and the Historiographic Romance of Rembrandt and the Jews," *Simiolus* 28 (2000–1), 181–97

**Zell 2002**

Michael Zell, *Reframing Rembrandt: Jews and the Christian Image in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London (University of California Press) 2002

**Zemel 2008**

Carol Zemel, "Diasporic Values in Contemporary Art: Kitaj, Katchor, Frenkel," in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp 2008, 179–82

**von Zesen 1664**

Filips von Zesen, *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam*, Amsterdam (Joachim Noschen) 1664

**Zhegin 1987**

Lev Zhegin, "Vospominania o V.N. Chekigrine" (Memories of V. Chekigin), *Panorama iskusstv* (Panorama of the Arts) 10 (1987), 195–232

**Zilbershtein and Samkov 1971**

Ilya Zilbershtein and Vladimir Samkov, eds., *Valentin Serov in vospominaniah, dnevnikah i perepiske sovremennikov* (Valentin Serov in the memoirs, diaries and correspondence of contemporaries), vol. 1, Leningrad (Hudojnik RSFSR) 1971

**Zuiden 1931**

D.S. van Zuiden, "Over de oudste vestiging van Joden in Den Haag," *Jaarboeken geschiedkundige vereniging Die Haghe* (1931), 184–91

**Zwarts 1926**

Jac. [Jacob] Zwarts, "Haham Saul Levy Mortejra en zijn portret door Rembrandt," *Oud Holland* 43 (1926), 1–17

# Index

Page numbers in bold include an illustration. The house numbers refer to the map between pages 50 and 51 and its legend on the reverse. Names between brackets are aliases.

## A

- Abarbanel Barbosa, Joseph (physician), 81
- Abbas, Rebecca, married to Moses Curiel (Jeronimo Nunes da Costa), 43n69
- Abendana, David (Fernando Dias de Britto; merchant, shareholder of the WIC), 52; house 14
- Abendana, Hanna (Hanna Osorio), married to Fernando Dias de Britto (David Abendana), 52
- Abendana, Ribca, widow of Samuel Abendana, house 30
- Abendana, Samuel, house 30
- Abenjar, Abraham (Duarte Dias Brandon; merchant, owner of paintings), 34
- Aboab, Abraham, 94
- Aboab, Elijahu (printer), **76**
- Aboab, Isaac de Matatiah (patron), 34, 38, 96, 227
- Aboab, Rachel, married to Salvador Rodrigues, 48, house 10
- Aboab da Fonseca, Rabbi Isaac, 26, 37, 80
- Aboab Osorio, Abraham (Denis Jennes; merchant), 61, 68n99; houses 30–31
- Aboab Osorio, Sara, married to Abraham Aboab Osorio, house 31
- Abodat Hahesed society (Sephardi society for poor relief), 87n35
- Abrabanel, Jonas (broker), 57, 67n70; house 48
- Abrabanel, Joseph, 67n70
- Abrabanel Barbosa, Samuel, 30, 56
- Abraham, Moses bar (owner of printing firm), 83
- Abrahams, Hartog (Swijngas; petty criminal), 51, 66n37
- Abrahams, Isaack (Ashkenazi litigant), 81
- Abrahams, Rachel, married to Levij Davids and to Jacob Speck Polack, 79
- L'Action Française* (daily newspaper), 247
- d'Aguilar, Rabbi Moses, 79
- d'Aguilar d'Andrada, Manuel. *See* Manuel Mendes de Crasto
- Almoli, Rabbi Shlomo, *Pitron chalomot* (The Interpretation of Dreams), 68n78
- Altman, Benjamin (art collector), 247
- Amsterdam, *passim*;
- STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS
- Batavierstraat, 84
  - Binnen Amstel, 30, 57, 65n13, 113; houses 47–48
  - Geldersekaade, 82
  - Breestraat. *See* Jodenbreestraat
  - Houtgracht, 29, 35, 41n36, 53, 58, 114, 118; HOUSES 37–43
  - Houtkopersdwarstraat (also Vlooienburgsteeg), 53; house 36
  - Jodenbreestraat, 34, 38, 46–**47**, 58, 64n3, n9, 66n47, 68n82, n96–97, 69n111, 92–93, 100, 103, 107n8, 112, 118, 123, 156, 232; houses 8–33
  - Jodenhouttuinen, 51; house 49
  - Korte Houtstraat, 55; house 44
  - Lange Houtstraat, 64n9; houses 45–46
  - Nieuwe Amstelstraat, house 12
  - Nieuwe Doelenstraat, 64n13; house 34
  - Nieuwe Herengracht, 43n69
  - Nieuwe Hoogstraat, 46
  - Nieuwe Houtmarkt, 113
  - Nieuwmarkt, 46
  - Rozengracht, 84
  - Sint Antoniesbreestraat, 15–16, 43n69, 45–46, 63–64n3, 60, 72, 86, 93, 112, 158; houses 1–5
  - Sint Antoniesluis (Sint Antonies Lock), 47, 51, 66n47
  - Uilenburg, 78
  - Vlooienburg, 55–56, 64n9, n16, 67n69, 78, 84, 112–13, 118
  - Vlooienburgsteeg. *See* Houtkopersdwarstraat
  - Waterloooplein, 118
  - Zwanenburgerstraat, 57; houses 47–48
  - Zwanenburger Bridge, 78
  - Zwanenburgwal, 58, 64n10
- BUILDINGS AND INSTITUTIONS
- Balonbaen, 56, 67n69
  - Beth Israel congregation, 26; house 40
  - Beth Jacob congregation, 62; houses 37, 45
  - Ets Haim seminary, 25, 48
  - Great Synagogue (1671), 46, **83**
  - Houtgracht synagogue, 26, **28–29**, 57, 69n111, 77
  - Jewish Cultural Quarter, 251
  - Jewish meat hall, 58; house 38
  - Jewish Museum (Jewish Historical Museum), 13–14, 20, 64n1, 74, 151, 223–25, 250; exhib. *The “Jewish” Rembrandt*, 13, 20, 74, 151, 158, 223–**25**, **229–30**, 232, 250
  - Mozes en Aäronkerk, 57, 64n9
  - Neve Shalom synagogue, 29, 40n21; house 42
  - Portuguese synagogue (1675), 28, 34, 38, 43, 46, 80–81, **83**, 149, 154n27
  - Rembrandt House Museum, exhib. *Black in Rembrandt’s Time*, 103, 105
  - Royal Academy (Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten), 165
  - Stedelijk Museum, 197
  - Talmud Torah synagogue and seminary, 25, 29, 49, 52, 55, 57, 61–62, 112, 119, 151; house 38
  - Zuiderkerk, 46, 57
- HOUSES
- De Arent (The Eagle), 61; house 30
  - Cronenburg, 66n74

- De Drie Ooievaars (The Three Storks), 47; house 10
- De Engelenburg (Castel Sant’ Angelo), 53
- Het Gekroond Compas (The Crowned Compass), 52, 66n46; house 15
- ‘t Huis van Nassauwen (The Home of Nassaus), 59; house 24
- Leer en Leerort (Leather and [presumably, the village] Leerort), 58; house 23
- De Olijfborg (The Mount of Olives), 46; house 1
- De Oude Hillebrand (The Old Hillebrand), 52; house 16
- Huis de Pinto (The Pinto House), 29, 60; house 4
- De Preeckstoel (The Pulpit), 64n4
- The Rembrandt House, 44–46, 58, 65n25, 103, 120n6; house 9
- ‘t Romeins Keyersershooft (The Roman Emperor’s Head), 61, 68n104; house 33
- Sint Joris in de gevel (St. George in the façade insignia), house 18
- Huis Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk House), 57; house 48
- De Tempel Salomons (The Temple of Solomon), 55; house 44
- De Suyckerbakkerij (The Sugar Refinery), 65n13, 113; house 47
- De Vergulde Schroeff (The Gilded Screw), 40n20
- De Vergulden Valck (The Gilded Falcon), 40n23
- De Vergulde Son (The Gilded Sun), 55
- Het Wapen van Kortrijk (The Arms of Courtrai), house 27
- De Witte Lelie (The White Lily), 61; house 26
- De Witte Rooster (The White Rooster), 52; house 12
- De Zeeridder (Knight of the Sea), 61; house 28
- De Zilveren Doornenkroon (The Silver Thorn Crown), 52; house 14
- d’Andrade, Abraham (witness concerning knife attack), 51
- d’Andrade, Diego (patron, merchant), 36–37, 39
- d’Andrade, Louis Gonsales (Abraham de David da Costa d’Andrade), 43n70
- d’Andrade, Mordechay (supervisor of the carpentry work on Rembrandt’s house), 51–52
- d’Andrade, Sara, married to Diego Teixeira Sampayo, 37
- Angel, Philips (artist), 143
- angels, 117, 127, 150–52, 172–73, 179, 182n47, 236–37
- Angola, 100
- Anthonisz, Aert (artist), seascape, 66n50
- antisemitism, in England, 189; in France, 8–9, 18, 233, 235, 237, 243–44, 247; in Christian polemics, 66n55; in Germany, 18, 109n46, 233, 235, 240, 244; in the Netherlands, 104; in Russia, 164, 206
- Antokolsky, Mark (Mordekai; sculptor), 164; works: *Christ Before the People*, 164; *Jewish Tailor*, 181n26
- Antwerp, 24, 40n32, 41n48, 60; fall of, 23
- Apers, Fytgen, married to Evert Moerseelaar, house 31
- Apollo Belvedere, 199
- Arari, Dr. David (physician), 67n56
- Arari, Ester, 67n56–57
- Archangel, Stephanie (museum curator), 105
- Arisz, Hubert (skipper), house 20
- Armenians, 51
- Arnhem, The Netherlands, 84
- Aron, Rabbi (engaged in religious debate), 58
- Aronov, Lev (artist), *Rembrandt in His Studio*, 216–17
- art collectors. *See* Altman, Benjamin; Bader, Alfred and Isabel; Beit, Alfred; Beit, Otto; Bromberg, Martin and Laura; Burgy, Amadé de; Camondo, Isaac de; Gideon, Sampson; Henriques, Jeronimo; Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis; Isaac, Henry; Kahn, Otto; Kann, Maurice and Rodolphe; Kaplan, Tom and Daphne; Kappel, Leopold; LeBleu, Jean; Lopez, Alfonso; Lugt, Frits; Mendes de Castro, Manuel; Michaelis, Max; Porgès, Jules; Rothschild, various family members; Röver, Valerius; Sarphati Pina, Abraham; Schelkens, Abraham; Sephardi owners of paintings in Amsterdam, 34–39; Six, Jan
- art dealers, 64n8. *See* Chenil Gallery; Duveen Brothers; Enden, Franciscus van den; Gersaint, Edmé-François; Gimpel, René; Goudstikker gallery; Isaacs, Pieter; Jonghe, Clement de; Kleinberger gallery; Langlois, François; Lesser gallery; Mariette, Pierre; Nieuland, Adriaen van; d’Orta, Samuel; Smith, John; Uylenburgh, Gerrit and Hendrick; Vollard, Ambroise; Voort, Cornelis van der; Wildenstein gallery; Wroblewski, Leopold
- Ashkenazi Jews, 9, 15, 28, 46, 61, 63–64n11, 71–88, 126, 139n31, 141, 144, 151, 167
- Athias, Joseph (book printer), 39n8
- Atiq Yomin* (Ancient of Days), 232
- Auerbach, Frank (artist), 17, 185, 192, 198
- Austria-Hungary, 162
- Avilla, H. (gilder), 41n42
- B**
- Babylonian Empire, 115
- Bacharach (trading house), 83
- Bacharach, Abraham (“zum Drachen”). *See* Tracht, Abraham
- Bacharach, Samuel (“zur Rost;” banker), 83
- Bad Kissingen, 207
- Baddel, Benedict (notary), 51
- Bader, Alfred and Isabel (art collectors), 246–47
- Bader, Linda and Daniel (donors) 246
- bakers, 52; houses 14, 39
- Bambeeck, Nicolaes van I (merchant), 58, 61; house 32
- Bambeeck, Nicolaes van II (merchant), 61; house 32
- Banninck, Lijsbeth Fransdr, married to Jan Cock, house 25
- Banninck Cocq, Frans (burgomaster of Amsterdam, lawyer, lord of Ilpenstein Castle, and the captain in Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*), 61; house 25
- Barbados, 94
- Barbosa, Samuel, 40n25–26
- Barchman Wuytiers, Sijmon (Catholic immigrant from Germany), 58; house 22
- Barlaeus, Caspar (scholar, professor), 231
- Barrios, Miguel (Daniel Levi) de (poet, troubadour, captain), *Imperio de Dios en la harmonia del mundo* (God’s Empire in the Harmony of the World), 33–34
- Bas, Agatha, married to Nicolaes van Bambeeck II, 61; house 32
- Baserode, Emanuel van (merchant, pharmacist), house 47
- Baskin, Leonard (graphic artist), 17, 180
- Baskind, Samantha (art historian), 182n53
- Bassekhes, Alfred (art critic), 218
- Bauhaus, 208
- Beelthouwer, Jan Pietersz (schoolmaster and “comforter of the sick”), 58
- Beethoven, Ludwig van, 186
- Beit, Alfred (mine owner, art collector), 239
- Beit, Otto (mine owner, art collector), 239
- Bel, Elisabeth van der, married to Nicolaes van Bambeeck I, 57, 69n101; house 32

