CHAPTER 17

Art Collectors and Painters II: Jacob Swalmius and Rembrandt

Jacob Swalmius and Guilielam van Neurenburgh bought many lots of prints, drawings and miscellaneous objects at the sale of Jan Basse of March 1637 and of Gommer Spranger of February 1638. The evidence I will present shows that they were both in close contact with Rembrandt. The conjecture will be developed in this chapter that they were his pupils (the first with some probability, the second, much more tentatively).

Only 20 Rembrandt pupils are known from contemporary documents with any degree of certainty. In addition, there were seven painters mentioned by Arnold Houbraken as having been Rembrandt pupils who were not cited as such in contemporary documents. This total of 27 artists about whom it may be said with some confidence that they were Rembrandt pupils were presumably a small fraction of the “almost innumerable children of distinguished families” who, according to Joachim Sandrart, paid 100 gulden per year – apparently without benefit of board or lodging – for the privilege of taking lessons from the great master. The other possible pupils are based on affinities of style with Rembrandt or on ambiguous contemporary references. Some of those known only from their works may have studied with Rembrandt only a short time to learn his way of painting.

We first encounter Jacob Swalmius on November 17, 1635, when he witnessed the testament of Rembrandt van Rijn and his wife Saskia van Uylenburgh in Rembrandt’s house. The clerk called him Jacob van der Walme but he signed neatly, on the same line as Rembrandt, “Jacob Swalmus” (sic). Witnesses to wills, other than notaries’ clerks, who signed last wills in the house of the testators, were often friends or close acquaintances who could be trusted to keep the terms of the will confidential. The clerk wrote his name as Jacob Swalmius when he bought 8 lots at the Jan Basse auction of 1637 – 7 lots of prints, one of drawings and a “little book.” When Swalmius bought one of these lots, he was identified by the clerk of the Orphan Chamber as “Jacob Swalmius in de Molsteegh tot Schelde Dirkxsz.”, which probably means that he was lodging with the ivory carver (auction buyer and collector) Schelde Diricxsz. The Molsteeg was situated in the ninth Wijk, near the Old Side Voorburgwal (not far from the present-day Central Station). It was within easy walking distance from the Vlooienburch (in the eleventh Wijk) where Rembrandt lived. Another buyer at the Basse auction who was living “tot Scheltes” at the very same time was Guilielam van Neurenburgh. Both Swalmius and Van Neurenburgh also
4: Rembrandt van Rijn, Portrait of Petrus Sylvius, Etching, 96 x 82 mm, Amsterdam, The Rembrandthuis
bought at the Gommer Spranger sale of 1638. At that sale Swalmius, who by this
time was said to be “tot Hondekote” (probably the painter Gillis de Honde-
coeter), bought three lots of Dürrer prints. In appendix 2 to this chapter I discuss
the pattern of purchases of both men at the Basse and Spranger sales.

Jacob van der Swalme/Swalmius was almost certainly the son of Carel van der
Swalme (1587-1640), commissioner of the Convoys and Licenses in IJzendijke and
dike-reeve (dijkstraaf) of the Orange Polder in Flemish Zeeland (territory recovered
from Spain). Carel was the brother of Henricus Swalmius (1577-1649), predikant in
Haarlem, portrayed by Frans Hals in 1639; of Eleazer Swalmius, predikant in Am-
sterdam, portrayed by Rembrandt in or around 1638; and of Arnoldus Swalmius,
predikant in ’s Gravesande. He is the only one of the four brothers who kept the
family name Van der Swalme. Jacob was born on 9 November 1614. There is no evi-
dence that he ever married. On 23 June 1645, he became baillu of IJzendijke. He
was still alive in 1660 when an accounting was made of the estate of Henricus
Swalmius after the death of Henricus’s second wife Ifje Willems van Weert. It is bare-
ly possible that he is identical with the individual named Jakob van der Swaeleme
who was buried in Amsterdam, coming from the Heiligenweg, in the Leidsche Kerk-
hof on 28 May 1671.

Eleazer Swalmius was born in Rhoon in 1582 and was ordained predikant in
Poortugaal and Hoogvliet (near Rotterdam) in 1605. He sided with the Counter-re-
monstrants in their bitter dispute with the partisans of Arminius. In 1612, he was
named predikant in Schiedam, where he remained for ten years, although he was
“lent out” to churches in The Hague (in 1617) and Utrecht (in 1619). He was called
to Amsterdam in 1620, but because his parishioners in Schiedam refused to release
him, he did not move to Amsterdam until 1622. We shall see presently that the
connections he made in Schiedam were an important part of his network of acquain-
tances. He married Eva Ruardi (or Ruardus), the daughter of Ruardus Acronius
(Vinning), in Schiedam on 16 September 1606. He was buried in the Oude Kerk
in Amsterdam on 4 (?) June 1652.

