REMBRANDT'S HOMER IN
THE MAURITSHUIS

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ABSTRACT

Rembrandt's "Homer" in the Mauritshuis in The Hague is but one work of three executed for the Italian nobleman, Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina. Ruffo had previously received an "Aristotle" from Rembrandt in 1654. At some time between 1653 and 1661, it was decided to supplement this painting with the "Homer" and an "Alexander". That Rembrandt should receive such a commission from a foreign patron at a time when his style was beginning to be outmoded by an emerging classicism is significant indeed.

There are many problems that concern the painting of "Homer" itself. One of the first is in determining what Rembrandt's original composition look like since the "Homer" has been drastically reduced in size, apparently the result of damage by fire. Then there are questions concerning what format did Rembrandt choose and what visual precedents was he following for his portrayal of Homer. Some tentative answers can be found by examining two drawings attributed to Rembrandt, "Homer Réciting His Verses" (Ben.no.913) and "Homer Dictating to a Scribe" (Ben.no.1066), and a painting of Homer by one of Rembrandt's most faithful pupils, Aert de Gelder. All these sources, however, suggest rather than define possible solutions as to how the "Homer" originally appeared. For the
figure of Homer himself, one can be more definite. Rembrandt turned to an antique bust, known as the Hellenistic, Blind Type, of which he at least owned a cast (Urk.169,no.163).

Problems also arise when one views the "Homer" in the context of the entire commission. Were the three paintings commissioned at the same time and who was responsible for their selection, Rembrandt or Ruffo? What are the historical and iconological reasons for making such a combination? Partial answers can be obtained by a careful and cautious reading of the documents. The evidence suggests that Rembrandt not Ruffo should be credited with choosing all the subjects or at the very least the "Aristotle". To answer why the three should be combined, a close reading of Aristotle's Poetics and Plutarch's Alexander would provide sound historical reasons. Many Rembrandt scholars have offered various iconological interpretations of which, I feel, Held's for the "Aristotle" and Valentiner's for the entire commission are the most conclusive. Their interpretations depend largely on what Homer meant to Rembrandt himself.

Homer generally in the seventeenth century was considered as the great teacher and inspired seer whose work, if properly read, would lead men to a righteous and virtuous life. Homeric allegoresis began in antiquity as a defense against Platonic criticism and continued into
the seventeenth century. Although Rembrandt may not have been too familiar with the actual text of the Homeric poems, he would certainly have been aware of Homer's reputation since the Dutch scholars were amongst his strongest supporters. It was Homer the man rather than his work that interested Rembrandt. Homer's image as the blind seer, the great teacher, and the 'almost' Christian prophet would have appealed to Rembrandt. The fact that Homer was blind, a theme inherent in much of Rembrandt's work, would only have served to increase this interest. In essence, it was the nature of Homer's blindness that made him, for Rembrandt and the seventeenth century, the great moral educator and the divine prophet.
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A. The Fragment

In the Mauritshuis fragment\(^1\) (Br.483), Homer, seated in an armchair\(^2\), is shown half-length and turned slightly to the right to give a full three-quarter view of his face. He appears in the guise of a prophet, a great singer and a blind seer who by divine inspiration "may see and tell / Of things invisible to mortal sight."\(^3\) Homer stares vacantly into space; his sightless eyes are sunk deep within their sockets - the flesh having been wasted away through lack of use.

"Yet to look at he was not like a blindman; for grace dwelt in his empty eyes. As I think the artist made him so, that it might be evident to all that he bore the inextinguishable light of wisdom in his heart."\(^4\)

His curly grey hair, full at the sides and thin over the high forehead, is encircled by a narrow gold fillet,\(^5\) an attribute of a poet. Covering his head is a somewhat droopy 'beret' which, at first glance, might appear as a doctor's cap, but upon closer examination is seen to be a headcloth that has been drawn behind the head and falls onto the nape of the neck.\(^6\) That Homer still possesses that other vital sense, hearing, is conveyed by having his ear protrude from amongst his greying locks.\(^6a\) His cheeks are slightly fallen. The skin, tight over the prominent cheekbones, is drawn into
wrinkles that lose themselves in a flowing, rounded yet well-kept beard.

Homer, with mouth slightly open, is portrayed reciting his verses - a song from the *Iliad* relating some valiant exploit of the noble Achilles, so admired by the young Alexander, would be most appropriate in the context of the commission. His left hand grasps the top of his cane while his right keeps expressive accompaniment to his words. A glowing golden mantle is wrapped around his shoulders and falls down onto his lap covering the knees. Underneath Homer wears a dull reddish-brown tunic, pleated on the breast and ending abruptly just under his beard. A wide sash cinches the tunic in at the waist. Beneath the tunic Homer is apparently wearing an undershirt which reveals itself by a touch of red at the sleeve of his right arm. The costume is certainly not Greek and finds its closest counterpart in the exotic dress of Rembrandt's self-portrait of 1658 (Br. 50).

Homer was dictating his verses to a scribe for in the bottom right-hand corner of the canvas there remains part of a forefinger and thumbtip holding a pen, the top of an inkwell and several pages of an open book. The general disposition of the 'two fingers' with the pen in between would suggest that the above reading is correct, a least judging from a good photograph. Further evidence that the painting has been cut down can be seen in the upper-left
Rembrandt's signature appears as "indt f. 1663." The background is in half-shadow with the light coming in from a rather high angle on the left and falling mainly on Homer's forehead, along the right side of his face and down onto his shoulder and raised right arm. Just below the level of his left shoulder, there seems to be a moulding or pillar base that perhaps marks the intersection of two walls since the area to the immediate right is hidden in shade. Homer may be seated in front of a niche or perhaps at the juncture of two walls somewhat in the manner of Nicolaes van Bambeeck (Br. 218) or "An Old Man in Fanciful Costume Holding a Stick." (Br. 239).

Although the Mauritshuis fragment has a rather monochrome brownish tone, Rembrandt, nevertheless, has managed to create a lively glowing surface - a warm yet scintillating harmony of golds, browns and reds so typical of his late style. The paint appears to have been applied quite thickly in a heavy impasto with a broad, coarse brush or in some areas such as the mantle possibly even with a spatula. Colour is piled layer upon layer to build up an uneven translucent surface. Form is suggested rather than defined; Homer seems to emerge from the background rather than being set off against it. In some parts of the canvas, especially the area around the hands, contours are blurred creating hazy, indefinite forms. The cane, for example, was mistakingly seen by Hofstede de Groot as part of Homer's robe. A painting that 'breathes' the same atmosphere, in
terms of technique and treatment of light, is Rembrandt's laughing self-portrait (Br. 61) in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum. 12
B. The Painting

In a note to Ruffo's agent, Rembrandt gave the dimensions of the "Aristotle", "Alexander" and "Homer" in the following manner:

"If each piece is 6 palmi wide and 8 high, they will be of agreeable dimensions and as concerns the price, the gentleman will not be overcharged.

your honour's devoted servant
Rembrandt van rhijn."13

From this note, therefore, it would be assumed that Rembrandt had intended to use an upright format for all three paintings. Confusion arises, however, from Rembrandt's sketch (Ben.no. 1066)14 of the composition which has an oblong as opposed to an upright format. Adding to this confusion is a painting of "Homer Dictating to Scribes" by Aert de Gelder, one of Rembrandt's pupils, whose work was supposedly derived from Rembrandt's painting.15 It too adopts an oblong format.

"Aristotle", "Alexander" and "Homer" are all listed in the Ruffo catalogue with the dimensions 8 x 6 palmi which traditionally would imply that the height was 8 palmi and the width, 6.16 Ruffo, unfortunately, was not always consistent in the application of this formula. Two paintings by Salvator Rosa in Ruffo's inventory are listed with the width first and then the height.17 Guercino's "Cosmographer", commissioned to act as a pendant to Rembrandt's "Aristotle", is listed in the inventory as: "A Cosmographer with a Turkish turban on his head, considering a geographical globe held with his left hand on a table, while he points to it with his right ... 8 x 6 palmi."18 Guercino had specifically asked Ruffo for
the measurements of Rembrandt's painting as well as a sketch of the composition in order to make his painting conform.\textsuperscript{19} Unfortunately this painting has been lost, but a sketch in the Museum of Princeton University, according to Rosenberg, preserves the essential features of the composition.\textsuperscript{20} Its measurements (255 x 190 mm) correspond to the proportions of the painting given in Ruffo's inventory and would indicate an upright format. Slive, however, has pointed out that the Cosmographer in the drawing is not wearing a Turkish turban, but a hat with a crown, trimmed with fur.\textsuperscript{21} As well, his left hand is holding a pair of dividers rather than the geographical globe on a table as described in the inventory. Guercino could have changed these features when he executed the painting, but, nevertheless, they do cast doubt on Rosenberg's proposal.

Rembrandt's drawing (Ben.no.1066), Aert de Gelder's painting, Guercino's pendant and even Ruffo's catalogue do little to clarify this question. The only concrete piece of evidence remains Rembrandt's note and it is upon this evidence that, I feel, we must assume that the Mauritshuis Homer did have an upright format. The choice of format is especially important since it determines many features of the composition which will be discussed next.

Reconstruction of the Composition

Ruffo's inventory gives the subject of the painting as "Homer seated dictating to two Disciples, half-figures, lifesize";\textsuperscript{22} thus, the presence of another scribe or student
apart from the one in the lower right hand corner is indicated. But it is difficult to imagine just exactly where this third figure would be located. Only Valentiner has questioned the accuracy of the descriptions of the subjects in the Ruffo inventory.\textsuperscript{23} If the inventory states that there were two disciples then there is little reason to question its authenticity. Some clues to the makeup of the original composition may be given by examining the two drawings of Homer attributed to Rembrandt (Ben. nos. 913 and 1066) and Aert de Gelder's "Homer Dictating to Scribes" already mentioned.

The first appearance of Homer in Rembrandt's art occurs in the drawing "Homer Reciting Verses" (Ben. no. 913)\textsuperscript{24} in Jan Six's Album Amicorum 'Pandora'.\textsuperscript{25} All the basic elements that make up the Mauritshuis painting are present here. Homer, shown standing, holds a cane in his left hand while gesturing with his right. His mouth is open and his sunken, sightless eyes are emphasized by the prominent brow of the forehead. Although his costume appears somewhat plain in comparison with the rich dress of the Mauritshuis Homer, it does have the same basic configuration: a long tunic with a mantle draped over the shoulders. In the drawing, the mantle may even cover the head and seems to have a laurel wreath pulled over top to hold it in place. Homer's costume in this instance is more classical in that he does not have the sash at the waist but this classical aspect may be explained in part by the nature of the drawing. Also Rembrandt could have been influenced by Raphael's conception of Homer in the "Parnassus" of the Vatican Stanze from which he obviously borrowed his idea for the entire composition.\textsuperscript{26}
Here too we find the chair and the young scribe studiously recording Homer's verses. If Homer were to sit down, the characteristic features of his face, the expressive gesture with the right hand and his holding the cane in his left hand would all contrive to make him very much like the Homer of the Mauritshuis fragment. Essentially Ben.no.913 defines the motifs of the Homer painting.

The second drawing, "Homer Dictating to a Scribe", (Ben.no.1066), defines the setting. Here Homer is not so much the great prophet but the great teacher. He is in an interior setting shown seated in an armchair with a single scribe at his side. The position of this scribe in relation to Homer, however, does not correspond to that occupied by the scribe of the fragment. In the drawing (Ben.no.1066) he is seen from the front on Homer's immediate left; whereas, in the painting, the scribe, judging at least from the position of the book and hand, must have been seen in a three-quarter view from the back and has been moved to a point directly in front of Homer. The advantages of this change are obvious since it makes for a much tighter bond between the two figures; and, of greater importance, it allows a much better view of Homer's face.

Such a change, moreover, may have been precipitated by the adoption of an upright rather than oblong format. The drawing is longer than it is high (14.5 x 16.7 cm.). Even if the painting were to have an oblong format, its dimensions (192 x 144 cm.) still would not conform proportionally to those of the drawing; they would
correspond in height but not in length. By contracting the design, Rembrandt may have been making room for the appearance of the second scribe or student mentioned in the inventory.

Aside from the format and position of the scribe, there are other differences that brand Ben. no. 1066 as a preliminary sketch. The background is quite different with respect to the disposition of light and architectural details. Homer is seated in front of a square pillar with his left shoulder silhouetted against a rounded opening, an opening that is remarkably similar to the one that appears to the left of Christ in the etching B. 67. The lighting, however, is not logical for it falls on the figures from the left as in the painting with no light entering through the rounded opening as one would expect. Perhaps this incongruity can be attributed to the wash added by a later hand.

The figure of Homer himself, apart from the angle of the head, is relatively close to the painting. Such details as the positioning of the hands with the cane are generally the same, although in the painting Homer's hands are held considerably lower. The headdress of the drawing is a much more satisfactory arrangement than the strange 'cap' of the painting. Rembrandt probably wished to reveal Homer's ear and uncover the fillet so he was forced into adopting the rather clumsy 'cap' arrangement for the sake of expediency. Homer's costume both in the painting and
drawing are comparable although in the latter it is difficult to ascertain whether the mantle falls straight down into his lap or is draped over his right arm and the arm rest of the chair. The chair itself differs from that in "Homer Reciting his Verses" (Ben.no.913) in that it does not have a high square back but a low rounded one akin to those in the drawings Ben.no.948 and Ben.no.A83.29 Aert de Gelder's painting of Homer has a similar type of chair.

Aert de Gelder's "Homer Dictating to Scribes" relates more closely to Ben.no.1066 than to the Mauritshuis fragment. The ratio of height to width corresponds almost exactly to that of the drawing. De Gelder's Homer is seated in almost the same restricted three-quarter view of the drawing, a scribe is seated at his side in much the same position, only not quite so frontally, and he looks at his book rather than at Homer. The hood too is similar only here it is held in place by a band perhaps intended to represent the poet's fillet.

There are obvious differences between De Gelder's painting and both Ben.no.1066 and the Mauritshuis fragment. The first, of course, is that it is a mirror image of Rembrandt's work. Homer is turned to the left rather than to the right. As well there are four disciples as opposed to the one of the drawing and the two of the painting. De Gelder's Homer is wearing a fur-lined tunic unlike Rembrandt's Homer. The heavy dark swirl of drapery that
appears over Homer's right arm in Ben.no.1066 may suggest that Rembrandt too had originally intended to render such a cloak. De Gelder seems to have misunderstood Rembrandt's expressive gesture since his positioning of the hands is extremely awkward: Homer's right arm, holding the cane, blocks the motion of his left. The chair as well, although having the same basic configuration as Rembrandt's version, is exceptionally large almost dwarfing the aged Homer.

Overall, De Gelder seems to have borrowed more from Rembrandt's drawing (Ben.no.1066) than from the Mauritshuis painting. There is a good chance, however, that he saw both since he entered Rembrandt's studio in 1661 and remained a pupil until 1667. But even if he did see the painting, it is extremely precarious to use his version as a basis for reconstructing the missing portions of Rembrandt's "Homer" because of the differences already pointed out: the oblong format, the reversed composition, the number of scribes and the other variations previously mentioned. De Gelder's positioning of the scribes, however, may serve as a reflection of how Rembrandt may have juxtaposed his two disciples: one may have been little more than a head appearing over the shoulder of the scribe. The restricted width of Rembrandt's canvas might make this suggestion the most feasible. Homer's headdress in the De Gelder painting may also reflect how Rembrandt envisaged his 'cap' especially in relation to the way it falls on the back of the neck. Both Aert de Gelder's Homer and Rembrandt's drawing (Ben.no. 1066) can only suggest possibilities or alternatives rather
than give any positive evidence as to the final composition of the Mauritshuis painting.

The orientation of the fragment within the total context of the work also has great importance in determining the final nature of the composition. Unfortunately the fragment has been cut down on all four sides, thus virtually eliminating any point of reference. The problem is to discover in what areas the "Homer" suffered its greatest losses. Of the three paintings commissioned for Ruffo, that of "Homer" has lost the most areawise; the "Aristotle" is the most complete. Held assumes that the "Aristotle" lost most of its fifty-three centimeters at the bottom of the canvas. Similarly, the "Homer" must have had its eighty-four centimeter loss in height chiefly taken from the bottom of the canvas since the scribe in the lower right-hand corner would necessitate that a considerable area be left to him if he were to appear little more than a bust-length figure. Such an arrangement would tend to orient the fragment in the upper left of the painting. If a second scribe or student were to appear close to him on the right side of the canvas, then the fragment would have to be moved even further to the left. That the painting has been reduced on the left as well is indicated by the remnants of Rembrandt's signature as has been previously mentioned. The question is just how much area has been lost here. Some idea may be given by the position of the signature itself since Rembrandt
frequently signed his works quite close to either edge.
If this is the case with the "Homer" then the loss on the
left side of the canvas might be very small indeed. Although
any orientation must remain purely speculative, placing the
fragment in the upper left-hand corner of the painting is,
I feel, the most plausible solution.

