

NEW RESEARCH

FERDINAND

GOVERT

Bol and Flink

W BOOKS



FERDINAND BOL (1616-1680)

Ferdinand Bol, born in 1616, was one of several artists from the city of Dordrecht who found their way to Rembrandt's workshop in Amsterdam, where Bol moved in 1636 after completing an apprenticeship with Benjamin Gerritsz Cuyp. Bol's independent career as a painter specializing in history paintings and portraits began in 1640 but really took off in the 1650s, when an advantageous marriage brought him into contact with a network of patrons that included Amsterdam regents and members of the Admiralty. Like Flinck, Bol participated in the decoration of the Amsterdam Town Hall, the centrepiece of the city's power and authority and the most prestigious artistic commission of the 1650s. Bol died in 1680, but it appears he stopped painting after his second marriage in 1669. In addition to paintings and drawings, Bol is the only known Rembrandt student who produced a substantial number of etchings.



GOVERT FLINCK (1615-1660)

Govert Flinck was born into a Mennonite family in Cleves in 1615. Around 1630 he moved to Leeuwarden to study with the painter, art dealer, and Mennonite preacher Lambert Jacobsz. In about 1633-1634, Flinck moved to Amsterdam, where he joined the workshop run by Jacobsz's business partner, Hendrick Uylenburgh. There he encountered Rembrandt van Rijn, from whom he took over as Uylenburgh's *chef d'atelier* in 1635. Flinck produced history paintings, portraits, and character studies as well as the occasional landscape. Praised by authors such as Joost van den Vondel and Joachim von Sandrart, his work was purchased by elite patrons not only in Amsterdam, but also at the courts of Orange and Brandenburg. Since his own time, Flinck has been both admired and criticised as an early proponent of the 'clear' style that replaced Rembrandt's earthy impasto and dramatic chiaroscuro with a smoother touch and brighter palette. Flinck was at the height of his fame when he died in 1660 at the age of only forty-five.

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 BOOKS

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The exhibition *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck: Rembrandt's Master Pupils* at Museum Het Rembrandthuis and the Amsterdam Museum presents an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate the achievements of two artists whose stature in seventeenth-century Amsterdam came to rival that of their famous master, Rembrandt van Rijn. Queen's University (Kingston, Canada), as a leading centre for the study of Dutch art, has been proud to lend support to this important initiative. On 16-19 July 2015, our Bader International Study Centre at Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, UK, hosted a conference, *Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol: Rising Stars in Rembrandt's Amsterdam*, that brought together academic art historians, museum professionals, and conservation scientists from Europe and North America to explore the work of Flinck and Bol from diverse methodological perspectives. Many of the chapters in this book were developed from papers presented at Herstmonceux.

The conference and this publication were made possible by support from Queen's University, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and especially from Drs. Alfred and Isabel Bader. It was Alfred Bader's vision to create a conference series that would bring new attention to artists in Rembrandt's circle, and his intellectual and philanthropic support have brought this book to fruition. Thanks to the Baders' commitment to Queen's (Alfred Bader's alma mater), the Agnes Etherington Art Centre on our Kingston campus is home to The Bader Collection, with over two hundred European paintings, and the curriculum at Queen's fosters the study of Rembrandt and his contemporaries through classes, colloquia, exhibitions, and research initiatives.

As editor of this volume, I am indebted to many people who have shared their time and expertise. First, of course, are the authors of our fifteen chapters, whose discoveries offer fresh insights into the art and cultural context of Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol. Sincere thanks to Patrick Larsen for his generous help in preparing the text. Behind the scenes, many other conference participants have contributed through continuing scholarly exchange. Matthew Hayes, Jennifer Kilian and Katy Kist produced elegant translations. Johan de Bruijn at WBOOKS supervised production with patience and care, with a lively design by Marinka Reuten. David de Witt at Museum Het Rembrandthuis and Tom van der Molen and Norbert Middelkoop at the Amsterdam Museum collaborated in organizing the conference and selecting papers for this volume. Their help and advice have been essential throughout the process of creating this book as a complement to their engaging exhibition catalogue. We are delighted to present this volume as the product of an on-going, international conversation about Rembrandt, Bol, Flinck, and the many talented artists who surrounded them.

Stephanie S. Dickey

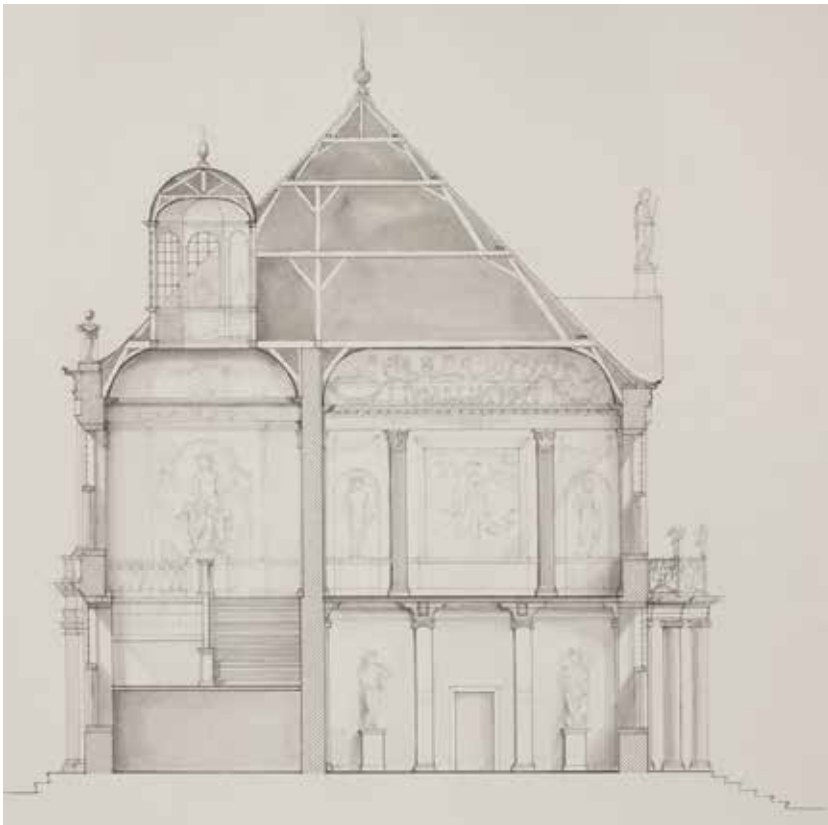
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On diverging styles, different functions, and fame: Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, and Rembrandt as history painters

ERIC JAN SLUIJTER

Over the past century Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol have been viewed as rather vapid followers of fashion – spineless artists whose paintings were only palatable when they still worked in the manner of their great master Rembrandt.¹ It is assumed that to please their audience they accommodated to a new fashion, adopting an international baroque style, thus becoming more successful than their master. Related to this view is the notion, forcefully presented by the 2014-2015 exhibition on the late work of Rembrandt, that the latter's style went out of fashion after 1650 because Rembrandt deviated radically from prevailing taste in his later work.² But did Flinck and Bol follow a new trend/taste/fashion (all words that have been used by recent authors) by changing their style? And did they eclipse Rembrandt's fame after 1650 because the latter was out of touch with the dominant trend? In this essay I will argue that Flinck's and Bol's stylistic change had more to do with different functions of their art than with new stylistic fashions, while Rembrandt remained the most highly reputed and highest paid master in Amsterdam but occupied a different position in the art market. To understand the divergence of styles developed by Flinck and Bol on the one hand and Rembrandt on the other, it is necessary to distinguish between a painter who made 'gallery paintings' – expensive works of art for the collections of true connoisseurs, which were not necessarily commissioned but mainly sold through high-end art dealers and other intermediaries (or from the artist's own stock) – and painters who aimed



1.1. R. ROYAARDS-TEN HOLT

Reconstruction of Honselaarsdijk Stairwell and Reception Rooms looking East, 1979, pen, pencil, and wash, scale 1:25. Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

at making art on commission for specific places, mostly on a considerably large format, with some sort of formal function. Locations for the latter might include private residences (chimney pieces in reception rooms, for example) and public spaces. This was a novel component of the Dutch art market that developed in the mid- to late-seventeenth century; for the artists it was a new challenge that required not only a different style, but also a different relationship to one's clientele.