Eleazer’s daughter Catharina (or Trijntje), born in Poortugaal about 1615, was
betrothed to Wilhelmus Dilburgh, born in Amsterdam about 1610, on 17 March
1645. She was living, most probably with her parents, on the Herengracht. She
signed the betrothal act “Catharijna van der Swalmen”. When their son Eleazer was
baptized in the Oude Kerk on 17 May 1647, Hendrick Swalmius (Eleazar’s brother,
Henricus, predikant in Haarlem) and Eva Ruardus were witnesses.

Via his sister Sibilla, Wilhelmus Dilburgh was linked to another predikant in Rem-
brandt’s family circle. On 18 May 1638 Sibilla was betrothed to Petrus Joannes
Sylvius (1610-1653), the son of the predikant Jan Cornelis Sylvius (1564-1638). One
year previously, in a print dated 1637, Rembrandt had etched the portrait of
Petrus Sylvius (ill. no. 4). The portrait of his father Jan Cornelis senior was twice
etched by Rembrandt, once in 1633 and then, posthumously, in 1638. Jan Cor-
nelis Sylvius was the husband of Alida van Uylenburgh, the cousin of Rembrandt’s
wife Saskia. When the pre-nuptial contract of Petrus and Sybilla was signed on the
day before the betrothal, the bridegroom was assisted by his father, the *predikant* Jan
Cornelis Sylvius; Sybilla was assisted by her presumed brothers Wilhelmus and Joh-
hannes Dilburgh. To add even more density to this Rembrandtesque milieu, Rom-
bout Kemp, one of the two sergeants depicted in Rembrandt’s Nightwatch, wit-
tnessed the ceremony.578

Eleazer’s younger daughter, named Helena (or Hiletje), baptized in Schiedam on
14 February 1618,579 was betrothed to Adriaen Banck, from Schiedam, 23 years old
on 3 May 1641.580 She was assisted by her father Eleazer Swalmius and her mother
Yffje (Eva) Ru(w)ardus. Jasper van Wallendael made an illegible declaration, which
probably concerned the consent of one or more of Adriaen Banck’s parents.581 Jasper
Wallendael, born circa 1589, was also from Schiedam. When he had his son Nicolaes
baptized on 10 September 1629, the witness of record was Joris Aertsz. Banck, the fa-
ther of Adriaen Banck.582 Adriaen Banck’s acquaintance with his future father-in-
law Eleazer Swalmius must have dated from his childhood in Schiedam. When Adri-
aen was nine years old, his brother Cornelis was baptized in Schiedam’s *Hervormde
Kerk* in the presence of Dominee Swalmius, who, as the first witness named, is likely
to have been the baby’s godfather.583 Six months after her marriage to Adriaen
Banck, Helena Swalmius, who had probably died in childbirth, was buried in Amst-
terdam’s Oude Kerk (on 18 November 1641).584

Adriaen Banck, canvas dealer (*kanvashandelaar*), became a citizen of Amsterdam
on 30 July 1642.585 Five years later, in 1647, Banck bought a painting of “Susanna”
directly from Rembrandt, as he declared at the request of Titus’s guardian Louys
Crayers, 12 years later.586 Banck remarried with Maria Boll from Haarlem. The be-
trothal took place in Amsterdam on 22 July 1649.587 The couple made their testa-
ment on 29 March 1650.588 They named each other universal heirs. If she died first,
he would be obligated to give 15,000 *ƒ* to her surviving child or children. But if he
died first, she would have to give his child or children, or heirs *ab intestato*, 30,000 *ƒ
Banck, evidently, was comfortably well off.