- Belarus, 171, 173, 218n1. *See also* Smilovichi, Vitebsk
- Belmonte, Isaac (André or Christoffel Nunes; merchant, board member of the Portuguese Jewish congregation), 61; house 29
- Belmonte, Jacob Israel (prominent member of Sephardi community), 98
- Belmonte, Baron Manuel de (prominent member of Sephardi community), 74
- Belmonte, Moses (poet), 34
- Belmonte, Rachel, 79
- Belten, Magdalena, married to Anthonie Thijsz and to Christoffel Thijsz, house 9
- Belten, Pieter I (wealthy Amsterdamer), 64n10, 12, 65n14; house 9
- Belten, Pieter II, son of Pieter Belten I, house 9
- Benedictus Hagenau, Abraham (blanket maker), 73
- Benveniste, Branca, married to Immanuel Benveniste, house 46
- Benveniste, Emanuel (Manuel; book printer), 39n8; house 46
- Berlin, 9, 167–69, 172, 181n18, 205–06, 211, 219n16, 241, 243–44; Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, 104, 229; Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, 217, 243, 247; Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein, 241, 244; Prussian Academy of Arts, 167; University of Berlin, 167
- Berlin Secession, 167, 169
- besamim* box (spice container), 37–38
- beth din* (court of law), 81
- Beuckelaer, Joachim (artist), 152
- Beuningen, Geurt Dircksz van (merchant, burgomaster, VOC director), 46, 64n7
- Beyeren, Leendert van (artist, pupil of Rembrandt), 119
- Bialik, Chaim Nahman (writer and poet), 19, 206–07, 219n19
- Bible, citations: Genesis 18, 151–52; Genesis 28:10–19, 117; Exodus 20:3–4, 160; Leviticus 16:15–34, 136; Numbers 22–24, 236; Deuteronomy 6:5, 105; I Samuel 17, 117; I Kings 6:4, 126; 7:50, 131; Daniel 2:31–36, 115; 5:1–30, 113; 7:1–27, 117; Matthew 3:7, 105; 16:56–57, 181n13; 22:37, 109n53; 27:25, 11; Mark 14, 181n13; Luke 2:22–40, 126, 128; 17:14, 130; 24:30, 137; John 18, 181n13; I Corinthians 9, 19; Galatians 3:1–22, 125, 132; 3:29, 125; 4:4–5, 126; Colossians 11:3, 208; Hebrews 2:17, 4:14–16, 125
- Bible, States version (*Statenbijbel*), 124, 137, 151
- Bible books and their iconography: Daniel, 7–8, 20n1, 84, 113, 115–16, 117, 120n18, 121n23, 228, 244; Ruth, 179; Esther, 37–38, 43n7, 84, 115, 146, 153n9, 158, 209, 216, 228, 230; Tobit, 49, 143–44, 172
- Biblical personages other than the above, Old Testament: Aaron, 34, 159; Abigail, 42n66; Abraham, 11, 31, 33, 42n66, 150–52, 179, 236; Ahasuerus, 43n70, 49, 159, 161, 163, 181n11, n21; Asenath, 217; Bathsheba, 146, 182n51; Belshazzar, 114; Benjamin, 38, 49; Bileam, 11, 49, 236–37, 248n3; Children of Israel, 42n66, 49; David, 42n66, 84, 116–17, 128, 167, 172, 207; Elijah, 35, 37–38, 42n67, 49, 182n47; Elisha, 42n67; Esau, 38, 42n66, 210; Ezekiel, 116; Goliath, 84, 116–17; Hagar, 11, 31, 33–35; Haman, 231; Isaac, 106, 166, 179, 236; Ishmael, 11, 31, 33, 236; Jacob, 38, 42n66, 49, 116–17, 147, 172, 207, 210, 217, 244; Joseph, 244; Joshua, 172; Laban, 147; Manoah, 171; Moses, 34, 42n66, 226; Nebuchadnezzar, 7–8, 15, 113, 115, 117; queen of Sheba, 38; Rachel, 179; Rebecca, 106, 166, 179; Samson, 38, 172; Sarah, 179; Saul, 207; Solomon (and Temple), 38, 42n66, 43n69, 49, 55, 84, 135; Tamar, 38; Uzziah, 32
- New Testament: Caiaphas (high priest), 159; Elizabeth, 99; Hannah, 127–28, 131–32; Jesus Christ, 52, 63, 67n55, 123–26, 128, 130–32, 134–35, 137, 139, 142–43, 158–60, 161–62, 164, 167–68, 172, 181n16, n21, 189, 244; John the apostle, 92, 105, 133; John the Baptist, 100, 135; Joseph, 126–27, 128, 131; Judas Iscariot, 151; Mary, 52, 99–100, 126–27, 128, 131–32, 188; St. Paul, **frontispiece**, 19, 124–26, 132, 175, 183n63, 188–89; St. Peter, 19, 92, 105, 133, 135; Pilate, Pontius, 135, 142–43, 160; Simeon, 126–27, 128, 131–33, 188–89
- Bijlevelt, Evert Pietersz, house 28
- bimah* (lectern in de synagogue), 161
- Bingen am Rhein, Germany, 84
- Birmingham, United Kingdom, 191
- Black people, 15, 19, 46, 60, 64n11, 90–109, *passim*; 97–100
- Blaeu, Lieutenant Cornelis Michielsz (Amsterdam militia officer), 61
- Blanc, Charles (art historian, arts administrator), 7–9, 14–15, 45, 153n12, 181n18, 228; *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt* (1859, 1861), 7–8; *L'oeuvre de Rembrandt reproduit par la photographie* (1853), 7, 45
- Blankert, Albert (art historian), 224
- Blijendael, Claes Abramsz, 66n41
- Bode, Wilhelm von (museum director, art historian), 169, 182n35, 241, 244
- Bodian, Miriam (art historian), 74
- Bogendorf-Rupprath, Cynthia von (art historian), 13
- Bois, Catharina du, married to Casper van Collen (Ceulen), 58; house 21
- bom judesmo* (civilized Judaism), 78
- Bomberg, David (artist) 17, 185–98; works: *Evening in the City of London*, 195; *Ghetto Theatre*, 193–94; *Hear O Israel*, 187, 189; *The Mud Bath*, 192; *Last Self-portrait*, 184–85, 187; *Rooftops of Jerusalem*, 193–94; *Self-portrait* (1909), 191; *Self-portrait* (1931), 194; *Soliloquy Noonday Sun*, 189–90; *Ronda, Spain*, 189–90; *The Talmudist*, 189–90
- Bonke, Hans (student assistant), 14, 64n1
- Boogert, Bob van den (art historian, museum curator), 224
- book printers. *See* printers
- Boreel, Adam (theologian, Hebrew scholar), 29, 63, 130
- Boreel, Willem (Amsterdam regent), 64–65n13; house 34
- Boroda, Alexander (museum director), 250
- Borough Group, 196
- Borough Polytechnic, Southwark, 189, 192, 196
- Bosch, Saskia van der (student), 41n45
- Boudaan, Gualtherus (Reformed minister), 25–26
- Bouwens, Levijntje, married to Nicolaes Eliasz Pickenoy, 50–51; house 8
- Braakensiek, Johan (graphic artist), 165
- Bragança, Portugal, 48
- Bragina, Marina (museum associate), 250
- Brazil, 29, 39n19, 61–62, 94–97, 101, 103–04
- Bredius, Abraham (art historian, museum director), 236, 242
- Bree, Pim van (programmer), 64n1
- Brereton, William (writer, politician), 69n11, 93, 101
- Brinck, Ernst (burgomaster of Harderwijk, keeper of journal), 15, 93
- BritPop, 196
- Bromberg, Laura, married to Martin Bromberg (Hamburg entrepreneur, art collector), 123, 243–44
- Broos, B.P.J. (Ben; art historian, museum curator), 143
- Brouwer, Adriaen (artist), tavern scene, 35
- Brouwer, Cornelis (apprentice artist), 107n1
- Brownists, 46, 64n9–10; house 45

- Brueghel, Jan I (artist), *Banquet of the Gods*, 40n32; *Tower of Babel*, 50
- Bruges, 52
- Bruijnsz Garst, Gijsbert (carpenter), 53; house 20
- Bueno, Ephraim (Ephraim Hiskia Bueno; in Latin Ephraim Bonus; physician), 9, 53, 55, 63, 67n56–57, n59, n61–63, 113, 158, 224, 227; portrait etching by Lievens, 11, 55, 93; portrait etching by Rembrandt, 11, 53, 93, 112, 147–49, 150–51, 153n23; portrait painting by Rembrandt, **cover illustration**, 11–12, 36, 53–54, 55, 112, 227; house 39
- Bueno, Joseph (physician), 54, 67n61; house 39
- Burch, Abel Mathijsz (merchant, beer brewer), 60, 65n17; house 4
- Burgos, Eliau de (Sephardi in Brazil), 94
- Burgt, Margreet van de (graphic designer), 251
- Burgy, Amadé de (print collector), 148, 153n18
- burial, 62, 77, 94, 159, 163
- Burliuk brothers (artists), 218n1
- butchers, 73, 171, 198, 216
- Buxtorf, Johannes (theologian, Hebraist), 66n55, 131
- Buytewech, Willem (artist), 152
- C**
- Calckoen, Johannes (goldsmith, jeweler), house 3
- Calckoen, Willem (goldsmith), 64n5; house 3
- calligraphers, 29. *See* Chaves, Aron de; Godines, Senior; Leon, Michael Judah; Machabeu, Juda; Machorro, Symcha
- Callot, Jacques (artist), 144, 152n7
- Calvinists, Calvinism, 10, 19, 62, 106, 133, 151, 227
- Calvo, Michel, cousin of Alfonso Lopez, 32
- Camondo, Isaac de (art collector), 241
- Campbell, Thomas (art historian, museum director), 143
- Campen, Jacob van (artist, architect), 35
- Campos, Marten de, 35, 42n57
- Capernaum, synagogue, 160
- Cardoso, David (broker), 35, 42n57, 43n72
- Cardoso, David de Abraham (merchant, bequeathed painting by Emanuel de Witte of the Portuguese synagogue), 38
- Cardoso, Jean (broker, art collector), 26, 33, 35, 41n46, 42n56, n59, 42–43n67
- Cardoso Ribero, Jacob (artist), 33, 41n39–40
- Cardozo, Branca, married to Judah Machabeu, 62; house 6
- Carel, Jan Jansz (house owner), 52
- Carel, Rebecca, 52; house 19
- Castelo Rodrigo, Portugal, 112
- Castro, Diego de (owner of paintings), 34, 42n51, 43n70
- Castro, Digna de (house servant of Uriël da Costa), 53; house 36
- Castro Tartas, David de (book printer), 39n8
- Catholics, Catholicism, 146, 161–62, 181n21; Jewish antagonism towards, 62, 227; Jews living as, 72, 75; prohibition of, 24; theology, 19, 120n11; unmarked places of worship, 46, 64n9, 236–37. *See also* Barchman Wuytiers, Sijmon; conversion; Lopez, Alfonso; Moses en Aäronkerk; Rocamora, Vincente; Veselaer, Susanna; houses 22, 43
- Cayenne, Guiana, 95, 103
- cemetery. *See under* Muiderberg, Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, The Hague
- Cézanne, Paul, 171, 179, 195, 212, 214, 216
- Chagall, Bella, married to Marc Chagall, 182n40
- Chagall, Ida, daughter of Marc and Bella Chagall, 212
- Chagall, Marc, 17, 157, 169, 171–73, 180, 210–12, 216, 218n1, 220n40, n47; lecture at University of Chicago, 172; works: *The Burning Bush*, 182n47; *Creation of Man*, 182n47; *Death of Moses*, 182n47; *Double Portrait with a Glass of Wine*, 209–10; *Ezekiel Receiving the Scroll*, 182n47; *Moses Receiving the Tablets of the Law*, 182n47; *The Promenade and Over the Town (triptych)*, 209; *Prophecy of Jerusalem to Elijah*, 182n47; *Red Jew*, 202–03, 210, 216; *Sacrifice of Manoah*, 171–72
- Chaikovskaya, Vera (art historian), 204, 207, 212–13
- challah, 136–37
- chalutz, 194
- Chanukah lamp, 27, 34, 41n46
- Charles I, king of England, 26
- Charleville, France, 73
- Chashnik, Ilya (artist), 219n37
- Chassidism, 179, 181–82n633
- Chaves, Aron de (artist), 33–34, 41n39–42; works: *megillah*, 34; *The Ten Commandments*, 34–35; title page of Miguel (Daniel Levi) de Barrios, *Imperio de Dios en la harmonia del mundo*, 33–34
- Chaves, Daniel de (employee of Daniel Pinto), 51
- Chechik, Liya (museum curator), 250–51
- Chekrygin, Vasily (artist), 208–09, 218n1
- Chenil Gallery, 192
- Chicago, 13, 172
- China, 29
- Chirkov, Anton (artist), 206
- Chistyakov, Pavel (artist), 205
- Chmielnicki massacres, 84, 126, 139n31
- Christian Hebraists, 29, 125, 130, 138n9
- Chuikov, Semyon (artist), 214
- chuppah* (wedding canopy), 166, 179
- Church of England, 46
- circumcision, 23, 26, 36–38, 39n6
- civet cats, 58, 61, 68n78
- Clark, Kenneth (art historian; as president of the War Artists Advisory Committee), 189
- Cleve, Germany, 83
- Cobbaut, Sara, married to Balthasar de Visscher, 64n12; house 9
- Coblenz, Germany, 83–84
- Cock, Jan Jansz (apothecary), house 25
- Coelen, Peter van der (art historian, museum curator), 143
- Cohen, Richard I. (historian), 181n24
- Cohen de Herrera, Abraham (philosopher), 27–28
- Cohen de Herrera, Sara, married to Abraham Cohen de Herrera, 27–28
- Collegiants, 121n32
- Collen (Ceulen), Casper van (gunpowder manufacturer), 58, 67n75; house 21
- Collen (Ceulen), Susanna van, 58, 67n75; house 21
- Compas, Dirck Jansz (compass maker), 102, 66n46; house 15
- Coninxloo II, Hans van (artist), paintings of a homestead and a watermill, 35
- Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, 75, 93
- conversion, of Jews to Catholicism in the Iberian Peninsula (*conversos*), 24, 28, 37, 40n32, 62, 67n55, 115, 227; return of *conversos* to Judaism, 25–26, 62, 93, 95–96, 118; voluntary conversion of Jews to a Christian church, 13, 237–38; of a Jew to Islam, 86; of Jews to Christianity in the New Testament, 128, 135; of Jews to Christianity in millenarian thought, 16, 101, 125–26, 128, 138; of Christians to Judaism, 26; of Black servants to Judaism, 94, 96, 98; of Berbers to Catholicism, 236; of Blacks to Christianity, 106
- Convivencia, La, 227
- Coppit, Oopjen, married to Marten Soolmans and after his death to Maerten Daey, 102–04, 240



