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THE MOTIF OF THE PRODIGAL SON IN REMBRANDT'S ART

by

FRANZISKA M.L. KRUSCHEN

BA McMaster

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Department of Fine Arts

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver 8, Canada

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## ABSTRACT

The following study presents a visual analysis of those works by Rembrandt associated with the Prodigal Son story. Essentially, they depict one of two episodes from that story; the Prodigal Son among the harlots in the tavern and his return to his father's house.

Tümpel, in his dissertation of 1968, parts of which have been published in the Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek of 1969, has presented the thesis that Rembrandt's interpretation of the Bible was not as subjective as had been previously supposed, but was, in fact heavily dependent on graphic works of the 16th and 17th Centuries, which represent the new Baroque iconography.

The painting in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, of himself dressed as a cavalier with a woman on his knee, which at once represents a double portrait and a scene of the Prodigal Son in the tavern, is in its imagery strongly rooted in a northern tradition of moralistic tavern scenes. This tradition begins with paintings, such as Lucas van Leyden's "Cardplayers", in Munich, dated c. 1520, or Van Hemessen's "Prodigal Son", signed and dated 1536, in the Brussel's Museum. While Rembrandt's painting represents a scene from the Biblical story, its importance lies not in its narrative aspect, but in its moralistic message.

Rembrandt, in his depiction of the Prodigal Son's return, both in his 1636 etching and in his later painting in the Hermitage is again within a well established pictorial tradition, popular particularly in Counter-Reformation Italy, but found also in Northern graphic works. Rembrandt uses a graphic example as a direct prototype for his etching.

The changes that he makes in his model are, however, significant, for they suggest a conscious attempt to redefine its iconographic implications.

The Hermitage painting incorporates even greater changes. In it he has placed a far greater emphasis on the union of father and son, by his choice of composition, the lighting and by the expressions of peace and serenity in the faces of the two figures. He has also placed an unprecedented importance on a third figure; a standing figure, dressed in red, to the right of the main group, whose relationship to that group is, however, ambiguous. He is possibly

the older brother. His attribution to Rembrandt, as well as that of the other surrounding figures, has been questioned.

The changes may express Rembrandt's personal religious orientation, although more definite conclusions on the painting's subject are, at this moment, immature.

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## Introduction and Historical Perspective

A number of works in the Rembrandt corpus have, at various times, been associated with the theme of the Prodigal Son. These are: 1) a painting now in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie<sup>1</sup>, which over the years has been variously titled, and which in the latest complete catalogue of Rembrandt's works<sup>2</sup> has been given as "Rembrandt and Saskia" ("The Prodigal Son in the Tavern?"). It is signed "Rembrandt f" on the left at 1/2 height and, although there is no documentary basis for its dating, it is placed by most scholars somewhere between the years 1634-1636<sup>3</sup>.

2) A painting in the Hermitage, signed "R v Ryn f" at the lower left beside the son's left foot, in an unusual fashion, which makes Bredius-Gerson question the authenticity of the signature, although not that of the painting<sup>4</sup>. Its title has usually been given as "The Return of the Prodigal Son". Its date is also not fixed, but is generally placed near the end of the 1660's<sup>5</sup>.

3) An etching, signed and dated 1636, representing "The Return of the Son"<sup>6</sup>.

4) A number of drawings<sup>7</sup>, and

5) The painting, usually called "The Polish Rider", which has been interpreted by Colin Cambell as the Prodigal Son's departure from his father's house<sup>8</sup>.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is taken from St. Luke 15: 11-32: \*

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "There was a man who had two sons;<sup>12</sup> and the younger of them said to his father, "Father give me the share of property that falls to me". And he divided his living between them.<sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living.<sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a great famine

\* Note: All Biblical texts cited are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

arose in that country, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup> So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine.

<sup>16</sup> And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger". <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants". <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son". <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; let us eat and make merry; <sup>24</sup> for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found". And they began to make merry.

<sup>25</sup> Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound". <sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup> but he answered his father, "Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf". <sup>31</sup> And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found".

This well known story was told by Christ as one of a series of parables in response to the contemptuous remarks made by the Pharisees and scribes about his association with sinners and publicans. The first of the Parables (Luke 15: 4-7) tells the story of the shepherd who had 100 sheep, and when he lost one of them, searched everywhere until he had found it, and the second (Luke 15: 8-9) tells of the woman who had lost one of her ten silver coins and, likewise, searched everywhere until she had found it. Christ then continues with the story of the Prodigal Son, which is again a story of finding what has been lost. This time it is the young man, who leaves his father's house and goes into the world, who is lost and in need of being found and brought back to God. His separation from his father's house represents his separation from God.

It is not until he recognizes his need to go back to his father's house, that is, by analogy, his need for God, and repents his separation from God, that he can be taken back. In this sense being found means being with God.

The "Return" to God has within it two aspects. The one is Man's active return and the other is God's willing acceptance of him. On the one hand, Man must recognize his need for God and repent his godless ways and then give himself to God. On the other hand, Man can never be worthy of God and, therefore, it is only because of God's infinite love and kindness that he takes Man back.

These two aspects of Christ's message are interpreted differently by Catholics and Protestants and result in major dogmatic differences between the two churches. While the Catholics have placed a great emphasis on the aspect of Man's repentance, embodied doctrinally in the sacrament of penance, the Protestants have rejected this strong emphasis on Man's action and, with it, this sacrament.

As Emile Mâle points out, the doctrinal difference between the Catholics and the Protestants, at a time when the church was still an important patron of the arts, expressed themselves in art<sup>9</sup>. The Protestant hostility towards the sacrament of penance was reflected in an increased emphasis in Catholic art on the theme of repentance, particularly after the formal statements on the function of art which said that art was to instruct and confirm the people in their faith<sup>10</sup>. Frequently represented, therefore, were the repentance of St. Peter, the penitent Magdalen, the psalmist, David, and the Prodigal Son.<sup>11</sup>

In this connection, we may see the numerous works on the subject of Penance by artists who were themselves Catholic, or who had a strongly Catholic clientele, such as Rubens<sup>12</sup>, Anthony van Dyck<sup>13</sup>, Guercino<sup>14</sup>, or Murillo<sup>15</sup>.

The parable has been interpreted in a number of ways in pictorial art<sup>16</sup> since its first appearance in 11th century Byzantine manuscripts in which its purpose is narrative. The illustrations serve to clarify, visually, the text<sup>17</sup>. The miniatures of the Goslar Evangelium from the first half of the 13th century emphasize the ritual and symbolic aspect of the parable in which the feast becomes the focal point of the story<sup>18</sup>. The 13th century *Biblia Pauperum* used the parable in a typological sense<sup>19</sup>, while Dürer, in his engraving of c.1496, chose the scene of the Prodigal Son among the swine as the most significant moment of the story in which the son recognizes his need for God. This is represented by his gaze at the church steeple before him<sup>20</sup>.

In the North, by the mid-16th century, the parable was illustrated extensively in the graphic arts, often in the form of a series of scenes. Hans S. Beham, for example, in four blocks dated 1540, illustrates, 1, "The Departure of the Prodigal Son", 2, "The Prodigal Son Living with Harlots", 3, "The Prodigal Son Among the Swine" and 4, "The Return of the Prodigal Son"<sup>21</sup>. The aspect of the Prodigal Son story most frequently illustrated in the latter half of the 16th and in the 17th century in the graphic arts and painting, was the scene depicting the Prodigal Son's adventures in the tavern, an episode only alluded to in the Biblical text with the words, "and the son took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living" (Luke 15: 13), and the elder brother's later accusation of the Prodigal Son having devoured, with harlots, his father's living (Luke 15: 30)<sup>22</sup>. Tümpel illustrates a series of four scenes by the monogramist M.T.,<sup>23</sup> two of which are dated 1541 and two 1543, elaborating on the Prodigal Son's experiences in the tavern and his subsequent expulsion from it. Other representations of this episode of the story in the graphic arts show, also, in subsidiary scenes, other moments from the Prodigal Son's story, but the tavern scene occupies the major position.

Gerhard de Jode, for example, made an engraving of "The Prodigal Son in Luxury". It was designed by Marten de Cleve and depicts two couples seated outdoors at a table, while a musician plays at the left. One of the young men has his hand raised holding a glass, which is being filled by a bare-breasted woman, while another serving maid keeps track of the drinks consumed on a scoreboard hanging from a tree. In the right background is the Prodigal Son among the swine, and in the left background, he is shown on his knees before his father. The tavern scene is further identified by the text at the bottom, "*Delitys fruiter veneris patrisque liei prodiguus at premitur nox miser ecce fame. Luc. 15.*"<sup>24</sup>. A somewhat later etching by Frans Francken, likewise depicts "Loose living", this time inside the tavern, while the Prodigal Son among the swine is indicated in the righthand corner, in the distance<sup>25</sup>.

Painted examples are also numerous. A painting in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, also by Frans Francken, again shows this predilection for the tavern scene, for he makes this the subject of a large central field, which is then surrounded by eight smaller rectangular fields illustrating other episodes from the story. These include; the father giving his son his rightful share of the inheritance, the son's departure, his expulsion from the tavern, his wanderings as a beggar, his search for work, the Prodigal Son among the swine, the return home, the slaying of the calf, and the celebration of the feast<sup>26</sup>. The popularity of this choice of scene seems to have been a particularly Northern phenomenon, for while tavern scenes were being done in Italy, especially after Caravaggio, they had little association with the Prodigal Son parable<sup>27</sup>.

The other scene from the parable frequently represented in the 16th and 17th centuries, either in a position of importance or in isolation, was the scene of the Prodigal Son's return to his father's house. It has a different history.

It was a popular subject in Catholic countries for it is the "Return" that actually embodies the Prodigal Son's repentance. He has already, earlier in the story when he was among the swine, made up his mind to go back to his father's house. It is, however, this moment when he actually falls down on his knees before his father that he finally breaks himself away from the things of the world in his submission to God. It is the actualization of his repentance. The subject appears particularly in the works of Italian artists of the second half of the 16th and 17th century<sup>28</sup>. Domenico Fetti, for example, who painted a series of scenes from the parables of Christ chose this episode in the Prodigal Son story<sup>29</sup>. The setting is that of 16th century palace architecture, similar to the architecture in Veronese's painting, "Alexander before the Family of Darius"<sup>30</sup>, while the figures are like the actors on a large stage set. The father, embracing his kneeling son, leans slightly forward as he looks compassionately down at him. The bearded man behind them, whom Pamela Askew identifies as the elder brother, is gesturing agitatedly as two other figures come out of the large doorway at the right. A curious dog follows. The father and son half hide two younger figures, one of whom holds a fatted pig which may allude to the son's former life as a swineherd. The left hand group consists of a beggar, who, leaning on a stick, makes a broad gesture towards the reunited pair, while a seated child is pointing at the Prodigal Son's bare feet. A peasant has come to view the scene while a mother with her child expresses the theme of family love and protection.

A work by Guercino in Turin, similarly represents the kneeling son before his father, who, this time, welcomes him with open arms. In the background, smaller figures dressed in contemporary costume are looking on arrogantly, one of them pointing at the repentant son<sup>31</sup>.

Guercino, in two other paintings, represents a different aspect of the Prodigal Son's return home, in which the idea of repentance no longer plays a major role. Both paintings represent the clothing anew of the son, a gesture indicating that the father has taken him back as his lawful son and heir<sup>32</sup>. It is a symbolic gesture of the son's new spiritual life. Rembrandt's choice of subject in both the Dresden and the Hermitage painting and in the etching, can, therefore, be seen in the light of a very strong pictorial tradition in the latter half of the 16th and the 17th century.

## Chapter I

### Rembrandt's Dresden Painting

A young man, dressed in a red tunic with gold thread woven into it and white ruffs on his left sleeve with the buttons on the other sleeve undone and a large black plumed hat, is seated with his legs parallel to a table, in a sideways position to the picture plane. He also wears red pants with a gold fringe and heavy boots; at his waist is tied a printed sash covered by a wide gold belt from which hangs a gilt-handled rapier. He has turned his head to the side so that he is looking out of the picture at the spectator. His right hand, holding a drinking glass (fluit), is raised as if proposing a toast, while his left arm lies across the backside of the woman seated on his knee. She has her body turned completely into the picture, but her head is twisted around in such a way that she, too, faces out at the viewer. The woman wears a pale blue gown and a short dark velvet bodice of the sort worn in the North in the 16th century among the more common classes. The jewelled chain decorating it, as well as the golden hair decoration and the pearls hanging from her ears, suggest modest wealth. Attention has often been drawn to the contrast between her calm, static nature and the dynamic open gesture and exuberance of her male companion<sup>1</sup>. The table at which the pair are seated has been covered with a thick rug, on which is placed, in such a position that they are cut off by the edge of the painting, a knife, a plate, a glass and a rumpled serviette. There is, posed proudly above these utensils, a peacock, in the form of a pastry. Its tail feathers extend across most of the painting's width, spreading themselves out in glory behind the young man's plumed hat and the upheld glass<sup>2</sup>.