After Eleazer Swalmius died in January 1652, his widow Eva Ruardus specified in
her testament of 1655 that the portraits of herself, her husband, and a deceased
daughter, probably painted by Rembrandt, should be kept for her grandson.589 This
grandson is presumed to have been Joannes Dilburgh who was baptized in Amster-
dam on 8 February 1646.590 In a second will, Eva Ruardus repeated this provision,
specifying that the third portrait was that of Hiletje (the late wife of Adriaen
Banck).591 Eva must have died shortly before 12 March 1659 when her post-mortem
inventory was taken.592 The inventory was drawn up at the request of her two sons-
in-law, Wilhelmus Delburch (Dilburgh) and Adriaen Banck. The attorney Jacob de la
Mijne and Cornelis Jansz. Slooterdiick were the executors of the late widow’s testa-
ment. There were 10 portraits in the inventory, including two of the daughters Trijn-
tje (Catharina) and Hiletje (Helena) and another of Hiletje. The other identified
portraits represented “grandparents and greatgrandparents Swalmius”.593 The

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“grandparents Swalmius” were probably Eleazer and Eva. There were also six portraits of princes and princesses of the House of Orange. The most numerous category of paintings in the inventory (none of which was attributed) consisted of landscapes (18). There were only two religious subjects (a Samaritan woman and a Maria). The portraits of Eleazer Swalmius, Eva Ruardus, and Hiletje Swalmius were
indeed left to the grandson (Johannes Dilburgh) who, in 1672, stated in his testament that he was leaving all his goods to his wife (Anna Mom) except for “the three portraits by Rembrandt”.594 The grandson, Johannes (Jan) Willem Dilburgh, who became a doctor in medicine in Amsterdam and also lived in Utrecht, was buried in his native city on 12 January 1696. On 29 May 1702, his children, Johannes, Constantia, Eleasar Swalmius Dilburgh and Dirck Dilburgh (the last two still of minor age), living in Utrecht, gave their mother Anna Mom power of attorney to collect some goods they had inherited from their greatgrandmother Eva Ruardus.595 The Rembrandt portraits may have descended to one of these children.

Some time in 1659 (the exact date is not known), Adriaen Banck, about 46 years old, made a deposition at the request of Sr. Louys Crayers, the guardian of Rembrandt’s son Titus, in which he declared that he had purchased from Rembrandt a painting of Susanna for 500 f in the year 1647.596

On 31 August 1660, the honorable Adriaen Banck, merchant in Amsterdam, sold a number of distinguished paintings to Adriaen Maen, a merchant in Schiedam.597 Adriaen Maen was his brother-in-law, the husband of his sister Maria Joris Banck.598 The sale may have been fictitious: it may just have been a way for Adriaen Banck to borrow money from Maen, who would be sure of repayment in case of his brother-in-law’s death. One of the paintings ceded to Maen was a Susanna by Rembrandt, presumably the one he had purchased directly from the artist in 1647, which Banck sold for 560 f. The other two Rembrandt works were “my portrait” (150 f) and a sketch of an unidentified subject (30 f). After the three Rembrants, the following paintings were listed: two pieces by Munix of soldiers (85 f), a piece by Van der Swalmius of Lucretia (85 f), a banquet piece by (Willem?) Heda (50 f), and a piece by (Ferdinand) Bol of Paris (70 f). The Lucretia by Van der Swalmius is presumed to have been painted by Jacob van der Swalmius/Swalmius.599 The proximity of a painting by Bol, who entered Rembrandt’s studio in 1636,600 is suggestive too. There was also a large print of Eleazer Swalmius, which was probably the engraving by Jonas Suydershoef, inscribed “Rembrandt pinxit” (ill. no. 5). Beside these works of art, the collection was graced by a large hunting scene by Rubens (300 f), two large landscapes by (Jacob or Salomon van) Ruisdael (130 f) and another piece by (Willem?) Heda (30 f). I was not able to trace the fate of the collection either in Amsterdam or in Schiedam after this transfer.

From these disparate pieces of information, I tentatively conclude that Jacob Swalmius was a pupil of Rembrandt, one of these “almost countless children of distinguished families” who contributed to Rembrandt’s extraordinarily high income from teaching in the 1630s and the early 1640s.

In the preparation of this chapter, I became aware of the importance of Reformed predikanten among Rembrandt’s contacts and in his milieu. In the literature on Rembrandt, much has been made of his relation with Remonstrants and Anabaptists (by Gary Schwartz in particular), perhaps because it was believed that Rembrandt was inclined toward one or both of these beliefs.601 But the Counter-Remonstrant preach-
ers that Rembrandt dealt with or who belonged to his circle have been neglected, with the exception of Schwartz’s illuminating remarks on the English preacher Johannes Elison and on his sons.\textsuperscript{602} We have seen that Rembrandt etched the portrait of the orthodox \textit{predikant} Johannes Sylvius, his cousin by marriage and the likely godfather of his son Rombertus, in 1633 and 1638, and the portrait of Silvius’s son Petrus in 1637. Around 1637 or 1638, he painted the portrait of Eleazer Swalmius. We have also seen that Petrus Sylvius married the presumed sister of Eleazer’s son-in-law Wilhelmus Dilburgh. Neither Eleazer Swalmius nor Petrus Sylvius is mentioned by Gary Schwartz or by Simon Schama. Volker Manuth, who does not cite Counter-Reformants in the list he provides of the religions of the individuals Rembrandt portrayed (moderate Calvinist-Remonstrants, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, and Jews), argues that “Rembrandt … kept his distance from the Orthodox Calvinists”.\textsuperscript{603} This assertion, which Manuth does not support with evidence, is perhaps in need of amendment, at least for the first part of Rembrandt’s career in Amsterdam.

