

Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts - Painting File

Bernard Jacobs
Drawn

1995-2001

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cms
9/canvas

70565 Stuttgart
Hessenwiesenstrasse 4

23.3.1997

Lieber Alfred,

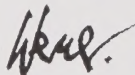
vielen Dank für Deinen Brief. Ich komme gleich zur Sache:

1.
Dein Exemplar des "Jakobstraums" finde ich in jeder Hinsicht besser als Röthlisbergers Bild (Kat. 64, Abb. 113), dessen Schwächen gesehen und durch Beteiligung der Werkstatt erklärt werden, wenn ich richtig verstehe.

2.
Bei dem kleinen Hund zweifle ich nicht an der Autorschaft von Velasquez. Das Tier muss von der Hand stammen, die den Hund beim Porträt des Infanten Don Fernando, um 1632/36, gemalt hat. Und nicht nur der Hund, auch die Landschaft! Leider bin ich nur Sumowski und kein Velasquez-Diktator.

3.
Euren Besuch am 14. Juni habe ich in der Agenda vermerkt. Ich freue mich, Euch wiederzusehen.

Herzliche Grüsse, auch an Deine Frau,
Dein





Dr. Alfred Bader
2 A Holmesdale Road
Béxhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3QE
United Kingdom

Utrecht 6 VI 1996

Dear Alfred ,

I've received your kind letter and photographs + printed information of the Valls/Feigen Bloemaert the day before yesterday. Thank you very much for all this, especially for the colour photograph. Apparently the central part of your new Bloemaert has retained its relatively good original condition, which certainly is a most happy circumstance. When talking to you last weekend I thought you've mentioned another picture with a biblical subject (presumably one that is on the market at the moment) about which I thought you wanted my opinion. But since no photograph of this picture was included in your letter, I've concluded that either you wanted to hear my impression about the new appearance of your Bloemaert, or I've misunderstood you. Regarding the first alternative, I cannot say too much: the colours are not a-typical for Bloemaert; nothing has emerged that necessitates the exclusion from Bloemaert's oeuvre of your picture. I am still of the opinion that it's been a very keen purchase. If I've misunderstood you, I am sorry for that. I went to the R.K.D. yesterday to check (among other things) whether the picture I thought you had mentioned, was in one of the catalogues of the forthcoming sales, but since these had not yet arrived there, I couldn't pursue the matter any further. At the R.K.D. I've met István Németh from the museum in Budapest; it was nice to talk to him again and to exchange some books. After our conversation on the phone I've also tried to speak to Mrs. Marjolein de Boer, due to her illness I couldn't reach her at the museum of which she is the conservator (Constantijn Huyghens's estate near The Hague), and of course people wouldn't supply me with her private number. But I am sure I'll get your catalogue quit soon, and I'll be very pleased with it (when in Braunschweig I've tried in vain to acquire a copy -the book had sold out). I'll be especially glad to have a fine colour reproduction of your Hieronymous, which as far as I know doesn't exist anywhere else. That painting is the closest 'oeuvre en rapport' with my own Bloemaert, a picture of which I've never regretted the purchase until now, despite its poor condition and its elevated price

I enclose a few photocopies (in accordance with my habit) taken from a fascinating booklet I've completely read last weekend (after having discovered its existence last Saturday). Gerhart Ladner's field of interest wasn't congruent with yours, nevertheless I think it would give you a lot of pleasure to read about his adventures as an (art)historian in Vienna,

1940

The following information was obtained from the records of the
 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, on the
 subject of the land owned by the United States in the
 State of California, and is being furnished to you for your
 information. The land is located in the County of [County Name],
 State of California, and is situated in the [Township Name],
 Range [Range Number], and Meridian [Meridian Name]. The
 land is described as follows: [Detailed description of the land, including
 acreage, boundaries, and any other relevant information].

The land is owned by the United States and is being
 offered for sale to the highest bidder. The sale will be
 held at the [Location of the Sale], on the [Date of the Sale].
 The minimum bid for the land is \$[Minimum Bid Amount].

If you are interested in purchasing the land, please
 contact the [Name of the Official], [Address], [City],
 California, for further information. The telephone number
 is [Phone Number].

Very truly yours,
 [Signature]

Rome, Toronto, Princeton and Los Angeles.

At the moment it's circa 30 ° Celsius here, and I cannot conceal to be a bit jealous of you now : living near the coast seems to me most attractive in these circumstances. On the other hand I am sure you're constantly running to London, which cannot be anything but extremely fatiguing. Therefore : please don't forget to take a break now and then, in order that we might meet each other again in good health in November !