On the couple's left, protrudes part of a piece of furniture which has been suggested as a bed by Tümpel<sup>3</sup>, and above it hangs a heavy piece of drapery which may be associated, at least in its colouring, with the bed below. In the top left hand corner, cut in half by the edge of the painting, hangs what has been identified by Weisbach, in 1926<sup>4</sup>, as a scoreboard, identifying a tavern as the location of the scene.

One of the first problems with this painting, is the identification of the subject. Its title has, over the years, been variously given. Unfortunately, we have no record of it before 1749, when it was bought for the Dresden Gallery by Le Leu in Paris<sup>5</sup>. Tümpel points out that in the 1754 inventory of the Dresden Gallery, it was called "Ein Offizier sitzend welcher ein Frauenzimmer caresfiert, in der Hardein Glas mit Bier haltend".<sup>6</sup> John Smith, in his 1836 Catalogue Raisonné, calls the painting "Love and Wine" and identifies the "cavalier" as the artist. It was, according to Smith, engraved by Riedel under the title of "La Double Jouissance" and etched by S. Fessard as "Les Oeuvres de la Vigne"<sup>7</sup>.

Later art historians have elaborated on this identification by Smith, seeing it as a self portrait of the artist with his wife, Saskia. Bode, in 1899, gives it the title "Rembrandt et Saskia à Table"<sup>8</sup>, and Valentiner, in 1904, calls it "Selbstbildnis des Kunstlers mit seiner Gattin Saskia"<sup>9</sup>. Hofstede de Groot, in 1916, likewise entitles it "Rembrandt and Saskia",<sup>10</sup> and in 1925, Valentiner restates the subject as "Der Verlorene Sohn Verprasst sein Erbe"<sup>11</sup>. Bauch (1965), seems to ignore the Biblical allusion, calling it "Rembrandt und Saskia in historischen Kostumen an der Tafel" and Menz, in a recent catalogue of the Dresden Gallery, lists it as "Self Portrait with Saskia"<sup>12</sup>. Gerson calls it "The Prodigal Son in the Tavern"<sup>13</sup>. If the two

figures are identified as Rembrandt and his wife, Saskia, can the painting also represent the tavern scene in the Prodigal Son story, for if we accept Rembrandt as the Prodigal Son, we must see his wife as one of the harlots. How can we reconcile these two identifications and what could Rembrandt have meant by such a painting? Again, various interpretations have been suggested, a representative selection of which Bergstrom has reproduced. He summarizes them in these categories; the happy and idyllic representation of Rembrandt's newly married life; an illustration of the libertine manners of bohemian artist's life meant as a challenge to the burghers; or, in connection with the Prodigal Son's story, meaning either that Rembrandt and Saskia are playing the characters of the story, or that a moralizing content of a more general kind has been implied <sup>14</sup>.

The problem of positively identifying the scene is compounded by the painting's present, perhaps, incomplete condition. For, as Tumpel points out, it is possible that the painting has been cut down. For this suggestion, he provides some evidence, pointing to a shadow of some sort falling across the still visible bottom of the scoreboard, and the fragmentary plate, knife and glass on the table <sup>15</sup>. Dr. Mayer-Meintschel has noted that the painting was transferred to a new canvas in an 1860 restoration, so that it is today, impossible to determine on technical investigation, whether the painting has been cut down <sup>16</sup>. Evidence provided by an x-ray of the painting, may, however, give some clues as to the relationship of its present state to Rembrandt's original conception. The x-ray reveals that, originally, in the background a naked female lutenist was portrayed. <sup>17</sup> This evidence would give further weight to the suggestion that a Prodigal Son in the Tavern was intended. The question here is whether Rembrandt painted over the third figure, or whether it was done by a later hand. Does this mean that in the original conception, there were three figures instead of only two?

In a drawing, "The Prodigal Son with the Loose Women" dated by Benesch c. 1642-1643<sup>18</sup>, we have the appearance of a naked female figure with a lute, who, standing behind the table in a raised position, looks down on the amorously engaged couple beneath her. The young man, with a moustache and a large cap over his loosely curled shoulder-length hair, is seated at a table. The chair is pushed back from the table so that he is sitting with his legs almost parallel to it and his body is turned outwards toward the spectator. He is dressed in a shirt with wide sleeves which come together tightly at the cuff and square cut trousers which reach over the knees and possibly boots, although this is somewhat difficult to make out. A sword hangs from his waist. He is caressing the woman who, in a rather inelegant pose, is sitting on his left knee. The two are looking at each other with smiling faces. The hair of the woman is fastened together at the top of her head, but stray curls fall into her face. Small drop-like earrings hang from her ears. Her dress has a low-cut bodice exposing her breasts and, in her left hand, she holds a drinking glass balanced partially on her raised knee. A rapier, or walking staff, leans up against the table and a woman sitting behind the table, her arm resting on it, has turned her head towards the couple. From the background on the left, emerges a figure carrying a great platter of food. Valentiner sees this drawing as a study for the painting which has then been much simplified, and dates it within this context, as c. 1634.<sup>19</sup> In making this statement, Valentiner would not have been aware of the possible third figure which, if not actually part of the finished composition, was at least planned in the preliminary stages.

Meder, on the other hand, attributes the drawing to Rembrandt's school<sup>20</sup>. In this context, it might represent a copy after another study made by Rembrandt. Both suggestions seem to indicate that, at some time, Rembrandt must have conceived a work of an amorous couple in the presence of a half-naked female figure; which may, perhaps, refer to the Dresden painting. It, and the x-ray

evidence, may, therefore, give some clues as to the original nature of the painting.

Both Bergstrom and Tümpel have attempted to secure the identification of the painting as a representation of the Prodigal Son in the Tavern iconographically by comparison with works that without doubt, represent this scene from the parable. They both draw up a list of those elements which are common to the Dresden painting and other works illustrating the parable. For comparison Tümpel uses an engraving by the Amsterdam engraver, done under the name of "P.P. Rubbens" <sup>21</sup>, which includes all the elements found in the Dresden painting. A young man is seated at a chair which is pushed slightly away from a table so that he is not actually sitting at the table, but rather, a little to one side of it. He wears a plumed beret and the clothes of a Junker. In his left hand, his elbow resting on the table, he holds a tall drinking glass, while his right arm is placed around the waist of the woman seated on his knee. Her low-cut dress reveals her bare breasts. Behind them, a servant woman is tallying up the drinks on a scoreboard hanging from the wall. In front of the table is seated a woman, who while playing her lute, looks over at the couple. On the wall beside the scoreboard is displayed a peacock, his tail feathers spread out.

The similarity of this engraving to the drawing suggested by Valentiner as a study for the Dresden painting <sup>22</sup> and also to the Dresden painting itself, is very strong. The Junker, the woman on his knee, the raised left arm holding the glass, the marked scoreboard, the peacock and the possible female lutenist all appear.

Another drawing, "The Prodigal Son with the Loose Women", suggested by Tümpel as a copy after Rembrandt, again exhibits many of the same elements. <sup>23</sup> Here, we have a bare-breasted woman, this time in a plumed cap, seated on a

young man's knee beside a covered table, while a woman writes on the score-board in the background.

Tümpel further points out the similarities between Rembrandt's painting and examples of the Prodigal Son belonging to the Utrecht School. He uses as an example, a Prodigal Son by Jan van Bijlert "~~Festgelag~~ *Festgelag van de Verlorenzoon*", which is dated 1629.<sup>24</sup> This painting represents the Prodigal Son, identified by the large plumed hat which he holds in his left hand and the raised glass which he holds in his right, in a semi-reclining position on a draped bench-like structure. He wears be-ribboned shoes and a stylish jacket. A woman holding a pipe and wearing a low-cut dress sits down behind him, while another woman approaches him from the rear. Separated from the Prodigal Son by the bench-like structure are three musicians, playing their instruments. Behind the two women, in the upper right-hand corner, stands another young man, his body turned into the picture but his head twisted out of it to catch the viewer's eye. While this painting depicts the parable scene, its recognizable elements have been reduced to a minimum; only the plumed hat, the raised glass and, perhaps, the elegant clothes, identify the young man as the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son seems to be sometimes represented as a young, stylish dandy and, sometimes, particularly in the Utrecht School, in a more military costume. The other details depict simply a scene of "loose living" such as that found in the "*Musicerend Gezelschap*", also by Jan van Bijlert<sup>25</sup>, which shows five figures playing musical instruments, haphazardly grouped beside a table on which lie abandoned pipes. On the left, at the end of the table, sits a young man dressed in the costume of a cavalryman, a rapier hanging from his side and spurs on his high boots. Across from him is seated a bare-breasted woman who is gesturing to get his attention, while beside him a figure is pouring wine from a flask into a glass. This is a scene alluding to all the elements of immoral living -

wine, women, tobacco and music - and its moralizing intention is very strong. Bijlert's "Prodigal Son" likewise depicts the wine, the women, the music and the smoking. In this latter painting, therefore, a moralizing intention cannot be overlooked. The lone figure in the background looking out at the viewer may serve as a commentator on the scene before him.

A comparison of the Dresden painting with a work given for this purpose by Bergstrom as an undisputable scene from the parable reveals similar conclusions. He illustrates a circular engraving after Marten de Vos from C. van de Passe, "Parabolarum Evangelicarum Typi Elegantissime", dated 1604 <sup>26</sup>.

The three minor scenes in the background illustrating the Prodigal Son's expulsion from the tavern, his work as a swineherd and the return of the son to his father's house, identify the story. The main scene takes place in the harbour of a tavern in which five figures are seated around a table, three of them playing musical instruments and the other two forming an amorous couple. The young man, dressed in a contemporary costume of elegance, is caressing the woman, who holds a goblet in her left hand, and in the shadows in the background, a woman is writing on a scoreboard. The inscription, forming a band around the narrative scenes, reads "In gravia es lapsus delicta! Revertere soldes: moneterum ad mores est via sera bonos" <sup>27</sup>, providing the key to the understanding of this engraving. For while its reference "revertere soldes" refers directly to the outcome of the Biblical story, it must also be read in a more general way as a warning against immoral living.

The text of an emblem from Theodor de Bry's Emblemata, published in 1592 in Frankfurt a.m. <sup>28</sup> again brings out the relationship of the Prodigal Son parable to a general moralizing statement. It reads:

Die Yippigkeit wie sich die Jugendt bring zu spot, und komt, in  
Armut, Angst und Not Wenn sie durch alle Yippigkeit, sich selber

bringt in Hertenleidt, solchs lehrt das Exempel schon, In  
 der schrifft vom Verlohrnen Son, Drumb lehrn heirauss ein jeder wol.  
 Wie er verwan sein Jugendt sol.<sup>29</sup>

It's message is obvious.

Lucas van Leyden's woodcut of c. 1519, depicting the Prodigal Son in the tavern, bears with it a strong moralizing overtone, beyond the narrative confines of the story<sup>30</sup>. The artist has minimized the narrative elements to a small circular table on which is placed a cup, a glass, some bread and a platter with fruit, including an apple, a pear and some cherries. At the table is seated an older woman in the act of drinking from a glass while beside her sit a young couple engaged in playful love-making. A figure dressed in the costume of a jester looks through the window and points a finger down at the couple, while a scroll linking the jester with the scene inside, reads "acht. yon. waren. fal.". These words serve as a warning against such immoral living from which the only salvation is avoidance.