To the four Counter-Reformant preachers who clearly belonged to Rembrandt’s milieu (Jan Cornelis Sylvius, Petrus Sylvius, Eleazer Swalmius, and Johannes Elison), I can now add a more distant fifth.\textsuperscript{604} On 14 March 1653, Rembrandt borrowed 4,200 \textcurrency{f} from Isaack van Hertsbeeck.\textsuperscript{605} From that date on, Van Hertsbeeck and Rembrandt are linked through many documents, mainly in the former’s quality as creditor of Rembrandt’s insolvent estate. By the time Rembrandt received the loan, Isaack’s sister Hester had been married for nearly twenty years to the staunch Counter-remonstrant \textit{predikant} Festus Hommius, who helped draft the resolutions of the great Dordrecht synod of 1618.\textsuperscript{606} Fifteen months after the loan agreement was concluded, on 25 June 1654, Hendrickje Stoffels was summoned by the Church Council for being unmarried and pregnant and was finally accused of committing whoredom with Rembrandt. Van Hertsbeeck may have been the last member of the Orthodox Calvinist party to do Rembrandt a favor.\textsuperscript{607} Portrait commissions by members of this group were already long past. After the confrontation of Hendrickje with the Church Council, Rembrandt could only expect animosity from that quarter.

\textbf{Guilliaem van Neurenburgh and the Basse and Spranger Sales of 1637 and 1638}

The circumstantial evidence for justifying the suggestion that Guilliaem van Neurenburgh was also Rembrandt’s pupil rests on the pattern of Van Neurenburgh’s purchases at auction and on the fact that, together with Jacob Swalmius, he lodged with the ivory carver Schelte Dirricxsz. in the Molsteeg on the Old Side.\textsuperscript{608}

One difficulty with this hypothesis lies in determining whether the buyer at auction was the father or the son, both of whom went by the name of Willem or Guilliaem van Neurenburgh.\textsuperscript{609} Since the beginning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Van Neurenburgh family had been well known as purveyors of natural stone (\textit{blaeusteen}), chiefly for the construction of churches and other public edifices, in various parts of the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{610}
At first these builders-contractors operated out of Maastricht and Namen (Namur), but by 1585, Coenraad van Neurenburgh III had settled in Dordrecht, where he and his family became members of the (Reformed) Walloon church. He died in 1608. At least two of his sons, Coenraad IV, born about 1571, and Willem II, born circa 1575, followed him in the family trade.\textsuperscript{611} By 1624, Willem II had become the full owner of his father’s business. When “Guilliaem van Neurenburgh” first emerged as a buyer at an Orphan Chamber auction in March 1637, Willem II would have been about 62, surely too old to be a pupil of Rembrandt.\textsuperscript{612} His last known delivery of stone – to the Hoogheemraadschap of Delftland in 1640 – may have taken place shortly before his death. Brujin and Huisman, the authors of the most complete article on the Van Neurenburgh family, argue that Willem II was the collector who bought at auction in Amsterdam in 1637 and 1638.\textsuperscript{613} This, as I shall now show, is at least disputable.