Commissioned paintings for fixed locations

It must have been a looming task for these two very ambitious young artists to determine how to address the artistic dominance of their master, and how to position themselves in relation to the latter's groundbreaking innovations. To be recognized as the pupil of the most renowned painter of Amsterdam would certainly have been an advantage for a beginning painter at a time when 'Rembrandt's manner was so generally praised [...] that everything had to be done along that line if one wanted to please the world', in the words of Arnold Houbraken.³ But a follower will never overtake the frontrunner, and that was the task an ambitious painter had to set himself, as another Rembrandt pupil, Samuel van Hoogstraten, made abundantly clear.⁴ To be able to make one's own mark within the competitive Amsterdam art world, a young artist should distinguish his art from that of his master. Both Flinck and Bol solved this problem by developing a manner that retained important elements of their master's innovations but was particularly suited to a new section at the high end of the Amsterdam art market that emerged

1.2. PHILIPS VINGBOONS II
Chimney, 1639, gilded wood,
435 x 310 x 115 cm, with painting
by JOACHIM VON SANDRART,
Odyseus and Nausicaa, ca.
1641-1642, canvas, 104 x 168.5
cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum,
inv.nr. BK-NM-10269 and
SK-A-4278



at that time: the demand for large-scale history paintings that were fixed into the panelling of the most representative rooms in the houses of the wealthy elite, and similar paintings that functioned in public spaces.

The stylistic change in the work of Flinck and Bol in the middle of the 1640s coincides with a significant change in the decoration of the most 'public' rooms in the houses of wealthy burghers, in particular the reception room typically referred to as *de zaal* (or [*groot*] *salet*): the



1.3. REMBRANDT VAN RIJN *Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1646, canvas, 97 x 71.3 cm, Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv.nr. 393. Photo: bpk/Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen

chimneys, doors, and walls began to be designed as ensembles, and paintings were commissioned to be fixed within such a planned setting. This trend originated in aristocratic circles in The Hague. The earliest known architectural design of this type is by Salomon de Bray for the Huys te Warmont, dated 1629; in De Bray's plan, preserved in a drawing by Pieter Saenredam, chimney breasts with frames for paintings and other fitted sites for paintings were carefully delineated.⁵ A spectacular early example must have been the Hall of Diana, the grand central reception hall of Honselaarsdijk Palace (demolished in the 19th century); commissioned by Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, its decoration was designed by Jacob van Campen and installed in 1637-1639. It had *The Crowning of Diana* by Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders (now Potsdam, Sanssouci) as its main focus on the chimney, and three large canvases by Van Campen, Paulus Bor, and Christiaan van Couwenbergh with scenes featuring the goddess Diana were fixed within the panelling of the other walls (fig. 1.1).⁶

The idea to plan the decoration of a room as a cohesive design was immediately picked up by Philips Vingboons for prestigious new townhouses and manors being built for the Amsterdam burgher elite. The earliest known is the grand house on the Singel designed by Vingboons for Joan Huydecoper, started in 1639 and finished in 1641,⁷ with a chimneypiece in its reception room, painted by Joachim von Sandrart, depicting *Odysseus and Nausicaa* (fig. 1.2). Tapestries hung on the other walls. Sandrart employed the manner that was most appropriate for such a purpose: a clear, decorous, and graceful style, with conventional poses and gestures and figure types of classical beauty, for which he applied his Roman experience.⁸ This was not the style he always used: when in Rome, between 1629 and 1635, he made some 'gallery paintings' in a somewhat 'updated' version of the style of his Dutch master, Gerard van Honthorst (known in Italy as Gerardo delle Notti), which was still renowned in the circle of Sandrart's (and



1.4 GOVERT FLINCK *Isaac blessing Jacob*, ca. 1638-1640, canvas, 117 x 141 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.nr. SK-A-110

Hornthorst's) patron Vincenzo Giustiniani.⁹ After his Amsterdam sojourn (1637-1645), when back in Germany, Sandrart worked sometimes in his 'Roman classicist' style, often in a more Rubenesque manner, but also in a very unclassical *chiaroscuro* manner.¹⁰ For Huydecoper's palatial setting, Sandrart fully exploited his knowledge of up-to-date styles in Rome. He transformed a rather violent invention by Pieter Lastman into an image of quiet grace, introducing a manner that formed the greatest possible contrast with Rembrandt – whom he would have considered his most important competitor – and suitable for its function in a stately reception room.¹¹

During his eight to nine years in Amsterdam, Sandrart must have been a true catalyst, being an artist of a cosmopolitan type new to the artistic community in that city: he saw himself as the only painter who knew how to behave with the elite. He proudly described himself as such in the introduction to his treatise, *Der Teutsche Academie*, where the reader is informed that he was greatly esteemed 'not only for his cosmopolitan knowledge of the arts, but also for his virtuous conduct, courteous behaviour, and elegant conversation, which few artists there [in Amsterdam] had demonstrated previously.'¹² Sandrart was the kind of artist who considered the nobility of art entirely in terms of the status of the elite patrons for whom the art was made, and the prestige to be gained in associating with such patrons. In his attitude towards the Amsterdam elite, he must have been an important role model for Flinck and Bol. The classicism Sandrart had introduced in a few paintings, however, had no immediate impact; the continuation of a style that can justly be called classicist had to wait for the arrival of Gerard de Lairesse.¹³ Apart from the obvious fact that Flinck and Bol did not have Sandrart's first-hand knowledge of the art of Rome and familiarity with the latest developments there, they would have realised that it was a better strategy to keep closer to successful Amsterdam traditions



1.5 GOVERT FLINCK *The Company of Captain Albert Bas and Lieutenant Lucas Conijn*, 1645, canvas, 347 x 244 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.nr. SK-C-371



1.6. NICOLAES LAUWERS AFTER PETER PAUL RUBENS *The Adoration of the Magi*, ca. 1620-1630, engraving, 616 x 4545 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.nr. RP-P-1887-A-12010

with which their audience, and they themselves, were familiar. As we shall see, they created a style that was recognized by this audience as appropriate for their public commissions and for specific paintings in the reception rooms of their own houses.