Rembrandt's Dresden painting must be interpreted in the light of these previous works. It is not a representation of the tavern scene from the Prodigal Son story in simply a narrative sense of the word, but carries with it strong moral implications. Rembrandt has, however, made significant formalistic changes. The most obvious is his minimization of the tavern atmosphere. The figure on the Son's knee is no longer dressed in the seductive costume of the harlot in the previously discussed painting of Bijlert or the engraving of P.P. Rubbens on the same subject. She has, furthermore, turned her body away from the viewer who sees only her back and from her companion. The only remaining indication that the scene does take place in a tavern, is the partially exposed scoreboard. If it was Rembrandt's decision to exclude the naked lutenist, then this is a further indication that his limited reference to the tavern setting was not unintentional. His choice of composition has, in fact, been related to

a painting by Terbruggen depicting a "Violinist and Girl with a Glass", which makes no reference to the Biblical story<sup>32</sup>. The painting in Krefeld is signed and dated 1624, and is a genre scene in which two large, half-length figures placed close to the picture plane, are shown together. The young man holds a violin while his female companion, whose clothes are pulled back off her shoulders revealing her breasts, holds up the glass. Both figures are looking out at the viewer in the same way that Rembrandt's two figures are. The violinist also wears a large plumed beret, as does the young man in the Rembrandt painting, and the large puffed sleeve of his tunic plays the same role of a visual link between the two figures. Was this similarity coincidental? Whether or not he did actually use the Terbruggen as a model for his own painting is an open question, but it serves to show that Rembrandt's visualization of the scene was within the moralizing genre tradition of the Utrecht school and not strictly according to other prototypes of the Prodigal Son story.

A most significant feature of the Dresden painting is the peacock head and the massive spread of peacock feathers. This motif occurs in a number of Prodigal Son representations, given both by Tumpel and Bergstrom, as well as in some examples of moralizing genre scenes<sup>33</sup>. Bergstrom points to the peacock as a symbol of pride (and voluptuousness), reproducing in this connection a drawing by Jacques de Gheyn of "Superbia", in the Leiden Prentenkabinet dated before 1604, in which the figure of Superbia, who represents Pride, holds a mirror decorated with the head and tail feathers of a peacock<sup>34</sup>. Rembrandt would certainly have been familiar with this association.

As Panofsky has already shown, in connection with Rembrandt's "Danaë"<sup>35</sup> which was a work begun in the mid-30's, emblematic motifs, at this period, seem to play a key role in the interpretation of some of Rembrandt's works<sup>36</sup>. To



look at the peacock in terms of its wider emblematic interpretation may, therefore, prove significant, as Henkel and Schöne show. It also represents "Verderbliche Leidenschaft", that is destructive or perishable passion, or pleasure which brings with it sorrow. The peacock, the bird of Juno, shows a beautiful tail with many eyes, but beneath, it hides a monster's head. Its message is that if you choose a woman for her beauty and purchase her favours for much gold and gifts, you will always be preyed upon by the ugly side of her character <sup>37</sup>.

A second to this study, relevant, emblematic interpretation of the peacock, is "Schwacheit des Menschens", or the weakness of man, for the peacock has beautiful tail feathers, but ugly feet. As soon as he recognizes the ugliness of his feet, his tail feathers fall; that is, as soon as man recognizes his weakness, his pride and magnificence disappear <sup>38</sup>. Both interpretations point to the futility and perishability of man's earthly pursuits. This warning is in keeping with the moralistic aspect of Rembrandt's Dresden painting.

Why has Rembrandt represented only two figures from the normally many figured scene? This question has already been partially answered by its association with works from the Utrecht school, especially as Tumpel has pointed out, with the previously discussed Terbrugghen. With regard to this question, the possible third figure must not be forgotten. A plausible explanation, again given by Tumpel, is the concept of "Herauslösung", a device which Rembrandt uses in a number of works, and which appears in the medieval devotional picture. It involves the isolation of the main figures of the story and the lifting of these figures out of its multi-figured narrative context. He points to a similar phenomenon by which Rembrandt has represented his "Danaë" in the Hermitage, without her shower of gold <sup>39</sup>, and his "Andromeda" in the Mauritshuis without her hero, Perseus <sup>40</sup>. By concentrating only on the isolated figure, Rembrandt

increases the psychological content of the picture <sup>41</sup>. In the Dresden painting he, in this way, brings the figures closer to the viewer and increases their rapport with him. It also raises more vividly the question of identity of the two figures, who are no longer simply two characters from a Biblical drama, acting out their narrative part, but real people. The portrait aspect is very strong, for although the bodies have been turned in directions away from the viewer, their heads are so placed to show their faces in an almost frontal view - in spite of, in the case of the woman, its apparent unnaturalness.

An identification of the figures as Rembrandt and Saskia, which has been suggested, <sup>42</sup> must be made by a visual comparison with a number of other securely based portraits of the artist and his wife. This is usually made on the basis of an etching signed and dated 1636 <sup>43</sup>, in which Rembrandt represents himself in the foreground, his face frontal, looking with severity out of the picture directly at the viewer. His left arm rests on a table, his pen still between his fingers, as if only momentarily looking up. He wears a dark, wide brimmed hat and a shirt with wide puffed sleeves and a large white collar. Over it he appears to be wearing a fur vest. His wife sits on a chair behind the writing table, her body turned at an angle towards Rembrandt, but her face also looking directly out of the picture at the viewer. Her hair is combed back and covered in a veil which hangs over her shoulders while a small fringe of bangs falls onto her forehead and stray strands frame her face. Her expression, too, is serious and somewhat heavy. The tone of the etching is very different from that of the painting, as are the character types of the two figures, which, in the etching, are much coarser and heavier. The two women, however, have the same high forehead and loosely curling hair, the same elongated nose, the same sad, rather inward looking eyes, puffy cheeks and double chin, and the two male figures both have a square face with, again, a slightly double chin, a moustache,

lumpy contours in their cheeks and curled, shoulder length hair. There is, therefore, a "family" likeness between the figures of the etching and those of the painting. Rembrandt has, perhaps, refined his figures in the Dresden painting to suit his narrative subject. It is also possible that the figures in the painting are not direct studies after life, as the etching, in comparison with the earlier series of small etched heads executed in the early 30's, in which Rembrandt also represents himself more coarsely, seems to have been <sup>44</sup>.

The flexibility of Rembrandt's adoption of a figure can be seen in a comparison of two works, both representing Saskia in different guises. In both, Rembrandt has changed the features somewhat to serve different ends, although Saskia is clearly recognizable in them. They are: the portrait of Saskia in Dresden, signed and dated 1633 <sup>45</sup>, and the painting of "Saskia as Flora" in the Hermitage, again signed and dated 1634 <sup>46</sup>. The Dresden portrait represents a young, though not naïve, girl, her face shown at three-quarters view, looking out coyly at the viewer, or, in this case we may suppose at her husband the artist. She wears an elegantly plumed hat, tilted coquettishly, a string of pearls around her neck, and gloves on her hands. Her softly curved mouth is opened slightly to reveal a tiny part of her front teeth. Her face is plump with rounded cheeks, but the general shape of it is oval. Her eyes are wrinkled forming tiny creases at the edges and her whole face is lit up with a smile. Her nose is long and slightly rounded at the end, and she has a double chin. In this portrait, Rembrandt has sympathetically and delicately represented the woman he loves as an outgoing woman of the world, dressed, however, not in contemporary fashion but in that of Lucas van Leyden's day <sup>47</sup>.

The slightly later portrait of Saskia as Flora, represents her in a very different spirit. Her face, turned again at a three-quarter angle to the viewer, retains the same slightly plump oval shape, but its lines are much smoother and the features are much more regular and geometrical. Her double

chin is formed by two softly curving arcs, while the upper line of the chin in the previous portrait is regular and the shadow across her face falls in almost a straight line, unbroken by any surface irregularities. This is quite different from the shadows falling across the Dresden portrait. Her eyes are much larger and more open, giving her the naive appearance of a young girl looking out shyly from under the costume. Her hair, again, falls in loose curls over her shoulders and she wears a pearl-drop earring. Her hair, garlanded with large, brightly coloured flowers, is in keeping with her depiction as Flora, the Roman goddess of spring and flowers. The geometric simplicity of the lines of her face adds to the desired effect of a simple, unaffected, potentially fruitful girl.

This difference of concept is again expressed in the representation of Saskia in the Dresden painting, which in its details reveals a strong affinity with the other two painted portraits discussed, but which has been manipulated again to suit its pictorial context. She has a wide, oval face, a slightly open mouth, revealing her teeth as in the Dresden portrait, a double chin and long nose slightly rounded at the end, a high forehead and curls loosely framing her face. Again, she wears pearl-drop earrings, while her hair, in the portrait, is tied back and held in place by the tiara adorning her head. Her features are more geometricized and regularized as in her portrait as Flora. This may be explained by the fact that, in both cases, an imaginary, fictitious person is being represented via an actual person's portrait, to distinguish it from the more realistic portrait which has no literary associations.

With Rembrandt, the situation is somewhat different, for in his self-portraits he has, throughout his life, very often dressed himself up for a particular role <sup>48</sup>. In a "Self-Portrait" signed and dated 1661, for example, he represents himself as St. Paul <sup>49</sup>. The identification of the subject as St. Paul, is based on his costume and attributes. It has been suggested that

the turban-like head dress refers to his "oriental" background, as he was born of Jewish parents in Tarsus. The hilt of the sword, Paul's traditional attribute, can be seen from under his cloak, while the book, also traditionally associated with St. Paul, has been replaced by a bundle of letters on which the word "Efesis" can be made out, referring to Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians <sup>50</sup>. The self-portrait element of this painting is shown by a comparison with another self-portrait, traditionally accepted as such, from the same period. The "Self-Portrait" signed and dated 1660 in the New York Metropolitan Museum, whose identification has not been questioned <sup>51</sup>, represents a physical type identical to that of the "St. Paul". Both figures are seen from the same angle and wear similar facial expressions - raised eyebrows, a wrinkled forehead, hard-set chin and tightly sealed lips. Both men have the same square face, sagging cheek muscles and chin, and the same large nose, wide at the base and slightly curved so that it appears crooked. Likewise, both figures have the same ear-length hair, bulging out from under their respective head gear.

The identification of the young man in the Dresden painting can be likewise secured by a comparison with a generally accepted self-portrait of the mid 30's. The "Self-Portrait" dated 1634 <sup>52</sup> in Berlin exhibits the same broad nose, curved somewhat into a point at the tip, large mouth, square face with high cheek-bones, slightly fleshy double chin and loosely curled hair. With Rembrandt, as with Saskia, the features are similar enough to justify the conclusion that Rembrandt has, in some way, used himself as the model for the Prodigal Son painting. His expression in the Biblical painting is, however, very different from that of the self-portrait. Although, at first glance, it seems more open, it reveals, in fact, less of his state of mind and appears almost flat and mask-like in comparison to the 1634 self-portrait. It is a

recollection of his features rather than a study of himself or a reflection of his condition. Nevertheless, an identification of the two figures in the Dresden painting under discussion can be made, revealing it to be a double portrait of the artist and his wife, in the guise of the Prodigal Son in the tavern.

The phenomenon of a portrait in the guise of a Biblical allegorical or historical personage, was not an innovation in the work of Rembrandt, but rather, a traditional feature of Dutch 16th and 17th century art <sup>53</sup>. An allegorical portrait was made for Charles I by Honthorst in 1628 on a trip to London. It represents a large courtly allegory of "Apollo and Diana", in which Charles I is shown as Apollo and Henrietta Maria is seen as Diana, with Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle, in attendance <sup>54</sup>.

Corneille de Vos, a noted Flemish portraitist, in a painting called "The Return of the Sacred Treasury of St. Norbert after the Heresy of Traucheln" <sup>55</sup> is said to have represented the people in the form of portraits <sup>56</sup>. The painting was, according to Wishnevski, done for the Funerary Chapel of the Snoeck family in St. Michael's Church in Antwerp, and represents members of the family in the guise of the participants in the 12th century event <sup>57</sup>.

Wishnevski also points to a painting by the portraitist Dirck Direksz Santvoort of "Jacob and Rachel", which represents a family portrait in the guise of Biblical characters <sup>58</sup>. It's scriptural identification is made on the basis of a comparison with a drawing in Christ Church, Oxford, by Hugo van der Goes <sup>59</sup>, in which the same setting and poses of the main figures are used. The portrait nature of the painting is suggested by the individualized features of the main couple and the two children and is emphasised by their frontal attitude and the bright light falling on their faces.

Rembrandt's "Jewish Bride" <sup>60</sup> falls into the same category as the painting by D.D. Santvoort, previously mentioned. Rosenberg, among others, sees this

painting as a double portrait commissioned by an actual couple, alluding to a Biblical pair <sup>61</sup>. Their costumes, which are not those of the 17th century, support such a suggestion. Several people have been suggested as possible models, although no positive identification has been made <sup>62</sup>.