At some unknown date, Willem van Neurenburgh II married Anna Willemot. Their first son, named Joannes, was baptized on 24 February 1613. He had a fairly distinguished career as one of Dordrecht’s regents, serving as a member of the city Council from 1630 on and as an alderman in various years. On 24 July 1634, he married Elisabeth Trip, daughter of Jacob Trip and of Margaretha de Geer, who, late in life, were portrayed by Rembrandt.\textsuperscript{614} Another son of Willem and Maria, named Coenraat (V), was baptized on 28 June 1615; a third, named Willem (III), on 13 October 1619.\textsuperscript{615} The authors of this study about the Van Neurenburgh family inform us that nothing is known about this last-named son. The absence of any information about Willem III suggests that he may have died early, that he had moved away from Dordrecht, or both. I conjecture that Willem or Guilliaem van Neurenburgh III may have been the buyer at auction at the Basse auction of 1637 who lodged, together with Jacob Swalmius, with Schelte (Schelde) Dirricxsz. on the Molsteeg. He would have been 18 years old in 1637.\textsuperscript{616} By 1638, when the Spranger sale took place, he had moved out of Schelte Dirricxsz’s house and was said to be lodging “next to the Lamb’s brewery” on the Singel (on the new side of Amsterdam).\textsuperscript{617} Since Willem van Neurenburgh senior, who was quite well off, possessed a house on the Keizersgracht,\textsuperscript{618} there would have been no reason for him to lodge with an ivory carver of modest means in 1637 and 1638. It seems more probable that his son Guilliaem was living with Schelte Dirricxsz. He may have bought prints at auction for his father or for his own account \textit{qua} artist.

I now turn to the two important sales – that of Jan Basse in March 1637 and that of Gommer Spranger in February 1638 – at which Rembrandt, Jacob Swalmius, and Guilliaem van Neurenburgh all bought numerous lots. (Selected lots sold in these two sales are shown in tables 2 and 3 of the Appendix to this chapter.)

The Basse sale took place in 17 sessions stretching into as many days. Rembrandt was present and bought lots at the sessions of March 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 19; Swalmius, at the sessions of March 13, 16, 18, 19, and 20; Van Neurenburgh, at the sessions of March 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, and 20. Isabella van Eeghen, in an important article devoted in part to these two sales, was the first to publish some notes that
the auctioneer Daniel Jansz. van Beuningen had jotted down in the back of the notebook containing the records of the sale. These notes are only partly readable, but the inference she made from them seems correct. Under the name Smijters, the auctioneer had written:

[...]ant van Remb. Guiliaem Neurenb. 3.18.-
1 dito – David ter Haer 5.-
1 dito Guiliaem Neurenb. 4.2

Samuel Smijters, a merchant, nephew of the well-known school teacher Anthonie Smijters, published translations of religious works (by Clément Marot, Theodore de Bèze and Petrus Dathenius) and psalms (with musical accompaniment). He too, like his uncle Anthony Smijters, seems to have been a Counter-Remonstrant. He was a frequent buyer of prints at Orphan Chamber auctions, including of course the Basse sale. He must have been closely acquainted with Rembrandt, who etched his portrait. It is possible that he was the surety for Rembrandt’s purchases. David ter Haer was a jeweler who also frequently bought at auction.

The inscription “[…]ant van Remb.” probably refers to Rembrandt’s account. (The partially illegible word is probably “Restant”). Ms. van Eeghen pointed out that Rembrandt bought prints for f 3:18:-- on March 14, two little prints (printjes) for f 5:--:-: on the same day, and “some volute shells” (wat horens) for f 4: 2:-- on March 19. These are very likely to have been the three lots that Daniel van Beuningen was referring to in his notes. Did Rembrandt buy these lots on behalf of Van Neurenburgh and Ter Haer because they could not attend these particular sessions of the sale? In the case of Van Neurenburgh, this possibility is excluded, seeing that he was present and bought lots on both March 14 and 19. In the case of Ter Haer, it cannot be excluded: he was indeed absent – or at least he did not buy any lots – on March 14.

Nevertheless, the most likely explanation, put forward by Ms. van Eeghen, is that Rembrandt ceded some lots to these two buyers and that the auctioneer Daniel van Beuningen was expected to collect the money due for the lots from them. Van Beuningen’s notes at least establish a direct contact between Rembrandt and Van Neurenbergh.

Gommer Spranger, whose post-mortem sale took place in 6 sessions from 9 to 14 February 1638, was the nephew of Bartholomeus Spranger. Born in Antwerp, he first went to work for an uncle in Moscovy, then settled in Amsterdam in 1600, where he became a wealthy merchant. He was buried on 12 October 1637. According to a deposition made by Gommer Spranger and two of his brothers ten years after the event, he had traveled to Prague in 1611, at risk of his life, to settle the estate of his uncle Bartholomeus. He had brought back with him, from Prague to Amsterdam, numerous wood blocks and copper plates that had belonged to his uncle. In the probate inventory taken after Gommer Spranger’s death, there was a case with four copper plates: “the dreamer”, the “tasvoyer”, “the cook” (all three by Dürer), and “Sint Bartholomeus” (by Spranger). The full titles of the Dürer prints are “The Dream of
the Doctor” (Bartsch 76), “The Offer of Love” (Bartsch 93)\textsuperscript{624} (ill. no. 6), and “The Cook and His Wife” (Bartsch 84). According to Ms. van Eeghen, various copper plates after Spranger were engraved by Jan Harmensz. Muller, the Amsterdam printmaker (also a buyer at auction). All these plates and many prints taken from them turned up at the auction of February 1638.