That working for this new segment of the art market implied a different relationship to one's audience can be gathered from several sources. Erna Kok demonstrated that both Flinck and Bol mainly worked within carefully built elite networks of patrons who were closely related to each other.¹⁴ By doing this, she argued, they positioned themselves outside the contingencies of the 'open' market. Most Dutch painters had become used to working 'on spec' with a certain audience in mind – for one's own stock or to sell through dealers – which meant that it was of paramount importance to build up an artistic reputation among art lovers and collectors, as Rembrandt and Gerrit Dou had magnificently done.¹⁵ For such artists it was more important to have ties with art dealers and collectors than to maintain close relations within specific networks of the social elite. It is striking that, in contrast to Rembrandt, one does not find works by Flinck and Bol in the few inventories of art dealers known to us. Even Johannes



1.7 GOVERT FLINCK *Bathsheba pleading with David to appoint Solomon as his Successor*, 1651, canvas, 105 x 152 cm, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, inv.nr. 64

de Renialme, who owned six history paintings by Rembrandt (and a few *tronies* and [self]portraits) had no works by Flinck or Bol in his huge stock of 586 paintings (1657).¹⁶

Moreover, also in contrast to Rembrandt, we do not know about other intermediaries or gentleman-dealers interested in these artists' works.¹⁷ That they worked for a different section of the market seems to be confirmed by the fact that, again in contrast to Rembrandt, one barely finds history paintings by Flinck or Bol in inventories. I am suggesting here that this is probably due to the fact that these were more often than not *nagelvast*: permanently fixed in their planned locations as chimney pieces, overdoor paintings, or in the panelling of the walls of the room; such works were normally not mentioned with the movable goods in inventories because they belonged to the structure of the house. In the rare case that we do come across a record of important history paintings by Bol in an inventory, the document regards paintings which indeed were fixed in the panelling of the room (a depiction of the goddess Semele) or in the chimney breast (a painting identified by Grijzenhout as representing the owners in the guise of Jason and Medea).¹⁸ In contrast, except for Rembrandt's contribution to the Batavian cycle commissioned for the Amsterdam Town Hall, for which the burgomasters for once tried to include the most renowned history painter of Amsterdam, and the exceptional commission for the Genoa altarpiece(s) from a patron who must have wished to have an unusual kind of *tenebroso* painting (a style favoured in the second half of the century in such cities as Genoa, Naples, and Venice), we know of no commissions to Rembrandt for history paintings to



1.8. GOVERT FLINCK *Manius Curius Dentatus refuses the Gifts of the Samnites*, 1656, canvas, 485 x 377 cm, Amsterdam, Royal Palace (formerly Town Hall), Burgomasters' Cabinet © Royal Palace Amsterdam



1.9. CAESAR BOETIUS VAN EVERDINGEN *The Four Muses with Pegasus*, ca. 1650, canvas, 340 x 230 cm, The Hague, Huis ten Bosch, Oranjezaal

function in public places or in a fixed position.¹⁹ The important paintings commissioned from Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik and Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina were pre-eminently created and displayed as desirable masterpieces for a collector's gallery (fig. 1.3).²⁰

Rembrandt and the gallery painting

History paintings for a fixed setting, whether in private residences or public buildings, generally had to convey a message related to the function of the building and/or the room in that building (public), or a message appropriate to the status of the owner (private). 'Gallery paintings' on the other hand, were collector's items. To stand out among other paintings in an art lover's collection, such paintings had to be eye-catching and to possess a characteristic, recognizable manner. Innovative styles like Dutch late mannerism and Utrecht Caravaggism also appeal to this category – one might call these movements collector's fashions. Prices in this section of the high-end market depended on a ranking of artistic reputation among art lovers.²¹

Rembrandt capitalized on a manner ‘that was entirely his own’ (as Baldinucci described it) and became in the course of his career ever more idiosyncratic.²² Though continually searching for new solutions, he focused on what was considered characteristic of his art: a radically innovative technique and manner of lighting and the suggestion that life itself is unconditionally represented, all in the service of the expression of the passions and based on ‘intangible imaginings without examples and firm foundations’ (De Lairese) and on ‘an exceptional natural gift’ (Houbraken).²³ His paintings were meant to be admired as great works of art.

‘Novelty’ had become an important element, and in such terms Rembrandt’s work was described. De Lairese, who must have had contact with Rembrandt in the last four years of the latter’s life, wrote: ‘through novelties [Rembrandt] gained great esteem among the illustrious authorities on art’.²⁴ Houbraken talks about Rembrandt’s art as ‘something new in its time’.²⁵ Sandrart, who based his account of Rembrandt’s art on knowledge acquired in Amsterdam between 1637 and 1645, described Rembrandt’s manner with great perceptiveness and admiration – no other artist’s style was so carefully analysed in his treatise.²⁶ As an artist used to working on commissions from elite patrons, Sandrart was, however, at the same time very critical about the fact that Rembrandt entirely kept to his own exceptional manner and only did what he himself thought right, even though, as Sandrart had to admit, this resulted in an amazing overall harmony (*die Zusammenhang der universal Harmonia*). Sandrart strongly disapproved of Rembrandt’s standpoint that ‘one should only and alone follow nature and no other rules’, and that the latter ‘did not hesitate to flout and contest our rules of art, such as anatomy and proportion, perspective, the usefulness of antique statues, Raphael’s art of drawing and prudent education, and also the academies, so highly necessary for our profession’ (referring to sessions in which artists drew together from life models, not to the academy as an institute).²⁷ Since Alberti, the ‘rules of art’ had been developed in relation to an art that was made on commission and meant for specific places and purposes.²⁸ When history paintings had to function within a specific, prestigious location, graceful and decorous paintings were called for, and not Rembrandt’s quite intrusive works requiring emotional involvement from the viewer. Dutch artists like Bol and Flinck, for whom it was a new task to make such paintings, had to deal critically with ‘rules’ that had been cherished by many generations of painters.

‘Helder schilderen’

When Flinck and Bol changed their style – developing a ‘clear manner’ of painting [*helder schilderen*], as Houbraken dubbed the style to which Flinck’s new manner belonged²⁹ – they harked back to traditional values which Rembrandt had emphatically rejected. Flinck and Bol went ‘back to normal’, to more conventional ways of arranging, drawing, proportion, lighting, and colouring, based on generally accepted ideals about how to depict a clearly readable narrative in accordance with the rules of decorum. In such a context, grace and selection of the beautiful in nature, central tenets in renaissance art theory, were fundamental principles. Grace ‘is the life and soul of art’, stated Franciscus Junius.³⁰ After a period in which painters had, for

the greater part, jettisoned grace and stylized beauty – Caravaggists, Lastman, and Rembrandt among the most dramatically³¹ – Flinck and Bol returned to more conventional ideals, which they primarily found in (prints after) Italian masters of the sixteenth century, but in particular in the example of Rubens, who would never forfeit *grâce*, even in the most violent scenes, as he had emphasized in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton.³² While Rembrandt studied works of art by great predecessors like Rubens to emulate them creatively, on his own terms, Flinck and Bol examined them for exemplary values with regard to correct drawing, poses, gestures, anatomy, proportion, and perspective.

Samuel van Hoogstraten nicely contrasts two styles that can be equated with a Rembrandt-*esque* manner and the ‘academic’ style, distinguishing between painters ‘who do great things by arranging their works tightly through *schikschaduw* [shadow effects applied for compositional reasons, to arrange figures and objects in the imagined space] and *beeldesprong* [variety in the placement of the figures, especially in their spatial relationships] but who also might ‘harm dignity (*deftigheid*)’ by ‘the depiction of unbefitting passions’ and by ‘deliberately manipulating light and shadow [...] to beautifully highlight one thing through obscuring the other’, while others, on the contrary, ‘esteem only a straightforward representation, freely organized, boasting that only what they do represents true grandeur (*’t ware groots*), following the Roman gracefulness of Raphael and Michelangelo’.³³ The latter was a style with which to make paintings that were *deftig* and *groots* (dignified and lofty). To be able to do this properly, Flinck, together with a few colleagues (later also Bol) began in the 1640s to organise ‘academic’ drawing sessions (they called such a gathering a *collegie van schilders*, assembly of painters) where artists sketched gracefully posed nude models,³⁴ similar to sessions Sandrart had attended during his period of training in Utrecht around 1625-1628 (organized by such artists as Abraham Bloemaert and Paulus Moreelse).³⁵ Rembrandt must have loathed the conventions of idealization in attitude and gestures, as is testified by his – and his pupils’ – drawings after nude models, but Flinck and Bol would have agreed with Van Hoogstraten, who complained that in his youth he had not been taught to place models in graceful poses, but rather in ‘unpleasant and repulsive’ ones.³⁶