From the last years of his Leiden period, a number of generally small etchings exist which show that Rembrandt, by using his own face as a model, studied many facets of human emotions <sup>63</sup>. He appears to have been building up a vocabulary of expressions to be used in the imaginative characters of his narrative paintings. The majority of these etchings are signed and dated in monogram, 1630, indicating that this study of expression was, at one time, for Rembrandt a very conscious undertaking. He used the results of this very subjective study as a basis for a more universalized statement; that is a universalization of his own experience.

In the same way, Rembrandt studied the faces of other people around him as concrete models for the otherwise abstract emotions of the characters in his narrative scenes, using particularly those in the immediate environment of his family as models for the painted characters <sup>64</sup>.

The self-portrait aspect of the Dresden painting must be seen in the light of this aspect of Rembrandt's concept of portraiture, of both himself, and of his immediate family. Rembrandt is not simply representing himself and his wife in the guise of the Prodigal Son in the Tavern as a comment on his own situation or character, as the other examples of portraits in the form of Biblical, allegorical or historical persons have done. He is, rather, using himself in a more generalized sense as a model to convey a moral message <sup>65</sup>. It is the message which is the most important aspect of the painting. While Rembrandt and Saskia, as the Prodigal Son with the harlot, are the butt of the message, they are at the same time its most eloquent spokespeople.

## Chapter II

### "The Return of the Prodigal Son"

The etching of the "Return of the Prodigal Son", signed and dated 1636, illustrates the other contemporaneously popular aspect of the parable. Although it represents a scene from the same story as that illustrated in the Dresden painting, its implications as a scene on its own are, as has already been shown, very different. It may seem more than coincidental that Rembrandt has chosen to represent two scenes from the same story within a relatively short time span in his career, but to link them in any way more than superficially, is to distort their independent iconographic significance. Rembrandt himself has not tried to unite the two works visually by the use of any unifying feature, such as in the type of the Prodigal Son. He seems, deliberately, to have explored the potential of each episode of the story independently, irrespective of their mutual origins.

Although the motif of the Prodigal Son's return was not as popular in the North as in Italy, an engraving by Lucas van Leyden provides an important 16th century visualization of the scene <sup>1</sup>. Rembrandt, who owned a book of prints by Lucas van Leyden, was certainly familiar with this particular work <sup>2</sup>.

The scene takes place in the wide expanse of the countryside, on a promontory of broken, rocky earth, before a palatial house. Out of it has come the old man to greet his son who, walking stick still under his arm, has just arrived home. He kneels before his father in a stately way, in spite of his bare feet and tattered hair and clothes, visible signs of the "loose" life that he has been living. His hat is tucked under his left arm and his hands are folded in supplication. He presents himself before his father to be taken in. The old man, his eyes closed, touchingly bends forward and stretches out his hands to receive his son. Behind the main group a number of figures look on.



One of them, wearing a turban and a beard, displays a gesture of annoyance as he exchanges comments with another <sup>3</sup>. In the foreground, well-dressed townspeople have gathered to watch the event while two figures, the one his jaw hard set and robes draped over his arm, come out of the building. A figure peers out of the window. The relationship of the father and son seems to be formal and somewhat strained, and the surrounding figures are interested but not sympathetic. The Prodigal Son has come home, but the rocky barren land and the formality of the scene suggest that life there is not promising. In the background, a farmyard is depicted in which a figure is seen slaying a calf, while another figure looks on; a possible allusion to the coming feast in honour of the son's return, while in the right corner, below the promontory, a farmer, stick in hand, is seen walking alongside his herd.

Rembrandt's etching, both in composition and in spirit, bears very little resemblance to the Lucas van Leyden print, which is more similar to the Italian visualization of the scene. Rembrandt has, however, directly or indirectly incorporated some of the elements of the print into his etching.

According to Arthur Hind <sup>4</sup>, Rembrandt has used another 16th century illustration of the scene as a prototype; a woodcut of the same subject by Maerten van Heemskerck <sup>5</sup>. There are strong similarities in the architectural setting with its steps leading up to an arched doorway, out of which figures are coming; in the arched vista to the left of it through which background action on a miniature scale can be seen and which leads the eye back into the distance to landscape and buildings. The basic positioning of the two protagonists, the father and son and the abandoned walking stick beside the kneeling figure, are similar as are the types of the two son figures, although the hair of the son in Heemskerck's work is shorter. They are both dressed in a piece of cloth wrapped around their waists and they wear no shoes. Both hold their hands together in front of their faces in an attitude of prayer and

supplication. In the Heemskerck, the father is in the act of stepping down from the top to the second step to reach his son. There is a strong element of motion which is likewise present, although to a lesser degree, in Rembrandt's etching. The movement represented by Rembrandt is a fraction of a second later than that shown by Heemskerck, for the father has already reached his son. In both, the positioning of the hands of the father is the same as he takes hold of the son's right arm with his left hand, although in Rembrandt's etching the contact is not yet quite made, while the other hand is placed around the bare shoulders of the respective son. A female figure coming out of the door in Heemskerck's woodcut, is holding a pair of shoes and in Rembrandt's etching, the emerging male figure likewise carries shoes as well as robes.

Despite these similarities, the differences between the two works are significant. A transformation in Rembrandt's work has taken place, which is especially evident in the spatial organization producing a less compact and more atmospheric quality. It can also be seen in the placement of the two main figures and in their relationship to the whole. The protagonists now form an interlocking unit within a triangular shape. The steps have been enlarged and emphasized so that they form a solid base supporting this triangular form which has, at its apex, the shoulders of the father enclosing the son. The arch on the left, balanced with the open doorway on the right, together with the strong base horizontals, give the whole a classical strength and harmony that is not present in Heemskerck's prototype. The walking stick seems to be an almost self-conscious attempt to introduce a diagonal into an otherwise static composition. The sense of motion in the father, although still present, has been greatly reduced. Instead of rushing out to meet the son as in the Heemskerck, the father, as already indicated, is there with the son. The implications of this change are very significant to the message, for in Heemskerck's woodcut the son is still

begging his father's acceptance of him as hired help, while the son in Rembrandt's etching, no longer has the need to ask - his father has already taken him into his arms and accepted him. In this Rembrandt is more textually correct, for in the Biblical story the son does not have to actually ask his father for forgiveness; he does so, but only after the father has already had compassion on him and embraced him <sup>6</sup>.

Rembrandt has changed the types of the figures coming out of the doorway, showing them as short and squat types who rush out eagerly with the robes and shoes for the son. He has also placed a third figure in a position of immediacy and importance, at an open window above the main group. The figure appears to have just opened the window, looking with curiosity, but showing signs of resentment towards the scene below. The figure's identity is uncertain, for while it's dress resembles that of a woman, the short hair and hat suggest that he is a man. <sup>7</sup>

Both Rembrandt and Heemskerck have kaleidoscoped into one scene, two consecutive events, by showing the servants carrying out the clothes, while the two figures still embrace each other <sup>8</sup>. This is already present in Lucas van Leyden's print. By introducing the older brother, they have alluded to yet another moment in the Biblical story.

Rembrandt has also changed the small background scene, which in the Heemskerck is clearly the slaughtering of the calf for the feast, to show a man with a stick in his hand, leading his herd. This, too, recalls a minor scene from the Lucas van Leyden print <sup>9</sup>.

These changes in the Heemskerck prototype are not accidental, but rather express Rembrandt's different concept of the theme. They embody a change in emphasis from the son's search for forgiveness to the father's ready acceptance of his wayward son. Rembrandt's etching is not simply a copy of the original, but an adaptation of the motif which uses Heemskerck's woodcut as a starting point.

Hind sees a drawing in Haarlem (Ben. 641, cat. no. 519), as a study for the 1636 etching<sup>10</sup>. Benesch, however, dates it 1644 on stylistic grounds<sup>11</sup>. Its possible relationship to the etching must, therefore, be examined critically on purely visual grounds. If it is a study for the etching, what is its relationship to the Heemskerck? Does it, in any way, serve as a link between the two graphic works? The arched doorway and the steps leading up to it are a constant in all three works. So, likewise, is the beard of the old man, the bare feet of the son and the abandoned walking stick. The composition of the drawing is however, very different from either of the two finished versions: In the placement of the figures - the old man placed frontally and the son seen from the back at a slight angle; in the visible remains of the son's clothes, including a shirt with loose sleeves; in the positioning of the father's hands on the head, and the son's head on the lap of his father; in the monumentality of the two figures and in their calm and static nature. The walking stick in the drawing has been relegated to a position of non-compositional importance.

On purely visual grounds, therefore, the drawing should be seen as a further development of Rembrandt's conception of the Prodigal Son's return, after the 1636 etching and not a study for it<sup>12</sup>. It is, in fact, more closely related in spirit in the composition of the main group, to the Hermitage painting of the same subject, done many years later. The youthful figure, leaning against the wall in the background who looks on with a quiet expression of curiosity, but acceptance, prefigures a similar figure in the background of the Hermitage painting.

The drawing in Rotterdam (Ben. 695, cat. no. 562) dated by Benesch c. 1644-5, represents another experimental stage in Rembrandt's attempts to arrive at a personal conception of the "Return of the Prodigal Son"<sup>13</sup>. The father is hurrying forward, his hands stretched out in anticipation, to reach

the son who has fallen down on his knees before him. The stick, which seems to be in motion, forms a psychological link between the father and son. The element of motion, first seen in the Heemskerck and carried over to some extent in the 1636 etching, is intensified which makes it very different from the static quality of the Haarlem drawing and the final painting. The broader, more elaborate setting, gives the drawing a more panoramic feeling, although the spatial definition is more ambiguous than in either the Haarlem drawing or the etching. A wall pierced by an arched opening creates two separate spatial areas. While the father, rushing out to greet his son is most certainly coming from the inside, it is difficult to determine from the angle of the son's body, from which direction he has come, which leaves the nature of the space on the other side of the wall in question. The greater number of figures witnessing the scene deviates from the two previously discussed works by Rembrandt, but is a motif which occurs in the van Leyden woodcut and in Italian representations. The kneeling woman in the foreground is, according to Valentiner, in the act of slaying a calf <sup>13</sup> (indoors?), a motif again found in the woodcuts of Heemskerck and van Leyden, while the figure in the broad brimmed flat hat behind the arched opening, has been interpreted as the older brother <sup>14</sup>. Valentiner points to the uncertainty of the drawing in places and to the many corrections made in it <sup>15</sup>.

If we accept the drawing as genuine and there seems to be no serious questioning of its authenticity, then we must see it as another attempt by Rembrandt to work out a suitable form for this episode of the Prodigal Son story.

Two further drawings (Ben. 1231, cat. no. 1017 and Ben. 1252, cat. no. 1037) are associated, by Benesch with the Hermitage painting <sup>16</sup>. Both drawings represent the father and son as a single, interlocking visual unit as the focal point in an expansive space; the architectural setting of the drawing in Dresden being flat and unstructural, so that it serves merely as a backdrop to the two

figures in front. This interlocking of the figures, which was already attempted by Rembrandt in the 1636 etching, provides the key vehicle of psychological expression so important to the Hermitage painting. The motif of the woman at the half opened door to form a window, reappears in the painting as do the steps leading up to the door. The walking stick, which was so important compositionally to the 1636 etching and present in the Haarlem and Rotterdam drawings, is now very simply integrated into the total space; in the Dresden drawing it lies on the ground parallel to the steps and in the Vienna drawing, it leans vertically against the wall. A further development has taken place, particularly in the Vienna drawing, which serves as an important link with the final painting. The youth is fully dressed in a robe, reaching down to his ankles and tied together at the waist, and the father wears a small cap.

Another drawing given by Benesch (Ben.1193, cat. no. 983) <sup>17</sup> must be questioned as a scene from the Prodigal Son story, for the young man in it is dressed in the costume of a traveller and not in the rags of one who has lived among the swine. The similarities between the present drawing and that representing "Raguel Welcomes Tobias" <sup>18</sup>, are too striking to be overlooked: in gesture, in the costume of the youth and in his short, boyish hair. The older man in both cases, carries a walking stick and wears the same sort of hat, although in the Tobias drawing the hat seems to be an afterthought. A comparison, as Valentiner has done, with the "Departure of Tobias" in the Vienna Albertina <sup>19</sup> may likewise be made, in which the old man represents Tobit, the father of Tobias.