- Cornelisz, Cornelis (lodging house keeper), 82
- Corot, Jean-Baptiste, 175
- Correa, Simon, 94
- Costa, Uriel da (philosopher), 26, 53, 181n19–20, 66n55; house 36. *Exemplar humanae vitae*, 53; *Uriel da Costa in the Synagogue*, 161–63
- Costa d’Andrade, Abraham de David da. *See* d’Andrade, Louis Gonsales
- Costerus, Abraham (Reformed minister), 66n55
- Crasto, Manuel Mendes de (Manuel d’Aguilar d’Andrada), 38, 42n67, 43n70–71
- Creffield, Dennis (artist), 196
- Cunha, Sebastian da (Isaack Ergas), 41n46
- Cupid, 33
- Curaçao, 101, 105
- Curiel, Aron, 43n69
- Curiel, Jacob, 43n69
- Curiel, Lea, married to Louis Gonsales d’Andrade (Abraham de David da Costa d’Andrade), 43n70
- Curiel, Moses (Jeronimo Nunes da Costa; merchant, diplomat), 43n69
- Curiel, Nathan, son of Moses Curiel, 43n69
- Curiel, Solomon, son of Moses Curiel, 43n69
- D**
- Daelder, Egbert Gerritsz (house owner, landlord), 62; house 5
- Daey, Maerten (military officer), 103
- Davelaer, Cornelis (city lawyer of Amsterdam, lord of Petten), house 28
- Davidts, Beeli (housemaid), 78
- Davidts, Levij, 79
- Davis, Joseph (historian), 76
- Debora (free brown woman), 95
- Degas, Edgar, 175, 179
- Dekkingen, Rabbi Isaac, 86
- Delmedigo, Joseph (physician), 227
- Del Soto (alias Delmonte) family, 80
- Denmark, Danes, 103, 109n42
- diamonds, diamond trade, 8, 236, 238–39
- DeWitt, David (art historian, museum curator), 42n58, 120n6
- DeWitt, Lloyd (art historian, museum curator), 135
- Dias Brandon, Duarte. *See* Abenjacar, Abraham
- Dias de Britto, Fernando. *See* Abendana, David
- Dias de Fonseca, Aaron, 80
- Dias da Fonseca, Hester, married to David Keizer, 80
- Dias de Pas, Manuel, 42n59
- diaspora, 85–86, 109n34, 115, 163, 179
- Dibbits, Taco (museum director), 200
- Dimier, Louis (art historian), 247, 249n22
- diplomats, 28, 51, 56, 67n74, 232; house 8
- Dircks, Geertje (housemaid and mistress of Rembrandt), 59; house 9
- Dithmarschen, Stijntje Thomas van (housemaid), 79
- Dix, Otto (artist), 194
- Dohme, Robert (publisher), 181n18
- Dorrevelt, Captain Pieter Barentsz, 50
- Dorrevelts, Jannetje, 26, 39n7
- Dorta, Fernando. *See* d’Orta, Samuel
- Dou, Gerrit (artist), 152
- Dreyfus affair, 244
- Drost, Willem (artist), 49, 228; works: *An Artist’s Work Table*, 49, 65n25; *Bust of a Man Wearing a Large-brimmed Hat*, 230
- Drumont, Edouard (writer), *La France juive*, 244
- Duarte, Leonora, daughter of Manuel Duarte, 42n59
- Duarte, Manuel (merchant), 35, 42n55, n59
- Dudok van Heel, S.A.C. (Bas; historian, archivist), 64n8
- Dunkirk, France, 81
- Duranty, Edmond (art critic), 165
- Dürer, Albrecht, 181n18, 220n39; *Christ in Emmaus*, from the *Small Passion*, 136–37
- Dutch East India Company (VOC), 46, 59; houses 1, 24, 34
- Dutch East Indies, 84
- Dutch Masters Cigars, 177
- Dutch Reformed Church, 24, 26, 34, 61, 66n55; house 28
- Dutch Republic, 23–24, 26, 39n1, 46, 83, 91, 94–95, 101, 104, 118, 139n32, 167
- Dutch West India Company (WIC), 52, 61–62, 95, 103; houses 9, 14, 19
- Duveen Brothers (art gallery), 243, 245
- Dyck, Anthony van, 181n18
- E**
- Eardly, Sampson (Sampson Gideon, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Eardly), 238
- East Indian wares, 81
- l’Ecluse, Jean de (schoolteacher, book printer, elder in Brownist congregation), 64n9–10; house 45
- Efros, Abram (art historian), 205
- Eijndhoven, Susanna van, married to Johannes Wtenbogaert, 52; house 14
- Einstein, Albert, 182n38, 219n12
- Ekster, Aleksandra Alexandrovna (artist), 218n1
- Elieser (Black servant), 96, 98
- Elkonin, Viktor (artist), 209
- Emden, Germany, 25, 72–73
- Emmerich, Germany, 83
- L’Empereur, Constantijn (professor of Hebrew), 16, 129–30, 133, 138n13
- Enden, Franciscus van den (Jesuit seminarian, Latin teacher), 119
- England, English people, 26–27, 34, 36, 39n10, 55, 69n111, 93, 112, 115, 185–201, 241. *See also* United Kingdom
- enslaved people, 15, 64n11, 91, 94–96, 98, 103
- Ergas, Hesther, married to Sebastian da Cunha (Isaack Ergas), 41n46
- Ergas, Isaack, 41n6
- Esther scrolls. *See* megillah
- ethnicity. *See* identity
- Evelyn, John (writer, traveler), 28
- excommunication, 26, 82, 119, 162–63
- exhibitions, Paris–Philadelphia–Detroit 2011, *Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus*, 155. *See also* Amsterdam, Jewish Museum; Amsterdam, Rembrandt House Museum; Moscow, Pushkin Museum; Paris, Musée de l’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme; Washington, Judaic Museum
- exile (*galut*). *See* diaspora
- exoticism, 99, 101, 106, 124, 137, 148, 153n9, 182n48
- expulsion from Portugal (1497), 24
- expulsion from Spain (1492), 24
- Eyck, Jan van, 175, 152, 181n18
- Eyck, Maria van, married to Hendrick Uylenburgh, house 8
- F**
- Falk, Robert (artist), 214–17
- Farmer, Jane (museum associate), 13
- Farrar, Abraham I (physician), 27, 52, 66n47
- Farrar, Abraham II (physician), 66n47; house 15
- Farrar, Debora, married to Abraham Farrar II, house 15
- Faulconniers, Anna de, widow of Pieter Nimeij, house 14
- Ferguson, Niall (historian), 240
- Fernando, Bastiaan (Black seaman), 100
- Fernando, Lucia (daughter of Bastiaan Fernando), 100

- Fernando, Manuel (Black seaman), 100  
 Fez, Morocco, 39n5  
 First World War, 192, 235  
 Fischer, Sandra, married to R.B. Kitaj, 179, 200  
 Flameng, Léopold (graphic artist), 45–46, 63  
 Flinck, Govert (artist), 135; house 8  
 Focquenbroch, Paulus van (merchant), 52; house 14  
 Focquenbroch, Willem Godschalck van (poet, playwright), 52  
 Fonseca, Ysak, 79  
 Fortuny, Mariano (artist), 218n4  
 France, 7, 13, 24, 58, 95, 112, 146, 181n18, 235–37, 243–47; Arts Administration, 7. *See also* Charleville, Dunkirk, Metz, Paris, Rouen  
 Francisca (leading figure in the community of Black residents of the Breestraat), 103  
 Francken (Franco Mendes), Hester, widow of Manuel Franco Mendes (merchant), house 18  
 Franco Silver, Abraham (Christoffel Mendes), 43n71  
 Franeker, The Netherlands, 63  
 Frankenburg, Abraham von (mystic), 231  
 Frankenstein, Alfred (art and music critic), 182n51  
 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 73, 81, 83–84  
 Freud, Lucian (artist), 17, 198, 200; *Painter Working, Reflection*, 199  
 Freud, Sigmund, 182n38  
 Frederik Hendrik, Stadholder, 26  
 Fry, Roger (art historian), 192
- G**
- Gabay, Isaac. *See* Matthea Rodrigues Cardoso  
 Gabay Henriques, Elias (donor to Sephardi synagogue), 37  
 Gabay Isidero, Moses (Francisco van Isidero), 43n71  
 Gabo, Naum (sculptor), 198  
 Gadas, Maria (museum associate), 250  
 Galicia, Spain, 159, 162–63  
 Gans, Mozes (historian), 111  
*Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (art–history journal), 7  
 Geerincx, Harman (carillon player), 52; house 16  
 Geerincx, Samuel, 52, 66n41  
 Germany, 12–13, 75, 84, 104, 112, 135, 181n18, 206, 208, 235, 241, 244, 247. *See also* Berlin, Bingen am Rhein, Cleve, Coblenz, Emden, Emmerich, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Hanau, Hessen-Kassel, Kassel  
 Gerniers, Catalijntje, married to Joris Woutersz, house 12  
 Gersaint, Edmé-François (art dealer, art historian), 113, 120n6, 121n23, 143, 147–48, 151, 153n13, n19, 228  
 Gerson, Horst (art historian), 236, 242  
 Gertler, Mark (artist), 191, 194  
 Getashvili, Nina (art historian, educator), 17–18, 220  
 ghetto, 158, 193–94  
 Gheyn, Jacob de, III (artist), 108n26, 128  
 Gheyn, Jacques de, II (artist), 108n26  
 Gibian, George (scholar of Russian and comparative literature), 207  
 Gideon, Sampson (financier, art collector), 39n10, 233, 238–39, 248n7  
 Gierymski, Aleksander (artist), 158  
 Gilt, Gregorius van der (witness to dispute), 81  
 Gimpel, Judah (Leib) ben Mordecai (book printer), 39n8  
 Gimpel, René (art dealer), 173, 245  
 ginger, 81  
 Giotto, 179  
 Goemare, Joos (artist), house 27  
 Gogh, Vincent van, 186, 197  
 gold, 8, 41n42, 55, 65n23, 81, 84, 113, 115, 131, 161, 166, 200, 239, 245  
 Goldschmidt, Benedict (Meyer Baruch; banker), 83  
 Goldsmit, Wolf (merchant), 83  
 goldsmiths, 46, 64n5; houses 2–3  
 Gomperts, Benedictus Levij (financier [*solliciteur-militaire*] of the States army), 83  
 Gomperts, Cosmanus Elias (financier, owner of printing firm), 83  
 Gomperts, Philip Levij and Sons (firm), 83  
 Goos, Abraham (engraver), 29, 227  
 Goris, Maijke, married to Gerrit Arentsz van Lier, house 23  
 GOSET, State Jewish Chamber Theatre, Moscow, 220n47  
 Gottlieb, Maurycy (artist), 17, 158–63, 180, 181n15, 224, 233; works: *Self-portrait as Ahasuerus*, 159; *Jesus Before his Judges*, 159; *Jesus Preaching at the Synagogue in Capernaum*, 160–61; *Uriel da Costa in the Synagogue Abjuring his Beliefs*, 161, 163  
 Goudstikker gallery, 245  
 Graeff, Abraham Govertsz van der (house owner), 61; house 29  
 Graetz, Heinrich (historian) 162, 181n16  
 Granada, Spain, 236  
 Granowsky, Alexander (theatre director), 212  
 Grasio, Manuel, 43n71  
 Greece. *See* Salonica  
 Greek Empire, 115  
 Greenland, 103  
 Grigoryev, Roman (art historian, museum curator), 16, 154  
 Grindel, Johannes (pharmacist), 61; house 26  
 Groot, D. de (researcher), 31  
 Grosz, George (artist), 194  
 Grotius, Hugo (humanist, diplomat, lawyer, theologian, poet, playwright), *Remonstrance[...]*, 125  
 guilds, 26, 29, 36, 38, 46, 81, 101, 177  
 Guiana, South America, 95  
 Guinea, Africa, 94, 101  
 Guston, Philip (artist), 157  
 Gutov, Dmitry (artist), 216; *An Old Man*, 215  
 Gutzkow, Karl (writer), 162–63
- H**
- Haarlem, The Netherlands, 82  
 Hachohen, Rabbi David ben Menachem (authority on *halakha*), 76  
 Hagen, Christiaan van (engraver), 33–34, 41n41  
 Hagoort, Lydia (historian), 96  
*halakha* (Jewish law), 62, 76, 81–82  
 Hals, Frans, 168  
 Hamburg, Germany, 24, 36–37, 39, 75, 243; house 18  
 Hameln, Glikl von (writer), 83  
 Hamerstein, Christoffel (baker, landlord), 67n59, n61; house 39  
 Hamilton, Richard (artist), 196  
 Hamis d’Orta, Jacob, 40–41n34, n39  
 Hanau, Germany, 73  
 Hanegum, Maria (housemaid), 79  
*Haolam* (Jewish weekly), 206  
 Harmansz, Grietje, married to Dirck Jansz Compas, house 15  
 Haro, David (physician), 63  
*haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment), 206  
*havdalah* (closing ceremony of the Sabbath), 38  
 Hebrew Bible, 115, 124, 172, 178, 181n11  
 Hebrew books and writing, 83–85, 101, 105, 108n33, 114, 120n11, 159–60, 163, 169, 182n47, 206  
 Hebrew learning, 66n55, 125, 128, 130, 219, 219n14, 227