In Flinck’s work we see from the very beginning that he was not willing to sacrifice grace. Even in the works in which he closely followed Rembrandt’s manner, such as *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (1639, see fig. 0.1), he infused his compositions with a pleasing softness of movements and gestures and a more conventional way of narrating a story.³⁷ He also knew how to make use of the style he had learned, together with Jacob Backer, in Lambert Jacobsz’s studio, where they must have studied prints after Rubens.³⁸ He did so, for example, in his early masterpiece, *Isaac blessing Jacob*, a life size painting with half-length figures, in which the undulating contours and large areas of strong colour are especially striking (fig. 1.4).³⁹ When Flinck deliberately moved away from Rembrandt as of the mid-1640s – notably in his 1645 militia piece for the Kloveniersdoelen, for which he used a compositional framework borrowed from the print after an altarpiece by Rubens (fig. 1.5-1.6) – he was able to merge all such elements into a new style, including the most important practices he had learned from Rembrandt: to arrange with light and shadow (*schikschaduw*), and to create harmony and depth through subtle transitions in colour and tone so that forms seem to come forward and recede in space (which was called *houding*).⁴⁰



1.10 FERDINAND BOL *David's Dying Charge to Solomon*, 1643, canvas, 171 x 230 cm (original width ca. 300 cm), Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, inv.nr. NGL.47

Thus, Flinck created a 'clear' manner that he could use in a flexible way in paintings of the 1650s (fig. 1.7).⁴¹ This manner was distinct from the style of the Utrecht-Haarlem group around Jacob van Campen. Under Van Campen's guidance, this group, consisting of Pieter de Grebber, Salomon de Bray, Paulus Bor, Jan Gerritsz van Bronckhorst, and Caesar van Everdingen, had turned, a few years before Flinck, from an often Caravaggesque approach towards a colourful style with strong colours, transparent shadows, and clear contours, but they had little notion about *houding*, so important for Rembrandt pupils such as Flinck and Bol.⁴² Studying Rubens's compositional strategies taught Flinck how to make a monumental composition with distinctly outlined figures filling the whole surface of a large painting, and how to arrange them in a clearly constructed but shallow stage defined by architectural elements (fig. 1.8).⁴³ His endeavours towards a flowing movement, however, were always restricted by a rather solid manner of painting figures, which often has more in common with figures painted by Lambert Jacobsz, Pieter Lastman, or Claes Moeyaert than with Rubens or Rembrandt.⁴⁴

The flair with which Flinck arranged compositions with Rubenesque movement and grace recalls not only the example of Rubens himself but sometimes, with their flowing contours and shimmering surfaces, also the work of Anthony van Dyck or Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert. A good example is *Allegory on the Memory of Frederik Hendrik*, commissioned by the Stadtholder's widow Amalia von Solms in 1654, which had to be fitted into the richly carved panelling of the *grote cabinet* (large drawing room) at Huis ten Bosch, designed by Pieter Post, where it functioned as a kind of pendant to *The Annunciation* by Willeboirts Bosschaert on the opposite wall (see fig. 3.1 and 3.4).⁴⁵ However, the solidity of the modelling and the careful tonality of the many gradations of colour (black, green, greenish grey, bluish grey, greyish orange, red brown, and yellow), subtly creating the space the robust figures convincingly occupy, show that



1.11. JACOB BACKER *Vertumnus and Pomona*, ca. 1640,
canvas, 132 x 107 cm, private collection



1.12. FERDINAND BOL *Vertumnus and Pomona*, 1644,
canvas, 154 x 128.9 cm, Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum,
Bequest of Mrs. Frieda Hauck, inv.nr. 1957.212

Flinck's work is grounded in a different tradition. As such, it vies with Willeboirts Bosschaert's softer, more refined, Van Dyckian manner of painting, which is less concerned with creating a convincing sense of depth, but is also an alternative to the harsh outlines, exceptionally bright colours, and airless space adopted by painters of the 'Van Campen group' who had worked in the same building on the ensemble in the Oranjezaal (fig. 1.9).⁴⁶ Flinck's style obviously appealed to the Amsterdam elite and to members of the courts in The Hague, Berlin, and Cleve, not because Flinck followed a 'fashionable' taste that already existed among this aristocratic and burgher elite, but because he was able to create, in his own way, a manner that they found admirable and fitting for paintings to be displayed in courtly and public spaces or in reception rooms of the burgher elite.

The poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel was a close acquaintance of Joachim von Sandrart and, after the latter's departure for Germany in 1645, seems to have become a friend and supporter of Flinck. Vondel championed a pictorial art that had a clear function within a formal setting.⁴⁷ In 1656, in a poem on Flinck's second marriage, Vondel described Flinck's new style very well, undoubtedly echoing the latter's own ideas on art (I paraphrase this passage): following the path of Apelles, Vondel writes, Flinck knew how to depict every figure with correct outline (*omtreck*) appropriate to its time and characteristics and with its true colour and



1.13. FERDINAND BOL *Amarillis crowning Mirtillo*, ca. 1650, canvas, 141 x 194.9 cm, San Francisco, California
Palace of the Legion of Honor, museum purchase by exchange, inv.nr. 1937.5

intrinsic quality, by means of the rules and laws of art which never deviated from nature. With his clarity (*klaerheyt*) he is a shining example for others.⁴⁸ Vondel's praise underlines the idea that the requirements of such paintings were primarily defined by the rules of decorum, to which everything else was subordinate: drawing, colouring, perspective, anatomy, proportion.

Ferdinand Bol remained for several years, probably from 1636 to 1640, with Rembrandt, much longer than Flinck's short apprenticeship with the master. Apparently he also did not have the thorough training in another style that Flinck had received before coming to Rembrandt.⁴⁹ This might be the reason that Bol internalized, more profoundly than Flinck, Rembrandt's manner of working with *houding* and *schikschaduw*. During the early stage of his career Bol solidified his position as a highly talented and thoroughly trained Rembrandt student. However, like Flinck, from the start Bol re-introduced grace and beauty. He did not strive for his master's focus on strong movement and emotions – which had been especially paramount in Rembrandt's art during the period when Bol was his pupil – but rather for a quiet mode, preferably in subjects that showed a static and serene situation.⁵⁰ Remarkably, some of his earliest histories were painted on a large scale (fig. 1.10) suggesting that Bol must have had wealthy patrons from early on, which gave him the opportunity to meet the new demand for large scale paintings to be installed in a fixed setting.⁵¹ This would soon affect his style.

Already by 1644, in rather large paintings with mythological or pastoral subjects, Bol had



1.14. **JACOB VAN LOO** *The Kissing Contest with Amarillis crowning Mirtillo*, ca. 1649, canvas, 161 x 192 cm, Muiden, Muiderslot, on loan from the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, inv.nr. NK2943

turned to much brighter colours and shining materials. Bol undoubtedly observed Jacob Backer's style, also frequently choosing the same subjects that Backer had depicted (fig. 1.11-1.12), but by way of a much more careful modelling with soft transitions in tone, he avoided Backer's spectacular but somewhat superficial effects. The saturated yellows, reds, and blues and very light skin tones that Bol began to use in such paintings also suggest that he responded to the novel style that Jacob van Loo had introduced in Amsterdam in paintings of mythological and pastoral subjects beginning in the second half of the 1640s (fig. 1.13-1.14).⁵² We know that Bol, together with Flinck, Van Loo, Nicolaes van Helt Stockade, and Willem Strijcker drew after the nude model in the 1650s; these painters must have known each other well and would have discussed their art (and Rembrandt's) with each other.⁵³ The strong blues (unthinkable in Rembrandt's art) and tauter outlines might have been stimulated by Van Loo's work.⁵⁴ Much more than Backer and Van Loo, however, Bol would create space through colour, light, and shade.