While none of the drawings can, therefore, be seen as an actual study for the etching or the later Hermitage painting, they do reveal Rembrandt's pre-occupation with the motif and his attempts to arrive at a suitable representation of it. They exhibit various aspects which will be developed to

their final conclusion in the painting, so that it presents a very different concept of the Prodigal Son's return to that expressed in the 1636 etching.

### The Hermitage Painting

Light from the left falls on the face of a bearded old man with grey wisps of hair coming out from under a tightly fitting cap. He wears a vibrant red cloak, with blue lining and red tassles hanging from the corners, over a yellow coat with a pleated skirt tied together at the waist with a sash. Under the coat is a textured white blouse with small rows of ruffles at the wrists. His body, turned to face the viewer, is bent slightly forward over the young man kneeling at his feet. The old man's shoulders are silhouetted against the dark background in a diamond shape with his head forming the apex and his hands meeting at the bottom. The head of the younger man is enclosed within this shape and his body is enveloped by the standing figure.

The light illuminating the old man also falls across the young man's shoulders and back, creating an aura of radiance and warmth around the kneeling figure. He wears a loosely fitting coarse linen garment <sup>20</sup> in tones of gold, over a red shirt. Tied together at the waist with a cord, it is patched on the shoulder below the older man's left thumb. A knife in a sheath hangs at his side. His head is shaven like that of a monk and his chin is covered with the stubble of a beard. The shoe on his right foot is tattered and worn, while that on his left has fallen to the ground exposing the sole of his foot completely. It is cut and bleeding.

The old man's expression is calm and his face is filled with great kindness. He is the father who is welcoming home his wayward son.

Colouristically, as well as compositionally, the two figures form a visual whole for they both reflect the red and gold of each other's clothing in their own. They stand on a two stepped dias, illuminated by the warm golden light.

In the background is a wall extending half way into the picture. It is divided into a number of horizontal bands, the highest of which is covered with surface decorations of vegetal motifs and relief sculpture <sup>21</sup> and is then broken by a large arch filling the other half of the picture's width. The open arch leads the eye back to a second wall which is again pierced by a window, probably forming the open half of a door <sup>22</sup>. The visible rear wall is shaded in such a way that it suggests surface activity of some sort - perhaps sculptural niches <sup>23</sup>. The facade indicates an edifice of some importance <sup>24</sup>.

Four figures witness the scene. A veiled woman in the shadows behind the arch looks out of the open window (or doorway). She wears a low-cut dress with a scooped neck and a black neckband from which hangs a shining pendant. She seems perturbed. A young boy whose body is almost lost in the shadows leans against a protruding wall. His head and eyes are slightly lowered, so that in view of the ambiguous space, his eyes would fall on the embracing figures. His expression is comparable to that of the youth in the Haarlem drawing; curious and puzzled, but accepting. A figure, again blending colouristically into the background, is seated to the right, his left leg resting on his knee and his left hand holding the edge of his coat. His hat and pants are of a type contemporary to Rembrandt. He looks thoughtful, but not deeply interested in the scene before him. His face has a vacant, mask-like quality made up of forms very much more block-like than the softly rounded modelling of the father's face. His body, which is done in an even cruder way than the head, appears non-structural so that his left shoulder is almost non-existent and his hands are large, flat and expressionless. Beside him stands a figure in full life size. He is illuminated by the light which falls on the father and son. In contrast to the other onlookers, he is clearly visible and modelled with care. He is dressed in a long red cloak so that, colouristically and in the style of



his costume, he belongs to the group of the father and son. His hands, folded in front of him, rest on the walking stick. A flat cap partially covers his brown shoulder length hair which flows into a long beard. His head is bent slightly forward and his gaze is directed downwards at the two main figures. The strong light on his face reveals hollow cheeks and deeply sunken eyes. He is moved by what he sees, but his expression is troubled. The contrast between his face and the serenity in the face of the kneeling figure, is striking.

There are many problems with this painting<sup>25</sup>. It was bought by Prince Dmitry Golitsyn, the Russian ambassador to Paris and The Hague, for Catherine II's picture gallery in 1766<sup>26</sup>. No x-ray data on the painting has, to my knowledge, been published.

A strip of approximately ten centimetres has been added to the right and to the bottom of the painting<sup>27</sup>. The line connecting the added part to the main part of the painting, is clearly visible although there is no marked change in the colouring of the added part in the painting technique. The change has altered the composition, for it means that the standing onlooker in red, has been given more volume and that his back has been partially freed from the picture's edge, so that he has become a more independent and fully rounded figure. The added space in front of the feet of the genuflected figure, adds depth to the picture. A comparison with "The Apostle Peter Denying Christ"<sup>28</sup> in which the person in the extreme left is cut half off and the seated soldier is very close to the picture plane, makes it less difficult to visualize the Hermitage painting without the added ten centimetres. We are, however, still left with the question whether Rembrandt added the two pieces to the edge, or whether it was done by someone else and, if so, by whom or why? It was suggested by the Paris sculptor, Falconet, in a letter of 1772 to Catherine II, as a companion piece to "Mordecai at the Feast of Esther and

Anasuerus", <sup>29</sup> which is now called "The Condemnation of Haman", <sup>30</sup> but a comparison of measurements of the two paintings does not explain the added ten centimetres <sup>31</sup>. The added strips may indicate a process of restoration, but we have no documentary material for verification.

The second problem is one of quality. Bob Haak has suggested that the spectators, which to him are qualitatively so much poorer, were not painted by Rembrandt, but were completed by another hand. As further evidence for such an assumption, he cites the unusual signature whose authenticity has been questioned, and which he suggests might have been done by the same hand that completed Rembrandt's painting.<sup>32</sup> This would assume that Rembrandt had left the painting incomplete.

The presence of the spectators is interpretatively problematic. The eyes of all four rest on the scene before them, all seeming to embody different states of mind in relation to the scene. They have no precedence in Rembrandt's drawings, at least in their present enigmatic form, and no textual explanation.

The relief work on the walls of the building, which cannot be presently read, may provide valuable material for the interpretation of the painting.

A number of visual observations can, however, be made for the differences between this painting and the 1636 etching, iconographically and spiritually are considerable, pointing to the change which has taken place in Rembrandt's conception of the Prodigal Son's return.

The strong geometric forms of the architectural setting and the main figure group in the etching, are very important to the painting, while the sense of movement still found in the etching is now absent. This results in a static composition, suggestive of calm, unwavering strength. The main group of the father and son no longer forms a triangle in which the backs of the two figures make up the two sides, indicating a more equalized relationship between the two figures, with the head and shoulders of the father forming it's

apex. The father's hands across his shoulders are expressive of the strong emotion which he feels towards his son <sup>33</sup>.

While the landscape in the etching carries the eye far into the distance into a different environment, there is no indication of a space beyond that represented within the picture. The reference to the building in the background serves merely as a stabilizing force, a visible sign of the solidity and security of the "home" to which the son has come.

The only direct allusions to the son's former life, that is, the time outside that represented in the picture, are the worn out shoes and cut feet and the knife hanging on his side, which was used in the slaughtering of pigs. The son has not arrived in the rags of a swineherd, but with the shaven head and garment of a penitent. He is no longer bare foot.

Rembrandt's choice in his representation of the footwear has significant iconographical implications. Although the son has both shoes, he is only wearing one. The other has been consciously taken off and placed beside his foot. This may be interpreted in a number of ways. Ewald Vetter presents the idea that the "loosened sandal" is an antique symbol of one searching for shelter and suggests that the "loosening" of one shoe indicates the son's need for the safety and security of the home <sup>34</sup>. It may, however, also be read as one bare and one covered foot. H.S. Beham has shown his returning Prodigal Son in this manner, <sup>35</sup> which in popular iconography was associated with the life of poverty. In this connection the vagabond in Peter Breugel's "Rich Man's Kitchen" is shown wearing only one shoe <sup>36</sup>. A print ascribed to Pieter Cornelisz Kunst of the "Prodigal Son Playing a Game of Dice" shows a pedlar standing at the table playing dice with the Prodigal Son. He is shown with a shoe only on his right foot, while his left leg and foot is completely bare <sup>37</sup>

The meaning of the son's footwear, however, may lie in another direction, for while the son is wearing only one shoe, the other shoe is clearly present and seems to suggest that the emphasis is on the taking off of the shoe. The book of Exodus speaks of the removal of the shoes in connection with holy ground. For the Lord, speaking to Moses out of the burning bush, said "...put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground".<sup>38</sup> The ground on which the son kneels may be seen as holy ground for, in his presence with his father, he is, symbolically, in the presence of God. The problem, however, still arises why he has only taken off one shoe<sup>39</sup>.

The standing figure in red also presents iconographic difficulties. The prominence given to him suggests that he is a figure of some importance. Qualitatively, he is, like the other spectators, poorer than the main two figures and may, therefore, not have been done by Rembrandt, although this does not exclude the possibility that he was part of Rembrandt's conception and, therefore, in accordance with the paintings total iconographic statement.

The older brother, although a more minor figure in previously cited pictorial works of this subject<sup>40</sup>, is nevertheless an important figure in the Biblical story seen as a whole. It is possible that he does represent the older brother, who in the Biblical story acts as a foil to his younger brother, for while his brother had separated himself from his father, he had remained faithful to him and had worked hard for him throughout the years.

Although, in light of the many technical difficulties and iconographical ambiguities, it is perhaps dangerous to make any statement as to the painting's meaning, it may, perhaps, be interpreted solely on the visual material at hand, as an expression of the Protestant concept of "grace". The father takes his "Prodigal" son back so freely and completely that they have become one, even

before the son has had a chance to express his repentance, while the older brother who, through his service and fidelity, had hoped to win a more favourable position in his father's eyes, now stands apart. This, however, requires further investigation.

### Footnotes

#### Introduction and Historical Perspective

1. Br. #30; H. de Groot #334; Bauch #535.
2. Breduis-Gerson.
3. Valentiner (1904) p.68, dates it c. 1636-37; Valentiner (1908) p.133, feels that his previous dating is too late and suggests an earlier date of c. 1634, which he bases on a Berlin drawing of 1633 (Benesch 483 cat. no. 437) and a study for Rembrandt's head of the same year at Warneck (Valentiner, 1908, p. 142 left). H. de Groot #334 p.192 dates it c. 1634-35; Bauch, Anmerkungen p.27 dates it c. 1636; Bergstrom, p. 145 suggests a date of 1636; Breduis-Gerson p.549 gives no date. The present author has no basis for disputing a mid 30's dating. The portrait character of the painting reveals strong affinities with other portraits of the artist and his wife of that period, although this, in itself, is far from conclusive as evidence. The dramatic hand gesture exhibited by the man can be seen as a feature of a number of works of the period (see also Br. #497; Br. #498; Br. #499). The calligraphic line of the young man's cap and the dramatically curved feather coming from it, are features which may be associated with his Baroque period of the mid-30's (compare the elaborate drapery of Br. #474).
4. Br. #598; H. de Groot #113; Bauch #94.
5. Valentiner (1908) p.471 dates it c. 1668-69; H. de Groot, p.90, c. 1669; The Hermitage, Leningrad, Dutch and Flemish Masters (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1964)\* p.88 suggests a 1663 dating by comparing it with a related family portrait in Brunswick (Br. #417); Bauch, Anmerkungen p. 7, c. 1668 (?); Breduis-Gerson, p.612, gives no date. Since the Brunswick portrait is not itself dated and since its relationship to the Hermitage painting remains unclear, it cannot be considered substantial evidence as a basis for the dating of the Hermitage painting. Compositionally, it belongs to the late 1660's (c.1668-69).

\*NOTE: Throughout this study literature frequently cited will be identified only once and later referred to by the author's name, the year of publication and, in brackets, the number of the footnote where the title is first given.