6: Albrecht Dürer, “The Offer of Love” (\textit{De tasvloer}), 93 x 89.1 mm, Engraving
I will concentrate on the Dürer material which was the most abundant and expensive (at least in the total that it brought at the auction.) Twenty-eight Dürer blocks and plates were sold at the Spranger auction, some with titles, some without. Of these, 21, consisting of woodcut blocks of the Life of the Virgin, were sold to the print-maker and dealer Cornelis Danckertsz. for 13 f 15 st. a piece, for a total of 288 f 15 st. After the sale of these blocks, 73 sets of the Life of the Virgin, presumably pulled from these same plates, were sold to 28 buyers (15 were sold for cash). The more important buyers included Rembrandt (9 sets), the painter Jan Looten (8 sets), the collector Isaack Soolmans (Sollemans) (7 sets), the painter and broker Hugo Voskuyl (4 sets), the collector Abraham Alewijn (3 sets), the calligrapher and presumed print dealer Hendrick Meurs (2 sets), and the art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh (2 sets). That artists who at least occasionally dealt in art works and full-time dealers should have bought multiple sets for sale requires no explanation. It is less clear why private collectors like Soolmans and Alewijn should have done so. (Since Soolmans bought 7 sets in a row at identical prices, the quality of the paper and of the printing can hardly have been an issue). The only explanation that comes to mind is that they bought duplicates to exchange with other collectors or dealers. Jacob Swalmius and Guillem van Neurenburgh each bought one set (at 1 f 18 st. and 1 f 19 st., respectively, these prices being virtually identical with those paid by Rembrandt). Hugo Voskuyl and Abraham Alewijn both paid the highest price: 2 f 3 st. for a dozen. I go into these details because they are relevant to the issue of collusion raised by Isabella van Eeghen concerning the following plates (“The Cook”, “The Dreamer”, and “The tasvloyer” and the prints that were pulled from them. She argued that Rembrandt, Smijters, and Van Neurenburgh must have “spoken over” these lots before the sale – that is, conspired not to bid against each other to keep prices low.

The first copper plate sold with an identifiable subject, “The Cook”, was bought by Samuel Smijters for 21 f. Later in the sale 8 dozen examples of the print were auctioned. Rembrandt took the first dozen for 2 f. Guillem van Neurenburgh and Jacob Swalmius both paid 2 f 2 st. and Hendrick Meurs, 2 f 1 st. per dozen (for two dozen), Abraham Alewijn and Hugo Voskuyl, 2 f 3 st. for a dozen each. There is no evidence of collusion in this case, even though Rembrandt did buy his lot at a slightly lower price than the others. Next came the copper plate of “The Dreamer”, bought by Van Neurenburgh for 18 f. Eight lots containing 12 prints of the subject were sold to Rembrandt, Smijters, Pieter de la Tombe (print dealer), Soolmans, Uylenburgh, and Herman Rendorp at exactly 1 f 16 st. per lot. The exception was a lot of 12 bought by Abraham Alewijn for 3 f. It is quite possible in this case, as Van Eeghen suggested, that the first successful bidder, Samuel Smijters, was offered six more lots of a dozen each at the same price of 1 f 16 st., which he accepted and then resold to Rembrandt et al. at the same price. This would be rigging of the most innocuous kind, perhaps even admissible to the auctioneer. The fact that Alewijn paid 3 f for his dozen, which was nearly twice as much as the other seven buyers paid, does not necessarily imply that this was a rigged price. After all, he could have bought the first
dozen at a price slightly in excess of $1.16$ st. The set he purchased may have been exceptional, perhaps printed on special paper.

Neither Van Neurenburgh nor Swalmius bought any prints from the “Dreamer” plate. In the case of the former, the explanation is obvious: why should he buy prints from a plate that was already in his possession? None of the other buyers of plates are known to have done so. But Swalmius’s absence among the successful bidders is more interesting. He seems always to have bought prints whenever his former housemate did so. In this case, he may have depended on his friend to give him or to sell him at a low price “pulls” from the plate in his (Van Neurenburgh’s) possession.