C.
Rembrandt's Bust of Homer

The facial features of the Homer in the Mauritshuis
fragment are comparable to those of the bust of Homer in
Rembrandt's "Aristotle". That Rembrandt owned such a visual
precedent is proven by the 1656 inventory of his possessions.
Among the many busts listed in his collection of sculpture,
there is a bust of Homer (Urk.169, no.163) which stood
beside one of Aristotle (Urk.169, no.164). It is questionable
whether this bust was a genuine antique or a plaster cast.34
At any rate, Rembrandt's Homer corresponds to an antique
bust known as the Hellenistic, Blind Type of which there are
at least twenty-two extant heads that all apparently derive
from one Greek original.35 Three of the finest examples
are in the Louvre, the National Museum of Naples and the
Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Held believes that Rembrandt owned a cast of the
Boston head on the grounds that it shows the ears clearly
which are hidden in other versions.36 It is true that the
ears are perhaps slightly more prominent in this example,
but there are other copies as well that have the ears
clearly visible - the uncovered ears are a characteristic
feature of the Hellenistic, Blind Type of bust.

An equally good candidate, in my opinion, is a bust in the Museo Capitolino. Originally it may have been a full-length terminal figure. Drawings by Girolamo da Carpi and Heemskerck supposedly represent this same bust before being cut down. Carlo Maratta drew the head only presumably after the herm had been reduced. Pinarolo’s guidebook, Antichita di Roma of 1703, records that this bust was at that time part of the Capitoline Collection.

Although the right ear is not quite as prominent as that of the Boston Head, it is, nonetheless, very noticeable. The arrangement of the hair, moreover, seems closer to Rembrandt’s painted version than does that of the Boston Head. A tuft of hair in front of the right ear forms a fork at the level of Homer’s eye and then swerves up to create a slight enclave in the hair. In the Boston version, this tuft of hair emerges from beneath the fillet as two separate and distinct strands quite unlike the hair style of Rembrandt’s Homer. The fillet too of the Capitoline bust being slightly narrower than that of the Boston head is again closer to Rembrandt’s.

The Capitoline head, nevertheless, varies considerably from Rembrandt’s 'graven image' especially with respect to the body of the bust. Rembrandt’s Homer is wearing a chiton whereas the Capitoline Homer has the chest and shoulders bare. This difference could possibly
be explained by the fact that Rembrandt may have had only a cast of the head and not the entire bust. Held, furthermore, has pointed out that the body of Rembrandt's bust is non-classical. Other less noticeable differences such as the general proportions of the head and the shape of the beard should caution one from making too definite a selection. On such slight stylistic similarities it cannot be stated with any certainty that Rembrandt did own a cast of the Capitoline bust, but at least this head can be considered as a possible candidate for such a selection. The simple fact that it was known at least shortly after Rembrandt's time and perhaps before helps to assert its claim.
CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL PORTRAITS IN PAINTING

A. Origin and Development

The practise of collecting portraits of the Wise Men of Antiquity owed its origin to ancient authors. Cicero, Suetonius, Horace and Juvenal all mention that the possession of portraits of literati and philosophers was the mark of the learned man.\(^1\) Pliny records that it was Asinius Pollio, a friend of Julius Ceasar, who began the custom of decorating libraries with statues and busts of the ancient sages, especially of Homer.\(^2\)

This tradition was revived in the fifteenth century by the book-loving Federigo de Montefeltro who commissioned twenty-eight portraits of philosophers, poets and fathers of the Greek and Latin Church for his study in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino.\(^3\) Each of the famous personages is shown in half-length or to the knees. Those of intellectual kinship like Plato and Aristotle or Homer and Virgil turn towards one another as if in disputation. Friedländer attributes these works to Joos van Gent; their style is half Netherlandish, half Italian.

The question of who should be represented was answered by the humanistic scholars of Federigo's court, perhaps by Federigo himself. Joos van Gent, at any rate,
must have received considerable assistance concerning the sequence in which the figures were to be portrayed and, above all, on the physical appearance of each personage, a knowledge of which for many of them could only be gained from literary sources. Not all the portraits were 'idealized' or invented since a few were men the Duke knew or had known and consequently a good likeness would be expected. Also the portraits of such well-known figures as Dante and Petrarch had been preserved by local tradition with which Joos would have had to become familiar. For the remainder, however, the Netherlander had to rely on his own inventiveness guided by Italian scholars, knowledgeable in antique literary sources. There could be no mistaking the identity of each figure anyway since each portrait was accorded a name and accompanied by a laudatory legend.

A further identifying feature was the allotment of the appropriate attribute to the illustrious man portrayed. Poets and philosophers are generally shown with their hand resting on a book, either open or closed, while their other hand is raised in an explanatory gesture. Similar attributes can be found in drawings of philosophers in medieval manuscripts. A late fifteenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library (M.S. Bodley 943) of the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* contains such sketches: Hermes, Plato, Socrates, and Homer are represented holding a book and pen-case; Hippocrates, with a pen-case and doctor's vessel; Alexander, with crown and sceptre; and St. Gregory is shown
preaching from an open book. This manuscript also included a portrait of Aristotle which unfortunately has been lost.

Sixteenth-century books containing feigned portraits of the ancients carried on this tradition. Two examples are Guillaume Roville's *Promptuaire des medalles des plus renommees personnes qui on este depuis le commencement du monde*, Lyons 1553, and Andre Thevet's *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres grecs, latins et payens*, Paris 1584.

In the seventeenth century, the fashion for historical portraits of the illustrious men of the past was rejuvenated by the Spanish Duke of Alcalá (1584-1637). Both in taste and intellectual pursuits, he was akin to the enlightened Federigo de Montefeltro. Alcalá was a classical scholar of some merit and also had a large library. There is a good chance that he saw Federigo's study and library during his visit to Urbino in 1626. Such a visit may have sparked his desire to decorate his own library in similar fashion. To carry out his plan he turned to Jusepe Ribera, renowned for his portraits of the Apostles.

The Wise Men that Jusepe Ribera painted were also in a sense invented portraits with little imitation of the antique. They were, nevertheless, quite apart from purely fictitious portraits such as those that can be found in the palaces at Como, Florence and Mondragone.
Ribera's Wise Men for Alcalá, like Van Gent's for Federigo, were based on a scholarly inquiry into the antique sources. In this sense they were just as much portraits as were the ancient busts of Homer. Alcalá himself may have played a part in defining the characteristic features of the individual sages for he had investigated the identity of the ancient busts that more and more were finding their way into the collections of Italian antiquarians. Some knowledge of the portraits of the philosophers could be gained by examining the works of Statius, Ursinus and Faber with their illustrations engraved by Lafréry and Gallé.\(^9\)

An interesting note, which may have some bearing on the commissioning of Rembrandt's "Aristotle", is that these portraits unlike Federigo's were to be left unnamed. Alcalá's learned guests were to guess who each portrait represented. Here again the appropriate symbols were added as hints to assist in the identification. Books, charts, papers, globes and writing implements were the familiar tools of these erudites. Some had peculiar attributes such as Socrates with his mirror and Diogenes with his lantern.

The success of these 'invented' portraits was widespread with innumerable copies and replicas being made. Ribera's sages, some in copies and others of dubious authenticity, were included in the collections of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Don Ramón Marotó of Palma de Mallorca,
the largest number being owned by Dr. Joachim Caravalho at the Château de Villandry. As in ancient times, they were the mark of a learned man.

B. Aristotle, Alexander and Homer

1. The Patron

Ribera had another patron not unlike the Duke of Alcalá in humanistic interests and intellectual pursuits. His name was Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina, patron of both Ribera and Rembrandt. Don Antonio, born in 1610, was the youngest of six children of the Duke of Bagnara whose family had played an important role in Calabria ever since the Middle Ages. His mother came from a prominent family in Sicily, and after her husband's death, she returned to Messina and built a large palace in the newly erected quarter near the harbour.

Don Antonio moved here with his bride in 1646. He was a wealthy man and personally supervised the affairs of his estate as well as taking an active part in political and cultural spheres. On the cultural side, his palace served as a meeting place for artists, writers and scientists with whom he founded an academy of the fine arts. Don Antonio was a scholar in his own right possessing a famous collection of medals and an important library.

The palace itself was decorated with mythological frescoes, sculpture, goldsmith's work and tapestries - the latter including a set designed by Rubens. Ruben's
tapestries interestingly enough were from the Life of Achilles series, so Ruffo at least indirectly was not unfamiliar with the work of Homer. Most interesting of all, however, was his pinacoteca where as early as 1649 he already owned 166 canvases, and by the time of his death in 1678, had augmented his collection to include 350 paintings. Ruffo kept a catalogue of his collection in which he listed the artist, the subject, the measurements and even sometimes the price. His list of artists is impressive indeed: Dürer, Lucas van Leyden, Titian, Van Dyck, Poussin, Jordeans, Guido Reni, to name but a few.

2. Ruffo, Ribera and Rembrandt

The year after Ruffo moved into the palace, he obtained through agents in Naples four half-length figures by Ribera, all of them pictures of Saints. Evidently, Jusepe's work pleased the nobleman for he ordered a Pietà of which Ribera sent him a preliminary sketch. Unfortunately, Ribera's protracted illness in 1649-50 delayed the completion of the work and must have vexed the patron since he reduced the promised price by ten percent. Oddly enough, Ruffo, who was in the market for philosophers, did not order any from Ribera - the leading artist in this genre. Don Antonio, however, may have been reluctant to deal with an artist in failing health.

Ruffo, at any rate, in 1652, the year of Ribera's death, turned to Rembrandt for a philosopher. Several
questions immediately come to mind. Why did Don Antonio pick Rembrandt for this particular commission? Did he ask specifically for an Aristotle or merely for a philosopher? To answer these questions we must known something of Rembrandt's reputation as an artist in Italy and the details of the commission.

Rembrandt's international reputation was seemingly based chiefly on his skill as an etcher. Guercino's letter bears witness to this fact:

"As for the half-figure of Rembrandt which came into your hands, it cannot be other than complete perfection, because I have seen various works of his prints which have come to our region. They are very beautiful in execution, engraved with good taste and done in a fine manner, so that one can assume that his work in colour is likewise of complete exquisiteness and perfection. I sincerely esteem him as a great artist."13

Did Ruffo also base his understanding of Rembrandt's painting style on a knowledge of Rembrandt's prints, or did he have access to other information? Ruffo normally operated through a middleman and may have relied on their descriptions of Rembrandt's paintings. Perhaps Ruffo was not too concerned since he was prone to striving for diversity in his collection both in the genre represented and in the nationalities of the contributing artists.14

Fitz Darby points out that both Ribera and Rembrandt would have been recognized as the leading exponents of the stile tenebroso at this time.15 The style was
outmoded at least by 1670 when Abraham Breugel maligned Rembrandt's work, but his criticism reflects the then current classicistic critique. Ruffo was obviously pleased with Rembrandt's "Aristotle" and even Breugel in 1670 was forced to admit that Rembrandt's half-figure was better than any made by the best Italian painters.

Rembrandt's treatment of an historical portrait differs somewhat from how Ribera conceived his task. The modus operandi of the latter consists chiefly in the reconstruction of an Antique personality and supplying clues to the identity of his subject i.e. books and a pen-case for philosophers. Rembrandt, on the other hand, goes a step further. In addition to supplying the traditional symbols, he provides, in the "Aristotle", more concrete visual references that not only identify the subject but also relate to the personal history of the philosopher. The bust of Homer and the chain with the medallion of Alexander are not merely attributes; they are supplementary portraits in their own right that form the parameters of Aristotle's entire being.

Rembrandt was apparently familiar with a type of portraiture in which one or more figures are shown together with books and classical busts. One of the finest examples is Ruben's painting of himself with his brother Philip and the scholars Lipsius and Woverius. A bust of the so-called
Seneca is prominently displayed in the background since Lipsius had edited Seneca's works. In this type of portraiture, there is a special bond that links the person portrayed with the bust. The busts, however, usually remain mere antiquarian objects that define the intellectual range or interests of the sitter, nor is there any physical contact between the person and the sculpture.

Von Einem points out that this motif of placing the hand on the bust owes its origin to Venetian portraiture, especially from the studio of Tintoretto. Presumably these portraits were of collectors and antiquarians. Normally there is no emotional bond between the sitter and the antique sculpture. Held argues that this gesture may have derived from collectors portraits to show their pride of ownership, but he feels that it could have a more profound significance. In his opinion it could be analogous to the gesture of placing a hand on a skull indicating an awareness of man's mortality. By substituting a bust for a skull, this gesture would then suggest a theme of survival, perhaps a special kind of survival invested in a work of art. In this context, art may be considered a handmaiden to Fame who helps preserve the memory of great men of the past.

To Ribera, portraits of the Wise Men would have provided an opportunity to study the human face as it reveals the personality of a historical person. Such a preoccupation
was not trivial: physiognomy was defined as a true science by the followers of Aristotle and spuriously by Aristotle himself.\textsuperscript{22} Ironically, Guercino judged Rembrandt's half-figure to represent a Physiognomist, therefore, he thought it appropriate to paint a Cosmographer as a pendant.\textsuperscript{23} As Held has so adequately shown, Rembrandt's portrait of Aristotle deals with far deeper concerns. Rembrandt is not content with merely unveiling the secret soul but a soul caught in the centre of conflicting forces. Here is where the difference between Ribera and Rembrandt asserts itself.

3. The Commission

Six years after having received the "Aristotle," Ruffo commissioned the aging Bolognese painter Guercino to provide a companion-piece. The intriguing question is why should he choose Guercino? Was he vexed with Rembrandt as he had been with Ribera? Did Rembrandt receive the commission for the Alexander and Homer some time previous to 1660 and then, for some unexplained reason, perhaps his habitual procrastination, failed to deliver on time? Had Don Antonio grown tired of waiting and in frustration had turned to Guercino?

At any rate, Guercino was commissioned to paint a pendant portrait on June 13, 1660\textsuperscript{24}; he had finished his work by October 6, 1660.\textsuperscript{25} Approximately nine months later
on July 30, 1661, Rembrandt shipped the "Homer" and "Alexander" from Amsterdam; they too were to act as pendants to the "Aristotle" and arrived in Messina in the fall of 1661. Only the "Alexander" was billed at this time. The "Homer" was shipped unfinished; it was returned to Rembrandt on November 16, 1662 but was referred to on November 1:

"invio con il d.° quadro d'Alessandro un altro d'Homero mezzofinito sopra tela bella e nova ... dentro una incirata." Why had Rembrandt shipped the Homer unfinished? Was it to placate an angry Ruffo so he would not lose the commission? Held at least thinks so.

Judging from Preti's letter of December 17, 1661, the pictures had greatly pleased the nobleman when they first arrived. A year later, however, Don Antonio complained that the Alexander was unprofessionally made up of four pieces of canvas and that the seams were disturbingly visible. Rembrandt was accused of taking a head he had painted earlier and enlarging it into a half-length figure by adding strips of canvas. Ruffo was still willing to accept it if the price were reduced by half, which he added was still more than what an Italian painter would receive, otherwise Rembrandt should paint a replacement. The Homer would be accepted if it were properly finished.

Rembrandt, obviously angered by Ruffo's complaint, retorted that there were no good connoisseurs in Messina, and that the seams would not show if the picture were hung
in the right light. The master offered to paint another Alexander if Ruffo were willing to pay an additional 100 florins more than the cost of the first and return it at his own expense and risk. The outcome is not known. Rembrandt, nevertheless, did complete the "Homer" and returned it to Sicily in 1664.

From the available facts, it would appear that Rembrandt did indeed receive the commission to paint the companion-pieces for the "Aristotle" before Ruffo turned to Guercino. The evidence, however, remains circumstantial—there are no documented facts. Rembrandt's shipping the "Alexander" and "Homer" only nine months after Guercino had completed his "Cosmographer" would suggest that a commission between Ruffo and Rembrandt had been previously arranged. Also the fact that the "Homer" was shipped unfinished possibly indicates that Rembrandt was anxiously concerned that he might lose the commission. Ruffo's complaint, moreover, might be construed as a penalty, as had been the case with Ribera's "Pietà", that he tried to impose on the tardy Netherlander. Perhaps this is unjust since Ruffo's complaint may have in fact been legitimate. It should be remembered that at this time Rembrandt was involved in the commission for his largest painting, the "Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis" for the Amsterdam Town Hall and consequently he may have been pressed for time.
By enlarging an already finished portrait head, Rembrandt may have thought he could dupe the Italian connoisseur.