6. B. #91.

7. Benesch in his catalogue of Drawings gives a number of drawings related to the Prodigal Son theme. Ben. 85, cat. no. 81, "The Departure of the Prodigal Son" in Dresden, Kupferstich Kabinett dated by Benesch c. 1632-33. Valentiner (1925) p.383, sees this drawing as a study for the Dresden painting and dates it 1633-34. Sumowski, in "Bemerkungen zu Otto Benesch's Corpus der Rembrandt Zeichnungen I", Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift Der Humboldt - Universitat zu Berlin. Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, VI, (1956-7), VII (1957-58), p.260, brings convincing evidence for its attribution to Philips Koninck.
- Ben. 108, cat. no. 100 verso "3 Couples of Soldiers and Women" in Berlin, Kupferstich Kabinett, dated by Benesch, 1635, and associated by him with the Prodigal Son in the tavern scene.
- Ben. 788, cat. no. 651 "Departure of the Prodigal Son" in the Gronigen Museum. Benesch dates it c. 1649-50 and sees the washes, which weaken the drawings as being by another hand. Valentiner (1925) p.384, does not recognize the hand of Rembrandt in this drawing and believes it to be the work of a good pupil.
- Ben. 732, cat. no. 601, "Prodigal Son among the Swine" in the British Museum, which Benesch dates 1647-48 while Valentiner (1925) p.387, gives a date of c. 1635-40.
- Ben. 655, cat. no. 528a, "Prodigal Son with the Loose Women" in Orleans, dated by Benesch c. 1642-43. Tumpel, p.118, sees it as a copy after Rembrandt.
- Ben. 658, cat. no. 529, "Prodigal Son with the Loose Women" in Basel, Benesch dates it c. 1642-43; Valentiner (1925) p.386 sees it as a study for the Dresden painting and dates it c. 1634.
- Ben. 641, cat. no. 519, "The Return of the Prodigal Son" in Haarlem. Benesch dates it 1644 and says that the washes, architecture and setting are by another hand, an idea which Haverkamp-Begemann in "Review of Otto Benesch, The Drawings of Rembrandt, First Complete Edition", Kunstchronik vol. XIV, 1961, refutes. Valentiner (1925) #388 dates it c. 1635, relating it to the etching on the same subject.
- Ben. 695, cat. no. 562, "The Return of the Prodigal Son", in Rotterdam, Benesch dates it 1644-45. Valentiner (1925) p.389, points out that

the execution has many corrections and is, in places, somewhat uncertain. Haverkamp Begemann, (loc.cit.) says that another hand did the green and gray washes.

Ben. 1193, cat. no. 983, "Return of the Prodigal Son" in the Hague, dated by Benesch 1655-56. Valentiner (1925) p.228 sees it as a "Departure of Tobias" (Ben. 727, cat. no. 597) and dates it 1645.

Ben. 1225, cat. no. 1011, "The Return of the Prodigal Son" in the Victoria and Albert Museum is dated by Benesch 1656, while Valentiner (1925) p.392, dates it 1664, on the basis of composition.

Ben. 1231, cat. no. 1017, "The Return of the Prodigal Son", in Dresden is dated by Benesch 1656-57. Valentiner (1925) p.391, relates it to works from the mid-50's, on the grounds of its severe architectonic composition, but feels that in its simplicity it may also relate to the Hermitage painting of the same subject (Br. #598) and that would place it in the late 1660's.

Ben. 1252, cat. no. 1037, "The Return of the Prodigal Son", in the Albertina, is related, according to Benesch, to the Hermitage painting (Br. #598) and is dated by him 1658-59. Valentiner (1925) p.390.

8. Colin Campbell, "Rembrandt's "Polish Rider" and the Prodigal Son", Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes, 33, 1970, pp.292-303. For a discussion of this article see Appendix I.  
Br. # 279.
9. Emile Mâle, L'Art Religieux Après le Concile de Trente, (Paris: A. Colin, 1932), p. 65-71.
10. R. Klein and H. Zerner, Italian Art 1500-1600, Sources and Documents, (Englewood Cliffs, N. Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1966) pp. 120-21. Canons & Decrees of the Council of Trent (trans. by J.J. Schroeder, London, 1941). The 25th Session, Dec. 3 & 4, 1563..... on the invocation, veneration and relics of the saints and on sacred images. "Moreover, let the bishops diligently teach that by means of the stories of the mysteries of our redemption portrayed in paintings and other representations the people are instructed and confirmed in the articles of faith which ought to be borne in mind and constantly reflected upon\*.....".



11. Mäle, 1932 (9) pp. 66-70 gives a number of examples of paintings done in the 17th century on themes of penitence.
12. Rudolph Oldenbourg, P.P. Rubens; Des Meisters Gemälde (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, nd.) p. 129, "The Madonna Adored by Four Penitents and Saints", 1615-17. (NOTE: The dates are those given by the author cited in each case) The execution is attributed to Anthony van Dyck; p. 176, "Christ and the Four Penitents", c. 1618; p. 104, "St. Magdalen Repentant", c. 1635-38.
13. Gustav Gluck, Van Dyck; Des Meisters Gemälde (New York: F. Kleinburger, 1931), p. 10; "St. Mary Magdalene in Penance", p. 144; "St. Mary Magdalene in Penance", p. 218; "St. Mary Magdalene in Penance", p. 226; "St. Mary Magdalene in Penance", p. 62; "Christ and the Penitent Sinners".
14. Nefta Grimaldi, II Guercino; Gian Francesco Barbieri; 1591-1666 (Bologna: Edizioni G.R., (pref. 1968) p. 136. "S. Maria Maddalena Piangente con due Angioli", 1622; p. 212. "David".
15. Murillo; L'Oeuvre du Maître (Paris: Librairie Hachette & Cie., 1913) p. 36 "Le Repentir de Sainte Madelaine", 1650-65; p. 100. "Le Repentir de Sainte Madelaine", 1665-75.
- \* 16. Ewald Vetter, Der Verlorene Sohn, Lukas Bucherei zur Christlichen Ikonographie vol. VII (Dusseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1955) goes extensively into the interpretive history of the parable in the visual arts and to a lesser degree in literature. The parable's literary history is discussed in Alison Mary Turner, The Motif of the Prodigal Son in French and German Literature to 1910. (Ph.D. dissertation on microfilm, Univ. of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1966).
17. Miniature from the M.S. Grec. 74, Paris, Bibl. Nat. folio 143r. 11th century. The scenes of the story are illustrated in two narrative bands and include: the son asking his father for money; the son standing among the swine; he returns home and prostrates himself before his father; the two, standing, embrace each other; the son is being dressed in new clothes. Vetter, 1955 (16) pl. I, p. 38.

18. The F. initial of the Lukas evangelium of the Goslar Evangelyary folio 715, includes within it two scenes from the Prodigal Son story; the son's arrival at his father's house and above it, the feast in honour of his return.  
Vetter, 1955(16) pl. III, p. 38.
19. Vetter, 1955 (16) p. 36, footnote 45 suggests H. Cornell, Biblia Pauperum (Stockholm: 1925) pl. 12 for illustration. Vetter (loc. cit.) p. 16. In the Biblia Pauperum, the Return of the Prodigal Son is juxtaposed with the reunion of Joseph and his brothers and the appearance of the risen Christ to his disciples.
20. Karl-Adolf Knappe, Dürer, The Complete Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965) p. 7, "The Prodigal Son amid the Swine", c. 1496.
21. F.W.H. Hollstein, German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, c. 1400-1700 (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1954) Vol. III pp. 30-31.  
H.S. Beham, plates 1-4, dated 1540.  
F.W.H. Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings Engravings and Woodcuts, c. 1450-1700 (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1949 --) (abbreviated hereafter, Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish) Vol. VII p. 77.  
Philip Galle produced six plates from the story after designs by Heemskerck, dated 1562.  
Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish, Vol. IX, p. 49.  
Rombout van der Hoeve executed four plates designed by August Braun.
22. This scene appears frequently in the pictorial tradition since the 13th century. L'Abbe y. Delaporte, Les Vitraux de la Cathédrale de Chartres (Chartres: E. Houvet, 1926) Pl. CL-CLII shows that six fields out of twenty nine in the "Prodigal Son" window in Chartres Cathedral were devoted to this episode of the parable.
23. Tümpel, 1968, p. 120, figs. 27-30.
24. Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish, 1949 (21) IX, p. 200. Gerard de Jode b. 1509 (or 1517) at Nymegen, d. 1591 in Antwerp.
25. Ibid., VII, p. 9. Frans Francken the Younger's dates are 1581-1642.

26. Kurt Bauch, Der Frühe Rembrandt und seine Zeit (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1960) p. 32 illustr. #19.
27. Caravaggio's, "The Calling of St. Matthew" in San Luigi de' Francesi, c. 1598-1601, (see Roger Hinks, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio - His Life, His Legend, His Works (London: Faber and Faber, 1953) Pl. 38, cat. no. 29, serves as a prototype for a number of works of figures occupied in various pursuits seated around a table. These were done by artists both in Italy and in the North, who were strongly influenced by Caravaggio's style. For example: Gerritt van Honthorst, "Mahlzeit", Florence, Uffizi, see Arthur von Schneider, Caravaggio und die Niederländer (Amsterdam: B.M. Israël, 1967) pl. 2, b; Walter Pietersz Crabeth, "Der Falschspieler", Private Collection, Germany, see Hermann Voss, Die Malerei des Barock in Rom, (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag (1924) p. 135 and p. 470; Bartolomeo Manfredi, "Musical", Florence Uffizi, see Alfred Moir, The Italian Followers of Caravaggio, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1967) II. pl. 103, I. pp. 86-88; Valentin de Boulogne, "Konversationstuck", Paris Louvre, see Voss (loc. cit.) p. 100 and p. 453.
28. Examples of the motif of the "Return of the Prodigal Son" are:-
  1. Annibale Carracci: i) A painting, now lost, was recorded in early literature as a work by Annibale. It hung in the Zambeccari Chapel in the church of Corpus Domini in Bologna and was later sold to the Duke of Orleans. In 1786, the painting was engraved. See Donald Posner, Annibale Carracci, A Study in the Reform in Italian Painting around 1590, 2 vols. (London: Phaidon, 1971) p. 62 and pl. 161, note 32. ii) A painting by Annibale listed in the 1743 Inventory of the Zambeccari Palace, or Casa Sampieri as given by Rudolph Wittkower, The Drawings of the Carracci in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle, (London: Phaidon, 1952) p. 112. iii) Two drawings at Windsor corresponding to the engraving are by Agostino. Wittkower (loc. cit.) pl. 30, cat. no. 95 and fig. 12, cat. no. 96 verso.
  2. Bernardo Cavallino: A painting in Naples, Capodimonte. See Moir, 1967 (27) II no. 220.
  3. Mattia Preti: A painting in the Palazzo Reale in Naples, dated c. 1656. See Caravaggio e Caravaggeschi. Catalogo della mostra, (Naples: Palazzo Reale, 1963).

4. Murillo: A series of scenes from the Prodigal Son story. All are dated 1660-80. See Murillo; L'Oeuvre du Maître (Paris: Librairie Hachette & Cie., 1913) nos. 109-115. A "Return of the Prodigal Son" dated 1671-74, (loc. cit.) no. 126.
5. Tintoretto: i) A sketch for the "Return" in the Uffizi, Florence. See Hans Tietze, Tintoretto, The Paintings and Drawings, (New York: Phaidon, 1948) no. 73. ii) A ceiling painting in an octagon of the Sala degli Inquisitori in the Ducal Palace in Venice, dated c. 1560. Tietze (loc. cit.) no. 74. Erich von der Bercken, Die Gemälde des Jacopo Tintoretto (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1942) gives it as a ceiling decoration of the Retrostanza dei Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Palazzo Ducale.
6. Bonifacio Veronese: A painting in the Villa Borghese, Rome. See Evelyn Philips, The Venetian School of Painting, (London: MacMillan & Co., 1912) p. 211.
29. Pamela Askew, "The Parable Paintings of Domenico Fetti", Art Bulletin 43, 1961, pp. 21-45.
30. Cecil Gould, The Sixteenth-Century Venetian School, National Gallery Catalogues (London: The National Gallery, 1959) no. 294, suggests a date at the end of 1570's.
31. Grimaldi, 1968 (14) pl. 108, Turin, Pinacoteca. Askew, 1961 (29) p. 31, note 29, connects Guerchino's Turin "Prodigal Son" with Fetti's rendering of the same subject. She suggests a date of c. 1618. For illustration see Grimaldi, 1968 (14) fig. 108.
32. Grimaldi, (loc. cit.) fig. 103, a painting in the Borghese Gallery dated c. 1618 and fig. 137, a painting in a private collection in Rome c. 1621.

## Chapter I

1. Bergstrom, pg. 145, "However a rhythmical dualism reigns in the conception of the two sitters. Saskia is stiff and static, a figure enclosed in itself, which could be inscribed within an isosceles triangle. Rembrandt, on the other hand, is active, a figure in movement, space demanding and open".

Christopher White, Rembrandt and his World (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964) p. 34. "Her (Saskia's) expression is decidedly dignified and is in marked contrast to that of her husband, whose coarse ebullient features are wreathed in a grin... Their differences of upbringing and temperament are clearly stated".

