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68.

Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (Amsterdam 1621 – Amsterdam 1674)

*The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*

1653

Oil on canvas, 101 × 83.7 cm

Signed and dated lower left: *G V Eeckhout. f/ A°. 1653*

Milwaukee, collection of Alfred and Isabel Bader

PROVENANCE

Woburn Green, London, collection of Captain Eric C. Palmer, in 1953; purchased from his widow by Alfred Bader, through Neville Orgel, in 1983

LITERATURE

Roy 1972, p. 217, no. 43; Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 2, p. 730, no. 415, p. 778 (colour ill.); vol. 6, p. 3600, no. 415; Alfred Bader, in *Aldrichimica Acta* 17, no. 2 (1984), p. 29 (cover ill.); Bader 1995, p. 211 (pl. 8)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

London 1953, no. 24 (ill.); Kingston 1984, p. 46, no. 19 (ill.); Yokohama, Fukuoka and Kyoto 1986-1987, p. 77 (colour ill.), p. 156, no. 21; Milwaukee 2005-2006, pp. 34-35, no. 10 (colour ill.)

AGAINST A FOREST landscape background, Mary holds the tightly swaddled baby Jesus on her lap. With her left hand she lifts the light covering from his head, thus allowing Joseph, who stands behind her, a view of the sleeping child. In the left foreground is a woven basket, and behind Mary to the right can be discerned the head of a donkey, cut off at the picture's edge. Both these elements allude to the apocryphal episode of the Rest on the Flight into Egypt.

Neither the placing of the figures in the immediate foreground nor their large scale relative to the frame is typical of Van

den Eeckhout's oeuvre, and this may have to do with the fact that the composition originally extended further on both left and right, making the vertical format and the concentration on the figure group less emphatic.<sup>1</sup> A much smaller version of the same image surfaced on the Amsterdam art market in 2005 (fig. 68a)<sup>2</sup> whose problematic condition made it very difficult to assess the question of Van den Eeckhout's authorship. Its discovery revealed the strongly horizontal format of the original composition, which was much more extensive. In the smaller work the donkey on the right has a much longer neck, and we can also make out part of a saddle lying in front of it. Minor differences revealed by a careful comparison with the present work indicate that it is not a small-scale copy; for example, the edge of white undergarment visible at Mary's left wrist is much broader in the Bader picture. It therefore seems at least possible that the smaller painting is a *modello* made by Van den Eeckhout in preparation for the 1653 painting.<sup>3</sup>

An inventory of Joachim van Aras's possessions drawn up in Amsterdam in 1665 mentions "Een schilderitie van Joseph met Maria en't kindeken Jesu met een ebben lijst gedaen door Mr. Gerrit Eeckhout (A small painting of Joseph with Mary and the infant Jesus, in an ebony frame, done by master Gerrit Eeckhout)."<sup>4</sup> Since the painting is described explicitly as being small, the Bader picture must evidently be excluded. But perhaps what Joachim von Aras already had in his possession in 1665 was a *modello* – possibly the small picture that appeared recently in Amsterdam – that the painter had produced for eventual sale.

Van den Eeckhout's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* has been connected both to Rembrandt's *Holy Family* from the first half of the



Fig. 68a. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, oil on panel, 24.6 × 29.4 cm. Location unknown.



Fig. 68b. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1645, etching with touches of drypoint, 13 × 11.5 cm, single state. Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis.

1630s, now in Munich,<sup>5</sup> and to Ferdinand Bol's 1644 painting on the same theme, now in Dresden.<sup>6</sup> The similarities with Bol's conception of the theme are of a general nature and are not very compelling. However, the Bader picture shares with Rembrandt's *Holy Family* the portrayal of a specific moment of family intimacy. Even more significant is Rembrandt's 1645 etching on the same theme as the likely source for Mary's gesture of revealing the sleeping child to her husband (fig. 68b).<sup>7</sup> Also notable is the reduced palette of the present painting compared to most of Van den Eeckhout's other history paintings from the 1650s – another indication that he was taking Rembrandt as his model.