Exactly when Ruffo had commissioned the "Alexander" and "Homer", and who was responsible for selecting them as pendants remains unclear. To find an answer we must turn once again to the "Aristotle" since it in effect determines many aspects concerning the commissioning of the two later paintings.

First, concerning the question of collaboration, Held feels, and I am inclined to agree, that Rembrandt alone was responsible for choosing Aristotle as the subject of his painting.\(^{33}\) Valentiner and Rousseau believe that both Ruffo and Rembrandt were involved in the selection.\(^{34}\) Held rejects this theory since he notes that for a time Don Antonio apparently did not know the subject of the painting. The Italian nobleman first registered it on Sept. 1, 1654 as a "Half-length figure of a philosopher made in Amsterdam by the painter named Rembrandt (it seems to be an Aristotle or an Albertus Magnus)."\(^{35}\) His guess is correct, or nearly so, but this is probably a reflection of his own erudition. In an account book of Jan. 8, 1657, it states: "Three ounces for a frame for the painting of Albertus Magnus."\(^{36}\)

Another fact supporting Held's contention that Ruffo did not specifically order an Aristotle is that in 1660 Guercino was forced to guess, and guess wrongly, what the
subject was. The first clear identification of the main figure as Aristotle emerged in a copy written in 1662 of the original shipping bill of 1654. One wonders whether Ruffo had seen the original bill, or why even a copy should be made of it eight years later.

It should be noted in this respect also that Guercino in spite of asking for Rembrandt's subject was left free to choose his "Cosmographer" even though it was specifically intended to be a pendant portrait to Rembrandt's "Aristotle". Guercino had asked for Rembrandt's subject but obviously received no reply. Similarly, the Neapolitan painter, Mattia Preti, was free to pick his own subject:

"I have waited to write you in order to see whether, along with my letter, I might send the picture with the half-figure which also has a turban wound about its head, just as in the other two extremely beautiful works already in your possession. Mine will represent Dionysius of Syracuse ..."

In this light, it seems highly unlikely that Ruffo would have asked Rembrandt to paint any more than a philosopher and not a specific philosopher. It is also unlikely that Ruffo would have called upon Rembrandt to paint an "Alexander" and a "Homer" as pendants when he placed no such restrictions on either Guercino or Preti. Besides, Alexander and Homer are already present in effigy in the "Aristotle". When pendants were ordered they would have been Rembrandt's natural choice.
The question of whether or not the idea for the enlarged commission existed at the very beginning cannot be definitely answered. Held argues that all the elements within the "Aristotle" would had one to believe that it was meant to be seen alone. The only evidence to suggest that Rembrandt was concerned how the three paintings would harmonize is contained in a note, unfortunately undated, concerning the size and a second document of 1661 by an Amsterdam agent saying that the "Homer" still needs work, and that when the three pictures were hung together, the "Alexander" ought to be placed in the middle. What this note means in effect is that the "Aristotle" and "Homer" were to be pendants to the "Alexander". If the "Aristotle" essentially defines the relationship existing between the three figures, why in the expanded commission does it not occupy this central position? By focussing attention on Alexander, who is so unobtrusive in the "Aristotle", does Rembrandt imply another meaning or give added significance to their inter-relationship? To answer these questions we must examine the reasons why Rembrandt should choose to combine Aristotle, Alexander and Homer in the first place.

There are sound historical and iconological reasons for such a combination. Historically it is known that both Aristotle and Alexander admired Homer's works to such an extent that it amounted to idolatry. Aristotle
in his *Poetics* considered Homer the incomparable master of all poetry. Homer's name and references to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* appear constantly throughout his work.

"Homer's position, however, is peculiar just as he was in the serious style the poet of poets, standing alone not only through literary excellence, but also through the dramatic characters of his imitations, so too he was the first to outline for us the general forms of Comedy by producing not a dramatic invective, but a dramatic picture of the Ridiculous; his *Margites* in fact stands in the same relation to our comedies as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to our tragedies."\(^2\)

In Aristotle's eyes, Homer was the Prince of Poets.

Alexander's admiration for Homer was even more pronounced. It has been recorded that he carried with him and kept at night under his pillow a copy of the *Iliad*, edited by Aristotle.

"And since he thought and called the *Iliad* a viaticum of the military art, he took him Aristotle's recension of the poem, called the *Iliad* of the Casket, and always kept it lying with his dagger under his pillow."\(^3\)

The "Iliad of the Casket" itself is evidence of the high esteem in which Alexander held Homer's work.

"When a small coffer was brought to him, which those in charge of the baggage and wealth of Dareius thought the most precious thing there, he asked his friends what valuable object they thought would most fittingly be deposited in it. And when many answered and there were many opinions, Alexander himself said he was going to deposit the *Iliad* there for safe keeping."\(^4\)
When Alexander visited the Tomb of Achilles, he called Achilles lucky because the story of his life had been told by Homer.\textsuperscript{45}

Part of Alexander's admiration for the great poet could have stemmed from Aristotle, since Aristotle had been his tutor for nine years in Macedonia. Plutarch records, however, in his \textit{Life of Alexander} that the relationship between the two became strained in later life:

"Aristotle he admired at the first, and loved him, as he himself used to say, more than he did his father, for that one had given him life, but the other had taught him a noble life; later, however, he held him in more or less of suspicion, not to the extent of doing him any harm, but his kindly attentions lacked their former ardour and affection toward him, and this was proof of estrangement."\textsuperscript{46}

Part of this estrangement resulted from Alexander's execution of Callisthenes who had been raised in Aristotle's house and may even have been a nephew. Plutarch's \textit{Alexander} was one of the most widely read ancient texts. Held places great emphasis on this book in interpreting the meaning of Rembrandt's "Aristotle".

Aside from these historical precedents for combining the three, several iconological reasons have also been postulated. Valentiner believes the three figures represent an abstract of humanism. Alexander the conqueror of the world representing the activity of
man at the height of his worldly success; Aristotle and Homer, the philosopher and poet, as expressions of the contemplative mind, formed the foundation for the success of the active mind. 47

Emmens proposes that the three may be expressions of the Poetic Spirit or Inborn Talent, ingenium, (Homer), the speculative Science of Art, ars, (Aristotle), and the active Practical Training, exercitatio, (Alexander). 48 Thus in this instance, Aristotle, Alexander and Homer could be thought of as representatives of Rembrandt's theory of art as far as he can be said to have one.

Held adds that they might form a Triptych of Fame. 49 Homer, Aristotle and Alexander are represented as special favourites of Fame in an early sixteenth-century French Tapestry. 50 Also included were Charlemagne, Plato, Cicero and Virgil.

Essentially, therefore, we are dealing here with two levels of meaning – the historical and the iconological. One does not necessarily negate the other. If we turn to the "Aristotle" to discern how Rembrandt originally conceived the relationship existing between these three famous men, assuming that Held is correct in considering it as being commissioned alone, then both
levels of meaning must be taken into consideration. Haverkamp-Begemann, Von Einem, and Saxl all interpret the "Aristotle" as an allegory demonstrating the kinship of Philosophy and Poetry, the former represented by Aristotle and the latter 'personified' by the bust of Homer. Their arguments suffer, however, from the exclusion of Alexander and the appreciation of historical factors. Only Held has managed to include all three in what could be called a moral allegory resulting from a thorough understanding of an historical situation. In Held's opinion, Aristotle is caught between the bust, symbolizing the more enduring values, and the chain, the token of secular honour. He shows his preference by touching the bust of Homer with the favoured right hand and with his left fingers the chain. In this context, Rembrandt's "Aristotle" can be called a true history painting: it has both a didactic function and derives from a specific historical situation that Rembrandt could only have learned through a "precise reading of history" - in this instance Plutarch's Alexander.

The major problem in this interpretation is in defining how Homer becomes a symbol of the more "enduring values". The question involved here is not how Aristotle and Alexander saw Homer, but how did Rembrandt see Homer. A close reading of Aristotle's Poetics or Plutarch's Alexander would not explain the creation of this 'image' of Homer. To find an answer we must examine the status
of Homer in the seventeenth century in general and Rembrandt's interest in the blind bard in particular, which are the subjects of the next chapter.

Before leaving this section, however, I would mention that the acceptance of Held's interpretation of the "Aristotle" does not invalidate the interpretations of Valentinier, Emmens, or even Held's own suggestion that the three may represent a Gallery of Fame when viewing the commission as a whole. I think Rembrandt's suggestion to place the "Alexander" in the centre is very significant and may be a reflection of a more general meaning.
CHAPTER THREE

THE STATUS OF HOMER IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A. How Homer was Known

Knowing Homer involves both the availability of his work and, of more importance, how his works were interpreted and understood. Access to and significance of the Homeric poems, therefore, are the two criteria governing the understanding of Homer in the seventeenth century. First, we will examine how well his works were known. 1

By the end of the seventh century Homer had almost disappeared from Western Europe. The *Ilias Latina* or *Pindarus Thebanus de bello Trajano*, a little epitome of the *Iliad* in less than 1100 verses, was the chief source of knowledge of Homer's poetry in the medieval period. Homeric references that occur in the writings of Dante, Roger Bacon and Chaucer were known through other ancient authors such as Horace and Cicero rather than from a direct knowledge of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It was in 1354 that Homer can be said to have returned to European civilization, for in that year Sigeros procured a Greek manuscript of the Homeric poems in Constantinople for Petrarch. Ironically, Petrarch could not read Greek and finally employed Leontius
Pilatus to translate some passages into Latin several years later. The translation pleased Petrarch and Boccaccio that they urged him to make a complete translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into Latin prose. Pilatus was invited to Florence, where in the home of Boccaccio and at the expense of Petrarch, he completed the task. The manuscripts were given to Petrarch and are now housed in the Bibliotheque Nationale. Legend has it that Petrarch died with a copy of Homer in his hands.

The knowledge of Homer began to spread. Bevenuto da Imola, who completed his commentary on the *Divina Commedia* in 1380, for example, quoted or referred to Homer about seventy times. But it was not until Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494) completed the Latin version of the *Iliad* begun by Carlo Marsuppini that Homer really began to be read in the West. Demetrius Chalkondyles under the patronage of the noble Florentine, Bernardo de' Nerli, edited the first printed edition of Homer in 1488. This edition was followed by those from the Aldine press in Venice in 1504, a second in 1517 and a third in 1524. In the first half-decade of the sixteenth century, Homer's *Iliad* was supplemented by other accounts of the Trojan War by Quintus Smyrnaeus, Calluthus, and Tryphiodorus. Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* and *Cave of the Nymphs*, added in 1521 and, in 1531, were followed by the anonymous work *Moral Interpretations of the Wandering of Odysseus*. The massive,
twelfth-century commentary of Eustathius, Bishop of Salonica, was printed in 1542 as was the Homeric Commentaries of Proculus to be followed in 1554 by the Homeric Allegories of Heraclitus of Pontus. Homer, however, never enjoyed a popular vogue such as Euripides since he was outside of the mainstream of the literature of the classical age, and, consequently, from those aspects of ancient culture which had the most appeal to the Latin scholars of Italy. As a result, Homer exercised a less profound influence on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than one at first might expect.

In the first half of the seventeenth century in France alone there were seventy-five editions of Homer's works. Although this figure may sound impressive, Homer was still relatively neglected, since for the most part these editions consisted of a single song, mainly from the Iliad, and were intended for scholarly use. Between 1640 and 1660 there appeared in Holland at least two editions reproducing those of Paris of 1622-24: the Amsterdam, Laurent edition in 1648 and the Ravestyn edition in 1650. A new edition accompanied by a Latin translation by Cornelis Schrevelius, rector of Rembrandt's old Latin school in Leyden, was published in Amsterdam in 1656 as well as in Leyden itself. It was in England, however, at the end of the 1660's that one finds the most important editions of Homer.
B. Homer and Allegory

Antiquity saw the poet as a sage, teacher and educator. It was the pedagogical concept of poetry that was held in high esteem. The two basic problems that concerned antique literary theory were: Was Homer useful and was he true? These same basic questions persisted right through the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance, and ultimately to the seventeenth century. Each age posed similar queries concerning the meaning and value of Homer, and often arrived at much the same answers.

The questions of Homer's usefulness and his truthfulness involve the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy - a quarrel that was already ancient in Plato's time.

"And let us further say to her (poetry) lest she condemn us for harshness and rusticity, that there is from old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry."^4

The criticism of the philosophers was directed against religion which essentially meant poetry since Greek theology was largely fashioned by the poets. Both Homer and Hesiod were confronted by the philosophic attack. Xenophanes, for example, states: "Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and scandalous among men: theft, adultery, and mutual treachery."^5 The overthrow of Uranus by Cronus and the latter by Zeus, of which Hesiod relates, was another sore point that offended philosophic sensibility and was one of the major reasons for Plato's banishing Homer from his ideal state: "the battles of the
gods in Homer's verse are things that we must not admit into our city either wrought in allegory or without allegory. Poetry in Plato's opinion was pedagogically harmful.

Greek scholars sought a compromise between poetry and philosophy and found it in an allegorical interpretation of Homer. Homeric allegoresis came into existence to defend Homer against the charges of impiety levelled against him by the Platonists. This practice was in harmony with one of the basic characteristics of Greek religious thought: the belief that the gods express themselves in cryptic form, in oracles and mysteries. It was the duty of the discerning man to see through these veils and coverings which hid the secret.

The various titles of early sixteenth-century publications such as the *Moral Interpretations of the Wanderings of Odysseus* or the *Homeric Allegories* of Heraclitus of Pontus show that allegory became a basic tool of Homeric textural interpretation. Sixteenth-century scholars found in Heraclitus a stout supporter of Homer. Born in the Christian era, he was confused with his better, Heraclitus of Ephesus and was thought to be a contemporary of Socrates. This false identification was due in part to the nature of his defense of Homer in refuting many of the charges brought against the poet in Plato's *Republic*. Heraclitus stated openly that if the epics did not have any hidden meaning then Homer was truly the most blasphemous of men; but, in his opinion, the charge of impiety should in effect be made
against the reader who was ignorant of this secret meaning.

The major figure in Homeric criticism for the Renaissance, and indeed for the seventeenth century, was Bishop Eustathius. To provide himself with the necessary information to uncover the Homeric mysteries, he turned to as many ancient sources as he possibly could - nearly five hundred early authorities. Eustathius was extremely thorough leaving no etymological explanation, nor moral or physical allegory, and no euhemeristic conclusion uninvestigated. He believed that Homer invented some of his fables but that others were purely allegories.

The Iliad, according to Eustathius, was heroic and sublime, but the Odyssey was to be more admired since it was filled with instructions for men. For early readers of Homer, Odysseus' wanderings from one temptation to another was analogous to a Christian's progress through life. Clementine of Alexandria and Augustine thought these wanderings were reminiscent of the life of Christ. Maximus in the fifth century, for example, equates the adventure with the Sirens with Christ tying Himself to the cross as Odysseus did to the mast in order to avoid the desires of pleasure so that all men would be saved from shipwreck in the world. In this light, the sixteenth century reader of Homer found in him as many hidden meanings as the Bible.
Plato's expulsion of Homer because of the harmful effects of his verse was refuted by Jean de Sponde in 1583. He expressed the Aristotelian view that poetry was a solid branch of human knowledge and was of enormous value to mankind. Early poets, he asserts, were often kings and philosophers moved by a Single Power to lead their readers to Him. From this poetic inspiration, their poems teach fortitude, temperance, liberality, clemency, integrity, fraternity, justice and prejudice. What is more they recommend remedies for the subjugation of all the contrary vices. The first among these poetical teachers of mankind was Homer. Although de Sponde omitted the customary allegorical references, his preface leaves little doubt as to how the Homeric poems were to be understood.

The allegorical treatment of the Homeric poems continued into the seventeenth century. Baudoin-Comes in the first chapter of his Mythology took up the theme that the fables had been invented by the ancients in order to transmit in viable form the secrets of philosophy. Similarly, in Valens inaugural address to the Royal College, he said that the reading of Homer was convenient to all ages: Homer charms the children with the pleasure of his fables and the form of his wisdom; he teaches virtues and good behaviour to adolescents; to men he shows the manner of good administration for public life and gives them the best private advice for military life. When La Rivière published a series of twenty-four engravings on the Iliad
in 1613, he added a moral caption to each one to indicate that the images lead one to virtue. One finds an echo of Eustathius in Baudoin-Comes when he speaks of the Odyssey in preference to the Iliad for moral education:

"If one carefully considers all that is written of Ulysses, one would find that the whole course of human life is expressed there, and that such fables contain the best teachings to give us courage and to allow us to support all sorts of inconveniences and adversities that this miserable life is subject to."13

Another series of engravings by Van Thulden, after the paintings of Primaticcio representing the story of Ulysses in a gallery of Fontainebleau, were edited by Tavernier in 1663. Like those of La Riviere fifty years earlier, there was a commentary moral under each plate. Tavernier asserted that all the inventions would be useful since they contained several good morals for the instruction of life.