2. Bergstrom, p. 143, footnote 3, identifies the peacock feathers behind the man's head and arm as parts of an enormous fan held by the woman, although on P. 145, footnote 4, he says that there has been some discussion about the wheel, as to whether it is a fan or part of the decoration of the pastry. He seems to prefer the first alternative, but leaves the question unsettled. The present writer feels that the representation of a peacock fan, as well as the peacock pastry, would be redundant and that all the peacock feathers in the painting belong to the peacock on the pastry.
3. Tümpel, p. 118, refers to it as a bed. On iconographic grounds it logically represents a bed, for a bed is a customary accessory in the tavern scene. Compare the etching by Jan Georg van Vliet, a pupil of Rembrandt, for illustration. See Tümpel, p. 119, c.f. p. 121, footnote 40, for the relationships of Vliet's work to Rembrandt's.
4. Werner Weisbach, Rembrandt (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1926) p. 172.
5. Henner Menz, The Dresden Gallery (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962) Gallery no. 1559, p. 208.
6. Tümpel, p. 123, footnote 88a.
7. John Smith, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters, 8 vols., suppl. (London: Smith & Sons, 1836) VII, p. 69.
8. Wilhelm von Bode and C. Hofstede de Groot, L'Oeuvre Complet de Rembrandt, 8 vols. (Paris: C. Sedelmeyer 1879-1906) III, p. 59, #157.
9. Valentiner (1904) p. 68.  
Valentiner (1908) p. 133.
10. H. de Groot, p. 192.

11. Valentiner (1925) p. 488, (no. 383), says that this drawing, representing the "Departure of the Prodigal Son", Ben. 85, cat. no. 81 and the drawing of the "Prodigal Son with the Loose Women", Ben. 658, cat. no. 529, were done at the same time as the Dresden painting. This drawing embodies the type of the Prodigal Son which Rembrandt uses in the painting and the other drawing provides the basic composition for that painting. By all logic, therefore, the Dresden painting represents the Prodigal Son theme.
12. Menz, 1962, (5), p. 208.
13. Gerson, p. 323.
14. Bergstrom, pp. 145-150.
15. Tümpel, p. 116.
16. Tümpel, p. 126, note 97.

A comparison of measurements, based solely on the available literature, suggests that the painting has been cut down. H. de Groot (64" x 52") and Gerson (approx. 63 1/4" x 51 1/2") approximate each other in their dimensions. John Smith, 1836 (7), however, in his catalogue written before the 1860 restoration, gives the dimension as 69" x 56". This indicates a difference of c. 5 3/4" x 4 1/2" in the two sets of dimensions.

17. Christian Tümpel, "Ikonographische Beiträge zu Rembrandt zur Deutung und Interpretation einzelner Werke (II)", Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen, vol. 16, 1971, p. 20, note 2. Dr. Annelise Mayer-Meintschel presented the results of an x-ray at the Rembrandt Congress in Amsterdam in 1969.
18. Ben. 658, cat. no. 529 (7, Introd.).
19. Ibid.
20. According to Benesch, ibid.
21. Tümpel, p. 118, note 73. Active c. 1620-30 in Amsterdam.
22. See note 18, above.
23. Ben. 655, cat. no. 528a (7, Introd.).

24. G.J. Hoogewerff, "Jan van Bijlert", Oud Holland, 80, 1965, p. 2-33.  
Fig. 19, Kerncat. no. 15.  
Jan van Bijlert, an Utrecht painter (1598-1671).
25. Ibid. fig. 17, Kerncat no. 38 s'Gravenhage, Gemeentemuseum.
26. Bergstrom, p. 156.
27. "You have fallen into grave crime! Return O soldier! for there is no last minute road to good morals".
28. Bergstrom, pp. 160-61.
29. "The Extravagance with which youth brings itself to ridicule and comes to poverty, fear and need, when youth through all its extravagance brings itself a troubled heart. This the story of the Prodigal Son has already taught us. Let this, therefore, be a warning to each one in his youth".
30. Jacques Lavalleye, Peter Breugel and Lucas van Leyden: The Complete Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1967), No. 214.
31. Beware. (your). true fall.
32. Benedict Nicholson, Hendrick Terbruggen (London: Lund Humphries, 1958) 35a, cat. no. A20, p. 60. He makes the comparison between Terbruggen's genre scene and Rembrandt's painting; Tümpel, p. 126 sees the Terbruggen as a formal prototype which inspired Rembrandt in his reduction of the scene to the two principle figures.
33. Works in which this motif occurs come from varying sources, representing not only the "Prodigal Son in the Tavern" but also more general moralizing and genre scenes. They include, for example: a drawing by Hans Bol in Albertina, signed and dated 1588, see Bergstrom, p. 155; a drawing by David Vinckboons in the British Museum from a series dated 1608, see Bergstrom, p. 158; the already discussed engraving by P.P. Rubbens; a painting by Willem Buytewech in Berlin "Biutenpartij" dated c. 1616/17, see E. Haverkamp-Begemann, Willem Buytewech (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1959), cat. no. II; and a painting by Jacob van Velsen "Musizierende Gesellschaft" in the National Gallery in London, signed

- and dated 1631. See Walter Bernt, Die Niederländischen Maler des 17. Jahrhunderts. 4 vols. (Munich: Verlag, Bisher F. Bruckmann, 1962) III, No. 893.
34. Bergstrom, p. 159, fig. 8.  
Tümpel, p. 124, likewise sees the peacock in connection with "superbia".
35. Br. #474; signed and dated 16(3)6.
36. Erwin Panofsky, "Der Gefesselte Eros, (Zur Genealogie von Rembrandt's "Danaë")", Oud Holland, 30, 1933, particularly pp. 193-99 and 215-17.
37. Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI und XVII Jahrhunderts, (Stuttgart: T.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), pp. 808-809, "Empta Dolore Voluptas".
- Stellatan ostentat caudam Iunonius ales,  
Sed natibus monstrum caelat, inestque vorax.  
Ducitur a tergo vinctus qui pascit edacem,  
Quicquid erat lucri prodidit inque feram.  
Cui meretrix forma placet, utque colatur inescat,  
Per petuo ad turpes logeris esse nates.  
Has alis, et semper venerari's donec abundas:  
Pauperior cum fis, pellit amica foras.  
Heus fuge scorta procul, nocet empta dolore voluptas.  
E venere et Baccho, semina mortis eunt.
38. Ibid., p. 809, "Nosce te ipsum"
- Ales, Juno tuus gemmantes explicat alas,  
Conspectis vero, dejicit nas, pedibus.  
Dotibus ingenij fesus sic tollit in altum  
Cristas! at meditans, deprimit has, homo, humum.
39. Br. #474.
40. Br. #462
41. Tümpel, "Studien zur Ikonographie der Historien Rembrandts" Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, 1969, pp. 160-61.
42. See pp. 9-10 of text.
43. B. 19; Gerson, p. 232 juxtaposes the etching with the Dresden painting; Tümpel, p. 125, also reproduces this etching in connection with the Dresden painting.
44. In particular two etched self-portraits B. 15 "Self Portrait in a Cloak With a Falling Collar" and B. 17, "Self Portrait in a Heavy Fur Cap" are signed in monogram and dated 1631.
45. Br. #97. This has not been questioned as a portrait of Saskia.  
Bredius-Gerson p. 555 describes it as being in excellent condition.



46. Br. #102. The identification as Saskia has not been questioned.
47. Otto Benesch, Rembrandt (Skira, 1957), p. 47.
48. A striking example close to the Dresden painting in date, is Br. #31, "Self-Portrait with a Dead Bittern" signed and dated, 1639; in Dresden, Gemäldegalerie. Rembrandt has dressed himself up as a hunter and holds in front of him, a great dead bird.
49. Br. #59. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, signed and dated 1661. Bredius-Gerson, p. 552, places this self-portrait as a "disguised" St. Paul in the series of apostles to which Br. #615 "The Apostle Bartholomew" also signed and dated 1661, also belongs. However, on p. 613, he questions the genuineness of this latter painting. H. de Groot, no. 575, "Portrait of the Painter" makes no reference to the Biblical association.
50. Rijksmuseum, Rembrandt 1669-1969, (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1969) p. 94.
51. Br. #54.
52. Br. #21. Bredius-Gerson, p. 548. The painting is signed and dated, although the last digit is not very clear.
53. Rose Wishnevsky, Studien zum "Portrait Histoire" in den Niederlanden, (Ph.D. dissertation, Munich, 1967) calls this phenomenon "portrait historie" and traces its origins, thematic possibilities and development. P. 5, she defines it as "die Synthese von Bildnis und Historienbild (Sammelname für biblische, mythologische und historische Sujets)". She sees the existence of a pure autonomous likeness as the basic premise and the role into which the person has been placed, as secondary. The relationships of the portrait to the role, however, seems, to my mind, to be a more fluctuating one, so that it is sometimes difficult to determine which of the two aspects is more important. The emphasis in the Dresden double portrait, under discussion, seems to be on the role that the two characters have assumed.
54. Oliver Miller, "Charles I, Honthorst and van Dyck", Burlington Magazine, 96, 1954, pp. 36-42. The painting is signed and dated and hangs in the Queen's staircase at Hampton Court.

Joachim von Sandrart, who accompanied Honthorst to England, mentions the painting in Joachim von Sandrart's Academie der Bau-, Bild-und Mahlerey-Kunste von 1675, (Ed. A.R. Peltzer) (Munich: G. Hirth's verlag A.G., 1925) p. 173. "Seen Rhum wurde je langer je grosser, desswegen der Konig Carl Stuart in England im zu sich beruffen, um ein sehr grosses werk zie mahlen, wie nahmlieh Appollo und Diana (denen er des Konigs und der Konigin Bildnisse gegeben) beysammen hoch auf den Wolken sitzen und Zusehen, wie Mercurius von der Erden, in Gestalt des Herzogs von Buckingham, die sieben freye Kunste mit sich fuhret und den Konig vorsteut,.....".

55. Edith Greindl, Corneille de Vos (Brussels: La Librairie Encyclopedique, 1944) p. 32. Painting is signed and dated 1630, in the Musée Royal des Beaux Arts in Anvers;  
Wishnevsky (53) p. 172, no. 30; however, places the painting in the Royal Museum in Antwerp.  
Greindl (loc. cit.) p. 32. The present title was not given to the painting until the end of the 18th century.
56. Greindl, 1944 (55), p. 32.
57. Wishnevsky, 1967 (53), p. 32.
58. Ibid., p. 153, No. 1; For illustration see Jakob Rosenberg, Rembrandt, Life and Work (London: Phaidon, 1968), p. 127.
59. For illustration see Rosenberg (loc. cit.), p. 127.
60. Br. #416, Rijksmuseum.  
Bredius-Gerson, p. 586. "The Jewish Bride (Isaac and Rebecca?)" which he claims Sumowski dates 1666. Tümpel, 1969 (41), pp. 163-167, points to the connection between this painting and a drawing (Ben 1202, Cat. No. 988) and then compares the two with a Raphael fresco in the Loggia of the Vatican (via an engraving by S. Badalocchio) which represents "Isaac and Rebecca Watched by Abimelech". On the basis of this comparison and the evidence provided by an x-ray, he establishes the subject of the painting as "Isaac and Rebecca". Rosenberg, 1968 (58), pp. 128-130, sees the subject as "Jacob and Rachel" and relates it to the previously mentioned "Jacob and Rachel" by D.D. Santvoort and Hugo van der Goes.  
H. de Groot, No. 929, calls it simply "A Married Couple".