Ensembles of *zaalschilderingen*, large paintings covering all the walls of a reception room, have rarely been preserved intact, but an exceptionally sizeable one from Bol's hand is still extant (fig. 1.15).⁵⁵ As in his other works, it is striking that he differentiated his style a little – even within one ensemble – between mythological and biblical subjects: the latter are less colourful and painted with softer contours. In his two huge paintings for the Town Hall he seems to have overreached his capacities. He still tried to keep the composition together with the help of '*schikschaduw*', but he did not succeed (fig. 1.16).⁵⁶ Though he was no less talented than Flinck, the latter's compositional style, featuring a more evenly lit, clearly constructed, stagelike architectural space and figures defined with more distinct contours, was better suited for such over-life-size scenes



1.15. Reconstruction of the reception room of Jacoba Lampsins in Utrecht, Nieuwegracht 6, with paintings by Ferdinand Bol. Photo: Jonathan Gration, Amsterdam

(above, fig. 1.8). However, a chimneypiece like the portrait historé, *Allegory of Education* (fig. 1.17), painted for the Trip family, demonstrates how Bol could use his later style to full advantage. It also makes clear that his sophisticated palette must have been a source of inspiration for the young Gerard de Lairese after the latter's arrival in Amsterdam in 1665.⁵⁷

Fame, style, and function

The considerable number of commissions that Flinck and Bol received through the Amsterdam elite, and in the case of Flinck also through court circles, has often led to the conclusion that Rembrandt's idiosyncratic style was valued less in the 1650s and 1660s. It is a mistake, however, to maintain that art lovers lost interest in Rembrandt's later paintings, which, in contrast with the two decades before 1650, no longer would have suited the current taste. No current or dominant taste existed in that period. On the contrary, a great variety of styles had been developed. Moreover, Rembrandt was still considered the greatest master of Amsterdam. Even De Lairese tells us that 'there were many people, and there still are [referring to the time he



1.16. **FERDINAND BOL** *Moses with the Tablets of Law descending from Mount Sinai*, 1662, canvas, 423 x 284 cm, Amsterdam, Royal Palace (formerly Town Hall), Magistrates' Chamber.
© Royal Palace Amsterdam



1.17. **FERDINAND BOL** *Portrait of Margarita Trip as Minerva instructing her Sister Anna Maria Trip (Allegory of Education)*, 1663, canvas, 208 x 179 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.nr. SK-A-46

was dictating his book in the 1690s] who maintain that he [Rembrandt] was able to do everything that the art and the brush could perform, having surpassed all the celebrities of his time up until today, because, they say, there was never a painter who came so near to nature in power of colouring, through his beautiful lighting, his lovely harmony, his rare and exceptional thoughts, et cetera. What could be lacking, having demonstrated so many exceptional gifts?' De Lairese adds that he himself also 'felt particularly attracted to Rembrandt's manner' (here De Lairese undoubtedly alludes to the second half of the 1660s, when he began his career in Amsterdam) but goes on to say, 'as soon as I began to realise that art had infallible rules, I found myself obliged to revoke my error and to reject Rembrandt's manner'.⁵⁸ This reversal must have taken place in the course of the 1670s, when he became thoroughly schooled by the participants of *Nil Volentibus Arduum*, in particular Andries Pels, in the theory of classicist theatre.⁵⁹

Especially in the last decades of his career, Rembrandt had become the only internationally renowned Dutch history painter.⁶⁰ He received prestigious Italian commissions, his work was

known to foreign connoisseurs, and the market value of his paintings was exceptional – by international standards even outrageous.⁶¹ More often and more extensively than any other Dutch artist, his work was discussed by foreign authors writing on art, such as Cornelis de Bie, Joachim von Sandrart, André Félibien, Roger de Piles, Florent Le Comte, Grégoire Huret, and Filippo Baldinucci.⁶² He had become one of the European celebrities whom Roger de Piles named in a list of painters who ‘occupied an important place in the republic of painting’ along with Domenichino, Guido Reni, Guercino, Francesco Albani, Nicholas Poussin, Rubens, and Van Dyck.⁶³ More important than the veracity of De Piles’ statement that the renowned collector Lucas van Uffelen had taken pleasure in comparing works by these artists is the fact that he granted Rembrandt a place in this enumeration of seventeenth-century celebrities – precisely the international company Rembrandt himself would have wanted to be situated in. Dutch history painters who are often said to have overshadowed Rembrandt during the later part of his career were scarcely or not at all mentioned in published books on art and artists.⁶⁴ Only Flinck received some interest in a few of those sources, as is testified by De Bie, Sandrart, and Baldinucci.⁶⁵ Bol seems to have had only local renown.⁶⁶

In the 1650s and 1660s, no fewer Rembrandtesque paintings seem to have been produced, both within the master’s workshop and by other admirers, than in the two decades before; on the contrary.⁶⁷ In the 1650s, we know of quite a number of Rembrandt pupils, and many remained closer to his style than the earlier generation, while the number of anonymous paintings in the manner of Rembrandt increased significantly, as far as we can gather from works that have survived.⁶⁸ Moreover, the highly talented and quite prolific Gerbrand van den Eeckhout followed Rembrandt’s manner much more closely after 1650 (at least in his biblical paintings).⁶⁹ Many other artists went in different directions, but the presence of competing, non-Rembrandtesque styles was certainly not more significant than before 1650. A *tableau de la troupe* of history painters active in Amsterdam in the 1650s and 1660s – Rembrandt, Jan Lievens, Flinck, Bol, Eeckhout, Jan Victors, Van Loo, Jürgen Ovens, Cornelis Holsteyn, Van Bronckhorst, Van Helt Stockade, Jan van Noordt, and Jan van Neck – is highly varied and shows no dominant trend.⁷⁰ The ones who, apart from Flinck, Bol, and Lievens, delivered paintings for the Town Hall (Thomas de Keyser, Cornelis Holsteyn, Van Bronckhorst, Van Helt Stockade, and Strijcker – artists who, in different ways, also developed a ‘clear’ manner) were apparently less highly valued and less highly paid. These painters had good connections among the elite and were competent masters, but were much less expensive than Bol, Flinck, or Lievens; they received commissions for the less prestigious rooms in the Town Hall.⁷¹ Rembrandt would not have been considered anyway, not only because of his exorbitant prices, long delays, and difficult character – he was known as an artist whom ‘one had to beg and throw in money to boot’⁷² – but also because his style was not suited for such commissions. Already in the second half of the 1640s, when the commissions for the Oranjezaal were granted to a number of painters, we may notice that highly placed patrons knew perfectly well what kind of works one wanted to have by Rembrandt’s hand, and what kind of painters one should commission to paint large decorative glorifications of the prince: in 1646, Rembrandt received 1200 guilders a piece for two biblical paintings for Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik’s art gallery (fig. 1.3) that were one

twelfth the size of the Oranjezaal paintings with Roman triumphs for which De Grebber, De Bray, Van Everdingen and others received 800 guilders each a few years later (commissions for which Backer and Van Loo had also been considered).⁷³ The price paid by Joan Huydecoper for Sandrart's chimneypiece, 280 guilders (fig. 1.2),⁷⁴ also suggests that for such paintings a patron generally spent less than an eager connoisseur would do for a masterpiece for his art collection. Sandrart's price is considerable, but still a bargain compared to a work by Rembrandt; the latter would have asked at least double the price for a painting that size.