- Hebrew schools, 119
- Heem, Jan Davidsz de (artist), 35
- Heijndrix, Gerberich, widow of Lambert Gerritsz Ruijl, married to Egbert Gerritsz Daelder, 62; house 5
- Hell, Maarten (historian), 64n1
- Hendricx, Lijsbeth, married to Geurt Dircksz van Beuningen, 46; house 1
- Hendrix, Annetgen, house 14
- Henrietta Maria, queen of England, 26
- Henriques, Jeronimo (art collector), 38, 42n59, 43n72
- Henriques d’Azevedo, 52; houses 16–17
- Henriquez, Gracia, 41n48
- herem*. See excommunication
- Hertz. See Hartog, Abrahams
- Herzl, Theodor (journalist, father of Zionism), 17, 182n38, 208
- Hessen-Kassel, Germany, 83
- Hester (high German maid), 79
- hiddur mitzvah* (beautifying the performance of the commandments), 27
- high priest, 55, 125, 130, 132, 136, 159
- Hillegers, Jasper (art historian), 14, 224
- Hinlopen, Jacob Fransz (lawyer), 59, 68n85; house 24
- Hinteding, Erik (art historian, museum curator), 41n41
- Hirszenberg, Samuel (artist), 163–65, 181n23; works: *Spinoza, Excommunicated*, 162–63; *The Black Banner*, 163; *Exile*, 163; *The Wandering Jew*, 164
- Hochberg, Aaron, cousin of Larry Rivers, 178
- Hoeffflager, Hendrick (merchant), 34–35, 42n53, 53, 66n50, 69n104
- Hoefijser, Pieter Maertensz (receiver-general of the Admiralty in Amsterdam), 68n77; house 22
- Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis (art historian, collector), 71, 242
- Holbein, Hans, 181n18
- Hollósy, Simon (artist), 220n39
- Holocaust, 105, 172, 244
- Holt, Lilian (artist), 194
- Holy German Empire, 83
- Holy Roman Empire, 73
- Hoof, Machteld, house 4
- Hoof, Pieter Cornelisz (poet, office holder), 53
- Hooghe, Romeyn de (graphic artist), 43n69, 132, 149; works: *Begraefnis der Joden buyten Amsterdam* (Funeral of Jews outside Amsterdam), 77; *Circumcision in the Home of a Sephardi Family*, 23, 36–37; *De geweesene kerk der Joden*, 28, 38; *Hof van de E: Heer de Pinto*, 60, 93; *Hof van den Baron Belmonte*, 74; *Inauguration of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam*, 38, 154n27; *T Profiel van de Kerk*, 83; *De preekstoel en binnentranssen* (Pulpit and Inner Sanctum of the Portuguese-Jewish Synagogue), 94
- Hoogstraten, Samuel van (artist, pupil of Rembrandt), 108n26, 124, 135
- housemaid. See maidservants
- Howell, James (historian), 46, 64n10
- Hungary, 75
- Huydecoper, Joan, lord of Maarsseveen (merchant, director of the VOC, burgo-master of Amsterdam), 59, 68n85; house 24
- Huydecoper, Maria, married to Jacob Fransz Hinlopen, 59; house 24
- Huygens, Constantijn (poet, in the service of the House of Orange), 56, 64n13, 67n69, 128, 192
- I**
- Iberian Peninsula, 11, 23–24, 28, 37, 41n45, 62, 72, 75, 93, 96, 227
- Ibsen, Henrik, 182n38
- Idelson, Raisa, married to Robert Falk, 217
- identity, identification, ethnicity, 15, 81, 171, 203–04, 216, 227; artistic identity, 196, 209; displaying Jewish identity, 133, 150, 164, 172, 206; hiding Jewish identity, 37; as Jews in the Netherlands, 26, 28, 63; of Rembrandt models, 9; Polish identity, 158; in relation to art, 158, 172, 178–79; in relation to collecting, 18, 34; as Sephardim, 75
- Inquisition, 24, 37, 40n32, 61, 123, 236
- Isaac or Isaacs, Henry (diamond merchant, art collector), 239
- Isaacx, Jecousiël (corrector of Hebrew books), 85
- Isaacz, Pieter (artist, diplomat), 67n74, 68n77
- Isfahan, Persia, 51
- Israel, Jonathan (historian), 239
- Israel, Menasseh ben. See Menasseh ben Israel
- Israëls, Jozef (artist), 17, 157, 165, 166–69, 180, 182n38, 219n12, 224, 233; works: *A Son of the Ancient Race*, 156, 165, 169; *Jewish Wedding*, 166
- Isserles, Rabbi Moses, 76, 154n26
- Istomin, Konstantin (artist, art professor), 209; *Woman Reading*, 208–09, 220n39
- Italia, Salom (graphic artist), 29–30, 34, 38, 40n23–24, n28, 93, 121n22, 148, 153n9, 232; works: marriage contract of Isaac de Pinto and Rachel da Vega, 59–60; *Portrait of Judah Leon Templo*, 93; *Portrait of Menasseh ben Israel*, 93, 113, 149, 153n24, 230, 232; Esther scroll, 30–31
- Italy, 24, 205. See also Livorno, Rome, Venice
- J**
- Jack of Diamonds art group, 105
- Jacobs, Barber, mother of Pieter Lastman (dealer in second-hand goods), 46, 64n4; house 2
- Janson, Willem (baker), house 14
- Janson van Ceulen, Cornelis (artist), 25
- Jansz, Aeltje, married to Gijsbert Bruijnssz Garst, house 20
- Jansz, Jan (carpenter), 65n30
- Jansz, Lijsbet, widow of Captain Pieter Barentsz Dorrevelt, 50; house 11
- Jansz, Reijnier (silk shop owner), 68n77, n81; house 23
- Jansz, Symon (artist), 29, 40n20
- Jennes, Denis. See Aboab Osorio, Abraham
- Jerusalem, Bezalel Academy, 170, 219n11; Hebrew University, 219n12; Herodian temple, 126, 128; Temple of Solomon, 16, 43n69, 49, 55–56, 63, 67n69, 113, 123–38, 124–25, 129, 137
- Jessurun, David (Francisco Mendes Porto; insurance agent, poet), house 28
- Jessurun, Rehuel. See Pina, Paulo de
- Jessurun, Rifca, daughter of Salvador Rodrigues, 49
- Jessurun, Sara, daughter of Salvador Rodrigues, 49
- Jessurun Leonor (Rachel), married to Salvador Rodrigues, 48
- jewelry, 8, 40n32, 48–49, 81, 83. See also diamonds, gold, pearls
- Jewish law. See *halakhah*
- Jewish Writers Committee, 172
- Jones, Jonathan (art critic for the *Guardian*), 103–04
- Jonghe, Clement de (bookseller, art dealer), 57, 67n62, n71, 126
- Joosten, Philip. See ha-Levi, Rabbi Moses Uri ben Joseph
- Joostensz, Elbert, house 14
- Josephs, Judith, married to Abraham Benedictus Hagenau, 73
- Josephus, Flavius (Roman Jewish historian and writer), 123–24, 128, 131–32, 138n1
- Juliana (enslaved Black woman), 94
- Jurriaens, Rebecca (junk shop owner), 50; house 11

- Justo, Jacob (Yaakov ben Abraham Tsaddiq; cartographer), 29, 40n21, **227**
- K**
- kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism), 248
- Kahn, Otto (art collector), 241
- Kahr, Madlyn (art historian), 146
- Kalaallit people, 103
- Kandinskaya, Nina, married to Wassily Kandinsky, 209
- Kandinsky, Wassily (artist), 208–09
- Kann, Maurice (banker, art collector), 245, 247, 249n22–23
- Kann, Rodolphe (banker, art collector), 243–45
- Kantor, Maxim (artist, writer, art historian), 210, 212, 220n39
- Kaplan, Thomas (entrepreneur, philanthropist, art collector), 247–48
- Kaplan, Yosef (historian), 74, 224–25
- Kappel, Leopold (art collector), 241
- Karo, Rabbi Yosef (author of halakhic compendium), 76
- kashrut*, kosher (Jewish dietary laws), 26, 73, 77, 174
- Kassel, Germany, 73, 83, 207, 217
- Keizer, David, 80
- Kelle, Lieven Sijmons (leather merchant), 52, 66n41; house 9
- Kerck, Pieter Jacobsz, 65n19; house 11
- Keren Hayesod, 194
- Kessels, Geert (programmer), 64n1
- ketubah* (plural *ketubot*; marriage contract), 30, **59–60**
- Kheifets, Kira (museum associate), 250
- Khmelnyskyi. *See* Chmielnicki
- Kick, Willem (lacquer artist), 57–58, 67n72; house 43
- Kikoine, Michel (artist), 198
- Kitaj, R.B. (Ron Brooks; artist), 17, 178–80, 182n53, 199–200, 233; works: *Second Diasporist Manifesto*, 179; *The Jewish Rider*, **176**; *Abraham's God (After Rembrandt)*, 179; *Los Angeles #26 (Nose Kiss)*, **178–79**, 199; “Passion series,” 179; *Self-portrait After Rembrandt's Last Self-portrait*, **200**; *Self-portrait with the Baal Shem [Tov]*, 182n63
- Kitschen, Friedrike (art historian), 162
- kittel* (white garment for ritual occasions and burial), 159
- Kleinberger gallery, 245
- Kleinert, Katja (art historian, museum curator), 249n18
- Klerk, Catheline de, married to Govert Spruijt I, house 27
- Knotter, Mirjam (art historian, museum curator), 14, 20, 41n45, 43, 69, 224, 226, 250
- kohanim* (Temple priests), 28
- Kolfin, Elmer (art historian), 108n25–30
- Kokelen, Trijntje van, married to Jacques Savery and to Govert Spruijt, 61
- Kolloff, Eduard (writer, political activist), 240
- Kollwitz, Käthe (artist), 180, 194
- Konchalovskiy, Pyotr (artist), 205, 218n6
- Kook, Rabbi Abraham, 12–13
- Koplivitz, Y. (translator), 206
- Korotkova, Lidochka (painter's model), 209
- Kossoff, Leon (artist), 17, 185, 192, 198
- Koster, Assueres (bell founder), house 13
- Koster, Gerrit (bell founder), house 13
- Kraków, Poland, 47, 181n15; Kraków Academy, 158
- L**
- Lacher, Sijmon Jansz (house owner), house 30
- Lamberts, Gillis (timber dealer), house 47
- Lamberts, Jan (barge captain and landlord), house 39
- Landsberger, Franz (art historian), 11, 104–05, 157–58, 224
- Langbehn, Julius (writer), 182n34, 241, 248–49n15
- Langlois, François (art dealer), 248n3
- Lastman, Nicolaes or Claes (artist), house 2
- Lastman, Pieter (artist), 23, 46–47, 64n4; house 2
- Laurens, Carel (merchant), 66n47; house 15
- Lebedeva, Tatiana (artist), 208–09
- LeBleu, Jean (art collector), 115
- Lee, Samuel (Temple scholar), 131
- Leerintveld, Ad (literary historian, library curator), 67n69
- Leguit, Guido (researcher), 14, 64n1
- Leiden, University, 63, 128
- Lentulus, Publius (Roman governor), 124, 135–36
- Leon, Rachel, married to Jacob Juda Leon, house 44
- Leon, Jacob Juda (called Jacob Juda Templo; rabbi, teacher, researcher), 26, 29–30, 55–56, 58, 63, 67n65, n69, 130, 133, 138n24, 227, 230; house 44; broadsheet of his model of the Temple, **56**
- Leon, Michael Juda (scribe), 29, 40n27; Esther scroll, 29–**31**
- Lesser gallery, 245
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim (writer), 158
- Leusden, Anja (publisher), 251
- Levi, Isak (house owner), 67n65
- ha-Levi, Aron Uri ben Joseph, son of Moses Uri ben Joseph ha-Levi, 25, 72
- ha-Levi, Rabbi Moses Uri ben Joseph (Philip Joosten), 25, 39n4, **72**
- ha-Levi, Samuel bar Moses (book printer), 39n8
- ha-Levi, Uri Phoebus ben Aron, or Uri Fayvesh (Phoebus) ben Aron Ha-Levi (book printer), 39n8, 72
- Levie Bernfeld, Tirtsah (historian), 41n45, 64n1
- Levij, Aron (Ashkenazi who attended Sephardi services), 80
- Levina-Rosengolts (Rosenholz), Eva (artist), 216; *No. 24 From the Cycle “People (Rembrandt series)”*, **215**
- Levine, Ruth E. (museum associate), 225
- Levitan, Isaak (landscape artist), 219n18
- Lewis, Wyndham (artist, writer), 192
- Leyden, Lucas van, *The Triumph of Mordechai*, 152–53n7
- Liebermann, Max (artist), 157, 167–69, 176, 180, 182n34, 219n11; works: *Jesus Among the Rabbis in the Temple*, 167–**68**; *Jewish Street in Amsterdam*, 169; *Self-portrait at an Easel*, **169**; *Synagogue in Amsterdam*, 169
- Lier, Gerrit Arentsz van (house owner), 58, 68n81; house 23
- Lievens, Jan (artist, etcher), 33, 41n39; works: *Elijah*, 35, 42n67; *Portrait of Ephraim Bueno*, 11, 54–**55**, 67n62, 93
- Lievensz, Simon (shoe seller), 52, 66n40; house 13
- Lightfoot, John (Temple scholar), 130–31, 133
- Limborch, Philip van (theologian), 53
- Linden, Johannes Antonides van der (professor of medicine and rector at the University of Franeker), 63
- Linden, Yuri van der (art historian), 41n45
- Lingelbach, Johannes (artist), *Pyramid on a Beach*, 35
- Lion, Rachel de, married to Michael Juda Leon, 40n27
- Liozna, Belarus, 212
- Lipchitz, Jacques (artist), 173
- Lisbon, 41n48, 51–52, 61
- Livorno, Italy, 51
- Lock, Adriaen (notary), 36
- Lodewijcx, Sara, married to Francois de Penijn, house 26
- Loman, Christiaan, Jr. (researcher, publisher), 64n3