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1. This hypothesis is supported by technical evidence: neither the left nor the right edge of the canvas shows the usual scalloped or garland pattern, which allows us to conclude that it was cut down.
2. Sale Amsterdam (Christie's), 16 November 2005, lot 38 (as by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout). This painting came from an unidentified private collection, for which it was bought from the Amsterdam art dealer Douwes in 1947. Unfortunately, it has darkened in many areas and is covered by an uneven layer of varnish. In addition there are large areas of damage where the paint layer has vanished entirely, revealing the support. Particularly serious is the irregular band measuring around 13-15 × 2-7 cm that extends horizontally from Mary's left forearm, over the face of the child and past Joseph's right arm.
3. Sumowski suggested this possibility in his entry to the catalogue of the 2005 sale; see note 2 above.
4. Amsterdam Municipal Archive, Notary G. Borsellaer, NA 593, dated 5 May 1665, fols. 252-265v, fol. 260; for further discussion see Loughman and Montias 2000, p. 50 note 123.
5. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Holy Family*, 1634, oil on canvas, 183,5 × 123,5 cm, Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. 1318, see Rembrandt Corpus, vol. 3, pp. 450-458, no A88 (ill.).
6. Ferdinand Bol, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1644, oil on canvas, 203 × 261 cm, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie, inv. 1603; see Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 1, p. 291, no. 81, p. 320 (colour ill.). For further discussion of the connection with the present painting, see Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 2, p. 730, and Roy 1972, p. 217.
7. As noted in Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 2, p. 730. For the print, see Hollstein, vol. 18, p. 30, no. B58; vol. 19, p. 48 (ill.). ♦

69.

Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (Amsterdam 1621 – Amsterdam 1674)

*Solomon's Idolatry*

Around 1665

Oil on canvas, 54.6 × 63.5 cm

Milwaukee, collection of Alfred and Isabel Bader

PROVENANCE

Uccle, Belgium, collection of W. van Gelder; sale, London (Christie's), 14 May 1971, lot 58 (as by Salomon Koninck); The Hague, with J. Hoogsteder; purchased by Alfred Bader in 1971

LITERATURE

Sumowski 1957-1958, p. 237 (as by Van den Eeckhout, *The Consecration of the Temple*); Sumowski 1962, p. 30 (as around 1660-1665); Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 3, p. 1404 (as *Solomon's Idolatry*); exhib. cat. Amsterdam and Groningen 1983, p. 136 (as by Van den Eeckhout, *Solomon's Idolatry*); Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 2, p. 738, no. 453, p. 816 (colour ill., as around 1665), and vol. 6, p. 3601, no. 453; Bruyn 1987, p. 223 (as not by Van den Eeckhout); Alfred Bader, in *Aldrichimica Acta* 23, no. 4 (1990), p. 85 (cover ill. in colour); exhib. cat. Delft 1994, p. 168, note 1 (as by Van den Eeckhout, probably *Solomon Praying in the Temple*); Manuth 2002, p. 235 (as by Van den Eeckhout, around 1660-1665)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

Milwaukee 1976, pp. 100-101, no. 45 (ill., as by Van den Eeckhout, *Solomon Praying in the Temple?*); South Hadley 1979, no. 4 (ill., as by Van den Eeckhout, 1650s or 1660s); West Lafayette 1980, unpaginated, no. 9 (ill., as around 1650); Yokohama, Fukuoka and Kyoto 1986-1987, p. 79 (colour ill.), pp. 156-157, no. 23 (as by Van den Eeckhout, *Solomon's Idolatry*, around 1665)

COLLECTION CATALOGUES

Milwaukee 1974, unpaginated, no. 12 (ill., as by Van den Eeckhout, *Solomon Praying in the Temple*)

THIS PAINTING SHOWS a ruler wearing a lavish mantle of gold brocade over a white undergarment and a turban surmounted by a crown. The figure kneels on a cushion, hands clasped before him in prayer. In front of him lies a sceptre, and to the right is an altar-like structure on which stand a censer and a pedestal. Behind the ruler two richly dressed women, also in a posture of prayer, kneel on a lower step. In the mid-ground is an enclosing structure with an open door and an arcade, through which other figures observe the scene.

This painting can be closely related to a drawing by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout that is presently in a Dutch private collection (fig. 69a). Differences in a number of details make it clear that this sheet is not a drawn copy of the painting, but a preparatory study.<sup>1</sup> It is significant for the iconographic interpretation of the painting that the drawing allows all the observers looking



Fig. 69a. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, *Solomon's Idolatry*, around 1665, pen in brown ink and brown washes, 18.8 × 23.2 cm. The Netherlands, private collection.