We may conclude that, indeed, Flinck and Bol had been followers of fashion – not, however, with their later styles, as many art historians have maintained, but during the first part of their careers. They set their careers in motion by studying with the most renowned master of Amsterdam and by following an amazingly novel style that fetched high prices with art lovers, but they immediately gave it their own spin, each in his own way infusing the Rembrandtesque style with a pleasant grace. Subsequently, they successfully focused on developing a style that elite patrons recognized as something they needed and valued for paintings that would convey their status, not as art collectors, but as distinguished members of society. Such people were referred to as *deftig* (distinguished, dignified, stately, lofty) and this same word was also used in connection with paintings produced in accordance with the traditional rules of decorum.⁷⁵ Both 'Dutch classicism' and 'international baroque' are entirely unsuitable epithets for this style, while 'academic' is also unsatisfactory.⁷⁶ Instead, we might call it the *deftige stijl* in recognition of the dignity and decorum that characterized both the style itself and the social circumstances of those who valued it most.

Endnotes

- ¹ Even those who extensively studied the two artists between the 1950s and 1990s, J.W. Von Moltke (Von Moltke 1965), Werner Sumowski (Sumowski 1983-1994, I [Bol], II [Flinck]), and Albert Blankert (Blankert 1982) obviously had little sympathy for the painters they chose to write about.
- ² London/Amsterdam 2014-2015, pp. 7, 30; see also Amsterdam 2015, p. 75.
- ³ Houbraken 1718-1721, p. 21. Carlo Cesare Malvasia wrote explicitly about pupils of Reni: 'The very fact of having such a great master bestowed great fortune on Reni's pupils.' (Spear 1997, p. 225). Something similar would have been true for Rembrandt's pupils.
- ⁴ On Van Hoogstraten's advice about competition, see Sluijter 2006, pp. 256-263.
- ⁵ Saenredam copied a design by Salomon de Bray from 1629; see Terwen and Ottenheim 1993, p. 17; Gerritsen 2006, p. 176-177; The Hague 2001-2002, p. 54. The manor was then owned by Baron Jacob van Wassenaar van Warmond.
- ⁶ Buvelot 1995, pp. 121-128; Tucker 2015, pp. 119-124, 132-134.
- ⁷ On the design, history and building of the house, see Ottenheim 1989, pp. 34-42. The house was destroyed in 1943, but parts of the interior had been donated to the Rijksmuseum long before.
- ⁸ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 86-88.
- ⁹ See Klemm 1986, pp. 16-17 and cat.nr. 5, 9, and 11.
- ¹⁰ For instance, *Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*, 1651, Bamberg, Diozesan-Museum; see also Klemm 1986, cat.nrs. 52 (1644), 68 (1651, directly based on Honthorst), 103 (1653), 136 (1670).
- ¹¹ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 79-90; relation with Lastman's *Odysseus and Nausicaa* (1619, Munich, Alte Pinakothek), pp. 88-89.
- ¹² Sandrart 1675, pp. 12-13 (biography of Sandrart [*Lebenslauf*] written by Simon von Birken, but Sandrart supplied the information); see Sluijter 2015a, pp. 71-79; Dickey 2004, pp. 100-104.
- ¹³ Although Dutch classicism has become a current label for the work of a whole group of Dutch painters (see especially Rotterdam/Frankfurt 1999), none can really be called 'classicist' until the arrival of De Lairese. See Sluijter 2016-2017 and n. 76 below.
- ¹⁴ See Kok 2013, pp. 43-78 and 143-145.
- ¹⁵ Like Rembrandt, in Leiden before 1631 Lievens had produced history paintings as 'gallery paintings' to be bought by collectors; after moving to Amsterdam from Antwerp in 1644 he only made history paintings on commission.
- ¹⁶ Except for one portrait by Bol. De Renialme did have quite a few works by Lievens, but only landscapes, still lifes, portraits, and *tronies* (Montias Database inv.nr. 180.0238). Gerrit Uylenburgh, a high-end dealer, had no paintings by Bol or Flinck in his inventory of 1675; London/Amsterdam 2006, pp. 301-302.
- ¹⁷ Crenshaw 2006, especially ch. 6. Well-known dealers in paintings by Rembrandt include Claude Vignon (Paris), Hendrick Uylenburgh, Johannes de Renialme, Lodewijk van Ludick, and Gerrit Uylenburgh. Also noteworthy is the merchant Marten van den Broeck. Joachim de Wicquefort offered a painting by Rembrandt for 1500 guilders to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel in 1652; Sluijter 2015a, pp. 57-58.
- ¹⁸ Ferdinand Bol, *Portrait of Leonard Winnincx and Helena van den Heuvel as Jason and Medea*, 1664, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage; Grijzenhout 2009-2010. Formerly identified as *Bacchus and Ariadne*.
- ¹⁹ Rembrandt, *The Conspiracy of the Batavians under Claudius Civilis*, 1661-1662, canvas, 196 x 309 cm, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv.nr. NM 578, temporarily on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Bruyn et al. 1982-2015, VI, cat.nr. 298; the existing painting is a fragment of the canvas commissioned for a lunette of the Amsterdam Town Hall (Royal Palace). For the Genoa commission, see Magnani 2007. Another exception might be the room with Ovidian scenes mentioned by Baldinucci in his biography of Rembrandt; Bernhard Keil must have been the source for his statement that Rembrandt made 'many works in oil on walls, representing the fables of Ovid in the house of a merchant-magistrate' (Baldinucci 1686, pp. 78-80: 'In casa un Mercante del Magistrato condusse molte opere a olio sopra muro,

rappresentanti favole d'Ovidio.') This might have been one of the first *kamerschilderingen* (ensembles of fitted paintings) in Amsterdam. Rembrandt made some large history paintings in 1635-1636 and a few in the 1650s and 1660s, but most likely on his own initiative and artistic motivation (see Bruyn 1986, pp. 94-98); they would have been very expensive and hard to sell – one reason why he produced so few.

²⁰ Bruyn et al. 1982-2015, VI, cat.nr. 211a; see also cat. nr. 106, 107, 162, 163, 211b. Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik's commissions to Rembrandt for a cycle of paintings depicting the Passion of Christ (now Munich, Alte Pinakothek) were for his gallery of paintings in the Binnenhof in The Hague – a context in which aesthetic appeal was paramount. The commissions by Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina (including *Aristotle with the Bust of Homer*, 1653, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) were also meant to join a collection comprised of gallery paintings by renowned artists, even to be emulated by other celebrities, as further commissions by Ruffo to Guercino, Salvator Rosa, Mattia Preti, and Giacinto Brandi testify (about the latter's painting it was explicitly written that this work was: '... fatto a gara e competenza die quelli che fece il Reimbrandt olandese'; quoted by Falomir in Madrid 2014, p. 190 [not in RemDoc]).

²¹ See Sluijter 2015a, pp. 19-22.

²² Baldinucci received information from the knowledgeable Bernhard Keil ('una maniera, che si può dire, che fosse interamente sua'); Félibien also wrote about 'une manière très particulière, et bien différente'; Rutgers 2008, p. 138. About his late style Bikker and Weber 2014-2015, especially p. 18, rightly state that Rembrandt probably 'sought to exploit the full potential of his fame – what we might call his brand – by concentrating on the aspects of his art that were most closely associated with his reputation'.

²³ De Lairese 1707, I, p. 325: 'losse, spookachtige inbeeldingen, welke zonder voorbeelden weezende geen wisse gronden hadden'; Houbraken 1718-21, I, p. 265: 'een zeldzame natuurlyke hoedanigheid'.