61. Jacob Rosenberg, Seymour Slive and E.H. Ter Kuile, Dutch Art and Architecture, 1600-1800, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 269, fn. 21.
62. There have been a number of attempts made to identify the couple. Bredius-Gerson, p. 586, gives some of the suggestions made. He points to Br. #296, "Young Man in a Red Coat" signed and dated 1659, in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, as a possible source for identification of the man in the Rijksmuseum. painting, but he questions the attribution to Rembrandt of the New York painting. Valentiner (1908), pp. 482-483, suggests Br. #326, "A Man with a Magnifying Glass" again in the Metropolitan Museum, as a portrait of the model for the "Jewish Bride" as well as Br. #401, "A Woman Holding a Carnation" in the Metropolitan as a portrait of his female counterpart.
63. They include, for example: B.9; B.10; B.13; B.316; B.319; B.320; B.336. Seymour Slive, Rembrandt and His Critics, (The Hague: Hartinus Nijhoff, 1953), pp. 30-31, too, refers to these etchings as examples of the vogue that existed for Rembrandt's work in the 1630's, saying that they were probably collected by artists as well as print connoisseurs as sources for the study of the branch of painting called expression.
64. Bauch, 1960 (26, Intro.), p. 168.  
Ludwig Munz, "Rembrandt's Bild von Mutter und Vater", Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen, Wien. N.F. 14, 1955, p. 141 ff, in which he gives a number of examples especially of his mother, as a direct model for a Biblical character. See Br. #69, "Rembrandt's Mother" as a Biblical Prophetess (Hannah?)" in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, signed and dated 1631. Tümpel, 1971 (41), p. 31.
65. J.A. Emmens, Rembrandt en de Regels von de Kunst, (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker and Gumbert, 1968), p. stresses the moralizing aspect of this painting, but overlooks it's biblical allusion.

## Chapter II

1. La Valleye, 1967 (30.I) no. 47 & 48, dated 1510.
2. Urkunden, no. 169, p. 200, item no. 198 "Een dito met Kopere printen van Leyde soo dubbelt als enkelt".
3. He is possibly the older brother.
4. Arthur Hind, A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings Chronologically Arranged and Completely Illustrated, (London: Methuen & Co., 1924) no. 147, p.
5. Hollstein (21, Introd.) VIII p. 235, nos. 1-4. Rembrandt has chosen one plate from a series of four depicting scenes from the Prodigal Son story: The Departure of the Prodigal Son; The Prodigal Son Living With Harlots; The Prodigal Son Eating With the Swine; The Return of the Prodigal Son.  
According to the 1656 Inventory Rembrandt possessed prints of Heemskerck's work. See Urkunden, no. 169, p. 201, item no. 227, "Een dito van Heemskerck, synde all werk van den selven".
6. St. Luke 15:20.
7. The look on the figure's face reflects the feeling expressed in Luke 15:28-30, which would suggest that the figure represents the brother. The drawings, Ben. 1231, cat. no. 1017 and Ben. 1252, cat. no. 1037, and the Hermitage painting, however, depict a similar figure standing at a window, which is clearly female. In spite of the ambiguity, if we see the figure in the small background scene as the brother with his herd, the figure at the window must be female.
8. Christian Tümpel, Rembrandt Legt die Bibel Aus (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1970) p. 85, says that Rembrandt wanted to indicate all the events of this part of the Prodigal Son story as Heemskerck had done before him, by representing the servants with the new clothes as well as the older brother. Rembrandt has taken over both these elements. The figure, who coming out of the doorway in the Heemskerck, has turned his head away from the main scene and points his finger, possibly represents the older brother, for in the Lucas van Leyden print, the older brother makes a similar gesture.

9. The motif of the figure at the window appears in the van Leyden woodcut.
10. Hind, 1924 (4) no. 147.
11. See note 7, Introd.
12. Benesch in his dating of the drawing after the etching, comes closer to the truth, although it would take a more thorough analysis of the drawing both on its own merits and in relation to the rest of the corpus of Rembrandt drawings to establish a definite date for the drawing.
13. See note 7, Introd.
14. Valentiner (1925) no. 389, p.
15. Ibid.
16. Ben. 1231 cat. no. 1017 (7, Introd.) and Ben. 1252, cat. no. 1037 (loc. cit.).
17. Ben. 1193, cat. no. 983, (loc. cit.).
18. Ben. 1082, cat. no. 871, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, dated by Benesch, c. 1651.
19. Ben. 727, cat. no. 597, Vienna, Albertina, dated by Benesch, c. 1647-48.
20. H. de Groot, p. 10, no. 113.
21. The details, however, are unclear and require more precise visual material for a thorough analysis.
22. It is difficult to make out the lower boundaries of the window. It may exist on its own, but more likely in light of the drawings (Ben. 1231 and Ben. 1252) in which a woman stands at open half of a door, the painting too represents a door.
23. This is, again, difficult to make out in the available reproductions.
24. Urkunden, no. 169, p. 202, item no. 240 "Een dito vol teekeningen van alle Roomsche gebouwen en gesichten van alle de voornaemsche maesters". p. 203, no. 248, "Een dito vol printen van architecture". p. 203, no. 253, "Een dito vol printen van de architecture".  
Kenneth Clark, Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance, (New York: New York University Press, 1966) p. 204, note 240; suggests these above

- entries by H. de Groot as possible sources for the elaborate architecture which appears in the background of several of Rembrandt's paintings such as the Hermitage "Return of the Prodigal Son".
25. Gerson, p. 507, Bibliography no. 170, lists a work, in Russian, by E. Fechner, Rembrandt: The Prodigal Son, Leningrad-Moscow, 1964, which may, in fact, deal with some of the problems of the Hermitage painting.
  26. V.F. Levison-Lessing, The Hermitage Leningrad, Dutch and Flemish Masters (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1964) p. VII and p. 89.
  27. Bredius-Gerson, p. 612.
  28. Br. #594; Bredius-Gerson, p. 611, signed and dated 1660 in the Rijksmuseum.
  29. Levison-Lessing, 1964 (26) p. VIII.
  30. Br. #522; Bredius-Gerson, p. 601. The authorship of the painting has been repeatedly questioned and has been attributed by Bredius-Gerson to Rembrandt's pupil, J. Victors.
  31. Br. #522, is 235 cm. x 190 cm.; The Hermitage painting is 262 cm. x 206 cm.
  32. Haak, p. 328.
  33. For hands with a similar expressive quality see "The Jewish Bride". Br. #416 (note 60,I).
  34. Vetter, 1955 (16, Introd.) p. XXXIV.
  35. See Introduction, p. 4.
  36. Lavalleye, 1967, (30,I) no. 118, dated 1563.
  37. Konrad Regner "Versuch einer neuen Deutung von Hieronymus Bosch's Rotterdamer Tondo", Oud Holland, 84, 1969, p. 70, fig. no 3; print in Basel Kunstmuseum dated c. 1517.
  38. Exodus 3:5.
  39. A comparison with Rembrandt's painting of "The Apostle Paul in Prison" (Br. 601), Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, signed and dated 1627, reveals a similar situation in which Paul is likewise wearing only one shoe, in this case his left shoe, while his bare right foot rests on the shoe lying to the side of it. The rock on which Paul has placed his

foot may, likewise, be seen as holy ground, for scripturally the rock has been associated with the church of Christ. See Matthew 16:18. The same problem of only one bared foot is present in this painting.

40. For Italian examples see p.6 of Introduction, see also Rembrandt's Northern prototypes, particularly Lucas van Leyden and Heemskerck and finally, Rembrandt's 1636 etching.

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## Appendix

The subject of Rembrandt's "Polish Rider"<sup>1</sup> has been a puzzle to scholars for many years. A number of attempts at an explanation have, however, been made.

A. Bredius, reflecting the opinion of most Dutch and German scholars of the time, interpreted it, in 1910, as an equestrian portrait of a Pole visiting Holland<sup>2</sup>.

In 1944, Julius Held argued against it's interpretation as a portrait, suggesting that it represented the unindividualized face of an "ideal hero"<sup>3</sup>. He points to the East European origin of the costume of the rider which, although homogeneous in it's impression, is likewise generalized and not representative of a particular nation. The importance of the costume is in it's military nature for it indicates that the man wearing it is a soldier<sup>4</sup>. Held compares him to Dürers "Knight, Death and the Devil" and to the "Bamburg Rider"<sup>6</sup>. He concludes that Rembrandt's rider, too, expresses the idea of the "Miles Christianus;" the "glorification of youthful courage and dedication to a worthy end"<sup>7</sup>.

Valentiner, in 1948, suggests the painting as a historical portrait of Gisbrecht van Amstel, the mythical founder of Amsterdam in the Middle Ages<sup>8</sup>.

Zygulski, on the basis of a thorough study of the rider's costume and weapons, concluded in 1965 that they were, indeed, of Polish origin and that their historical fidelity must have been the result of a direct study of a real person; a Polish rider<sup>9</sup>.

In 1969, Bialostocki, used Held's and Zygulski's conclusions as his starting point, asking why Rembrandt has expressed the ideal of the "Miles Christianus" through the image of an "Eques Polonus" or Polish rider<sup>10</sup>. This, he explains in terms of Rembrandt's religious orientation. The rider is an expression of Rembrandt's sympathies for Socinian ideas, represented in the Socinian theologian Jonasz Szlichtyng, who was of Polish origin, not in the portrait sense, but as an embodiment of the spiritual hero.

Colin Campbell's article, published in 1970<sup>11</sup>, must be seen against this background of interpretations of the painting. He suggests that the "Polish Rider" represents the prodigal son's journey into a far country<sup>12</sup>. He dismisses the nationalistic importance attached to the rider's costume<sup>13</sup>, and uses two drawings, traditionally identified with the Prodigal Son theme, as his starting point; the one a student's work<sup>14</sup> and the other rejected by Benesch

as not authentic<sup>15</sup>. From the two drawings, he cites elements which re-appear in the paintings: a sword, a slightly curved weapon, a quiver of arrows implying a bow, the rider's three-quarter length coat - all come from the first drawing, while the saddle cloth running over the horse's shoulders which re-appears in the painting as a leopard skin, comes from the second.

He sees an anonymous Dutch painting of c. 1520, depicting the "Prodigal Son's Journey to a Far Country"<sup>16</sup> as an iconographic prototype for Rembrandt's painting. The two works correspond in the passage of the horse from left to right, its gait, the direction faced by the rider and his pose<sup>17</sup>; the landscape setting<sup>18</sup> and the direction of the light which illuminates the horseman<sup>19</sup>.

The horse's head is comparable to that represented in an engraving by P. Galle after Heemskerck, of the "Prodigal Son's Departure"<sup>20</sup>, which Campbell feels Rembrandt knew<sup>21</sup>.

He sees the building in the background of the painting, which has been identified as Hagia Sophia<sup>22</sup>, as Rembrandt's visualization of a "far country".

Although Campbell draws from a number of sources to give weight to his suggestion of the "Polish Rider" as an episode from the Prodigal Son story, they do not, without further evidence, point to the conclusion that he has made.

Footnotes for Appendix

1. Br. #279, Bredius-Gerson, p. 571, in the Frick Collection. The painting has been cut at the right edge, so that only the "Re\_" of the signature remains.
2. A. Bredius, "Rembrandtiana", Oud Holland, 28, 1910, p. 194.
3. Julius Held, "Rembrandt's 'Polish Rider'", Art Bulletin, 26, 1944. pp. 246-65, esp. p. 253.
4. Ibid., p.256.
5. Knappe, 1965, (20), no. 72, dated 1513.
6. Held, 1944 (3), p. 246.
7. Ibid., p. 246.
8. W.R. Valentiner, "Rembrandt's Concept of Historical Portraiture" Art Quarterly, XI, 1948, pp. 116-135.
9. Zdzislaw Zygulski, Jr., "Rembrandt's Lisowczyk", Bulletin du Musee National de Varsovie VI, 1965, pp. 43-65.
10. Jan Bialostocki, "Rembrandt's 'Eques Polonus'", Oud Holland, 1969. pp. 163-176, esp. p. 169.
11. Colin Campbell, "Rembrandt's 'Polish Rider' and the Prodigal Son", Warburg & Courtauld Institute Journal, 33, 1970, pp. 292-303.
12. Luke 15:13.
13. Campbell, 1970 (11), p. 294.
14. Ben. 788, cat. no. 651, "The Departure of the Prodigal Son" in Gronigen, attributed to Philips Koninck (see note 7, Introd.).
15. Valentiner (1925) p. 384. "The Departure of the Prodigal Son".
16. Campbell, 1970 (11) Pl. 38d. Its present whereabouts are unknown. It forms a pair with an extant painting representing "The Prodigal Son Receiving his Inheritance", (loc. cit.) Pl. 39b.
17. Ibid., p. 298.

18. Ibid., p.298.
19. Ibid., p. 298.
20. Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish (21, Introd), VII, p. 77.
21. Rembrandt possessed a book of prints by Heemskerck (see note 5, II).
22. Campbell, 1970 (11) p. 298 and fn. 26 identifies the building by a comparison with that shown in a print "View of Constantinople" by Melchior Lorsch which is dated c. 1559. It has been in the Leyden University Library since 1595 and it is, therefore, possible that Rembrandt saw Lorsch's print. For illustration see (loc. cit.) pl. 39a.