Have a nice and fruitful Tour over the
Continent,

Cheerio

Hubert

Dhr. H. van Bearle
Dorstige Harthof 32
3512 NW Utrecht
Nederland

(N.B. : dial code has changed
into : 0031302313538)

A64
in MR

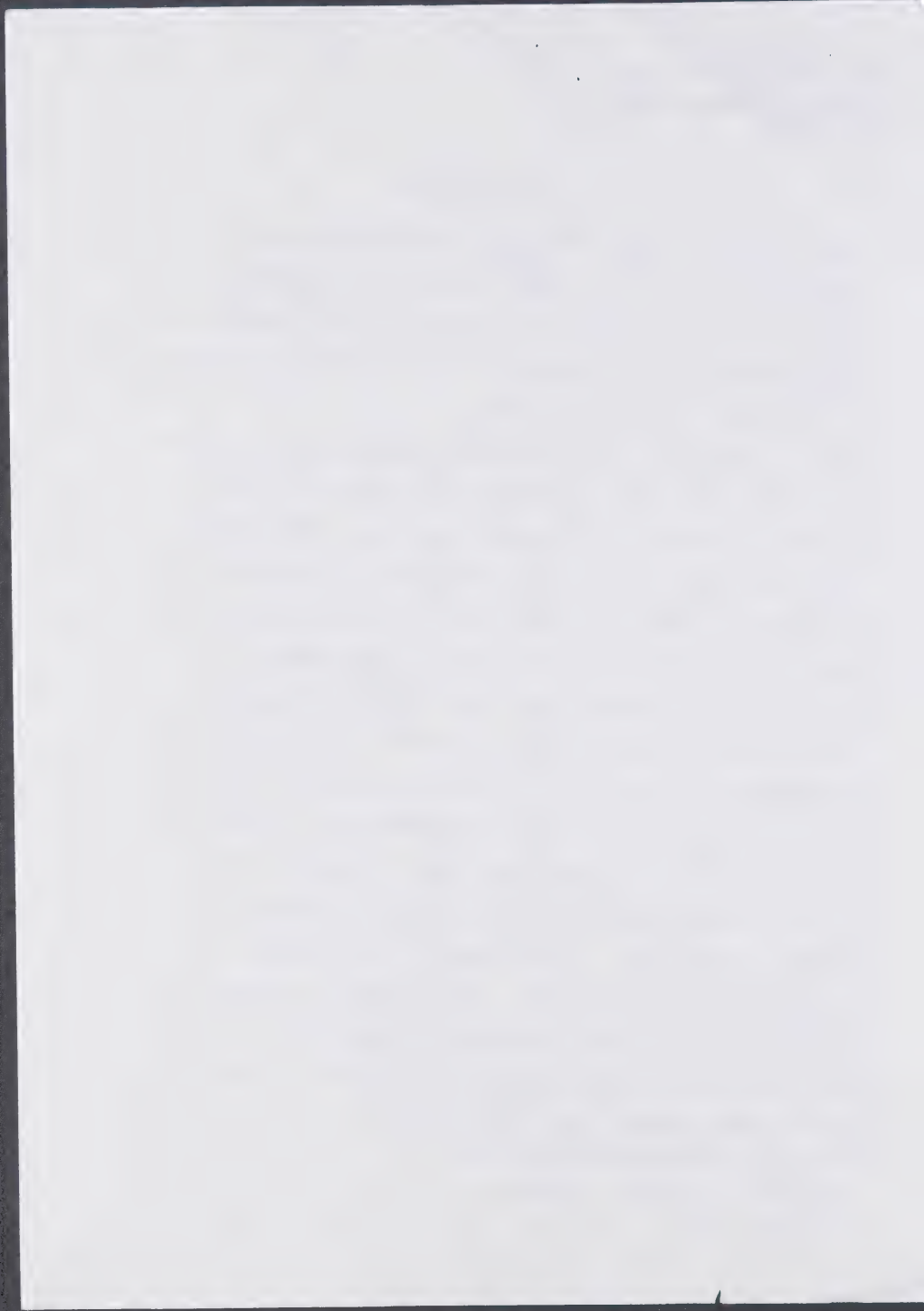
Classes:
Please return

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211
United States

Dear Alfred ,

At the end of a long weekend of lonesome study which I've enjoyed very much, I'll try to write a response to your last letter. As I consider it important to put it in the mail tomorrow, I am afraid this won't be a very long text. Not that there are no subjects to write about; it's just a matter of economical use of the time available. Let me therefore start with replying to the two topics of your letter and see later whether anything else can be added or not.

As our meeting in London is concerned, yes it is also my opinion that it was to be regretted that we haven't spent more time together, and discussed at ease many of the things our minds are so full of : paintings and art historical problems. Though I am not a buyer on such a scale as you are, my appetite for paintings equals yours, and so I have a hard time too when making visits to three viewing days on one Sunday (December the third) in London, where as always I have to try to use my time utmost efficiently. I must admit that I still have not developed a strategy of controlled looking, that means focusing on pre-selected items only, and avoiding to become detracted by giving attention to other objects or people. And so it happened again that I was fully swamped by all the impressions which ends in mental confusion of much of the informations I had the unique chance to gather then But I've made some progress in comparison to former visits of the same kind; this time I've started (at Sotheby's) to select from the catalogue circa 15 lots (no.'s 38, 41, 44, 46, 57, 123, 158, 172, 201, 215, 216, 221, 225, 226, 264 and 266) to which I've given special attention first. And since I was so lucky as to find a catalogue at Phillips's (I am simply too frugal to buy them (though I know how indispensable these books in fact are, in the days when the viewings are being held - just because of the fact that these books later are of relatively little value, I prefer instead of buying them to spend my money on buying a scholarly exhibition catalogue which in the long run definitely is of more use) I succeeded in having a quite profitable visit there. The least I've learnt this time at Christie's, where I only arrived late (after having absorbed already many visual impressions) and where I started looking without prior consult of the catalogue. When you've briefly met me at Christie's the next day, it immediately was revealed that I had failed to see the paintings there thoroughly, when you've asked my opinion on a Dou and a Sweerts, and I had to confess that I didn't remember the pictures. I then had the intention to ask you whether you could arrange