²⁴ De Lairese 1707, I, p. 325.

²⁵ Houbraken 1718-21, III, p. 206 (in the life of Aert de Gelder).

²⁶ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 59-61 and 77-78; see also Sluijter 2015c.

²⁷ Sandrart 1675, II, Bk. 3, p. 26.

²⁸ Leon Battista Alberti's *De Pictura* of 1435, the first renaissance treatise on painting, would still resound in Karel van Mander's *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst* (1604) through the German adaptation of Gualtherus H. Rivius (see Van Mander/Miedema 1973).

²⁹ Houbraken, II, p. 21.

³⁰ Junius 1638 (English edition), p. 103. For an excellent discussion of the concept of grace from antiquity to the seventeenth century, see Spear 1997, pp. 102-114.

³¹ Van Mander wrote in his comment on Caravaggio's ideology that working from life was fine, but one first should learn to select the most beautiful from nature (Van Mander/Miedema 1994-1999, I, fol. 191v). Many painters in the first four decades of the seventeenth century completely jettisoned this principle.

³² See Heinen in Braunschweig 2004, pp. 28 and 146.

³³ Van Hoogstraten 1678, pp. 175-176, distinguishes three manners, the first being an additive style 'displaying an assortment of things together' rather than emphasizing unified narrative and composition; Sluijter 2015a, pp. 88, 387, 407 (note 86). On classicism, see also below, n. 76.

³⁴ See, for instance, Govert Flinck, *Female Nude Model*, ca. 1645-50, black and white chalk on blue paper, Paris, Fondation Custodia, collection F. Lugt, and other examples in Amsterdam 2016 and Amsterdam 2017-2018. On the drawing sessions, see Manuth 2001; Sluijter 2006, pp. 322-324. This group, mentioned as such by Dirck Bleker, was active in 1648 (the date on a drawing of a nude by Flinck [Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, inv.nr. 1327]) and probably earlier. On the difference between drawings from live models by this group and by Rembrandt and his circle, see Sluijter 2006, 292-309; Noorman 2016.

³⁵ Sandrart mentions that he visited *der Academia* as an apprentice in Utrecht, probably the same drawing school Crispijn de Passe II attended in his youth; Sandrart 1675, II, Bk 3, p. 317; Bok 1970; Sluijter 2015a, pp. 78-79. Sandrart, p. 329, also refers to a pupil he had in Amsterdam (Johann Sigmund Müller) who visited the *Academien*, suggesting such drawing sessions started before 1645.

³⁶ Van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 294: 'ik beklaeg my wanneer

ik mijn oude Academieteyckeningen overzie, dat men ons daer van in onze jonkheyd zoo spaerich heeft onderrecht; daer het niet meer arbeyt is een graesselijk postuur, dan een onaengenaem en walgelijk na te volgen'. See Sluijter 2015a, p. 106; Noorman 2016, pp. 30-36.

³⁷ See, for instance, *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, 1639 (Paris, Louvre; above, fig. 0.1); Sluijter 2015a, pp. 102-104.

³⁸ On Lambert Jacobsz's studio see Hillegers 2009 and below, ch. 2.

³⁹ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 99-101 and 105-107.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 97-108.

⁴¹ A quite different kind of commission is *Allegory on the Birth and Death of Prince Wilhelm Heinrich III of Brandenburg*, ca. 1650, Potsdam, Sanssoucci; see ch. 3 and fig. 3.9; Sluijter 2017-2018.

⁴² With these painters, who each developed his characteristic style while supervised by Van Campen, we see a similar phenomenon of 'back to normal'. However, they started from a different background (see my lecture 'Caesar van Everdingen, Jacob van Campen en "Hollands classicisme"', <http://www.ericjansluijter.nl/lectures/>). On 'houding', see Taylor 1992.

⁴³ See Sluijter 2015a, pp. 97-99.

⁴⁴ See Sluijter 2017-2018.

⁴⁵ Flinck, *Allegory on the Memory of Frederik Hendrik*, 1654, canvas, 307 x 189 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.nr. SK-A-869, on loan to Mauritshuis (Prins William V Gallery), The Hague; Von Moltke 1965, cat.nr. 118; Sumowski 1983-1994, cat.nr. 636. Willeboirts Bosschaert, *Annunciation*, canvas, 221 x 191 cm, Dessau-Mosigkau, Museum Schloss Mosigkau; Heinrich 2003, cat.nr. 61; Rotterdam/Frankfurt 1999-2000, pp. 168-171. See below ch. 3 for analysis of this commission.

⁴⁶ See Van Eikema Hommes in Van Eikema Hommes and Kolfin 2013, ch. 4-5. For analysis of the painting methods of *The Four Muses and Pegasus* by Van Everdingen and its pendant by Lievens, see Van Eikema Hommes and Speleers 2011.

⁴⁷ For Vondel and the art of painting, see Porteman 1979; for Vondel and Sandrart, Porteman 1987.

⁴⁸ Sterck et al. (eds.) 1927-1940, VIII, pp. 199-201.

⁴⁹ Bol might have been a pupil of Jacob Gerritsz Cuyp in Dordrecht. Blankert's supposition that Bol might also have studied in Utrecht, based on a Hendrick Bloemaert-like painting that seemed to have a Ferdinand Bol signature (Blankert 1982, pp. 16-17 and cat.nr. 35), was undermined when the painting proved to be signed by Ferdinandus West (established by Willem van de Watering; Kok 2013, p. 46, n. 195).

⁵⁰ Sandrart perceptively observes that Rembrandt 'showed little light and highlighted only what he considered the most important part, around which he artfully bound together light and shadow, including well measured reflected lights, so that the light in the shadows faded away with great judiciousness, the colouring being truly glowing - all of which he did with great insight'; Sandrart 1675, II, Bk 3, p. 327. This is also true for Bol's early style.

⁵¹ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 334-345.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 343-345.

⁵³ The document is dated 1658 (Bredius 1915-1922, vol. 4, p. 1255; Manuth 2001, p. 49-50), but this group undoubtedly began these drawing sessions earlier. See above note 34.

⁵⁴ On the mystery of Van Loo's work before 1648 (his earliest dated history painting), see Sluijter 2015a, pp. 374-379.

⁵⁵ On this ensemble, see Van Eikema Hommes 2012.

⁵⁶ See also Ferdinand Bol, *Gaius Fabricius Luscinus in Pyrrus's Army Camp*, 1656, canvas, 485 x 350 cm, Amsterdam, Royal Palace (formerly Town Hall), Burgomaster's Chamber. On Bol's struggle with the composition of these two huge paintings, see Blankert 2004, pp. 45-92.

⁵⁷ See Amsterdam 2017-2018, cat.nr. 89.; Sluijter 2016-2017, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁸ De Lairese 1707, I, p. 325.

⁵⁹ See De Vries 1998, pp. 89-98. For the relationship of this group to the work of Bol, see the essay by Ilona van Tuinen in this book.

⁶⁰ Claude Vignon's letter of 1641 and Peter Mundy's diary of 1640 (citing only Rembrandt by name) testify to Rembrandt's international renown at an early stage; Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, pp. 212 and 202. His fame in the 1650s and 1660s is affirmed by Italian patronage and mention in Gabriël Buccelinus's list of painters; Van de Wetering 1997, pp. 265-268; Sluijter 2015a, pp. 56-58 with further references.

⁶¹ For example, Don Antonio Ruffo's complaint about the high price Rembrandt charged, well above the price asked by Guercino, one of the best paid painters in Italy (Sluijter 2015a, p. 56 with further references), is supported by the prices mentioned in Spear 2010.