Some readers searched through the Iliad and the Odyssey for evidences of universal Christian wisdom.14 Homer's life was compared with that of Moses to show that they were almost the same person in an anonymous Discours enforme de comparaison sur les vies de Moyse et d'Homere of 1604. J.B. Persona in Noctes solitariae sive de iis quae scientifice scripta sunt ab Homero in Odyssea (Venice, 1613) discovered in Homer an awareness of an eternal, perfect, creating, unified God, who is omnipresent, omniscient, and possessed of an unopposable will. Persona was pleased to find Homer knew the soul to be separate and immortal.
In another work dating from 1655, Jacques Hugues' *Vera historia Romana, seu origo Latii vel Italiae ac Romanae urbis*, this search for Christian prophecy in classical sources was carried to the extreme. The fall of Troy was construed as a historical equivalent of the Babylonian and Roman captures of Jerusalem. Tiresias or Abraham is described as blind because he prophecizes the coming of Christ yet never sees Him. Following Hugues' reasoning, Cassandra, who predicted the fall of Troy, is Jeremiah. Homer's gods and heroes are in word and deed none other than Jesus Christ in a Greek guise. In a similar view, Jove's expulsion of Hephaestus is the Pentecost, and Theristes becomes Saul Tharsites, the opponent of Achilles - Christ and Odysseus - Peter, whose conversion is predicted when Hector is pierced by the spear of Achilles. Achilles' spear is likened to the cross of Christ which no other man could lift. Odysseus when he carries off the Palladium and arms of Achilles is Peter bringing the cross and keys to Rome. His very name means "singer of Jesus", "ode" + "eusous", and Penelope, his wife, is the Church, whereas her suitors are heretics. How Hugues' reading of Homer was received by other seventeenth-century interpreters is unfortunately not known, but it is bound to have provoked a reaction, anger if not mirth.

The classical scholar, Zachary Bogan, took a more conservative stance. He published in 1658 a massive
compilation of parallel passages with the title EBRAISON:
sive comparatio Homeri cum Scriptoribus Sacris quoad norman loquendi. Bogan placed quotations from Homer and other poets side by side with verses from the Bible. Thus Genesis 28:20-21, where Jacob says, "If God will be with me and keep me in the way I go ... I shall come again to my father's house in peace" finds its parallel in Iliad X.284-85, where Diomedes invokes Athena to "follow with me now even as you followed with my father, the good Tydeus". Besides these verbal echoes, Bogan gives more concrete examples such as when the daughter of Antiphates comes down to the spring Artacia in Odyssey X. 103-11 she is Rebecca at the well. Anteia's passion for Bellerophon, Iliad VI.160-99, is the Homeric version of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Bogan, however, was more cautious than Hugues and he placed Homer's observations about Jehovah in an appendix so as not to offend.

The search for Christian prophecy in the Homeric works was carried on by later readers, but the two examples already mentioned are sufficient to show just how far this allegorizing process could be carried. Homer, in the general consenus of seventeenth-century opinion, was thought of as the great moral teacher whose work if interpreted correctly would lead men to a virtuous life. He had poly-mathic knowledge. To some he was more than an educator; he was a 'divine' prophet capable of foretelling even Christian revelation.
C. The Anti-Homeric Critique

Homer's role as the great teacher or prophet did not go uncontested. Echoes of Platonic criticism against poetry in general and against Homer in particular as its leading exponent continued to be heard throughout the centuries. Fra Girolamo writing in 1492 declared that he was not against poetry but the abuses of it; yet, when he was finished listing the possible abuses, there was little left that could be called poetry. To him the Scriptures were the highest form of poetry and he looked askance at any lower form as conducive to immorality. Fra Girolamo was especially intolerant of classical literature which he felt tended to undermine Christian culture just as the Homeric poems were considered harmful to Plato's ideal state. Savonarola viewed poetry with a similar diffidence.

The major invective against Homer himself came in 1561 with the publishing of the *Poetics* by Julius Caesar Scaliger. Again a Platonic bias can be detected in Scaliger's charges in that they are directed against impiety and untruthfulness, not in poetry in general, however, only in the Homeric works. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are only fables, garrulous and a tolerably ridiculous rough sketch of the divine work of the *Aeneid*. Homer is merely an ape of nature, a teller of old wife's tales and one looking at gods and men from the vantage point of a swineherd. Scaliger's condemnation of Homer is only equalled by his admiration for Virgil. Virgil is compared with those painters and sculptors who, selecting the best from many
objects in nature and combined these excellences into one image seem "not to have learned from nature, but to have vied with her, or rather to have created laws for her to obey." In another passage, Scaliger practically deifies Virgil by referring to him as a second nature to whom writers can turn in place of nature itself, since "nothing was omitted by that heavenly genius: there is nothing to be added unless by fools, nothing to be changed unless by the impudent."  

At the turn of the century, in 1607, exactly, Homer suffered another attack, not as savage, but nevertheless condemning. Paolo Beni in his *Comparatione di Homero, Virgilio e Torquato* searched to prove that Godfrey of Tasso conforms more to the heroic ideal than either Achilles or Aeneas, has better unity in the narrative than does his antique predecessors, and that Tasso, better than Homer or Virgil, attains the breadth and grandeur that is expected of an epic poem. Beni's critique, although not having the acrimony of Scaliger's, is perhaps even more damaging. Homer is accused of lacking art, of primitivism, of errors in moral order, of gross mistakes in composition both in the conception of the whole and even in the details such as the titles and invocations.

It was Scaliger's critique, however, that found favour with seventeenth century critics in France. Like in Scaliger, Virgil was the Learned Poet; Homer, the Vulgar Poet. In January of 1636, Colletet presented a *Discours*
de l'eloquence et de l'imitation des anciens before the French Academy. The address spoke of Virgil in laudatory terms: "by means of imitating Homer, Hesiod and Theocritus, one is able to say of him, that he outdistanced the first, treaded equally with the second, and followed the last so close that he ceded him nothing, if it is only the order of time."  

By this formula, Homer lost not only his position as the universal Prince of Poets, but even his primacy among the Greek poets.

Another French critic, Pierre de Lancre, restated the Platonic criticism of Homer in speaking of the impiety and immorality of having men fight against the gods, as well as of the intolerable and ridiculous behaviour of the Homeric characters. Achilles, for example, sulks in his tent nursing an insane grudge while his countrymen are being annihilated. P. Garasse also accused Homer of having invented absurd histories, but it was La Mesnardière, above all, who took Homer to task for the ridiculous and improper behaviour of his heroes. He cites the examples of Odysseus crying like a little, twelve-year old girl because his ship is in danger of being lost, and the noble Achilles ranting and raving like a madman merely because flies have attached themselves to the wounds of the dead Patroclus. La Mesnardière wonders what the great captain would have done if lions and panthers had torn the body of his friend into a thousand pieces. He concludes by finding Virgil's hero, Aeneas, much superior in moral behaviour.
Although all these attacks were inspired by Scaliger, they have been tempered by the seventeenth-century conception of morality. A certain nationalistic flavour can be detected in their criticism especially in relation to Achilles who makes his own countrymen suffer for his own personal interests. Homer began to be criticized for more than his base and vulgar images that offended seventeenth-century norms of behaviour. Charles Sorel in *Berger extravagant* of 1627, and Descartes in a letter to Beekman of 1630, began to question the very process of allegorizing the Homeric poems.

A similar scorn for Homer's fables was delivered in an address to the French Academy in Feb. 26, 1635 by Boisrobert. He expressed an opinion that was later to develop into the controversial Quarrel between the Ancients and Moderns: the current prejudice in favour of antiquity impeded the development of modern works. Homer was singled out as his special target. Boisrobert typified him as a cheap singer of the public squares who sold his verse to the rabble in order to gain his pitance. Was Homer truly the master of philosophy, the master of morals? Was he what they said he was?

These questions were beginning to be asked by more and more seventeenth-century, French, literary critics, and their answers were soon to erupt in full force in the latter half of the century. Colletet in a publication of 1658 casts doubt on Homer's role: "if on occasion he (Homer) let escape several moral sentences, this was only in passing,
since his principal design seems to have been more of a diversion than of giving precepts for the moderation of the mind and for the reformation of the morals ..."22 Such attacks, it must be pointed out, were in the minority in the first half of the century and were all essentially French. A definite anti-Homeric party had not yet emerged.

Homer was not without his defenders. The Flemish and Dutch authors were among his most ardent supporters. Apparently, they were well aware of the French critique of Homer or at least with Scaliger's. Justus Lyseius, for example, rallied to Homer's defence placing him above Virgil. Daniel Heinsius (1580-1665), the professor and librarian of the University of Leyden and editor of Aristotle's Poetics, was perhaps Homer's greatest admirer. Any passages in the Homeric poems that were offensive to seventeenth-century taste were attributed by Heinsius to later interpolations or corruptions.23

Gerhard Johann Vossius (1577-1649) was another supporter. He was the professor of history at Amsterdam from 1633 and, in a book on poetics published in 1647, he also rated Homer above Virgil. It should be remembered too that Cornelis Schrevelius, as mentioned earlier, had published a new edition of Homer's works in Amsterdam in 1658. As well, Vondel in an introduction to his translation of Virgil came to the diplomatic conclusion that both Homer and Virgil were superb poets in their own right.24 Even in
France, as late as 1667, Homer could find supporters for his cause. Pellisson in an address to the Academy of Lamoignion listed seven advantages of Homer over Virgil. Homer for the seventeenth century was the Prince of Poets. Only in France in the latter half of the century was his position of ascendancy questioned.

D. Rembrandt and Homer

1. The Classicistic Critique

Having examined Homer's status in the seventeenth century, what can we learn of Rembrandt's appreciation of Homer. What was it about this ancient bard that Rembrandt would find so appealing?

Keiser and Held have suggested that the disparaging attacks levelled against Homer by a classicizing literary theory may have endeared him to Rembrandt. Rembrandt and Homer had a common interest in portraying man's physical and emotional life. Eventually, both of them were to be criticized for their vulgarity and base naturalism.

The criticism inspired by Scaliger essentially branded Homer as a Vulgar Poet in the sense that he sinned against decorum. His having men fight with the gods and the often ridiculous behaviour of his characters, as mentioned by such critics as La Mesnardiére, are the standard examples.
Rembrandt, by analogy, was later considered as a Vulgar Painter by a classicistic art theory. He was ill-advised in his choice of subjects when he portrays a figure such as the "Nude Seated on a Mound" (B.198), an etching executed around 1631. Jan de Bisshop's famous remark that it was inappropriate to represent garter marks on the flesh was once thought to have been made with this particular etching in mind. In a poem of 1681, Andries Pels does apply it to Rembrandt's work as just one of his many errors.

"He chose no Greek Venus as his model
But rather a washerwoman or a treader of peat from a barn
And called his whim 'imitation of nature'.
Everything else to him was idle ornament. Flabby breasts
Ill shaped hands, nay, the traces of the lacings
Of the corset on the stomach, of the garters on the legs,
Must be visible, if nature is to get her due.
This is his nature, which would stand no rules
No principles of proportion in the human body." 27

The important words are "imitation of nature". According to the classicistic theory as proposed by De Bisshop, artists should not follow nature but search out a select distillation of nature which ultimately could be found not in nature itself but in antique sculpture. 28

De Bisshop's formula for arriving at beauty is remarkably similar to Scaliger's praising Virgil as one who is so successful in this selective process that he vies with and even surpasses nature. The Learned Poet like the Learned Painter can find the proper distillation or model
by turning to antiquity: for Scaliger to Virgil; for De Bisshop to antique sculpture.

A synoptic view of the classicistic critique of Rembrandt would state that he followed nature rather than the ideal beauty behind nature, he despised the academies and the rules governing anatomy and proportion, perspective and imitation of the antique. These are the essential criticisms implied in Pels' poem.

Hard-core classicism, however, did not fully emerge until 1669 with the publication of Jan de Bisshop's two volumes of Icones and Paradigmata (1670) dedicated respectively - and I would add significantly - to Constantyn Huygens, Johan Augustyn Wtenbogard and Johannes Six. The Paradigmata opens with a remark by Six concerning the nature of beauty and its role in art. Drawing (disegno), he decides, is the distinguishing feature common to all beauty in art.

This respect for drawing ultimately derives, as do many of the poetical and rhetorical terms found in seventeenth-century art criticism, from Vasari's comments on Venetian artists. They were considered ignorant of the antique, were accused of slavish obedience to nature, to the living model, and of painting without any thoroughgoing preliminary studies. Although they excel in colouring and achieve a deceptive likeness to nature, this strength is merely used to cover up their weakness in drawing.
Vasari's life of Titian includes all the postulates of this critique - a critique that seventeenth-century art theorists could and inevitably did apply to Rembrandt. Bruegel's letter to Ruffo, concerning the "Aristotle", "Alexander" and "Homer", reflects this criticism. Rembrandt, in Bruegel's opinion, uses colour and chiaroscuro to disguise his inability to draw; Rembrandt is firmly entrenched in the Venetian camp.

The leading representative of the Vulgar Painter, according to seventeenth-century Italian critics, was, of course, Caravaggio. Vincenzo Carducho, Baglioni, Scanelli and Bellori all saw in him the features that were so distasteful to the classicistic theory: he lacked decorum, obscured outlines in the name of naturalism, imitated the model directly without judgement or forethought, and relied solely on his own powers of invention. These propositions of classicistic criticism applied to Caravaggio since 1630 were eventually employed against French and Dutch painters by 1668.

A classically oriented view of art, however, already existed in Holland before 1650, having been promoted and stimulated in The Hague by Constantyn Huygens. Huygens, it should be remembered, had advised Rembrandt and Lievens early in their careers to go to Italy to study and become familiar with the works of Raphael and Michelangelo. It was also Huygens who counselled Frederik Henry on the
building and decoration of his palaces and the expansion of his art collections. Other indications of the presence of the classicistic critique can be found in the literature of the period. Certain features in Carel van Mander show a disposition towards classicism, but it is in Franciscus Junius with the translation of his *De Pictura Veterum* into Dutch in 1637 that we find a precursor to the classicists. William Goeree in his *Inleydinge Tot de Algemeene Teycken-Konst* of 1668, an influential classicistic work, respected the postulates of Junius' art theory.

Rembrandt bore the brunt of the classicistic attack after 1670, but whether he was aware of any classical bias against his work in the previous two decades is difficult to determine. The fact that De Bisschop's books were dedicated to Six and Huygens, the exponents of this new classicism and both former patrons of Rembrandt, does reflect a change of taste in the 1670's. A preference for classicistic art may have manifested itself earlier in the decade and could be a possible reason for the apparent cooling in the friendship between Rembrandt and Jan Six mentioned by White.

Emmens, moreover, has shown that the essential features of the classicistic critique were already present in the earlier treatises of the Italian critics. Breugel's letter shows that this critique was applied to Rembrandt shortly after his death.
The classicistic critique of Rembrandt, like that directed against Homer, in the first half of the seventeenth century, at any rate, would not have been sufficiently developed to seriously hamper his artistic production as is indicated by the number of commissions he received in the 1660's. It cannot be stated categorically that the classicizing critique of Homer would have endeared him to Rembrandt, although it could very well have played a part especially if Rembrandt were aware of a similar invective against himself. Rembrandt would have been aware, as well, of the general climate of opinion in favour of Homer in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. There are other factors, however, that I feel played a more important role in determining Rembrandt's attraction to Homer.

2. The Blind Bard

Various Rembrandt scholars, in relation to Homer, have mentioned Rembrandt's concern with blindness. This theme is particularly noticeable in the number of illustrations concerning Tobit's loss and recovery of sight. Blind or partially blind figures appear constantly in Rembrandt's work: the "Blinding of Samson" (Br. 501) of 1636, "Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph" (Br. 525) of 1656, and the "Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis" (Br. 482) of 1661. In addition there are drawings of blind beggars (Ben. nos. 749, 750), of fiddling beggars who are also probably blind (Ben. nos. 739, 740) as is the one in the etching of 1631 (B. 138). Belisarius, the Byzantine general, who ended his
life as a blind beggar is found in a drawing of the late 1650's (Ben.no.1053) with an inscription in Dutch: "Have pity for poor Belisarius who was once in great esteem because of his heroic deeds and who was blinded through jealousy." A blind man, and possibly a blind woman, are included in the etching "The Hundred Guilder Print" (B.74). Blindness, therefore, was inherent in much of Rembrandt's work. The problem is to determine its significance and especially how Rembrandt interpreted it in relation to Homer.