- London, 12, 17, 83–84, 178, **195**, 199, 219n19, 238–39, 245; Arts Council, 197; Bevis Marks synagogue, *The Ten Commandments*, 34–**35**, 41n42; Bartlett School of Architecture, 196; Bloomsbury, 194; Borough Polytechnic Institute, 196; Creechchurch Lane Synagogue, 41n42; East End, 191; National Gallery, 12; Slade School of Fine Arts, 191; Whitechapel, 191–92, 194; Whitechapel Art Gallery, 192. *See also* School of London
- Lope, Alonso de. *See* Lopez, Alfonso
- Lopes, Anna (maidservant), house 48
- Lopes, David (house owner), house 35
- Lopez, Alfonso (Alonso de Lope; jeweller, agent for Cardinal Richelieu), 11, 13, 32, 38, 236–**37**, 239, 248n3–4
- Los Angeles, 178–79; Skirball Museum, 13, 226
- Louis XIII, king of France, 58; house 22
- Louis XIV, king of France, 32
- Lozovoy, Alexander (artist), 219n37
- Lugt, Frits (art historian, collector), 120n3
- Luna Montalto, Abraham de (Abraham Segenberch; merchant), 81
- Luna Montalto, Rabbi Lopo de. *See* Montalto, Isaac
- Lurie, Doron (art historian, museum curator), 224
- Luther, Martin, 227
- Lutherans, 72–73
- Luyken, Jan (artist), 132
- M**
- Maarsen, The Netherlands, map of the town, 43n72
- McAuley, James (journalist, historian, writer), 240–41
- Machabeu, Juda (also Jehuda; Luis Nunes do Valle; calligrapher), 29, 39n19, 62; house 6
- Macharro, Jacob (employee of Jacob Pereira), 51
- Machorro, Abraham (calligrapher), 29; *Respuesta a un filosofo Hebreo* (Response to a Jewish Philosopher), **30**
- machzor* (prayer book for high holidays), 25, 72–**73**
- Madrid, Spain, 61
- Maes, Nicolaes, *Woman with Three Children and a Goat* (New York, Leiden Collection), 239
- mahamad* (board of Sephardi congregation), 39n13, 78, 231–32
- maidservants, 46, 53, 78–79, 106, 108n31; houses 36, 46
- Maimonides (physician, scholar, philosopher), 128, 130
- Makovsky, Sergei (poet, art critic, curator), 218n4
- Malachi (accused of knife attack), 52
- Malevich, Kazimir (artist), 209, 218n1, 219n37
- Manet, Edouard, 171
- Marck, Dirck Claes van der (baker), 52, 66n45; house 14
- Maria, Infanta, Spanish princess, 62
- Maria (Black woman, married to Bastiaan Fernando), 100
- Mariette, Pierre (art dealer, connoisseur), 150
- Marken, The Netherlands, 78
- Marr, Leslie (artist), 196
- Mashiach, Samuel, brother-in-law of Sabbethai Zvi, 85–86
- Matejko, Jan (history painter), 158, 181n15
- Mathijsz, Jacob (merchant), 81
- Matisse, Henri, 179
- Mayer, Hendel, married to Aaron Dias da Fonseca and to Joseph Salomons, 80, 84
- Mazarin, Cardinal, 32
- megillah* (plural *megillot*; scroll of Esther), 29–**31**, 34, 37–38, 40n27
- Mellon, Andrew (American industrialist, patron of the arts), 218n6
- Melnikoff, Avram (sculptor), 12
- Menasseh ben Israel (rabbi, writer, book printer, publisher), 20n1, 26, 28–30, 52, 56–63, 111–21; house 48; in relation to Rembrandt, 9, 15–16, 120n3, 152, 158, 224, 229; portrayed by Rembrandt in etching?, 18, 149, **223**, 227–28, 230; portrait etching by Salom Italia, 30, 93, 148–49, **232**; painted portrait?, 40n25; as printer-publisher, 26, 29, 58, 68n78; *De creatione problemata* XXX, 231; *Hope of Israel*, 61; *Even yekarah: Piedra gloriosa*, 7, 18, 40n24, **117–18**, 120n18–28; *De termino vitae*, 114–**15**; *VVelkomst, uyt sijns Volcks name*, 26–27
- Mendes, Abraham (artist), 32
- Mendes, Christoffel. *See* Franco Silvera, Abraham
- Mendes, Isabel, married to Bartolomeo Rodrigues, 59; house 24
- Mendes de Crasto, Manuel (Manuel d’Aguilar d’Andrada, art collector), 38, 42n67, 43n70–71
- Mendes Franco, Hester, married to Manuel Mendes Franco, 52; house 18
- Mendes Franco, Jacob, son of Manuel Mendes Franco, 52; house 18
- Mendes Franco, Manuel (merchant), 52
- Mendes Franco, Moses, son of Manuel Mendes Franco, 52; house 18
- Mennonites, 47
- Mercury, 33
- Merle, Jonas van (artist), 64
- Merle du Bourg, Alexis (art historian), 14, 224, 229
- Messiah, 225, 232; Jesus as the Messiah, 132, 136; in Jewish hopes, 8, 12, 115, 117, 126, 138; Jewish rejection of Christ’s Messiahhood, 63, 128; Lubavitcher rebbe as, 179; Second Coming of Christ, 126, 138. *See also* Zvi, Shabbetai
- messianism, 15, 86, 112, 115, 228
- Metz, France, 73
- Meurs, May (student assistant), 41n45
- mezuzah*, 181n14
- Michaelis, Max (mine owner, art collector), 239
- Michalowski, Piotr (artist), 158
- Michelangelo, 144, 197, 226
- Middleton, Charles (art historian), 153n12
- Midrash, 13, 120, 179
- Mieris the Elder, Frans van (artist), 152
- Mikhoels, Solomon (theatre director), 212, 216
- millenarianism, 16, 29, 63, 138, 139n32, 223, 228, 232
- minhag*, 75
- minyán* (quorum of ten men for full prayer service), 84, 126, 138n5, 163
- Mishnah, 16, 128–**29**, 130, 138n20
- Mizrachi (religious Zionist movement), 218
- models, 180n5, 216; Jew as Jesus, 135–36, 158; Rembrandt models seen as or being Ashkenazi Jew, 10, 46, 82, 92, 224, 229; Black people as, 99; Saskia as, **146–47**. *See also* Hochberg, Aaron
- modernism, 192, 196–98, 218n1
- Modigliani, Amedeo, 173, 198
- Moerselaar, Evert (physician), 61; house 31
- mohel* (circumciser), 37
- Moises (named in deposition), 52
- Molijn, Hendrik du (house owner), 66n40, houses 12, 18
- Momper, Joos de (artist), landscape painting, 35
- Mondrian (Mondriaan), Piet, 198
- Monogrammist HB, 151
- Monsanto, Mozes Moreno (Manuel Rodrigues Monsanto; house owner), house 42
- Montalto, Rabbi Isaac (Lopo de Luna Montalto; rabbi, merchant), 58, 68n77–78; house 22

- Montalto, Michael (merchant), 58  
 Montefiore, Moses (banker, philanthropist, supporter of Jewish settlement in Palestine), 17, 208  
 Montias, John Michael (economist, art historian), 41n45, 115  
 Moors, 15, 93, 108n27  
 Moreno, Jacob (physician), 55, 67n64  
 Morgenstein, Susan W. (museum curator), 225  
 Morocco, 29. *See also* Fez  
 Morteira, Rabbi Saul Levi, 39n5, 62; house 5; *Providencia de Dios con Ysrael* (The Providence of God with Israel), 62  
 Moscow, 206; Active Revolutionary Art Associations, 213; Imperial Academy of Arts, 19; Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, 103, 203, 250–51; Moscow Choral Synagogue, 206; Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, 205, 208, 214, 220n51; Museum of Pictorial Culture, 220n48; Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, exhibits. *Rembrandt* (1936); *Rembrandt: A Different Perspective* (2015), 216; Rumanietsev Museum, 209; Vkhutemas–Vkhutein (art school), 208–09, 213–14, 219n28, 220n39  
 Mostaert, Daniel (Amsterdam town secretary), 53, 63  
 Muiderberg, Ashkenazi cemetery, 77  
 Müller, Johannes (Lutheran theologian, anti-Jewish polemicist), 67n55  
 Müller, Jürgen (art historian), 168, 182n34  
 Mundy, Peter (British factor, merchant trader, traveller, writer), 93, 101  
 Munich, 159, 161, 163, 167  
 Münz, Ludwig (art historian), 151  
 Muslims, 11, 101, 154, 227, 236  
 mythology, mythological figures, 242; Athena, 146; Bellona, 33; Cupid, 33; Flora, 146; Mercury, 33; Neptune, 43n71. *See also* Sephardi painting collections, subjects of
- N**  
 nação (nation, referring to the Sephardi community), 75  
 Nadler, Steven (historian), 15–16, 18, 74, 121, 225, 232  
 Naftali, Gets (Ashkenazi Jew accused of street violence), 78  
 Nagel, Alexander (historian), 107  
 Nagtegaal, Aernout (draftsman, engraver), portrait of Rabbi da Fonseca, 37  
 Narkiss, Mordechai (historian), 121n22  
 Nasimova, Maria (museum curator), 250  
 Nassy, David, 95, 103, 108n15, 109n42  
 Nassy, Debora (servant), 94–95  
 Neradovsky, Pyotr (artist), 218n5  
 Netherlands, The, *passim*. *See also* Amsterdam, Arnhem, Franeker, Haarlem, Maarsse, Marken, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, Soest  
 Netto, David (Sephardi in the New World), 94  
 networks, 32, 38, 71, 83–84, 86, 206, 250  
 Neve Shalom congregation. *See under* Amsterdam  
 New Christians (*conversos*). *See under* conversion  
 New Jews, 75, 225  
 New York, Jewish Museum, 13; Metropolitan Museum of Art, 247; Museum of Modern Art, 197; Stern's College for Women, 13; Yeshiva University Museum, 13  
 Nicolai, Anneken, married to Michiel Uijtens, 64n5; house 3  
 Nietto, Sara (housemaid), 79  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 179, 182n38  
 Nieulandt, Adriaen van (artist, appraiser), 58, 68n77, n81–82  
 Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 83  
 Nikritin, Solomon (artist), 213, 220n48  
 North Africa, 24  
 Norway, Norwegian, 82  
 Nunes, André or Christoffel. *See* Belmonte, Isaac  
 Nunes, David (witness in criminal charges), 51, 66n37  
 Nunes, Leonarda (Rachel Nunes de Castro), house 46  
 Nunes Canis, Maria, married to Francisco (David) d'Orta, 40n32  
 Nunes da Costa, Jeronimo. *See* Moses Curiel  
 Nunes Henriques, Beatriz, married to Manuel (Isaac Haim de Abraham) Teixeira de Sampayo, 37  
 Nunes Henriques, Jacob (inheritor of painting by Emanuel de Witte), 38  
 Nunes do Valle, Luis. *See* Machabeu, Juda *nusach* (Jewish ritual custom), 75–76
- O**  
 Odesa, Ukraine, 205, 217  
 Oetgens van Waveren, Weintgen, widow of Lieutenant Cornelis Michielsz Blauw, 61; house 25  
 Offenber, Adri (historian, library curator), 18, 228  
 Ogier, Charles (diplomat), 28–29
- Oizer, Leib ben (warden and secretary of the Ashkenazi community), 86  
 Olis, Jan (house owner), 61; house 29  
 Oppenheim (family firm), 83  
 Oran, Algeria, 39n5  
 Orange, house of, 26–27, 34, 39n9  
 Orloff, Chana (sculptor), 173  
 Orobio, Jacob (Sephardi who bedded Christian maid), 79  
 Orobio de Castro, Isaac (philosopher, physician, religious apologist), *Respuesta a un filosofo Hebreo* (Response to a Jewish Philosopher), 30  
 Osorio, Bento (Baruch; merchant, founding member of the Sephardi congregation), 35, 42n54, 52–53, 61–62, 69n104; house 33  
 Osorio, Hanna, married to Fernando Dias de Britto (David Abendana), 52  
 d'Orta, Cana, daughter of Francisco (David) d'Orta and Maria Nunes Canis, 40n32  
 Osorio, Sarah, married to Abraham Aboab Osorio, 61  
 d'Orta, Francisco (David; merchant), 40n32  
 d'Orta, Guiomar (Ester), daughter of Francisco (David) d'Orta and Maria Nunes Canis, 40n32  
 d'Orta, Jerónima (Raquel), daughter of Francisco (David) d'Orta and Maria Nunes Canis, 40n32  
 d'Orta, Samuel (Fernando Perera; artist, print dealer), 11, 23, 30–32, 38, 40n32, 41n40, 112, 236  
 Osorio, Bento (co-founder of the Sephardi congregation, owner of paintings), 35  
 Ostade, Adriaen van (artist), 152  
 Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, Sephardi cemetery Bet Haim, 40n34, 65n32, 77, 94, 96, 101  
 Oxford, Pasternak Family Collection, 219n12
- P**  
 Palestine, 12, 142, 163, 169–70, 173, 194, 219n12, 227  
 Pallache, Rebecca (owner of paintings), 35, 42n57  
 Panofsky, Erwin (art historian), “Rembrandt und das Judentum,” 14, 104–05, 109n47, 157–58, 227, 229–30  
 Paolozzi, Eduardo (artist), 196  
 Pardo, Rabbi Joseph, 24, 39n5  
 Parijs, Gerrit Gerritsz (cloth dyer), 52; house 17