⁶² De Bie 1661-1662, 290; Huret 1670, p. 111; Sandrart 1675, I, Bk 3, p. 58, 84, 85, II, Bk 3, pp. 326 (vita), 240, 319, 320, 329; Van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 13, 75, 176, 183, 191, 212, 228, 257, 268, 273, 291, 306; Felibien 1679, p. 50, Baldinucci 1686, pp. 78-80, Felibien 1685, IV, 92, 99; Baldinucci 1681-1728 (ed. 1974-1975), VI, p. 58-60; Roger de Piles 1699, 421-427; Florent Le Comte 1699, III, p. 125-126; Du Puy de Grez 1699, p. 81-82; also Angel 1641, p. 47, Orlers 1642, p. 375; Temple and Anstey (eds.) 1925, p. 70; De Monconys 1667, II, p. 132. They are all discussed by Slive 1953, except for Huret and Du Puy de Grez (see for the latter two Van Helsdingen 1969).

⁶³ De Piles 1677, p. 142-143; see Dickey 2004, pp. 97-98, and Sluijter 2015a, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁴ The claim that the Dutch classicists 'were in their own time the best paid and most discussed artists' (Blankert in Rotterdam/Frankfurt 1999-2000, p. 13) is simply not true. For example, the star of the exhibition for which Blankert wrote this statement, Caesar van Everdingen, is not mentioned in any of the seventeenth-century books listed in n. 62 above. Houbraken was the first to mention him; Houbraken 1718-1721, II, pp. 94-95. This is also true for Salomon and Jan de Bray, Paulus Bor, and Pieter de Grebber, the latter named only by Van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 257.

⁶⁵ De Bie 1661-1662, p. 280, Sandrart 1675, II, Bk 3, p. 319, Baldinucci 1686, p. 80 (Baldinucci 1681-1728 [ed. 1974-1975], V, p. 322). See also below, ch. 14.

⁶⁶ Remarkably absent in such sources as De Bie and Von Sandrart, Bol's name appears in city descriptions in relation to the Town Hall, e.g. Fokkens 1664, pp. 707-708; Von Zesen 1664, p. 368. Only Commelin 1694, p. 868, mentions Bol as one of the famous Amsterdam painters. Unlike Flinck, Bol did not penetrate the cultural elite; no poems were written on his paintings by Joost van den Vondel or Jan Vos. This analysis is indebted to Winnie Verbeek's bachelor's thesis on the early reception of Flinck and Bol, University of Amsterdam, 2008 (unpublished).

⁶⁷ Of the twenty-nine history painters working in Amsterdam ca. 1630-1650, when Rembrandt's style is described as dominant, twenty show no reflection of Rembrandt's style in their work. The remaining nine changed their manner after a short period of following Rembrandt (Flinck and Bol being the most successful), or followed him only in certain aspects. See Sluijter 2015a, especially pp. 385-394.

⁶⁸ For many examples, see Sumowski 1983-1994; see also Amsterdam 2015a.

⁶⁹ See Sluijter 2015a, pp. 346-347. For a survey of Van den Eeckhout's stylistic development, see Sumowski 1983-1994, II, pp. 719-724.

⁷⁰ The leading history painters continued in manners they had developed in the 1630s and 1640s, while none of the few younger ones seem to have had the ambition or capacity to compete with the established masters. Jan Lievens (b. 1607) introduced a neo-Venetian/Van Dyckian manner, followed by Jürgen Ovens (b. 1623). Jan van Noordt (b. 1624) followed Jacob Backer. Jan Gerritsz van Bronckhorst (b. 1603) and Cornelis Holsteyn (b. 1618) brought elements from, respectively, Utrecht and Haarlem history painting into Amsterdam, Van Loo (b. 1614) introduced a new type of academicism, and Nicolaes van Helt Stockade (b. 1614) updated Lastman with harsh colours, mainly succeeding through social connections. On Flinck and Ovens, see below, ch. 12.

⁷¹ The most prestigious rooms, the status of which was also displayed in materials and ornament (Corinthian capitals for the important rooms, Ionic for the lesser ones), were the *Burgemeestersvertrek* (Burgomaster's Cabinet, with paintings by Flinck and Bol), the *Vroedschapskamer* (Council Chamber, Flinck and Van Bronckhorst), the *Schepenkamer* (Magistrates Chamber, Bol), and the *Burgemeesterskamer* (Burgomaster's Chamber, Lievens). The only exception is Van Bronckhorst's painting in the *Vroedschapskamer*, but that was, in my view, a matter of economizing. Bol made an oil sketch for a huge painting, *Moses appointing Leaders*, to be placed on the chimney opposite Flinck's *Salomon praying for Wisdom*, but the commission went to Bronckhorst at a price of fl 1800, instead of the fl. 2500 Flinck was paid; Bol would undoubtedly have charged the same amount. In the

end Bronckhorst received only fl. 1000. Lievens was paid f. 1200 for a painting of less than half the size. See Van de Waal 1952, p. 215-219; Vlaardingerbroek 2011, p. 138-139, 148; Sluijter 2015b, especially pp. 25-26; Sluijter 2017.

⁷² Houbraken 1718-1721, p. 269: '[...] zyn konst werd zoodanig in zyn tyd geacht en gezogt, dat men hem (als het spreekwoord zeit) moest bidden en geld toegeven'.

⁷³ Sluijter 2015a, pp. 52-55 with further references.

⁷⁴ Ottenheym 1989, p. 274, note 91. See Sluijter 2015a, p. 88.

⁷⁵ It is several times combined with '*grootsheid*' (grandeur) and by Junius once with '*statelyk*' (stately); for example, Van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 176; Junius 1641, pp. 332-333.

⁷⁶ There is nothing 'classicist' about the styles of Flinck and Bol, if 'classicism' is taken in its usual sense to mean art that consciously engages with the formal example of Greco-Roman sculpture and draws on the tradition of Raphael, Annibale Carracci, Domenichino, and Poussin. The manners of Flinck and Bol grew entirely out of Netherlandish examples (in particular, Lastman, Rembrandt, and Rubens, all of whom have more right to be called 'international'); Rembrandt's dialogue with artists such as Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, the Carracci, Caravaggio, and other Italians is, in fact, more 'international'. 'Academicism' would be a more suitable term (they more or less followed the traditional 'rules' established in the Renaissance), but is unsatisfactory because of its association with the ideas of the Academie Royale in Paris as of the second half of the seventeenth century.

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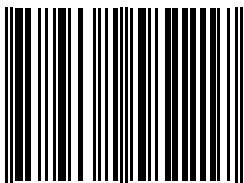
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Of the many talented artists who worked with Rembrandt van Rijn in Amsterdam, none were more successful than Govert Flinck and Ferdinand Bol. Like Rembrandt, both trained elsewhere before making the audacious move to Amsterdam in the 1630s, a period of dynamic growth for the city that was fast becoming the cultural capital of northern Europe. In this volume of essays, art historians and conservation scientists present recent research that sheds new light on the activities of both Bol and Flinck: their painting techniques, patronage networks, intellectual milieu, and shifting critical fortunes. Several chapters explore their relationships with other artists: Lambert Jacobsz, Flinck's teacher in Leeuwarden, Jürgen Ovens, who worked closely with Flinck in Amsterdam, and Cornelis Bisschop, who studied with Bol.

Each in his own way, Flinck and Bol took the lessons learned from Rembrandt, developed their own styles, and garnered prestigious commissions and esteem. Based on a landmark international conference and produced to accompany the exhibition *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck: Rembrandt's Master Pupils*, this book brings new attention to two brilliant painters who began their careers in Amsterdam as Rembrandt's acolytes and stayed to become his rivals.



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