Held offers several conjectures which may assist in an explanation of this phenomenon. Traditionally the loss of sight was interpreted as a retributive punishment and was considered one of the worst tragedies that could befall a man. Since the painter's craft demands in a sense that he be a voyeur, an over concern with sight may reflect a subconscious feeling of guilt. Blindness would then be the retributive form of punishment for the Freudian 'lust of the eye'. Held postulates that the nature of Homer's blindness, which protected him from defilement through visual contact with the world, may have made him an ideal figure for Rembrandt.

Another possible reason for Rembrandt's concern with blindness may stem from his own father. There is good reason to believe that Harmen Gerrits van Ryn was blind. The only certain portrait of him, a drawing in the Ashmolean Museum (Ben.no.56r) would seem to indicate that he had
indeed lost his sight. A further indication that this belief is true can be found in a painting, "Tobit and Sarah Waiting for Tobias' Return", by Rembrandt's pupil, Gerard Dou, in which the master himself may have had a hand. Bauch has recognized Harmen Gerrits' features in the figure of Tobit. 43

It is the nature of Homer's blindness, at any rate, that Rembrandt, either consciously or subconsciously, would have found particularly appealing. For the Greek philosophers, the subject of blindness was a topic of much debate. To the Stoics it was a desirable affliction that frequently plagued their adversaries, the Academics. Sight was so indispensable to the Zenonist that in his opinion a wise blind man would prefer death rather than suffer its loss. Whether a man should take this course of action was much argued in the schools. It was the Epicureans who interpreted blindness in the positive sense. 44

Cicero, in speaking of the nature of blindness and of blind men he knew, relates its positive advantages:

"When Democritus lost his sight he could not, to be sure, distinguish black from white; but all the same he could distinguish good from bad, just from unjust, honourable from disgraceful, expedient from inexpedient, great from small, and it was permitted him to live happily without seeing changes of colour; it was not permissible to do so without true ideas. And this man believed that the sight of the eyes was an obstacle to the piercing vision of the soul and, whilst others often failed to see what lay at their feet, he ranged freely into the infinite without finding any boundary that brought him to a halt." 45
Homer's blindness was at first seen in the retributive sense in that it was inflicted upon him as a punishment for slandering Helen of Troy, but Suidas reinterpreted it as a means to keep the mind unvitiated by sensual appetites. Finally, Homer was credited with this "Piercing vision of the soul." That Rembrandt was aware of such an interpretation of blindness can be seen in a sketch of Christ healing a blind man (Ben.no.C92), known in a copy, illustrating the ninth chapter in John:

"As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."

Homer, in the same sense, is a prophet not in spite of his blindness but because of his blindness.

3. Conclusion

Rembrandt was essentially interested in Homer the man rather than in his works. In contrast to his treatment of Ovid, he borrows only one subject from Homer, "Thetis seeks Achilles to take part in Battle" (Ben.no.A45), and even this is of doubtful attribution. Rembrandt did not use the Homeric poems as sources for his subjects. His fascination with Homer is, I feel, with the image of Homer as the inspired prophet and the great teacher whose words must be copied down for the enlightenment and benefit of mankind. It is the importance of the word that Rembrandt
constantly stresses. Both in "Homer Reciting His Verses" (Ben.no.913) and in the Mauritshuis painting, Homer is shown teaching. With respect to the former, I think it significant that Rembrandt adopts a similar composition for his depiction of "Christ Preaching" (B.67). Using Von Einem's words, "Both Homer and Christ are mediators of the Divine". In the Mauritshuis "Homer", Rembrandt again emphasizes Homer's didactic function. Even the Homer-type of figure in such works as "Nathan Admonishing David" (Ben.no.948) is represented in a similar fashion. Homer was just as much Alexander's teacher as Aristotle had been. Although Rembrandt may not have been familiar with the text of Homer's work, he was most certainly aware of his reputation as a source of universal and perhaps even Christian truth. Through the medium of allegory, Homer was credited with divine wisdom and polymathic knowledge; throught the medium of paint, Rembrandt made him the divine teacher and educator of mankind.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. B. Adam Bartsch, Catalogue raisonné de toutes les estampes qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt ... composé par les sieurs Gersaint, Helle, Glomy e P. Yver (Vienna: 1797).


I have included many arguments and personal comments in the notes to Chapter One that could have been incorporated into the body of the text, but feel that, because of their nature and detail, they are more suitably placed here.

CHAPTER I

1. The fragment in the Mauritshuis represents approximately one third of the original composition (see page 12 and n.31 for a discussion concerning the dimensions). It has been damaged by fire. Goldscheider mentions that there was a fire in the Ruffo picture gallery in 1848 during which the "Homer" was severely damaged, and the "Alexander" was probably lost. (L. Goldscheider, Rembrandt. London, 1967, p.175). Rousseau, however, believes that both the "Homer" and the "Aristotle" were probably sold in Naples before 1815. (T. Rousseau "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer," Metropolitan Museum Art Bulletin, Vol.20, No.5, 1962, p.155).

These two paintings, at any rate, did eventually end up in England. The "Aristotle" was exhibited in London in 1815, but the whereabouts of the "Homer" at this time unfortunately has not been determined. Finally, however, it was bought by T. Humphrey Ward in 1894 from the London art dealers, S.T. Smith and Son, for the sum of twelve shillings, and was subsequently acquired by Dr. A. Bredius in the same year who exhibited it on loan in the Royal Gallery at The Hague. (C. Hofstede de Groot, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century, London, 1916, no.217, p.143).

Although the "Aristotle" has been reduced in size, there is no evidence to suggest that this reduction was the result of a fire. Both "Alexanders" (Br.479 and Br.480), if either can be considered part of the Ruffo commission, would also have suffered from a size reduction, but once again whether this loss is due to fire damage is not clear. Gerson in speaking of the Ruffo portraits states simply that some have suffered from heat without naming which ones (A. Bredius, Rembrandt, (revised by H. Gerson) 3 ed., London, 1969, p.594).

If all three paintings were damaged by the same fire, it would have had to occur before July 21, 1738, the dated of the sale of the Glasgow "Alexander" (Br.480) in Brussels, or, assuming the Gulbenkien "Alexander" (Br.479) to be the "lost" painting, before June 5, 1765, when it was sold in Amsterdam. The fire of 1848, at any rate, therefore, would not appear to have been the one that harmed the Rembrandt paintings.
Until more is learned about the nature and extent of the damage of the "Aristotle", "Alexander(s)" and "Homer", little can be said other than that the "Homer" was damaged by fire at some time. X-Ray examinations may perhaps give some further clues as to the damage suffered by the respective paintings. Slive, for example, suspects that Aristotle's large beret could be overpainting since Aristotle is listed in the Ruffo inventory as wearing a Turkish Turban. Held, however, mentions that X-Rays have indeed been taken of the "Aristotle" but refers only to the sleeve on Aristotle's left arm which was much narrower than it is now. He fails to say anything concerning the hat. (J. Held, Rembrandt's Aristotle and other Rembrandt Studies, Princeton, 1969, p.16, n.51).


4. Christodorus in The Greek Anthology, Bk.II, 322 ff. This description of Homer was made from a bronze statue in the celebrated gymnasium called Zeuxippos, erected under Septimius Severus at Byzantium and destroyed by fire shortly after Christodorus wrote (A.D.532).

5. The fillet or crown that has been traditionally associated with poets is of course the laurel wreath. According to Homer crowns were presented to only divine beings such as the Olympian gods (Il. XVIII,485) or to an entire army (Il. XIII, 736); but they were never presented to a single individual no matter how great his valour.

Later the laurel wreath was awarded to the victors in the Pythian games at Delphi which were held in honour of Apollo, the god of poetry and song. The nature of the contests in Thucydides' opinion (Bk.III,4IV.2-5) is defined by Homer himself in the "Hymn to the Delian Apollo":

"At other times, Phoebus, Delos is dearest to thy heart, where the Ionians in trailing robes are gathered together with their wives and children in thy street; there they delight thee with boxing and dancing and song, making mention of thy name, whenever they ordain the contest."

Apollo was connected with the laurel in various ways: he had been purified by the blood of the python in the laurel groves of Tempe and, in the Daphne legend, his love for the nymph was spited by her transformation into the tree that afterwards bore her name. Daphne is the Greek name for the laurel tree. (A. Whittick, Symbols Signs and their Meaning, Massachusetts, 1960, p.206).

Classical busts of Homer, nevertheless, do not show him wearing a laurel wreath but instead a fillet probably either of linen or wool. Plato, for example, when he banishes
Homer from his ideal state says: "we should send him away to another city, after pouring myrrh down over his head and crowning him with fillets of wool." (Plato, Republic, Bk. III, 398). In Roman times an embroidered fillet of linen or silk was the attribute of sovereignty and was of oriental origin.

Rembrandt apparently has transformed the wool into gold. Pliny in Natural History, IV, Bk. XVI, III 8 records that in Roman times golden crowns ranked below civic wreaths. There were several varieties awarded for specific actions. One decorated with turrets, for example, was given to the first man who scaled the walls of a besieged city. Another variety of triumphal crown was called corona aurea. The corona navalis or rostrata was decorated with the beaks of ships and was awarded to the first sailor who boarded an enemy ship and later to a commander who won an important victory. There is no mention, however, of awarding a golden crown for poetic achievements and all the crowns previously mentioned are essentially awards for military valour. Arrian, Anabasis Alexandri I, XII, 1 records that: "When Alexander reached Illium, Menoetius the navigator crowned him with a golden wreath and so did Chares ...."

Rembrandt must have assumed that Homer's fillet was made of gold, or at least was gold in colour, nor would the classical bust in his collection (Urk. 169, no. 163) lead him to think otherwise. Gold in fact would seem a more logical choice than linen or wool because of its inherent value. The fact that Rembrandt adopted this ancient symbol in place of the more traditional one, the laurel wreath, shows his respect for the antique model. Homer in the drawing Ben. no. 913, for example, does seem to be crowned with a laurel wreath. Most Renaissance and Baroque portraits of Homer, especially Italian, employ the laurel wreath rather than the wool fillet even though these artists would have had even better access to authentic classical busts. See: Raphael's Homer in the "Parnassus" of the Vatican Stanze; Joos van Gent's "Homer" in the Palazzo Barberini, Rome; Pierfrancesco Mola's "Homer Dictating his Verses", Rumjantzeff Museum, Moscow, "Homer Playing the Viola", Corsini Gallery, Rome and the replica of the latter in Dresden. The laurel wreath was the highest honour that a poet could receive. Petrarch, on the recommendation of King Robert of Naples, was given the poet's crown of laurel at the hand of the Roman senator on the Capitol. No greater homage could be paid to him. (V. Hall Jr., Renaissance Literary Criticism, New York, 1945, p. 65).

6. The "cap" in this respect would be similar in arrangement to the type of headcloth that Nathan wears in "Nathan Admonishing David" (Ben. no. 948) and also that worn by the 'Homer' prophet in the background of "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" (Br. 588). Homer in "Homer Dictating to a
Scribe" (Ben.no.1066) may have a kerchief separate from the mantle as does Aert de Gelder's bard in "Homer Dictating to Scribes" in Boston (reproduced in H. Gerson Rembrandt Paintings, New York, 1968, p.140, fig.371). Also Rembrandt's "Christ" (Br.629) appears to have his head covered in a similar fashion.

Traditionally Homer was shown, both in sculpture and painting, with his head bare. There is one classical precedent, a bust in the Museo Capitolino (R. and E. Boehringer, Homer, Bildnisse und Nachweise, pl.63, c,d), that represents Homer with his mantle draped over the back of his head. This region of the bust, however, has been extensively restored. Visconti mentions that it is a sign of deification, yet Bernoulli states that this motif is more Roman than Greek. According to Livy it was a tradition among the Romans for the pontifex maximus or officiating priest to veil his head when performing a sacred rite.

Undoubtedly this veiled head had some special significance for Rembrandt. He seems to be equating Homer with the priest and prophet figures that appear in other works such as the "Priest" in the "Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis" (Br.482) or even to St. Peter in the "Apostle Peter Denying Christ" (Br.594). Fitz Darby points out that a skull cap was the mark of a teacher or philosopher, but it is difficult to conceive Rembrandt's cap conforming to this type although the implication of Homer as the great teacher would be most appropriate. (D. Fitz Darby, "Ribera and the Wise Men," The Art Bulletin, Vol.44, 1962, p.297).


7. The closest counterparts to this gesture can be found in "King David with a Boy" by Memling (cf., M. Friedlander, Early Netherlandish Painting, Vol.VI, Part I, pl.78) and a "Portrait of Clement VII" by Sebastiano del Piombo (reproduced in F. Hartt "Power and the Individual in Mannerist Art", Acts of the XX International Congres of the History of Art. Studies in Western Art, II, 1963, pl.LIV, fig.6). Both works are interesting in that they show a youth to the immediate right of the figure in a manner not unlike Rembrandt's drawing of "Homer Dictating to a Scribe" (Ben.no.1066). The gesture of the raised right hand may have ultimately derived from portraits of famous doctors of the church such as those executed by Joos van Gent in the studiolo of Federigo de Montefeltro at Urbino (reproduced in Friedlander, op.cit., plates 106-115). A usual formula, although not a dogmatic one, was to show the figure seated with the left hand resting on or holding an open or closed book while the right hand is raised as if the person were about to speak. Such a gesture might be interpreted as a benediction. Poets and Philosophers in this same series also have similar explanatory gestures as if they were
disputing some question in their work. Such gestures, moreover, were employed in the depiction of theological lectures where an instructor explains some point of dogma to students (see a "Theological Lecture" by Domenico di Michelino, Bergamo, Accademia Canara reproduced in J. Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance, London, 1937, pl.201).

Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis painting adopts this gesture as one of instruction typifying the relationship between student and teacher. Here Homer represents the teacher of mankind who knows "all the arts, and all things human pertaining to virtue and vice, and all things divine." (Plato, Republic, 433). Rembrandt employs this same expressive formula, once again, in a similar student-teacher situation "Doctor Nicolaes Tulp Demonstrating the Anatomy of the Arm" (Br.403). Tulp like Homer is shown with mouth slightly open gesticulating with his hand - in this instance the left hand - to assist in the explanation of some aspect concerning the anatomy of the arm to his attentive onlookers.

Rembrandt seems to have been particularly fond of 'painting' the voice. His portrait of "The Mennonite minister Cornelis Claesz. Anslo in conversation with a woman" (Br.409) may in fact be an answer to such a challenge offered by the poet Joost van den Vondel. Vondel dedicated an epigram of four lines either to this portrait of Anslo, executed in 1641, or to an etching of him also dated in the same year (B.271). The poem runs as follows:

"O, Rembrandt paint Cornelius' voice. The visible is the least important part of him: The invisible one only learns through the ears He who wants to see Anslo, must hear him."

(See J.A. Emmens, "Ay Rembrandt, Maal Cornelis Stem," Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, 7, 1956,p.133; Bredius, op.cit., p.583; S. Slive, Rembrandt and his Critics 1630-1730, The Hague, 1953,p.73). If Vondel's poem were made with the etched portrait in mind, assuming it was done first, then Rembrandt's painting of the minister caught in mid-conversation gesticulating with his left hand might be interpreted as Rembrandt's answer to the poet's challenge. By painting Homer, Rembrandt again accepts the challenge where the 'painting' of the voice assumes an even more profound significance.

8. Clark (Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance, London, 1966, p.130) states that the pleated shirt was a part of sixteenth-century Venetian dress. Rembrandt was not interested in recreating classical costume. Held ("Rembrandt en de klassieke wereld," De Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis,
1972, 1, pp.3-17) moreover, mentions that Rembrandt borrowed many of his costumes for historical figures from the fashions and costumes of the stage. The "Drawing of an Actress" (Ben.no.318), for the medieval drama "Gijsbrecht van Amstel" for example, shows the actress in a costume that Rembrandt was later to employ in dressing the Greek princess in the foreground of the etching the "Marriage of Jason and Creusa" (B.112). In addition, the portraits of "Lucretia" (Br.484 and Br.485) as well as the "Juno" (Br.639) all have the heroine clothed in a style of dress strongly reminiscent of Venetian portraiture. Held remarks that the sumptuous and luxurious costumes of sixteenth-century Venice would be considered sufficiently classical for the heroes and gods of distant history.

According to Richter's description of Greek costume (The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks (4 ed.), London, 1970, pp.57-58) Homer should be wearing a chiton and himation or mantle. The chiton was a tunic of soft linen or wool made from one oblong cloth folded on one side and sewn on the other, or two rectangular pieces sewn on both sides. Sleeves were formed by either pinning or sewing the chiton at the top over the shoulders. Generally the chiton had a belt over which the garment was pulled to form a pouch. Cords too were occasionally used across the back and shoulders to keep the chiton in place especially if it were long. A variant of the tunic was the exomis fastened with a broach on one shoulder only, worn also with a belt, but consisting simply of a rectangular cloth.

