



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,⁵ and to Ferdinand Bol's 1644 painting on the same theme, now in Dresden.⁶ 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).⁷ 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.

Völker Manuth

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 C. Borsellaer, NA 593, dated 5 May 1665, fols. 252-265, 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.¹ 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.



through the arcade opening to be identified conclusively as women – something that is no longer clear in the painting. Also, the foot that appears on top of the pedestal at the right edge of the drawing unquestionably belongs to a seated statue of one of the pagan idols worshipped by King Solomon. This detail is absent from the painting.

According to the First Book of Kings, God had warned the Israelites not to associate with members of pagan tribes, lest his people succumb to the temptation of idolatry. Ignoring this caution, Solomon took many pagan wives and concubines, who persuaded him to worship foreign deities. The king even had sanctuaries erected, so his womenfolk might burn incense and make sacrifices to their gods (1 Kings 11:8).

It has been suggested several times that the theme of this painting is actually Solomon's prayer on the occasion of the Consecration of the Temple, which is thoroughly described in chapter 8 of the First Book of Kings.² The chief argument in favour of this identification is the absence of the pagan idols seen typically on the altar in images of Solomon's Idolatry. Speaking against this identification, however, is the fact that there is no significant prior tradition for depictions of Solomon's prayer at the Consecration of the Temple. This theme was portrayed only rarely during the 17th century, and correspondences between Van den Eeckhout's painting and the few existing examples³ – including the painting by Philips Koninck in the Bader collection (cat. 101) – are not evident. By contrast, Solomon joining his harem wives in the worship of their pagan deities can be counted among the more frequently depicted themes. Many examples can

be identified, particularly in the work of such Haarlem artists as Willem de Poorter (cat. 155), Jacob de Wet and Jan de Bray. But Leonard Bramer, active in Delft, also painted the theme repeatedly.⁴ With some differences in the details, nearly all these depictions emphasize the role of the pagan women, who encouraged King Solomon to commit idolatry. Moreover, in an earlier rendering of the subject dated 1654, Van den Eeckhout himself placed one of them in a prominent position, directly beside the kneeling Solomon.⁵ The presence of the female figures is critical to the iconography of this theme, and it is owing to their inclusion in the present painting that it may also be considered a representation of the Idolatry of Solomon.

Volker Manuth

1. See Sumowski 1979ff., vol. 3, pp. 1404-1405, no. 647 (ill.).
2. See under Literature at the head of this entry. Alfred Bader remains convinced that the painting depicts Solomon praying in the Temple (written communication with the author of this entry, 13 August 2006).
3. Among these is an etching by Matthaeus Merian that appeared as an illustration in the so-called Merian Bible, which was published around 1630 in Strasbourg. In this image the king is shown kneeling at prayer on a podium in the nave of a three-aisled church, high above the heads of the large crowd. This corresponds to "all the congregation of Israel," specified as being present in the biblical description of the Consecration of the Temple by Solomon (1 Kings 8:5, 22, 55). In Dutch 17th-century painting, aside from the painting by Philips Koninck in the Bader Collection (cat. 101), there is also an example by Leonard Bramer: oil on panel, around 1650, 73.5 × 109.5 cm, signed, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie alte Meister, inv. 1324; see exhib. cat. Delft 1994, pp. 168-169, no. 46 (ill.). This picture shows Solomon kneeling in the Temple before the Tabernacle with the Tables of the Law and precious vessels. Behind him stands a group of priests.
4. On the dissemination, popularity and interpretation of this theme in 17th-century Netherlandish art, see Judith van Gent in exhib. cat. Amsterdam and Jerusalem 1991-1992, p. 96, and Bleyerveld 2000, pp. 239-242.
5. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, *The Idolatry of Solomon*, 1654, oil on canvas, 169 × 138 cm, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. 258; see Sumowski 1983-1994, vol. 2, p. 730, no. 417, p. 780 (colour ill.). ◆