- Parijs, Jan (house owner), house 17
- Paris, France, 7, 32, 38, 40n32, n34, 161, 167, 236; Centre Pompidou, 197; Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 165; Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, 14, 18, 223–33; exhib. *Rembrandt et la Nouvelle Jérusalem: Juifs et Chrétiens à Amsterdam au Siècle d'Or*, 223; Jewish artists in, 32, 171–73, 197–98, 212, 236; Jewish collectors in, 240–41, 243–45, 249n22; La Ruche, 216; Société des amis du Louvre, 241; World's Fair, 167
- parnassim* (board of a Jewish congregation), 80–83, 86, 119
- Pas, Isabella de, married to Manuel Duarte, 35, 42n55, n59
- Pas, Moses de. *See* Salom, Moses de Isaac
- Pasmore, Victor (artist), 198
- Pasternak, Boris (writer), 205
- Pasternak, Leonid (Avrum Yitzhok-Leib; artist, educator, writer), 17, 157, 180, 205–06, 211, 217–18n10, 219n12–13, n19; *Rembrandt: His Creations and His Value for Judaism*, 19, 206–08, 219
- Pasternak Slater, Lydia, daughter of Leonid Pasternak, 219n12
- Pauw, Adriaen (aristocratic Dutch diplomat), 51; house 8
- Pauw, Nicolaas, son of Adriaen Pauw, 51, 65n27; houses 8, 33
- payot* (sidelocks), 159
- pearls, 8, 50, 147
- Pelicorn, Egbert, heirs of, 65n17
- Pellicorne, Anna, daughter of Jan Pellicorne and Susanna van Collen, 58
- Pellicorne, Caspar, son of Jan Pellicorne and Susanna van Collen, 58
- Pellicorne, Jan, married to Susanna van Collen, 58, 67n75; house 21
- Penijn, François de (pharmacist) and family, 61; house 26
- Perera Preto, David (landlord of Ashkenazi synagogue), house 35
- Pereira, Abraham Israel (merchant), 60–61, 68n87; house 32
- Pereira, Jacob (tobacco merchant), 51; house 9
- Pereira, Jahaco (Jacob; merchant), 31–32, 40n34, 41n38; house 32
- Pere[i]ra, Joseph (artist), 32
- Pereira, Rebecca, married to Jacomo (Jacob) Pinto, 59; house 24
- Pereira, Samuel (merchant), 40n34; house 32
- Pereira, Samuel (tobacco merchant), 51; house 9
- Pereira, Sarah, married to Abraham Israel Pereira, house 32
- Pereira de Campos, Margareta, widow of Martin de Campos (owner of paintings), 35, 42n57
- Pereira d'Orta, Jacob, 40–41n34
- Perelsheim, Sadock Salomons (merchant, board member of the Ashkenazi congregation), 83
- Perera, Fernando. *See* d'Orta, Samuel
- Perera Preto, David (house owner or tenant), house 35
- Perlove, Shelley (art historian), 16, 100, 106, 120n11, 138n7, 139, 228, 232
- persecution, 8, 14, 20n1, 24, 37, 93, 126, 158, 236, 247
- Persia, Persians, 37, 51, 115, 158–59, 244. *See also* Isfahan
- Persiaenen* (Armenian merchants), 51
- Pether, William (artist, engraver), 239
- Peyrère, Isaac de la (Huguenot scholar of Bible studies), 101
- pharmacists. *See* Cock, Jan; Grindel, Johannes; Penijn, François de; Teijlingen, Pieter van
- Philips, Abraham (member of *beth din*), 81
- philosemitism, 158, 180n7
- philosophers, 30. *See* Cohen de Herrera, Abraham; Costa, Uriel da; Menasseh ben Israel; Spinoza, Baruch de; Tolstoy, Lev
- physicians. *See* Arari, David; Barbosa, Joseph Abarbanel; Bueno, Ephraim; Bueno, Joseph; Delmedigo, Joseph; Farrar II, Abraham; Moerselaer, Evert; Moreno, Jacob; Rocamora, Isaac Israel; Zacuto, Abraham
- Picasso, Pablo, 171, 198; *Old Jew and a Boy*, 212
- Pickenoy, Nicolaes Eliasz (portrait painter), 50–51, 65n27; house 8
- Piloty, Karl von (artist, educator), 158
- pilpul* (style of exegesis), 85
- Pimentel, David (merchant, owner of paintings), 35, 53
- Pina, Abigael de, married to Miguel (Daniel Levi) de Barrios, 33
- Pina, Paulo de (immigrant from Portugal), 96, 98
- Pinta, Esther, married to José (Joseph) Pinto, house 37
- Pinto, Abraham de (owner of paintings), 35
- Pinto, Daniel (merchant), 51–53, 65n28, n30, n32, 81, 112; houses 8, 9
- Pinto, David Emanuel de, son of Isaac de Pinto, 60; house 4
- Pinto, Isaac de (official of Amsterdam Sephardi community), 30, 59–60, 68n91; house 4
- Pinto, Jacomo (Jacob) de (merchant), 59, 68n88; house 24
- Pinto, José (Joseph; merchant), house 37
- Pinto, Moses de, son of Daniel Pinto, 51, 53, 65n32
- Pinto, Rachel de, married to Abraham de Pinto (owner of paintings), 35, 42n57, n59, 51
- Pinto, Sara, daughter of Daniel Pinto, 51
- Pinto House. *See under* Amsterdam
- Pire, Anna du, house 14
- Pire, Susanna du, house 14
- Plantinus, Samuel (owner of paintings), 42n60
- poets. *See* Barrios, Miguel (Daniel Levi) de; Belmonte, Moses; Bialik, Chaim Nachman; Farrar II, Abraham; Focquenbroch, Willem Godschalck van; Gertler, Mark; Hoofft, Pieter Cornelisz; Jessurun (Francisco Mendes Porto), David; Rocamora, Isaac Israel; Rosenberg, Isaac; Schnur, Ernst; Shakespeare, William; Vondel, Joost van den; Vos, Jan
- pogroms, 84, 123, 163, 206, 211, 216–17
- Pol, Lotte van de (historian), 80
- Poland, Polish, 75, 82, 85, 153–54n26, 159, 161, 163, 181n15, n21, 209; Jewish artists in and from, 158, 163, 191. *See also* Kraków
- Polish Jewish Nation in Amsterdam, 85, 86n4, 87n4
- Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 83–84, 86, 153, 154n26. *See also* Vilna
- Ponte, Mark (archivist, historian), 93, 100
- Pool, Sijmon de (Ashkenazi attendant of Sephardi services), 80
- Pop Art, 176
- Porcellis, Jan or Julius (artists), seascapes, 35
- Porgès, Jules (jeweler, art collector), 239
- Porto, Portugal, 27
- Portugal, 24, 28, 125. *See also* Bragança, Castelo Rodrigo, Lisbon, Porto
- Posternak, Kiva-Yitzhok (grandfather of Leonid Pasternak), 205
- Prague, Bohemia, 73, 84
- Preto, Rachel, married to David Perera Preto, house 35
- Price, Ritchard (doorkeeper of the English Church), house 26
- printers and publishers. *See* Benveniste, Emanuel; l'Ecluse, Jean; Fayvesh (Phoebus) ben Aron Ha-Levi, Uri; Menasseh ben Israel; d'Orta, Samuel; Schauer,

Gustav; Solomon Salzman; Tériade; Veselaer, Susanne

Projectionist Group, 213

Protestantism, 10, 46–47, 75, 120n11, 124, 227, 230, 232. *See also* Brownists, Calvinism, Collegiants, Dutch Reformed Church, Lutheranism, Mennonites, Remonstrantism

Purim, 30, 37, 153

## Q

Quekels, Maria, married to Abel Mathijsz Burch, 60; house 4

## R

Rabbis. *See* Aboab da Fonseca, Isaac;

d'Aguilar, Moses; Almoli, Shlomo; Aron; Dekkingen, Isaac; Isserles, Moses; Kook, Abraham; Leon, Jacob; Juda; ha-Levi, Moses Uri ben Joseph; Menasseh ben Israel; Montalto, Isaac; Morteira, Saul; Levi; Pardo, Joseph; Rodrigues Pereira, Hans; Sacks, Jonathan; Schneerson, Yosef; Yitzchak; Soloveichik, Meir; Stern, Meir

Raes, Kattelijne Thomas, married to Adriaen van Nieulandt, 58; house 23

Ranst, Jacoba, married to Gilles Valckenier, 53; house 19

Rajner, Miriam (art historian), 181n24

Ranst, Jacoba, daughter of Pieter Ranst, 52; house 19

Ranst, Pieter (merchant, director of WIC), 52–53, 66n50; house 19

Raphael, Shabbetai (Sabbatean prophet), 86

Raphael Sanzio, 236

Recanati, Daphne (philanthropist, art collector), married to Tom Kaplan, 247

Reiniers, Steijntge, married to Reijnier Jansz and to Joris Woutersz, house 23

Remonstrants, 52–53, 151

Repin, Ilya (artist), 205, 218n4; *Jew Praying*, 204

Richelieu, Cardinal, 32, 236

Rijckevorsel, J.L.A.A.M. van (art historian) 143

Rijn, Rembrandt van, *passim*; works: PAINTINGS (by number in Bredius-Gerson 1969, including paintings no longer given to the master)

• Self-portraits

– Br. 2 *Self-portrait* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), 159

– Br. 30 *Self-portrait with Saskia* (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), 210

– Br. 42 *Self-portrait* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), 175

– Br. 50 *Self-portrait* (New York, Frick Collection), 195

– Br. 52 *Self-portrait* (London, Kenwood House), 186–87

– Br. 59 *Self-portrait as St. Paul* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), **frontispiece**, 19, 124, 175, 183n63, 188–89

– Br. 61 *Self-portrait as Zeuxis* (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum), 200

• Family

– Br. 69 *An Old Woman Reading* (called “Rembrandt’s Mother;” Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 205

– Br. 116 *Hendrickje Stoffels* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 217

– Br. 128 *Man with the Golden Helmet* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 244

• Men

– Br. 146 *A Man at a Desk* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 209

– Br. 179 *Man in Oriental Costume* (Chatsworth), 32

– Br. 180 *Man with a Turban* (Washington, National Gallery of Art), 229

– Br. 199 *Marten Soolmans* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, and Paris, Louvre), 102–04, 240

– Br. 218 *Nicolaes van Bambeeck* (Brussels, Koninklijke Musea van Schone Kunsten van België), 61, 69n102

– Br. 219 *A Scholar at His Desk* (Warsaw, Royal Palace), 10

– Br. 235 *A Young Man With a Sword* (New York, Leiden Collection), 239

– Br. 250 *A Young Jew* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 92, 182n51, 244

– Br. 252 *Ephraim Bonus, Jewish Physician* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), **cover**, 9, 11, 36, 54, 112

– Br. 270 *Old Jew in an Armchair* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 163–64

– Br. 274 *An Old Man in Red* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 210–11

– Br. 276 *Jan Six* (Amsterdam, Six Foundation), 150

– Br. 279 *The Polish Rider* (New York, Frick Collection), 177, 179

– Br. 285 *An Old Man in an Armchair* (Florence, Uffizi), 62

– Br. 295 *A Head of an Old Man with Curly Hair* (Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre), 246

– Br. 300 *Bust of a Young Jew* (Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum), 92, 106, 235, 245

– Br. 304 *Head of a Bearded Man: Study for St. Matthew* (Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre), 246

– Br. 310 *Two African Men* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), 98–100, 104–07, 108n27, 109

– Br. 321 *Gerard de Lairesse* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), 241

– Br. 323A *Portrait of an Elderly Man* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), 238

– Br. 324 *Bearded Man with a Black Beret* (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), 9–10

– Br. 326 *Man with a Magnifying Glass* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), 245

• Women

– Br. 342 *Oopjen Coppit* (Paris, Louvre, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 102–04, 240

– Br. 359 *Young Woman Resting Her Hands on a Sill* (Warsaw, Royal Palace), 9–10, 12

– Br. 360 *Agatha Bas* (Royal Collection), 61, 69n102

– Br. 381 *Old Woman in an Armchair* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 218n5

– Br. 401 *Woman with a Carnation* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), 245

• Groups

– Br. 403 *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), 61, 218n4

– Br. 406 *Jan Pellicorne with His Son Caspar* (London, The Wallace Collection), 58, 68n76