The himation or mantle, was a large rectangular piece of cloth about seven or eight feet long and equal in width to the wearer's height. It was wrapped about the body in every conceivable manner.

9. This 'moulding' is similar in nature to the one that appears to the immediate right of the poet Jan Hermansz Krul (Br.171) and may indicate a division of the wall surface as in the background of "De Staalmeesters" (Br.415), but I suspect that it is actually part of a pillar like the one that appears in the drawing "Homer Dictating to a Scribe" (Ben.no.1066).

10. The contrasting red-gold accord of the 50's so strikingly represented in the "Aristotle" itself and especially in such works as "Jacob Blessing the Children of Joseph" (Br.525) by the end of the decade begins to mellow producing a more monochrome yet nevertheless intense colour harmony - a 'neutralizing' trend that can be detected not only in the "Homer" but also in the paintings the "Apostle Peter Denying Christ" (Br.594) or the "Return of the Prodigal Son" (Br.598). In such late paintings as the
"Dordrecht Merchant Jacob Trip" (Br.314) colour alone defines surfaces. Rembrandt's technique for colour creating form is perhaps most apparent in his last unfinished work of "Simeon with the Christ Child in the Temple" (Br.600).


12. W. Stechow ("Rembrandt-Democritus" in Art Quarterly, Vol.VII, No.4, 1944, p.223) was the first to compare the yellow light upon the shoulder with the Mauritshuis "Homer". The general painterly technique with the light falling upon the glowing mantle and the quick, coarse treatment of the face strongly recall the painting of Homer.


"Als ider stuek 6 palmen breedt is en 8 hoogh, sullente goede formaeten weesen, en de prijs aengaende en sullen den Heer Niet overschatten.

U.E. Gheneegen dienaer

Rembrandt van rhyn".

14. Ben.1066, fig.1283 "Homer Dictating to a Scribe". Pen and bistre in Indian ink, brush, heightened with white, top corners rounded off; yellow, grey washes partly by a later hand; 145 x 167 mm.; Stockholm Nationalmuseum; Collection of J.T. Sergel. The drawing was first attributed to Rembrandt in 1908 by G. Falk whose attribution was first supported by J. Kruse and then rejected by him in 1909. (See J. Kruse, "Eine neuentdeckte Homerus- Zeichnung von Rembrandt in Nationalmuseum zu Stockholm, Studie zum Gemalde im Mauritshuis", in Oud Holland, XXVII, 1909, p.221-228). It was also rejected by Schmidt-Degener in 1915, but has been accepted by Neumann, Valentiner and Bredius as authentic. The current general consensus of opinion is that it can be attributed to Rembrandt although it has obviously been tampered with. (See W.R. Valentiner, Rembrandt Handzeichnungen 2 Band, New York, 1934, no.567; Rembrandt. National Museum Stockholm Catalogue, 1956, no.186; C. Muller Hofstede, "Die Rembrandt-Ausstellung in Stockholm," in Kunstchronik, IX, 1956, p.94; Rembrandt 1669/1969, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Catalogue, 1969, no.138).

15. See pp.10-12.

17. *Ibid.* The paintings in question by Salvator Rosa are listed as follows: no. 242 "Storia di Pitagora che compra i pesci da' pescatore in una barca, scena marittima ... 7 x 5" and no. 244 "Il filosofo Anchita tarantino con la sua colomba ... 3\frac{1}{2} x 5\frac{1}{2}." Converting the palmi to meters would make the dimensions of the respective paintings 1.68 x 1.20 m. and 0.84 x 1.32 m. L. Salerno (*Salvator Rosa*, Milano, 1963) gives the dimensions of the first (Cat.no. 68) as 1.27 x 1.87 m. (for slightly different dimensions see *Catalogue of Paintings in the Dahlem Museum*, Berlin, 1968, No. 1/59, 1.31 x 1.87 m.) and of the second (Cat.no. 88) as 1.32 x 0.96 m. By reversing the height and width, therefore, the dimensions correspond quite closely to those listed in the Ruffo inventory.

18. "Cosmografa con un turbante turchino in testa che considera un mappamondo tenato con la mano sinistra sopra un tavolino e con la destra va accennando ... 8 x 6 palmi. (Ruffo, *op.cit.*, p.316).

19. See Appendix A. I quote the relevant section from J. Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," in *Art Quarterly*, VII, 1944, p.130.

"Will you, therefore, kindly send me the measurements, both the height and the breadth of the painting, so that I, on my part, shall not fail to use the same dimensions, and as much as my poor ability will allow, you yourself will see expressed in this picture.

If you would also, on the occasion of sending me the measurements, be willing to honour me with a little sketch of Rembrandt's picture, done by some painter, so that I could see the disposition of the half-figure, I should consider it the greatest favour, and should be better able to make a counterpart, as well to place the light in the right place. I shall wait also the subject which I am to represent, in order to be able to conform more closely to your wishes ...."


23. W.R. Valentiner (*Rembrandt and Spinoza*, London, 1957, p.73, n.1) refers to the fact that the "Alexander" is mentioned in the Ruffo inventory being seated as "obviously one of the errors which occur frequently in the old inventories."
24. Ben.913, fig.1123 "Homer Reciting Verses"
Reed-pen and bistre, arched top; inscribed and dated by the artist: "Rembrandt aen Joannus Sicx.1652"; 255x180 mm.; Amsterdam Six Collection. See Appendix B.

25. The drawings Ben. no.913 and Ben. no.914 "Anna Wymer, Burgomaster Jan Six's Mother, as Pallas, in her study", are in a book, a quarto volume, cut, gilded and bound in parchment. On the binding in delicate script is inscribed "Pandora, 1651". An explanation of the title is given by two loose leaves at the beginning a gouache copy after the central figure in Bloemart's engraving "Creation of Pandora" and a small slip of paper on which is written: "Les Dieux enrichissent Pandore de leurs dons précieux pour la rendre agréable aux Hommes." The two drawings appear almost in the centre of the book after about thirty-four blank pages where it is assumed that Rembrandt could make them most easily since they are drawn directly into the book and not stuck in. Besides the Liber amicorum, Jan Six owned a "groote Pandora" consisting of a collection of quotations, proverbs, maxims and jokes written on the used sheets of a Town Council record book. Six merely turned it back to front and upside down and wrote "Pandora" on what had been the back cover. (See Dora and Erwin Panofsky, Pandora's Box, New York, 1956, p.68, n.3.) Clara Bille interprets "Homer Reciting his Verses" as an implied compliment to the young poet Six who she sees as the young scribe sitting at the feet of Homer. (See Clara Bille, "Rembrandt and Burgomaster Jan Six," in Apollo, 85, 1967, pp.260-265).

26. See Appendix B.

27. The tradition of representing scribes copying down the words of the illustrious person portrayed, perhaps stemming from Raphael, can be found in sixteenth century Italian portraits such as one attributed to Girolamo da Carpi "Ippolito de' Medici conferring an office on Monsignor Mario Bracci" (reproduced in Sixteenth Century Italian Schools, National Gallery London Catalogue, 1964, p.95) or Sebastiano del Piombo's portrait of "Bishop Carondolet" (reproduced in H. Von Einem, "Rembrandt und Homer," in Wallraf-Richartz - Jahrbuch, Vol.XIV, 1952, p.198,pl.174). That Van Dyck was familiar with this tradition can be seen from his portrait of "Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, with his Secretary Sir Philip Mainwaring" (reproduced in G. Glück, Van Dyck, New York, 1931,S.483). Pierfrancesco Mola's portraits of "Homer Dictating His Verses" and "Homer Playing a Viola" (reproduced in H. Voss, Die Malerei des Barock in Rom, Berlin, 1924, p.286) and a copy of the latter in Dresden (reproduced in F. Schmidt Degener, "Rembrandt en Homerus", in Feest-Bundel, Amsterdam, 1915, pl.12) are all
part of this tradition that Rembrandt must have come in contact with. Scribes appear in some of Rembrandt's works such as the one in the "Justice of Brutus" (?) (Br.460) or the account keeper in the "Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard" (Br.558). For Homer as a prophet and teacher see Chapter Three.

28. I visualize the scribe being seated in a manner similar to the "Man Dictating a Letter to a Scribe" (Ben.no.599). This angle of viewing a figure from the back is a characteristic feature of several drawings and appears as well in "The Departure of Tobias" (Ben.no.597), "The Unworthy Wedding Guest" (Ben.no.612) and in "Christ conversing with Mary and Martha" (Ben.no.631). The position of Mary, on the right in the latter drawing, shown holding an open book is, I feel, how Rembrandt depicted his scribe in the Mauritshuis "Homer". He would be turned, however, slightly more away from the viewer to give a three-quarter view rather than the profile view in the case of Mary.

29. There are two drawings of "Nathan Admonishing David", Ben.no.947 and Ben.no.948 of which the latter is the more mature and shows more of the chair. Both drawings, however, relate quite closely to the drawing Ben.no.1066 and the Mauritshuis fragment with respect to the general disposition of the 'Homer-type' of figure. Nathan like Homer is shown gesticulating with raised right arm, a gesture akin to that of the Mauritshuis "Homer". This gesture is closer to the painting in Ben.no.948 than in Ben.no.947 since in the former the back of the hand is seen whereas in the latter more of the palm is visible. The chair represented in Ben.no.A83 is probably the clearest interpretation of how the chair in the Mauritshuis painting should look.

30. Aert de Gelder, 1645 - 1727, probably came to Rembrandt's atelier when the master was working on the "Civilis" and witnessed the creation of Rembrandt's last great works. De Gelder was the pupil most faithful to Rembrandt's late style.

31. The "Aristotle" has lost 53 cm. in height and 11 cm. in width; the Gulbenkian "Alexander" (Br.479), 74 cm. in height, 53 cm. in width; the Glasgow "Alexander" (Br.480), 54.5 cm. in height, 56.5 cm. in width; and the "Homer", 84 cm. in height and 61.5 cm. in width.

32. If the fragment were more centrally aligned then it might be possible to have the second scribe appear in the lower-left corner of the painting. Such a figure might be akin to the 'admirer' who is shown seated resting his arm on Homer's chair in the drawing "Homer Reciting
his Verses" (Ben. no. 913) or to a similar figure who appears at Christ's feet on the left in the etching 'Le petite tombe' B. 67. That Rembrandt was fond of such an arrangement can be seen from another drawing, Ben. no. 541 "The Brethren of Joseph Requesting Benjamin from their Father" where Rembrandt has actually superimposed such a figure seated on the left on the raised platform.

33. Cf. p. 3.

34. It has been generally assumed that Rembrandt's bust was a cast. Cf. Bernoulli, Griechische Ikonographie, I, p. 11, no. 17; Boehringer, op. cit., p. 99, no. D, pls. 53-55; Richter, The Portraits of the Greeks, I, p. 52. Rembrandt's inventory only lists "one plaster cast of a Greek antique" ("een pleyster giestal van een Greeks antiq"), Urk. 169, no. 329, but other works in his collection such as the antique "Laocoon", Urk. 169, no. 329, must have been casts as well. Rembrandt in addition to the antique casts owned a considerable amount of plaster work, especially those "cast from life". Urk. 169, nos. 6. one head in plaster; 161. one head of a Moor east from life; 178. eight large pieces of plaster work, cast from life; 316. a large collection of hands and heads cast from life; 317. seventeen hands and arms, cast from life. Clark, op. cit., p. 200 points out that life casts were used for teaching students up to the end of the nineteenth century. Casts of antiques and antique sculpture itself presumably were used for similar purposes. See Appendix C.

35. The actual physical portrait of Homer is unknown since he lived ca. 800-700 B.C. during the Geometric period of Greek art when no individualized likeness could have been produced. It was during the Hellenistic period that the idealized portrait reached its maximum maturity. The practice of decorating libraries with portraits of the great poets and prose writers of the past gave new impetus to its evolution. Pliny (XXXV, 2.9) in referring to these portraits adds that "even our yearning for them gives birth to countenances that have been handed down to us as occurs in the case of Homer." These idealized portraits, therefore, had no real iconographic basis but were character-types or portrait compositions based either on legend or left to the imagination of the individual artists.

Four categories of Homer portraits have been recognized: the so-called Epimenides type; the so-called Modena type; the so-called Apollonios of Tyana type; and finally the Hellenistic, Blind type. In the first, the poet is represented as a venerable old man with a long flowing beard. His loss of sight is suggested by closed eyes, a motif adopted by Raphael for his Homer in the "Parnassus" of the Vatican Stanze. There are only two known
copies of the Modena type both in bronze, thus its influence on later artists would be very limited. The third type, Appollonios of Tyana, was identified as being Homer chiefly by its similarity to a head inscribed Homeros on Roman coins of Amastris in Paphlagonia, a colony of Smyrna. F. Ursinus, the Renaissance antiquarian, owned a statuette, now lost, which resembled this type and was drawn by Galleus (Vat. Cod. Cupp. 228, no. 120) as well as by Rubens (cf. Boehringer, op. cit., pp. 43 ff., pl. 17b and 18c).

The Hellenistic, Blind type of Homer is the most celebrated of all the invented portraits. It was during the Hellenistic era that the sculptors, with their intense love of realistic detail, were able to take the scanty literary descriptions of Homer and create a portrait of the bard not as he was but as he ought to have been. This type captures the poetic genius and the whole intellectual being of Homer so convincingly that it is difficult to imagine him otherwise. The Hellenistic, Blind type of head seems to derive from one created at Alexandria between 200 and 50 B.C., where Homer and his work were the favourites of the Alexandria Library and the schools of the Ptolemaic court. Rembrandt with his interest in depicting aged scholars would have been naturally attracted to such a head.


38. Two sketches of a full-length terminal figure in Marten van Heemskerck's Roman Sketch book (1535-1536) Vol. 1, folio 64 v, now in the Berliner Kupferstichkabinett, has been thought by several scholars to represent this bust before being cut down (reproduced in Boehringer, op. cit., pl. 52, a, b.) Both Bernoulli and Richter, however, state that the likeness of this bust to the Hellenistic, Blind type is slight. I feel that they are correct in questioning the fact that Heemskerck's drawings may not be of the Capitoline bust, but the very nature of the drawings does not rule out this possibility. The frontal view could indeed be a Homer whereas the profile view seems to be quite different: the former appears to represent the poet's fillet, the latter does not. Girolamo da Carpi's drawing (attributed to him by A.E. Popham, reproduced in C.C. Vermeule, III, "The Dal Pozzo-Albani Drawings of Classical Antiquities in the British Museum," in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 50, Part 5, 1960, p. 27, no. 390, fig. 89) appears to be taken from a Hellenistic, Blind type of herm, but whether it is of the Capitoline bust again is questionable.
39. Vermeule, op. cit., p. 27 records that this bust apparently came before the museum received the Albani Collection.

40. Held, op. cit., p. 18.
CHAPTER II


4. Dante's features are preserved in a bronze bust, now in the Museo Nazionale in Naples, as well as in Michelino's "Dante and His 'Divine Comedy'" in the Duomo of Florence. Similarly, we find Petrarch in a fresco by Andrea del Castagno in Sant' Appollonia in Florence and again in a portrait by an unknown fifteenth-century master in the Galleria Borghese at Rome. (For reproductions, see respectively Burchardt, *op. cit.*, figs. 213, 218, 221, 222).

5. S. Scrope, W. Worcester and Anonymous Translator (trans.), *The Diets and Sayings of the Philosophers*, London, 1941, pp. xx-xxi. Although we might find it odd to have such figures as Hermes and Alexander considered as philosophers, this attribution results from moralizing the events of their life. Since their stories have philosophical value, they themselves were considered philosophers.


8. I was not able to obtain much information on the portraits in the palaces of Como, Florence and Mandragone but there are a series of such portraits in a small gallery in the Galleria Borghese (sala XV). They are arranged in two tiers and consist of small likenesses of famous Greeks and Romans depicted in attractive medallions inscribed with their names. The features of each, however, are purely invented. No attempt was made to secure a real likeness of the individual even when a certainly identified portrait of him was known at the time. (See Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 23).

9. See Appendix D.

11. Ibid., p.28. Rubens made a series of eight painted sketches around 1626-1627 that represented scenes from the life of Achilles; seven are in the Boymans Museum and the eighth is in the Whitcomb Collection at Detroit. They were meant to be designs for tapestries and were mentioned in the inventory of Daniel Fourment, Ruben's father-in-law, in 1643 at Antwerp. The themes were taken from Homer, Virgil, Pausanias and Statius: Thetis submerging her new-born in the Styx; Achilles educated by the Centaur Chiron; Achilles with the daughters of Lycomedes; Deeds during the Trojan War; Wrath against Agammemnon; Thetis' request to Vulcan to forge armour for her son; Struggle between Achilles and Hector; and finally the Death of Achilles. It is not known what subjects Ruffo's set of tapestries had. See R. Van Luttervelt, The Rijksmuseum and other Dutch Museums, London, 1967, p.135; A.S. Cavallo, Tapestries of Europe and of Colonial Peru in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, 1967, cat.no. 36.