Finally, the copper plate of “The tassloyer” was sold to Samuel Smijters for $9.15$ st. All sets sold at a later point in the sale consisted of one dozen prints of the plate, except for one consisting of 18 prints. Hugo Voskuil paid $2.1$ st. for a dozen. Rembrandt paid only $1.10$ st. Jacob Swalmius paid $1.16$ st. for his set and Guillaume van Neurenburgh, $1.11$ st. for his. Isaack Soolmans also paid $1.11$ st. The remaining lots, which all went to Hendrick Meurs, sold for $1.12$ st., except for the set of 18 prints which sank to $1.2$ st. I can see no collusion here, although I am intrigued that Rembrandt should again have been the lowest-price buyer.

About all I can conclude from this lengthy analysis is that, whenever lots were sold that attracted a small number of buyers (unlike “The Life of the Virgin”, which was apparently quite popular), some mild degree of collusion among people who were well acquainted with each other, as Rembrandt, Pieter de la Tombe, Hendrick Uylenburgh, and Samuel Smijters undoubtedly were, is likely to have occurred. The fact that Van Neurenburgh had bought two lots from Rembrandt at the Jan Basse sale in the previous year adds to the presumption that he too belonged to this inner circle, as did of course Jacob Swalmius. But there is no clear evidence that they conspired with Rembrandt to hold down prices.

Appendix to chapter 17

Table 17.1

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<th>Lot</th>
<th>Item Purchased</th>
<th>Price (gulden)</th>
<th>Buyer</th>
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<td>238</td>
<td>uts. (a number of prints)</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Guilleam van Neurenburch</td>
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<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Rembrandt</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>377</td>
<td>a number of prints</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>411</td>
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<td>417</td>
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<tr>
<td>427</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>575</td>
<td>2 art books (konstboecken)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>637</td>
<td>a set of prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>644</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>647</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>679</td>
<td>a little book (probably illustrated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>685</td>
<td>a set of prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>688</td>
<td>a set of prints</td>
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<td>704</td>
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<td>710</td>
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<tr>
<td>713</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>717</td>
<td>1 uts. (drawing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>729</td>
<td>a number of drawings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>a number of prints</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>842</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>846</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>847</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>850</td>
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<td>852</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>860</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<td>861</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>868</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>872</td>
<td>a print of Rafael</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>874</td>
<td>two little prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>988</td>
<td>some white paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>a number of prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1006</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1007</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1013</td>
<td>a number of prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1144</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1194</td>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1198</td>
<td>1 empty art book (constboeck)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1215</td>
<td>1 empty book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1215</td>
<td>a number of prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1230</td>
<td>a few prints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1250</td>
<td>uts. (a number of drawings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guilliam van Neurenb[ergh]

Rembrandt

Jacobus Swalmius

Guilliam van Neurenburgh

Rembrandt

Jacobus Swalmius in the Mosteegh

"tot Schelde Dierricx"
Table 17.2
Selected buyers at Gommer Spranger sale, 12, 13, and 14 February 1638

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price (gulden)</th>
<th>Buyer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 February</td>
<td>A book of proportions by Albor Duer</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Michiel le Blon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 plate of Albdoruer</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Abraham Alewijn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ditto (plate of Albdoruer)</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>Cornelis Danckertsz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ditto (plate of Albdoruer) of the Trinity</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Cornelis Danckertsz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a plate of Albdoruer</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Abraham Alewijn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life of the Virgin (Vrou leven) woodcuts by Albdoruer (21 plates)</td>
<td>288.75</td>
<td>Cornelis Danckertsz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a copper plate of Albdoruer of the purse fleecer (tas vloijer)</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>Samuel Smijters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a copper plate of Albdoruer of the dreamer (droomer)</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>Guljam Neurenburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a copper plate of Albdoruer of the cook (de kock)</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>Samuel Smijters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The lot numbers have been added. In a couple of cases (lots 1320 and 1323), the numbers placed after the lot numbers seem to correspond to the numbers in a catalogue of the sale, no copies of which have survived. The names of buyers are spelled as in the original manuscript.
13 February