– Br. 407 *Susanna van Collen and Her Daughter Anna* (London, The Wallace Collection), 58, 68n76

– Br. 410 *The Night Watch* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 209

– Br. 414 *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Joan Deijman* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum), 189

– Br. 415 *The Syndics of the Drapers’ Guild* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 177

– Br. 416 *Isaac and Rebecca (known as “The Jewish Bride”)*, 106, 109n56, 175, 182n51, 197

• Genre

– Br. 433 *The Standard Bearer* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 239–40

– Br. 437 *A Woman Bathing* (London, National Gallery), 174



- Br. 457 *The Slaughtered Ox* (Paris, Louvre), 173–74, **196–97**, 216
- Mythology
  - Br. 464 *The Rape of Europa* (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum), 241
  - Br. 474 *Danaë* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 182n51–52
  - Br. 478 *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), 245
  - Br. 481 *Jupiter and Mercury Visiting Philemon and Baucis* (Washington, National Gallery of Art), 241
- Old Testament
  - Br. 487 *Bileam's Ass Balking at the Angel* (Paris, Musée Cognacq-Jay), 236–**37**, 248n3
  - Br. 490 *David Playing the Harp for Saul* (Frankfurt, Städel Museum), 167
  - Br. 497 *Belshazzar's Feast* (London, National Gallery), 113–**14**, 115, 120n11
  - Br. 509 *Manoah's Sacrifice* (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), 182n51
  - Br. 515 *Abraham and the Three Angels* (private collection), 179
  - Br. 521 *Bathsheba with King David's Letter* (Paris, Louvre), 182n51
  - Br. 524 *Joseph Accused by Potiphar's Wife* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 205, 218n6
  - Br. 525 *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph* (Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), 207
  - Br. 526 *David Playing the Harp for Saul* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), 167, 172, 207, 217
  - Br. 527 *Moses with the Tablets of the Law* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 62, 172, 178, 182n47
  - Br. 528 *Jacob Wrestling the Angel* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), 172
  - Br. 530 *Ahasuerus and Haman at the Feast of Esther* (Moscow, Pushkin Museum), 209, 216
  - Br. 531 *The Disgrace of Haman* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 229–**31**
- New Testament
  - Br. 543 *Simeon's Song of Praise* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), **127–28**, 131–32
  - Br. 548, 550, 557, 560, 562 *The Passion Series* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), 182n51
  - Br. 555 *St. John the Baptist Preaching* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), **100–01**, 105–06, 108n33
  - Br. 562 *The Visitation* (Detroit, Institute of Art), **99–100**, 105
  - Br. 578 *The Supper at Emmaus* (Paris, Louvre), 123, **134**, 136
  - Br. 588 *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), **244**
  - Br. 598 *Return of the Prodigal Son* (St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum), 175, 182n51, 207, 212, 214, 219n37
  - Br. 600 *Simeon in the Temple with the Infant Christ* (Stockholm, Nationalmuseum), **188–89**
- Biblical figures
  - Br. 604 *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 200
  - Br. 621 *Head of Christ* (Detroit, Detroit Institute of Art), **134**
  - Br. 622 *Head of Christ* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), **122–23**, **243–44**
- Unidentified
  - “A Jewess,” 37, 42n64
- DRAWINGS (by number in Benesch 1973)
  - Beggars and scenes from daily life
    - Ben. 22 *Beggar Couple with a Dog* (private collection), 152n6
    - Ben. 30 *Standing Beggar* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 152n6
    - Ben. 32 *Old Beggar in a Long Cloak and High Cap* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), 152n6
    - Ben. 279 *A Scolding Woman* (London, Courtauld Institute Gallery), **50**
    - Ben. 365 *Two African Drummers* (London, British Museum), **91**, **97**, 99
    - Ben. 665 *Two Jews in Discussion* (Haarlem, Teylers Museum), **79**, 126
    - Ben. 667 *Group of Orientals* (Warsaw, University Print Room), **80**
    - Not in Benesch, *Four Men Standing, Wearing Hats* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), **70–71**
- ETCHINGS (by Bartsch number, as in Schwartz 1977)
  - Self-portraits
    - B. 4 *Self-Portrait with a Broad Nose*, 176
    - B. 19 *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, **48**
  - Old Testament
    - B. 29 *Abraham Entertaining the Angels*, **150–51**
    - B. 30 *Abraham Casting Out Hagar and Ishmael*, 11, 31, **33**
    - B. 36 *Four Illustrations for Menasseh's Piedra Gloriosa*, 7, 15, 18, 40n24, 57, 115–**16**, 117, 121, 231–32
  - New Testament
    - B. 49 *Presentation in the Temple: Oblong Print*, **131–32**
    - B. 51 *Presentation in the Temple with the Angel: Small Plate*, **127**
    - B. 76 *Christ Presented to the People: Oblong Plate*, **143**
    - B. 77 *Christ Before Pilate: Large Plate*, **142**, 160
    - B. 94 *Peter and John Healing a Cripple*, **92**, 105, **133**, 135
  - Genre
    - B. 112 *Medea, or the Marriage of Jason and Creusa*, 232
    - B. 118 *Three Oriental Figures (Jacob and Laban?)*, **147–48**
  - Beggars, including scenes from daily life
    - B. 119 *The Strolling Musicians*, 152n6, n7
    - B. 121 *The Rat Catcher*, 144–**45**, 148, 153n8
    - B. 126 *Pharisees in the Temple*, formerly known as “*Jews in the Synagogue*,” 8–**9**, 57, 67n71, **124**, 126, 151, 227
    - B. 133 *Beggar with a Stick, Walking to the Left*, 152n6
    - B. 143 *Old Man Seen From Behind, Profile to Right: Half-figure*, 152n6
    - B. 153 *The Blindness of Tobit: A Sketch*, **143–44**
    - B. 162 *Beggar in a High Cap, Standing and Leaning on a Stick*, 152n6
    - B. 164 *Beggar Man and Beggar Woman Conversing*, 152n6
    - B. 166 *Beggar with a Crippled Hand Leaning on a Stick*, 152n6
    - B. 167 *Beggar with a Stick, Walking to the Left*, 152n6
    - B. 173 *Beggar Seated Warming His Hands at a Chafing Dish*, 152n6
  - Men
    - B. 266 *Jan Cornelisz Sylvius* (1633), 151, 153n23
    - B. 269 *Portrait of a Man*, traditionally identified as Menasseh ben Israel, 18, **112–13**, 148, **223**, 229
    - B. 271 *Cornelis Claesz Anslø*, 151
    - B. 277 *Jan Asselijn*, 151
    - B. 278 *Ephraim Bueno*, 9, 11, 54, 147–51, 148–**49**, 153n23
    - B. 280 *Jan Cornelisz Sylvius* (1646), 151
    - B. 281 *Joannes Wtenbogaert*, “*The Goldweigher*,” 152n6
    - B. 285 *Jan Six*, 151, 153n23, 154n29
    - B. 302 *Head of a Man in a High Cap*, 152n6

- Women
    - B. 340 *The Great Jewish Bride*, **141**, 145, 147–48, 153n12, n17
    - B. 342 *St. Catherine* (“*The Little Jewish Bride*”), **146–47**, 153n13
    - B. 357 *Bust of an African Woman*, **97**, 99
  - Prints after
    - *La Juive Fiancée*, 9–10, **12**
    - *Philon le Juif*, 229
  - Rijn, Titus van, house 9
  - Rivers, Larry (artist), 17, 176, 178, 180; works: *Dutch Masters President’s Relief*, **175**; *History of Matzah* (*The Story of the Jews*), 177; “*Moses was an Egyptian?*,” 178
  - Rocamora, Isaac Israel (Vincente; physician, poet, Dominican friar), 62–63; house 7
  - Rodchenko, Alexander (artist), 208
  - Rodrigues, Abraham (witness to knife attack), 51
  - Rodrigues, Bartolomeus (merchant), 59, house 24
  - Rodrigues, Isaque (witness to knife attack), 51
  - Rodrigues, Salvador (Josuah Jessurun Rodrigues; merchant, owner of paintings), 34, 42n52, n57, 43n71, 47–50, 52, 65n17, n19–20, n23, n25; houses 10, 11
  - Rodrigues Cardoso, Matthea (Isaac Gabay; merchant), 61
  - Rodrigues Pereira, Rabbi Hans, 96
  - Rodriguez, Beatris, house 46
  - Roelof (murderer of his mother), 78
  - Roest, Adriaen (lawyer), house 21
  - Roiz, Josuah Jessurun (probably Rodrigues, Salvador), 65n23
  - Roman Empire, 115
  - Rome, 161; Sistine Chapel, 144, 175
  - Ronda, Andalusia, 189–90, 196
  - Rood, Anshel (board member of the Ashkenazi congregation), 77
  - Rosa, Dr. *See* Farrar, Abraham
  - Rosenberg, Isaac (poet), 191, 193–94
  - Rosenberg, Jakob (art historian, museum curator), 10–11, 105, 247–48
  - Rosh Hashanah, 77
  - Rothschild, 233, 239–40, 245, 247
  - Rothschild, Baron Alphonse de, 240
  - Rothschild, Edmond de, 232, 240
  - Rothschild, Eric de, 240, 245
  - Rothschild, Gustave de, 240
  - Rothschild, Baron James Mayer de, 239
  - Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 59–60
  - Rouen, France, 48, 64n10
  - Röver, Valerius (art collector), 147, 151, 154n20
  - Rubens, Peter Paul, 181n18
  - Rudolph II, Emperor, 34
  - Ruijl, Lambert Gerritsz (artist, silk trader), 62; house 5
  - Runia, Epco (museum curator), 65n15
  - Russia, 17, 84, 157, 164, 172, 180, 232, 250–51. *See also* Moscow, St. Petersburg
  - Russian art and artists, 164, 173, 175, 181n26, 203–20
- S**
- Sabbateanism, 85
  - Sacks, Rabbi Jonathan, 12–13
  - St. Petersburg (also Petrograd, Leningrad), 47; GOSEKT State Jewish Chamber Theatre, 212; Hermitage Museum, 209; Imperial Academy of Arts, 206, 218n6
  - Salom, Moses de Isaac (Moses de Pas; owner of paintings), 34, 42n52
  - Salomons, Elias, 81
  - Salomons, Joseph, 80, 84
  - Salomons, Judick, married to Eleasar (Lenart) Swaeb, 51, 73; house 49
  - Salomons, Levij (member of the *beth din*), 81
  - Salomons, Moijses, 78
  - Salonica, Greece, 24, 39n5, 75
  - Sampson, Aeltie Moses, married to Jacob Sampson, 73
  - Sampson, Jacob (kosher butcher), 73
  - Sampson, Jacob Jansz (silk merchant), house 10
  - Sampson, Marritge Jacobs, married to Pieter Jacobsz Kerck, 65n19; house 11
  - sandek* (male relative holding baby boy at circumcision), 37
  - San Francisco, Museum of Modern Art, 197
  - Sanhedrin, 159–60, 163
  - São Tomé, 100
  - Sarphati Pina, Abraham (merchant, art collector), 34, 42n50
  - Sarphati Pina, Thomas Nunes (Joshua Sarphati; house owner), 42n50
  - Sasportas, Rabbi Jacob, 227
  - Savery, Jacques (artist), 61, 68n96
  - Savery, Roelant (artist), painting of birds and animals, 53, 66n50
  - Schama, Simon, 13, 17, 120n3, n11, 201, 224, 226–27, 231, 238
  - Schapiro, Meyer, 172
  - Schauer, Gustav (publisher), 181n18
  - Schelkens, Abraham (Frankfurt art collector), 83
  - Schenk, Peter (print collector), 147
  - Schmidt, Georg Friedrich (graphic artist), 9–10, **12**
  - Schmidt-Degener, Fritz (art historian, museum director), 245, 247
  - Schneerson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (the sixth Lubavitcher rebbe), 9, **11**, 179
  - Schnur, Ernst (poet), 167
  - School of London, 198
  - Schorsch, Jonathan (historian), 101
  - schuilkerk* (clandestine Catholic place of worship), 64n9
  - Schwartz, Gary (art historian), 14, 19–20, 41n37, 120n6, n11, 121n25, 128, 132–33, 135, 224, 226, 231, 233, 249–50
  - scribes. *See* calligraphers
  - Second World War, 74, 104, 158, 172
  - Segenberch, Abraham. *See* Luna Montalto, Abraham de
  - Senior, Abraham. *See* Teixeira Sampayo, Diego
  - Senior, Hannah Deborah, married to Michael de Spinoza, 118
  - Senior Godines, Benjamin (artist), 34, 38, 96; works: *Mea Berachot*, **38**; *Memento Mori*, **96**
  - Sephardi Jews, *passim*, esp. 23–70
  - Sephardi painting collections, subjects of (34–39): Actaeon spotting the naked Diana; Ahasuerus; Bileam; Benjamin; Benjaminite bridal theft; birds and animals; brothel; Children of Israel; Daniel in the lion’s den; King David; David and Abigail; Elijah; the Prophet Elijah and the Woman of Zarephtha; Elijah fed by the ravens; Elisha; Queen Esther; the five senses; the patriarch Jacob; Jacob and Esau; the teachings of Jacob; Hagar; Neptune; nude and erotic images; orientals; portraits; Portuguese synagogue; Roman emperors; royalty; Samson; the queen of Sheba; King Solomon; the judgment of Solomon; Susannah and the Elders; Tamar; Tobias; tronies
  - Serrano, Isaac (owner of paintings), 34, 42n52
  - Serov, Valentin (artist), 205
  - servants, 15, 46, 60, 73, 78, 91, 93–96, 98–100, 105; *see also* maidservants
  - Shakespeare, William, 158
  - Shchekin-Krotova, Angelina, married to Robert Falk, 214
  - shema* (part of daily prayer), 160, 189
  - shtetl* (Central or East European village with mainly Jewish population), 172
  - Shulchan aruch* (Set Table, codex of Jewish law), 55, 76