14. Haskell, op.cit., p.209 At least some first hand knowledge of Rembrandt's painting style could have been known in Italy from the Danish painter, Bernhardt Keil. Baldinucci employed him as an oral source in his biography of Rembrandt. Keil had studied with Rembrandt in Amsterdam from around 1642 to 1644 and remained there until he left for Italy in 1651 where he remained until his death in 1678. See Slive, op.cit., pp.106-108.


16. Abrahaam Bruegel's letter to Don Antonio Ruffo on Jan.24, 1670:

"By your letter of Dec.29, I see that you have had made various half-figures by the best painters of Italy, and that none of them approach those of Rembrandt. It is true I agree with this but one must consider that great painters, like those by whom you have had your half figures made, are not usually willing to lower themselves for a trifling draped half figure in which the light shows only the tip of the nose, and in which one does not know where the light comes from, since all the rest is dark. The great painters try to show a beautiful nude body, in which one can see their knowledge of drawing. But an incompetent person, on the contrary tries to cover his figures with dark clumsy garments, and this kind of painter does the contours so that one does not know what to make of it ...."
What I merely want to say is, this is no business of great men, to occupy themselves with such trifles, which almost anyone can do. But I beg you to forgive me for speaking so freely. My love of painting leads me to do so ...."

This translation is from Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," op. cit., 132-134 and was made by Miss Ruth Magurn.


20. Held, op. cit., p.27.

21. The only fault with Held's suggestion of the bust becoming a symbol of survival is in the relationship between it and the living figure. In the case where the skull is used the relationship is more direct: the man is made aware of his own personal mortality. In the case of the bust, however, the theme of survival would depend largely on the identity of the bust itself. Would any classical bust do to suggest this theme of survival and make the person portrayed aware of his own personal immortality? The connection does not seem to be as strong as with the skull.

22. Ibid., p.7.

23. Letter from Guercino to Don Antonio Ruffo, Oct.6 1660 quoted from Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," op. cit., p.130:

"For the half-figure to accompany that of Rembrandt, which I judge represents a Physiognomist, I thought it would be very appropriate to paint a Cosmographer, as I have in fact already done."

24. Cf. Appendix A.

25. Cf. n.22.


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

30. See Appendix E.

31. See Appendix F.

32. The difficulty that Harmen Becker encountered in trying to obtain the "Juno" (Br.639) from Rembrandt may also reflect the artist's lack of time.


35. Held, op.cit., p.12.

36. Ibid.

37. See Appendix G.

38. This translation was made by Miss Ruth Magurn from J. Rosenberg, "Rembrandt and Guercino," op.cit., p.132; Ruffo, op.cit., p.241: "Mi sono trattenuto a non scrivere a S.S. Ill. ma per vedere di mandarli assieme con la lettera un pezzo di quattro con una mezza figure che anch'io lega il torbante in testa come l'altre due che tiene assai belle e il mio sera Dionisio Seragoseno...."


40. Ibid., p.12.

41. Ruffo, op.cit., p.128: "In quel modo che fece una volta sopra la tela, mentre starebbe bene appresso l'altro per mettere Alexandro nel mezzo se così comandano me lo avvisano." Ruffo assumed that Don Antonio put the "Homer" and "Alexander" together; the "Aristotle" had Guercino's "Cosmographer" as its pendant. Held, op.cit., p.21, f.n.69 states that such an arrangement would automatically put "Homer" on the left and "Aristotle" on the right facing toward the centre. Both Hoogewerff and Valentiner, however, place "Aristotle" on the left and "Homer" on the right. See G.J. Hoogewerff, "Rembrandt en een Italiaansche Maecenas," Oud Holland, XXXV, 1917, p.138 and W.R. Valentiner, Rembrandt and Spinoza, London, 1957, p.67. I think Held's arrangement is the most suitable compositionally with both "Aristotle" and "Homer" facing the centre. This note would appear to be by Ruffo's agent in Amsterdam and it must be remembered that the instruction to place "Alexander" in the centre comes via this intermediary. One would naturally think that the "Aristotle" would be the central focus of attention if the "Alexander" and "Homer" were considered as pendants. It would seem natural, although perhaps
redundant, to have "Homer" on the left and "Alexander" on the right facing Aristotle. The intensity of meaning that Held sees in the "Aristotle" would also justify placing it in the centre. It should be noted here, however, that both the "Aristotle" and the "Homer" are essentially paintings complete within themselves; the "Alexanders" are not so complete. If either "Alexander" can be considered the Ruffo painting, then placing the "Aristotle" and the "Homer", on the right and left respectively, might give it added support. I feel that the note's advice, although cautiously, must be taken into account. Such an arrangement also agrees better with my interpretation of Homer and Aristotle as the teachers of the young Alexander.

42. Aristotle, Poetics, IV, 10-15.

43. Plutarch, Alexander, VIII.2.

44. Plutarch, Alexander, XXVI.1.

45. Arrian, Anabasis Alexandri, Bk.1, XII.

46. Plutarch, Alexander, VIII.3

47. Valentiner, op. cit., p.67.


49. Held, op. cit., p.22.


52. Held, op. cit., p.40.

53. Ibid., p.39.

54. On October 18, 1641, Philip Angel in an address given in Leyden on St. Luke's day used Rembrandt's painting, "Samson's Wedding Feast" (Br.507), as an example of how it is a painter's duty to inform the viewers of the past. Rembrandt "achieved this by a precise reading of history and by carefully thinking about the meaning of what he read." See S. Slive, Rembrandt and his Critics 1630-1730, The Hague, 1953, pp.37-46.
CHAPTER III


4. Plato, Republic, Bk. X, VIII.

5. Curtius, op. cit., p. 204.

6. Plato, Republic, Bk. II, XVII.

7. See Hepp, op. cit., p. 97. Eustathius received his greatest sphere of influence between 1600 and 1650. Such erudites as Isaac Casaubon and Saumaise left their manuscripts covered with notes taken from Eustathius. A lesser scholar, Pierre de Marcussus even composed an extract of remarkable things he found in both Homer and this eminent interpreter. When Gassendi was reading Homer, he asked his friend Peirse to send him a copy of Eustathius, but he did not find in it what he had hoped to.


9. Ibid., p. 91.

10. Aristotle's Poetics restored poetry as a philosophical science of poetry and conceded it both an ethical and a philosophical value. This explains why ever since the middle of the sixteenth century, his Poetics has been the central focus to all attempts to discuss the nature of poetry philosophically. See Curtius, op. cit., p. 146. In this respect, it is appropriate that it is Aristotle and not Plato who has his hand on the bust of Homer. The kinship between philosophy and poetry is essentially an Aristotellean bond.


13. Ibid., p. 115.

14. For this section see Allen, op. cit., pp. 100-105.
15. V. Hall, Jr., Renaissance Literary Criticism, New York, 1945, p. 70.


18. Ibid., p. 206, n. 44.


20. The features of the Vulgar Poet were drawn from the works of Horace: his portrait of the Foolish Poet in the second Epistle of Book Two. Both types are characterized by limitless faith in their own inspiration and naive admiration for their own work. Horace recommends that a poet should strike a balance between Inventiveness (ingenium), a feature of Homer praised even by his enemies, and Discipline (studium). Vondel's Aanleiding ter Nederduits Dichtkunst stated the case for this Horatian balance for Dutch poets. (See Emmens, op. cit., pp. 180-181.) For the features of the Learned Painter see Lee, op. cit., pp. 235-242.


22. Ibid., p. 140.

23. Finsler, op. cit., p. 139.


25. The seven advantages were: the glory of invention; his reputation among the Greeks - both Plato and Aristotle admired him; his heroes' characters were better defined; he was more instructive in matters of morals and politics as well as having richer poetry; he was considered the treasure of the Greek language whereas Virgil did not occupy the same position with respect to the Latin language; his descriptions of combats and wars were better; and finally the fact that he had been revered for all time. See Hepp, op. cit., p. 394.


27. Slive, op. cit., p. 102.

30. Ibid., p.187.
31. Ibid., pp. 181-182.
32. See Breugel's letter Ch.II, n.16.
35. Emmens, op. cit., p.186.
36. Ibid.
37. See C. White, Rembrandt and His World, London, 1964; Clara Bille, "Rembrandt and Burgomaster Jan Six," in Apollo, 85, 1967, pp.260-265. Six had lent Rembrandt 1,000 florins in 1653 and had his portrait painted by the master in 1654 (Br.276) which would indicate a close relationship between the two at that time, at least on a patron-painter basis. After 1658, however, there is no further indications of any contact between them. A possible cooling in their relationship may be reflected by the fact that Margareta Tulp, married to Tulp in the previous year, had her portrait painted by Govert Flinck rather than by Rembrandt. Another reason for this apparent cooling again concens Flinck. Uylenburg was recommending Flinck to his many influential friends, one of whom was Jan Six. Rembrandt's debt to Six has also been mentioned as a possible sore point between the two, but Six lost no money in this transaction since he had sold the promisory note to Gerbrandt Ornia. It was Ludewyck van Ludick who had to stand security for the 1,000 florins plus 200 florins interest. Just how close Rembrandt and Six had been still requires further investigation.
38. See Chapter II, note 15.
39. Scholars such as H. van de Waal ("The Iconological Background of Rembrandt's Civilis," in Särtbyck Konsthistorisk Tidskrift, XXV, 1-2, 1956, pp.12-25) and J.W. von Moltke (Govaert-Flinck, Amsterdam, 1965) have suggested that "The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis" (Br.482) was removed from the Amsterdam Town Hall because of a classicistic bias. Rembrandt may have sinned against decorum in portraying such details as showing Civilis with only one eye and representing the oath as almost a 'barbaric' ritual. There are other reasons, both architectural and economic, that may explain why Rembrandt's canvas was taken down.
The budding spirit of classicism may have been a factor that influenced the burgomasters not to reinstate Rembrandt's painting, but it does not tell the whole story since they must have been aware of Rembrandt's capabilities when they commissioned him to do the painting in the first place.

40. For this section see Held, "Rembrandt and the Book of Tobit," op. cit., pp.104-128.

41. Quoted from Held, op. cit., p.125 n.3. Benesch gives the reading as: "Have pity with / the poor Belisarius / who was once in great / esteem because of his / manlike deeds / and who because of jealousy / was deprived of his eye-sight.

42. Ibid., pp.125-128.

43. Ibid., p.127.

44. Cicero (Tusculan Disputations, V, XXXVIII) reflects this philosophic view when he says: "it was the soul which receives the objects we see. Now the soul may have delight in many different ways, even without the use of sight, for I am speaking of an educated and instructed man with whom life is thought; and the thought of the wise man scarcely ever calls in the support of the eyes to aid in his researches."

45. Ibid.

46. See Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology, New York, 1939, p.109, n.48. Both Homer and Stesichorus were accused of maligning Helen:

"There can be no doubt about the latter (Stesichorus), for I saw him there - by that time Helen had forgiven him". Stesichorus had said harsh words of Helen and was blinded by Castor and Pollux for his presumption. He recanted in a famous Palinode, of which some lines are still preserved and so recovered his eyesight. (Lucian, A True Story, I, 15).

"And for all who sin in matter of legends, there is an ancient form of purification with which Stesichorus was acquainted, though Homer was not. For when he was deprived of his eyesight for maligning Helen, he was not ignorant, like Homer, of the cause, but a true votary of the Muses, he learnt his fault, and straightway sang

False was my tale - unpassed the rolling sea,
And Troy's proud turrets never viewed by thee.

And so, having composed all his palinode, as it is called, he immediately recovered his sight." (Plato, Phaedrus, 243a).
That Homer was in fact blind stems from the belief that he was the author of the Hymn to the Delian Apollo:

"Come now, let Apollo be gracious and Artemis likewise, and farewell, all ye maidens, Yet remember me even in after times, whenever some other toil-enduring man, a dweller upon the earth, shall visit this isle and ask: 'O maidens, what man is the sweetest of the minstrels to you of all who wander hither, and in whom do you take most delight.' Do you make answer, all with one accord, in gentle words, 'The blind man who dwells in rugged Chios.'" (Thucydides, Bk.III, CIV.5).

Not all Antique authors, however, were willing to accept Homer's blindness. Lucian (A True Story, II, 20) for example, states: "That he was not blind, as they say, I understood at once - I saw it, and so had no need to ask", but this may be intended as a joke. Others such as Pausanius (Bk.IV, XXXIII, 7) believed Homer lost his sight through disease. The number of writers professing Homer's blindness outweighed those against. Homer's blindness became a traditional fact.

47. Von Einem, op.cit., p.186.

48. Poetry besides containing secret wisdom also taught universal practical knowledge. Both Quintilian and Plutarch state that Homer was familiar with all the arts. Melanchthon labelled Homer's description of Achilles shield as the foundation for astronomy and philosophy. Similarly Dionysius of Halikarnassus asserts that through Homer all other studies came into Greece and ultimately philosophy. As late as 1713, Anthony Collins called the Iliad the "epitome of all arts and sciences". Homer had planned it for all eternity "to please and instruct mankind". See Curtius, op.cit., p.206 and D.S. Margoliouth, The Homer of Aristotle, Oxford, 1923, p.237.
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Six, J. "De Homerus van Rembrandt," in Oud Holland, 15 1897, pp.1-10.


APPENDIX A

Guercino's Letter of June 13, 1660

Excerpt from a letter written by Guercino to Don Antonio Ruffo; cited from V. Ruffo "Galleria Ruffo nel Secolo XVII in Messina," in Bollettino d'arte, X, 1916, pp.100-1:

Circa il particolare della mezza figura del Reimbrant capitata alle mani della S.V. Ill.ma non può essere che di tutta perfetione, perché io ho veduto diverse sue Opere in stampa comparse in queste nostre parti, li quali sono riuscite molto belle, intaglate di buon gusto e fatte di buona maniera, dove si può argomentare che il di lui colorire sia parimenti di tutta esquisitezza e perfetione, et io ingenuamente lo stimo per un gran virtuoso.

In quanto poi alla mezza figura che ella desiderava da ma per accompagnamento di quella del Reimbrant, ma della mia prima maniera gagliarda, io sono prontissimo per corrispondere et esequire li di lei ordini; resta che lei si compiaccia d'inviarmi le mesure, si della lunghezza come della larghezza del quadro che dal mio canto non mancherò d'impiegare tutto me stesso, e quanto potrà e saprà fare la mia debolezza Lei medesima lo mirerà in detto quadro espresso.

Se poi ancora con l'occassione d'inviarmi la misura V.S. Ill.ma volessi onorami di un poco di schizzo del Quadro del Reimbrant fatto per mano di qualche Pittore acciò potessi vedere la dispostione della mezza figura, il favore mi sarebbe singolarissimo e potrei governarmi meglio per l'accompagnamento, si come per pigliare il lume al suo luggo; starò similmente attendendo il soggetto che dovrò esprimere acciò maggiormente io possa confrontarmi col desiderio di V.S. Ill.ma a cui ... mentre confermo la mia devotissima osservanza; qui resto, e riverentemente gliene bacio le mani. Bologna li 13 Guigno 1660.

Di V.S. Ill.ma

Devitissimo et Obbligatissimo servo
Giovanni Francesco Barbieri
APPENDIX B

Rembrandt and Raphael

Many scholars have pointed out the similarities that exist between Rembrandt's "Homer Reciting His Verses" (Ben. no. 913) and Raphael's "Parnassus" in the Vatican Stanze. Homer of the Stanze is shown standing with Dante to his right and Virgil to his left. The blind bard reaches out with his right hand while he grasps his robe with his left hand. Homer's head, crowned with laurel, is turned skyward perhaps for divine inspiration as he sings his verses. A young scribe at his feet lifts his pen for a moment and turns attentively towards the poet in order to better hear the inspired words.

Rembrandt, of course, could not have seen Raphael's work in person, but it was made known to him through a print by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael (B.247). Marcantonio's print enjoyed a considerable reputation. It is not, however, an exact duplicate of the Vatican fresco, but reflects an earlier intermediate stage. There are extraneous additions such as the five flying putti with garlands, Apollo is playing a lyre rather than a violin, and the semi-circular format has been changed to an oblong one. Marcantonio's print itself is known in two copies: one adds another string to the lyre and the second has only three putti. It is highly likely that Rembrandt owned a print of Marcantonio's engraving or at least one of the copies. His inventory, for example, records that he owned a considerable collection of prints done after Raphael's work: Urk.169, nos.196 one book with copper-plate engravings by (after) Raphael of Urbino; 205. one book with prints after Raphael of Urbino; 206. one book with prints after the same, very valuable; 214. one book after Raphael of Urbino, very fine impressions.