295 1 ditto (life of the Virgin, by Dürer) (tot Hondekote) 1.9 Jacob Swalmiis
296 ibid. 2.0 Mr. Hendrick Meurs
297 ibid. 2.0 solvit
298 ibid. 2.35 Rembrandt
299 6 ditto (life of the Virgin by Dürer), 36 st. a piece 10.8 Isaack Sonnemans
300 96 images of Mary 2.2 Hendrick Uylenburgh
301 109 coats-of-arms 1.55 ibid.
302 60 St. Francis (Francikes) 1.3 Pieter la Tombe
303 a passion by Alturff (Altdörffer) 1.35 Abraham Alewijn
304 220 Trinities 10.75 Cornelis Danckertsz.
305 140 Communions (Avondt malen) 4.3 Mr. Hendrick Meurs
306 a number of diverse prints 0.95 Harmen Rendorp
307 12 cooks Alborduer 2.0 Rembrandt
308 ditto 2.1 Guilliaem Neurenberch
309 ditto 2.05 Hendrick Meurs
310 ditto 2.1 Jacob Swalmius
311 ditto 2.05 solvit
312 ditto 2.05 Mr. Hendrick Meurs
313 ditto 2.15 Abraham Alewijn
314 ditto 2.15 Hugo Voskuijl
315 12 purse fleecers 2.05 Hugo Voskuijl
316 ditto 1.8 Jacobus Swalmius
317 ditto 1.6 solvit
318 ditto 1.6 Hendrick Meurs
319 ditto 1.55 Guilliaem Neurenberch
320 ditto 1.5 Rembrandt
321 ditto 1.5 Hendrick Meurs
322 18 ditto 1.1 Jan Looten
323 12 ditto 1.11 Isaack Sollemans opt Water
324 12 dreamers by Alborduer 1.8 Samuel Smijiers
325 ditto 1.8 Rembrandt
326 ditto 1.8 Pieter de la Tombe
327 ditto 1.8 Isaack Soolmans
328 ditto 1.8 Pieter de la Tombe
329 ditto 1.8 Hendrick Uylenburgh
330 ditto 3.0 Abraham Alewijn
331 2 lifes of the Virgin 4.0 Jan de Raedt
332 1 ditto 1.8 Harmen Rendorp
333 12 dreamers 1.16 Harmen Rendorp

14 February

334 a print by Rembrandt 3.0 Guilliaem Neurenberch
335 ditto 5.0 David ter Haer
336 ditto 4.0 Guilliaem Neurenberch

End of sale
Notes on selected buyers at the Basse and Spranger sales:
Abraham Alewijn (1607-1679): cloth merchant; an important collector, whose wealth was assessed at 400,000 f in 1674. The poet Jan Vos praised the works of art in the Saal of Alewijn’s house.

Cornelis Danckertsz. II (?–1656): Engraver and print dealer, nephew of the architect and land surveyor Cornelis Danckertsz. I.

David ter Haer (1606-c.1643): Goldsmith and diamond merchant. He paid a tax of 25 f in 1631, corresponding to an assessed wealth of 5,000 f.

Jan Looten (1618–?): Landscape painter influenced by Jacob van Ruisdael. He paid a tax of 30 f in 1631, corresponding to a wealth assessment of 6,000 f.

Hendrick Meurs (1604-c.1640): Schoolmaster, calligrapher, and probably print dealer. After his death, his widow, Judith Cotermans, appeared before the Orphan Chamber and declared that her children with Hendrick Meurs were entitled to 4,000 f for their father’s inheritance (WK 5073/789, 3 August 1640).

Guillaume van Neurenburgh: See text.

Jan de Raedt: Brother-in-law of the important collector Gommer Spranger (at whose sale he bought some lots). After the death of Spranger, he became the guardian of his children in 1640. He paid a tax of 300 f in 1631, corresponding to an assessed wealth of 60,000 f.

Harmen Rendorp (de jonge): When he bought a lot at the Spranger sale, he was said to be “knecht ten huis”. He may have been a merchant apprentice in Spranger’s business. His father, Harmen Rendorp I (who died in 1625), a merchant by occupation, was a devoted Remonstrant.

Samuel Smijters (?–1644): Bookseller and, probably, print dealer. He paid a tax of 15 f, corresponding to an assessed wealth of 3,000 f. In the estate of Clement de Jonghe (1679), there was an etching of Rembrandt of the portrait of Samuel Smijters, which can no longer be identified with certainty.

Isaack Sollemans (Soolmans) (1586-aft. 1646): Cloth merchant. He paid a tax of 75 f in 1631, corresponding to an assessed wealth of 15,000 f. His son Marten, who married Oopje Coppit, was portrayed by Rembrandt in 1634.

Jacob Swalmius: See text.


Hugo (Huijch) Voskuil (1593-1665): Painter and, later in life, broker (makelaar). He was probably a pupil of Pieter Isaacksz. He signed the Remonstrant petition of 1628.