- Sigal-Klagsbald, Laurence (art historian, museum director), 14, 18, 224, 229, 233  
silk, 48–49, 55, 81; dealers in, *see* Aboab Osorio, Abraham; Hoeffslager, Hendrick; Jansz, Reijnier; Ruijl, Lambert Gerritsz; Sampson, Jacob Jansz; Wiggert, Willemsz; Wouters, Joris  
silver, 27, 29, 31, 37–38, 49, 52, 65n23, 82, 84, 113, 115; house 14  
Silver, Larry, 17, 120n11, 183, 224, 232  
Simons, Lucas (house owner), house 16  
Six, Jan (dye manufacturer, poet, art collector), 108n32, 121n25, 148  
skullcap (*kippa* or *yarmulke*), 132, 159, 245  
slaves. *See* enslaved people  
Slive, Seymour (art historian), 105  
Sloten, Leonore van (museum curator), 65n25  
Sluys, David Mozes (historian), 74  
Smilovichi, Belarus, 198, 216  
Smith, John (art dealer, cataloguer), 9, 107n3, 239–40  
Snyders, Frans (artist), fruit still-life, 35  
Soares, Esther, married to Saul Levi Morteira, house 5  
Sobieski, Jan (Polish–Lithuanian ruler), 209  
Soeira, Ester, married to Jonas Abrabanel, house 48  
Soeira, Gracia, married to Samuel Abrabanel, 30, 56, 113  
Soest, The Netherlands, 33, 35, 41n46, 42–43n67  
Solis, David de, 82  
Solomon Salzmänn (Russian publishing house in Germany), 206, 219n13  
Soloveichik, Rabbi Meir (academic), 13  
Soolmans, Marten (portrayed by Rembrandt), 102–04, 240  
South Africa, 239  
Soutine, Chaim (artist), 17, 157, 173, 178, 180, 185, 197–98, 216–17, 233; works: *Flayed Ox*, 173–74; *Slaughtered Ox*, 197, 216  
Soyer, Raphael (artist), 157, 175–76, 180, 182n51, n53; works: *Self-portrait at Easel*, 174; *Self-portrait*, at age eighty-one, 176  
Spain, 11, 23–24, 39, 61, 75, 115, 189–90, 227, 236. *See also* Galicia, Granada, Madrid, Valencia, Valladolid  
Speck Polack, Jacob, married to Rachel Abrahams, 79  
Spinoza, Baruch (Bento, Benedict) de, 15–16, 26, 57, 61–62, 118–19, 121n29, n33, 162–64, 180n2, 224; house 43; portrait of, 110–11  
Spinoza family, 58, 67n72  
Spinoza, Gabriel de, 119  
Spinoza, Michael de (Miguel d’Espinoza; merchant), 57–58, 67n72, 118; house 43  
Spruijt, Annetie, married to Jacobus Grindel, 61  
Spruijt, Govert I (copper caster), 61; house 13  
Spruijt, Govert II (copper caster), house 13  
Spruijt, Johannes (artist), 61  
Steen, Jan, 152  
Steer, Wilson (tutor), 191  
Stepanova, Varvara (artist), 208  
Stern, Rabbi Meir, 81  
Stevens, Elke, 40n25, 41n45, 42n56–57, 64  
Stoffels, Hendrickje, married in common law to Rembrandt, 53, 217; house 9  
Struck, Hermann (Chaim Aaron ben David; artist), 169–70, 173, 211, 218n11  
Stuart, Princess Mary, 26  
Stuarts, 26–27, 39n10, 238  
Sturck, Egbert (house owner), 65n15, n25  
sugar, 59, 61, 65n13, 95–96, 103–04; house 40  
Surikov, Vasily (artist), 205, 218n6  
Suriname, 76, 95–96, 98, 101, 103, 108n15  
Swaeb, Eleasar (Lenart Swaeb; tobacco spinner), 51, 66n36–37, 73; house 49  
Sweden, 84  
Sweers, Catrina, married to Paulus van Focquenbroch, 52; house 14  
Swens, Pieter (contractor), 65n30  
Swetschinski, Daniel, 39n12, 74  
Sylvius, Jan Cornelisz (Reformed minister), etched portraits of by Rembrandt, 151, 153n23  
Sylvius, Petrus (Reformed minister), 151, 153n23  
Symcha (calligrapher), 29  
synagogues. *See under* Amsterdam, Capernaum, London  
Syverts, Pietertje, married to Willem Kick, 57; house 43
- T**  
Tablets of the Law, 34–35, 62, 172, 178, 182n47  
*tallit* (plural *tallitot*; prayer shawl), 101, 149, 151, 159–61, 166–67, 189  
Talmud, 12, 16, 27, 85, 120n8, 162  
Tarasevich, Maria (museum registrar), 250  
*tebah* (reading platform), 29  
Teijlingen, Pieter van (pharmacist, deacon and elder of the Reformed Church), 61; house 28  
Teixeira, Esther Maria, married to Bento Osorio, house 33  
Teixeira de Sampayo, Diego (Abraham Senior), 37  
Teixeira de Sampayo, Manuel (Isaac Haim de Abraham), 37  
Tel Aviv, Habima Theatre, 219n12; Museum of Art, 170, 218–19n11  
Temple. *See under* Jerusalem  
*Tenach* (Hebrew Bible), 26, 49  
Ten Commandments. *See* Tablets of the Law  
Tériade publishing house, 172  
Thijsz, Anthonie (house owner), 47; houses 9, 10  
Thijsz, Christoffel (house owner), house 9  
Thijsz, Elisabeth, married to Anthonie Thijsz, house 10  
Thivart, Jan (sugar and salt refiner), house 40  
Thomasz, Joris (George Thomas; merchant, owner of paintings), 34, 41n48  
Thysius, Antonius (professor of theology), 128  
timber trade, house 47  
Tiribás, Victor, 16, 121n25  
Titian, 236  
tobacco, 51, 73, 84; house 9; spinner of, *see* Swaeb, Eleasar; trade in, 52, 81; *see also* Aboab Osorio, Abraham; Pereira, Jacob; Pereira, Simon; Pinto, Daniel; Pool, Sijmon de; house 49  
Tolstoy, Lev (writer, philosopher), 218n10  
Tonks, Henry (surgeon anatomist, art teacher), 191–92  
Torah scrolls, appurtenances, 25, 29, 34, 41n46, 49, 65n23, 72, 77, 84, 160–61, 182n47  
Toura Fernandez Vega, Abigael de Moses, married to Juda Machabeu, house 7  
Tracht, Abraham (Abraham Bacharach “zum Drachen;” banker), 83  
Tralowitz, Moijsses (antisocial Ashkenazi), 82  
Tulp, Nicolaes (surgeon, burgomaster), 61, 68n100  
Tümpel, Christian (art historian), 120n3, 142–43, 224  
Turkey, 29. *See also* Constantinople  
Tyshler, Alexander (artist, graphic artist, stage designer), 212, 214, 216; works: *Jewish Wedding*, 213; *King Lear*, 213; *Prodigal Son*, 213, 216  
*tzadik* (a righteous person), 12  
*tzitzit* (fringed ritual undergarment), 132

- U**
- Uijtjens, Anna, married to Willem Calckoen, house 3
- Uijtjens, Michiel (goldsmith), 46, 64n5; house 3
- Ukraine, 126, 218n1; “special military operation” against, 232, 251. *See also* Odesa
- Union of Utrecht (1579), 24
- United Kingdom, Aliens Act (1905), 191. *See also* Birmingham, London, Oxford
- United States, 12–13, 158, 235. *See also* Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Washington
- Usiel Ribeiro, Eliazar, 41n40
- Uylenburgh, Gerrit (art dealer), 37
- Uylenburgh, Hendrick (art dealer), 47, 50–51, 64n13, 65n27, 93, 112; house 8
- Uylenburgh, Saskia van, married to Rembrandt van Rijn, biography, 29, 47, 50, 64n13, 112, 146; houses 8, 47; in art, 153n12
- Uziel, Rabbi Isaac, 39, 226
- V**
- Valckenier, Gilles (burgomaster), 53; house 19
- Valencia, Spain, 62
- Valtiner, Wilhelm (art historian, museum director), 119, 121n32
- Valkenburg, Dirck (artist), painting of river in Suriname, 95–96, 108n17
- Valladolid, Spain, 39m19
- Vaz, Simcha (Guiomar [Simcha] Nunez Vaz Querido), married to Jacob Israel Belmonte, 34
- Vaz Dias, Abraham Mordechai (historian), 64n2, 74
- Veen, Jaap van der (art historian), 37, 41n45, 64n1, 65n20, 224
- Veenhuysen, Jan (graphic artist), etching of synagogue, 57, 151
- Vega, Rachel da, married to Isaac de Pinto, 30, 59–60; house 4
- Velasquez, Diego, 174; *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 209
- Veldesteijn, Jan van (sugar refiner, landlord of Rembrandt and Saskia), house 47
- Velthem, Helena van, married to Hendrick du Molijn, house 18
- Venice, Italy, 39n5, 48, 61, 75
- Verspreet, Anthonij (house owner), 42n55
- Vertangen, Daniel (artist), painting of the rape of Europa, 35
- Veselaer, Susanne (book printer), 39n8
- Vierhuijsen, Cornelis Claesz van (house owner), house 21
- Vignon, Claude (artist), 248n3
- Villalpando, Juan Battista (Jesuit, Temple researcher), 123, 125–26, 133, 138n23
- Vilna, Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, art academy, 198
- Vinci, Leonardo da, 171; *Last Supper*, 178
- Visscher, Balthasar de (merchant), 47, 64n12; house 9
- Vitebsk, Belarus, 172, 216
- Vliet, J.G. van (graphic artist), “Philon le juif,” after Rembrandt, 229
- Vollard, Ambroise (art dealer), 172
- Vondel, Joost van den (poet), 53
- Voolen, Edward van (art historian, museum curator), 14, 224
- Voorst, Adolf van (physician), 63
- Voort, Cornelis van der (artist, art dealer), 34, 41n48, 42n49
- Vorticism, 192
- Vos, Gerard (classical scholar, theologian), 63
- Vos, Jan (poet), 135
- Vossius, Isaac (scholar, professor), 121n25
- Vries, Erwin de (sculptor), 98
- W**
- Wá’ad Arba’ Aratzot* (central Jewish authority in Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), 153–54n26
- Waal, Edmund de (artist, writer), 241
- Waal, Henri van de (art historian, professor), 13, 120n3
- Wallet, Bart (historian), 15, 88
- Wandering Jew, The, 160, 164, 181n11, n21
- Warburg, Aby (art historian), 109n46
- Warhol, Andy, 176
- Washington, DC, Judaic Museum of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, exhib. *The Jews in the Age of Rembrandt*, 13, 225; National Gallery of Art, 218n6; Netherlands–America Bicentennial Commission, 13
- Weenix, Jan Baptist (artist), painting of a rider, 35
- Werff, Adriaen van der (artist), 92–93, 107n1
- Wesel, Germany, 84
- White Russia. *See* Belarus
- Wijnschenk, Ruie (researcher), 64n1
- Wildenstein gallery, 245
- Wilhem, David de (German–Dutch scholar), 231
- Willem II, Stadholder, 26
- Willems, Annetje, married to Adriaen Teunisz Lievelt, house 14
- Willemsz, Wiggert (silk merchant), 61; house 31
- Willemsz, Pieter (perspective draftsman), 29
- Willinck, Dirck (dealer in chamois leather), 61; house 26
- Winter, van, art collection, 240
- Winternitz, Emanuel (museum curator), 151
- Wisse, Jacob (historian, museum director), 13
- Witsen, Jonas (owner of sugar plantation), 96, 108n17
- Witsen, Jonas I (amateur painter, wealthy patron), 41n39
- Witte, Emanuel de (artist), 149, 153n9; works: *Courtyard of the Beurs in Amsterdam*, 153n9; *Interior of the Church in Delft with the Tomb of William the Silent*, 153n9; *Interior of the Portuguese Synagogue*, 38, 154n27
- women’s gallery in synagogue, 161
- Wood, Christopher (art historian), 107
- World Zionist Organization, 219n16
- Worms, Germany, 73
- Worms, Michiel (merchant), 81
- Woutersz, Joris (merchant, owner of a silk shop), 52, 66n40; houses 12, 23
- Wren, Christopher (architect), 56
- Wroblewski, Leopold (art dealer), 198
- Wtenbogaert, Johannes (Remonstrant minister), 52, 151–52n6, 153n23; house 14
- Wtewael, Joachim (artist), 152
- Y**
- Yavne (Hebrew language publishing house), 206
- Yiddish, 76, 81, 85, 212, 219n12
- Yom Kippur, 136
- Yudin, Lev (artist), 219n37
- Z**
- Zabelinha (Black resident of the Breestraat), 94
- Zacuto, Abraham (physician), 227
- Zaikin, Rafail (artist), 209
- Zell, Michael (art historian), 15, 109, 120n11, 138n7, 225, 229, 232
- Zesen, Philip von (writer, poet, diplomat), 56–57
- Zevin, Lev Jakovlevic (artist), 209
- Zhegin, Lev (artist), 209
- Zionism, 169–70, 218n11
- Zuiden, D.S. van (archivist), 31
- Zvi, Shabbetai (false Messiah), 85–86
- Zwarts, Jacques (historian), 62