Rembrandt, nevertheless, has translated Raphael's composition into his own personal idiom. From Raphael he borrows the idea for an open-air setting, the hillock and laurel grove, Homer's gesture, and the attentive scribe and admiring audience. These similarities are, nevertheless, superficial; Homer in Rembrandt assumes a new role. Here in the drawing Homer is portrayed not as the Prince of Poets receiving the adulation of his followers, but as a prophet figure preaching to all common people. Such an interpretation is further substantiated in that Rembrandt chose a similar compositional setting for his etching "Christ Preaching" (La petite tombe', B.67). Christ, standing on a raised platform with a youth at his feet, like Homer's scribe, spreads the divine word to a quiet, contemplative collection of every-day people. As well, the general disposition of
the young Christ in "Christ Disputing with the Doctors" (B.65), also executed in 1652, recalls the didactic expression of Homer's gesture in the drawing.

For the figure of Homer himself, Rembrandt turns once more to the Italian master as interpreted by Marcantonio. Here again, however, Rembrandt transforms the rather 'blatant' rhetorical gesture of the print into a slight, subtle movement of the hand feeling out the tempo of every word. Homer is not so much loudly proclaiming his verses as softly singing them. It should be pointed out that Marcantonio's image of Homer is much more 'boisterous' than Raphael's original. The Homer of the Stanze has his mouth only slightly open and the gesture of the hand appears more like the inarticulate groping of a blind man than the rhetorical flourish of the Raimondi.

The features of Homer's face - the open mouth, the deep, inset eyes, the full, rounded beard - all are found in the Homer of Raphael and consequently in Rembrandt. Their ultimate origin ironically comes not from a classical bust of Homer, but from the famed "Laocoön," a Hellenistic sculpture of the second century, B.C., discovered in Rome on January 14, 1506. Rembrandt's inventory lists an 'antique' Laocoön in his collection of sculpture (Urk,169,no.329). That Raphael used this sculpture as the model for his Homer can be seen in a drawing in the Royal Library, Windsor. Raphael adopts the ancient motif for the pathological interpretation of blindness, the closed eyes, which may suggest a knowledge of the so-called Epimenides type of Homer bust although he probably would not have known it as such. Whether Homer's eyes are closed in Ben.no.913 is difficult to assess. Pierfrancesco Mola's late portraits of Homer in the Galeria Corsini and the duplicate in Dresden still adopt this motif. It should be noted that Joos van Gent's "Homer" is similarly represented.

The widespread popularity of Raphael's "Parnassus" must have helped to stereotype Homer's features before a more critical archeological representation derived from classical busts became widely accepted. This popularity is attested to by the fact that Raphael's Homer again turns up in the title-page of the Odyssees in Chapman's Whole Works of Homer of 1616 (reproduced in George de F. Lord, Homeric Renaissance, London, 1956). The "Parnassus" itself served as a design for a French tapestry in 1682 (reproduced in A. Lejard, French Tapestry, London, 1946, p.66). For Rembrandt, however, the Hellenistic, Blind type of Homer offered a much better idea of how the ancients pictured their greatest poet and it was to this precedent that he turned for the Mauritshuis Homer.
Rembrandt and Antique Sculpture

In addition to the heads of Homer and Aristotle, Rembrandt owned a series of twenty busts of Roman emperors that were arranged in chronological order. Twelve were in the Kunst Caemer and eight more were in the back room. Such a collection of antiques was not uncommon in Holland in the seventeenth century. Prince Frederik Hendrik, for example, not only had classical sculptures in The Hague, but also at his country palaces Rijswijk and Honselaarsdijk.

A collection of marble statues was shipped to Holland from Antwerp in 1646 through the offices of the versatile Sir Micheil Le Blon, engraver, art lover and secret agent. Although the size of the collection is unknown, it must have been quite large since it was divided up among twenty-six of Amsterdam’s leading citizens, for the sum of 6,400 florins. One of the buyers was Rembrandt. He spent 186 florins for his share of the consignment. It has been assumed that eighteen of the above mentioned busts of Roman emperors (Urk.169, nos.147, 149, 152, 156, 160, 168-173) were included in this purchase.

The inventory mentions Augustus, Caligula, Marcus Aurelius, Galba, Otto, Agrippa, Vitellius, Vespasianus, Nero, Faustina, Caisus Silius and some unnamed busts. Of three of them, Rembrandt made pen sketches: one in the library at Turin (Ben.no.452) renders just the general outline of a Roman emperor; the profile bust in the Berlin Print Room (Ben.no.770) was copies from his bust of Galba; and the third (Ben.no.770a) in the Albertina is another study of a Roman emperor. Rembrandt may have been attracted by the veristic quality of Roman portraits. In his drawing of Galba (Ben.no.770), for example, Rembrandt captures the essence of this domineering Roman: the bulging cranium, the bony structure of the skull and the hawk-like features of the face.

Aside from the thirty-eight or thirty-nine antiques and casts of antiques, Rembrandt also owned drawings after the antique (Urk.169, no.251) and another book of statues (Urk.169, no.261) drawn from life. Unfortunately none of these drawings have survived. To this collection can be added a book of statues engraved on copper (Urk.169, no.226) and possibly one containing engravings by Heemskerk of all his works (Urk.169, no.227).

The question arises to what purpose did Rembrandt use his collection of Antique sculpture? Slive suggests that they were acquired essentially for the instruction of his pupils. Van Gelder points out that from the sixteenth
to seventeenth centuries artists studied works of sculpture to discover the Vitruvian system of proportions.  A treatise by Crispijn van de Passe, *Della luce del dipingere et disegnare*, was published in Amsterdam in 1643-44 which outlined this training for a young artist.  The basis of study was not the antique works in themselves but the interpretation of antiquity in mathematics.

Drawing from antique sculpture, apparently in Rembrandt's studio was but a preliminary stage before attempting to draw from live models. A drawing by Van Renesse in the Darmstadt Museum shows a live model while in the background there are Roman busts thus implying that the artists in the drawing have left this preliminary stage behind and are now capable of drawing from life. That Rembrandt stressed practical training especially drawing from live models can be seen from his etching "The Walking Trainer." Once the student had passed through these successive stages, drawing from sculpture and drawing from life, then he could rely on his own memory for his guide.

Rembrandt, moreover, must have had an interest in these works of antiquity himself other than just using them as models for his pupils. Clark feels that Rembrandt employed them as a source of harmonious and integrated forms that could be applied to living experience, although he states that Rembrandt did not seem to profit too much from his study of figures in the round. Perhaps Benesch is closer to the truth when he sees Rembrandt studying antique portraits in much the same manner that he studied old men, to capture the character, the secret soul as revealed through the facial features and the eyes. The veristic nature of Hellenistic and Roman portraiture would have been a natural magnet attracting the master.
Renaissance Antiquarians

In 1558 Fulvius Ursinus became the librarian to Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese. Ursinus's interest in Greek portraits had been stimulated by the inscribed headless herms in the Villa of Julius III and he soon began to collect them both for himself and for his patrons, the Farnese cardinals. His study of Greek portraiture soon made him the foremost scholar in this field.

Ursinus, however, was not the first to publish a book on Greek portraiture. This distinction was left to the Portuguese Achilles Statius who in 1659 issued *Inlustrium viror ut exstant in Urbe expressi vultus*, Romae MDLXIX, formis Antonii Lafreri. It consisted of fifty-two assorted plates but no descriptive text.

In the following year, 1570, Ursinus published his book *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium et eruditor. ex antiquis lapidibus et nomismatibus expressa cum annotationibus ex bibliotheca Fulvi Ursinii*, MDLXX, Romae, Ant. Lafrerii formis. Theodorus Gallaeus or Dirk Galle, a native of Antwerp, was allowed to draw portraits in Ursinus's collection, in that of the Farnese cardinals, and also some in other Roman collections. These drawings were then used to make engravings which were published in 1598 in a book with the title *Illustrium imagines ex antiquis marmoribus, nomismatibus et gemmis expressae, quae exstant Romae, major pars Fulv. Ursinum*, Theodorus Gallaeus delineabat Romae ex archetypis, incidebat Antwerpiae 1598. Once again there was no descriptive text. Ursinus planned to make corrections and add further illustrations to this work but this plan was interrupted by his death in 1600. The task was taken up by Johannes Faber, a physician and antiquarian from Bamberg. Faber's book finally appeared in 1606 as a second edition of Galleus' work. It had the same title only with the addition *Editio altera, aliquot imaginibus, et J. Febri ad singulas commentario auctior atque illustrior*. Ant werplae ex officina Plantiniana, 1606. These works remained the basis for the study of Greek portraits for almost two centuries. Later publications continued to utilize Galleus' reproductions and Ursinus' descriptions and attributions.
APPENDIX E

Ruffo's Complaint and Rembrandt's Reply

- 1662 a Primo Novembre in Messina -

Raccordo per il Sig.re Console Gio. Battista Vallembrrot nell'arrivo che farà in Amsterdam. Significherà al Sire Isach Just la poca sodisfazione tiene l'amico di Messina del quadro del Alessandro per conto del quale detto quadro si commise, così haversi pagato davantaggio dell'Aristotile che anni sono si commesse dal Sire Giacomo di Battista per conto della medesima persona al Sire Cornello Vangaor come per essere dio quadro di Alessandro pintato sopra quattro tele cucite che fanno quattro custure così pessime, che non si possono credere, oltre che il tempo poi le farà crepara ed in conseguenza viene a perdorsi dell'intutto detto quadro nè in due canto pezzi di quadri che la detta persona tiene dell' migliori soggetti d'Europa, si ritrova quadro con tela giuntata, come il sud.° Alessandro, il quale, per che da principio non era più che una Testa in tela sana il Sire Pittore Rembrant per volerlo poi far divenire mezza figura, per causa, o di risparmiar fatiga o per le molte occupations che le sovra stavano, pigliò per expediente d'andarli giuntando la tela, prima loco nella lunghezza e poi perché il quadro le riusciva stretto lo giunto nella larghezza, e per remediare all'uno e all'altro mancamento, invio con il detto quadro d'Alessandro un altro d'Homero mezzo finito sopra tela bella e nova che apunto sarà stata quella tela, quale se ne pigliò 18 fiorini, quale sud.° quadro d'Homero mezzo finito dentro una incirata, e sua cassa ridotto nella misura degli altri, si rimanda ad effetto di perfezionarsi, con pensiero d'havere in questo a soddisfare il mancamento dell'altro del quale non si può calcolare più che una testa, volendosi ritenere che si potrebbono calcolare la metà delli 500 fiorini che s'ha pigliato degli altri due inviati, che sarebbero fiorini 250 prezzo qu tripli cate più di quello che si prattica in Italia dagli più celebri pictori, li quali d'una Testa han stabilito il prezzo di scudi 25 e d'una mezza figura scudi 50 e tanto maggiormente che il quadro d'Homero se l'invia è quasi mezzo spedito e si ha da durare la metà fatica meno che sarebbe a perfettionarlo per l'intiero per che in quanto alle tele giuntate rendono tanta mala vista che è necessario levarle che in caso poi non volesse usare questa cortesia, la quale e raggionevole e dovuta, si renderà parimenti il medesmo Alessandro per farle restituire il prezzo non essendo dovere a tenere un quadro di tanta spesa in casa così difettoso convenendo ancora alla reputatione ed all'amico di V.S. per non far meno di quello fece il Sig. re Vangaor ed al
Pictore Rembrandt di far restare sodisfatta la curiosità del compratore il quale con questa sodisfazione non manchera di farne degli altri che per lo meno tiene intenzione di complirne una mezza dozzana per li quali volendone il Pictore mandare gli schizzi se potrà far in fogli di carta, di lapis, o rosso, o nero conforme più le piacerà per potere poi da questi che potranno venire dentro un piego da lettera o per mare dentro uno scatolino elegire il compratore quali più le saranno di sua sodisfazione et al suo felice ritorno che farà da Asterdam con la medesima cassa e tela incerata potrà portare il quadro d'Homero perfectionato.

Copia di ricevuta dell cap.no Nicolò di Cornelio Vanhol trasformata in Italiana.

1662 a di 16 Novembre in Messina

Io sotto scritto cap.no Nicolò di Cornelio Vanhol della nave nominata Arion confessò haver ricevuto dal Sig. re Don Antonio Ruffo una Cassa dentro un quadro segnato come fuori che prometto consegnare se Dio mi concedera buon viaggio in Asterdam al Sig.r Isach Justen, pagandomi per il mio nolo tre fiorini, et in fede del vero ho firmato tre ricevute d'un tenore una sodisfatta restano l'altre di nessun valore il di come sopra e sotto scritto.

Nicolò di Cornelio Vanhol.

- Resposta del Pitore Rembrandt -

Molto me maraviglio del modo che scrivono del Alessandro che è fatto tanto bene, credo che vi sono pochi amatori a Messina e poi che V.S. lamenta tanto del prezzi quanto della tela ma se V.S. comanda tornarlo sopra sue spese, a suo resiço come ancora il schizzo Humorio farò un altro Alessandro poi in quanto alla tele me ha mancato pingiendo che fu de bisogno alungarlo ma però quando pende giusto sopra suo giorno non si vedrà niente. - Se V.S. piace il Alessandro così va bene se non a V.S. piacesse tener il detto Alessandro il manco prezzo li f.ni 600 -fiorini.

E il Humerio F.ni 500 - et il costo della tela, le spese se intenda doverle fare V.S. le piacendo haverlo fatto resterà servito di mandarmi la giusta misura quanto le vole grandezza.

E ne attendo la risposta per meo governo

Rembrandt van Ryn.
APPENDIX F

Copy of Shipping Bill of 1654

Copia del conto e spese del quadro dell' Aristotile fatto pintare dal Pictore Rembrant il S.re Cornelio Eysbert Vangaor d'ordine del fu Giacomo di Battista per conto del Sig.re Don Antonio Ruffo di Messina.

1654 a 19 Guigno in Amsterdam

Per la pictura del Rembrant per la fattura . . F.500
Per la cassetta e chiodame . . . . . . . . . . . . F. 3.12
Per 0/3 di montatura e pesatura . . . . . . . . . F. 6
Per il convoglio . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . F. 2.19
Per li diletoni di N.o 120 . . . . . . . . . . F. 1.4
In bordo della Nave in Texel . . . . . . . . . . . F. 1.8

F.515.85.16.8
NOTES TO APPENDICES

1. See translations Ch.II, n.19 and p.22.


6. Ibid., p.52, f.n.4. The buyers were: Reynier Pauw; Balthazar, Josef, and Jan Coyman; Nataniel Geeraerds; Adriaen Trip; (Joan) Huydecoper; Frederick Alewyn; Jan de Neufuille; Burgomaster Baequix (?); Thomas de Kemel (?); Pieter and Jan van den Abele; Jacques Burchgrave; Jan van Helmond; Rembrandt van Rijn; Hendrick Schooten; Volekert Rosendael; Dr. Vogel; Willem Dobbes; Andries Ackerswen (?); Christoffel Thysz; Gaspar van Riquefort; Willem van de Werve; Jan Fonteyn; Thomas Broers.

7. Clark, op.cit., p.77 believes that these busts came from the Collection of Sir Dudly Carleton who sold them to Rubens in 1618. The agreement was concluded on May 20 and included 21 large statues, 8 statues of children, 4 torsos, 57 heads, 17 pedestals, 5 urns, 4 bas-reliefs, 18 busts of Roman emperors plus sundry fragments and small pieces. Very little is known of these works but some idea of the original collection can be gained from the group of ancient statues and busts which one sees in the background of an "Interior of the House of an Art Collector," assumed to be Rubens, in the National Gallery, Stockholm (reproduced in C. White, Rubens and his World, London, 1968, p.38). The Carleton marbles remained in Ruben's possession until 1627 then they were sold to the Duke of Buckingham.
8. Valentiner (628A) has tried to identify this drawing of Galba (Ben. no. 770) with a Roman bust in the Museum of Stockholm. Benesch, however, questions the similarity of the features between the Stockholm bust and the Rembrandt drawing. Held ("Rembrandt en de klassieke wereld," in De Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis, 1972, 1, p. 7) mentions that the body of the busts of the three Roman emperors, as with Rembrandt's bust of Homer, are non-classical.

9. Slive, op. cit., p. 87, n. 3.

10. Van Gelder, op. cit., p. 54.

11. Ibid.


16. Ibid., p. 128.