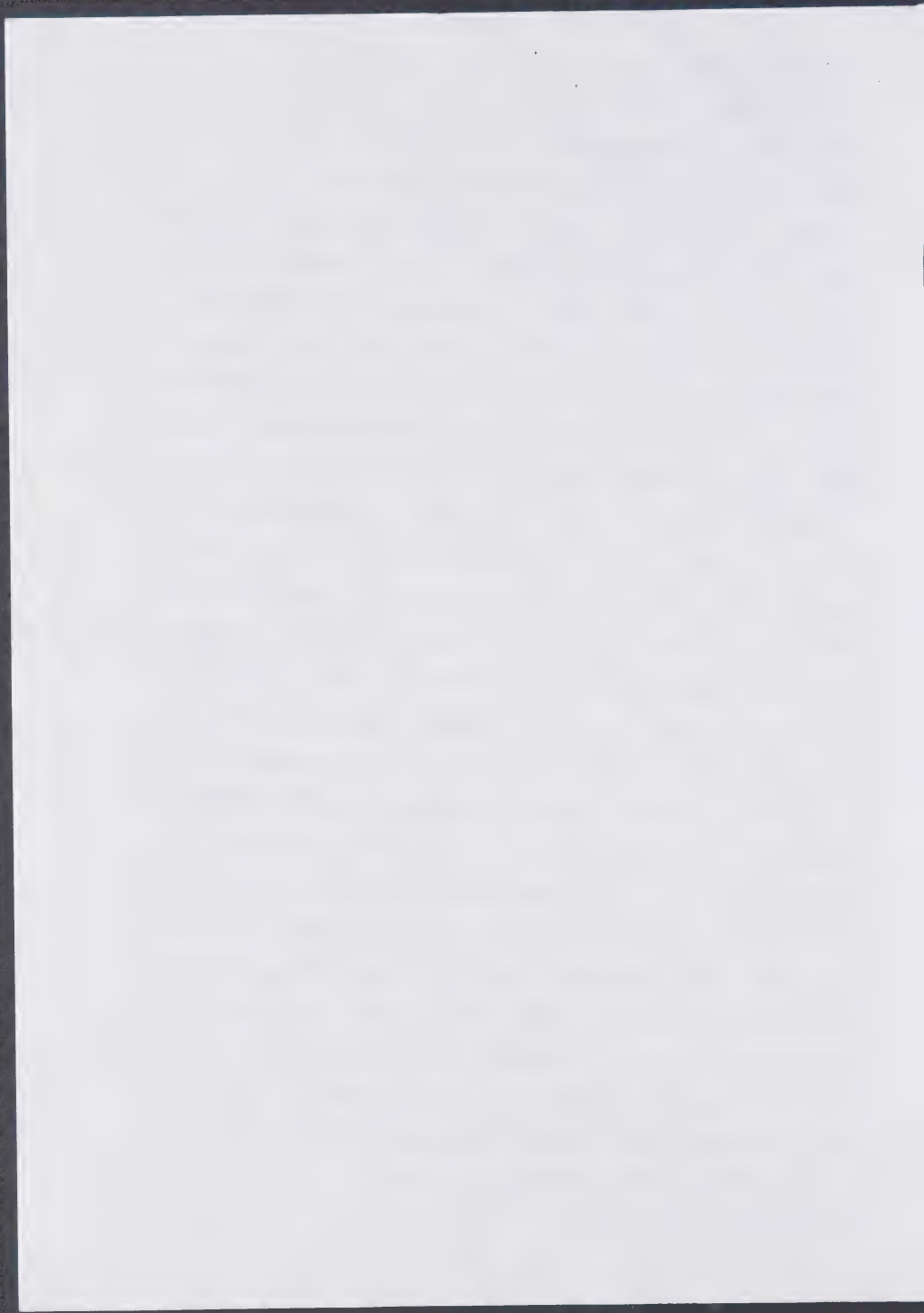


a free copy of the catalogue for me (because you're such a good client, I considered it likely that this action would be successful), but when the moment arrived when I had to use the chance, I didn't do it; I wouldn't bring you in a position (of having to ask for a free copy) which you possibly might consider as being below your dignity.

Rethinking my experiences at the viewing days it's my impression that history paintings (the kind of paintings which have my special iconographically oriented interest) become more and more rare.

Nevertheless visiting viewing days isn't an easy task, since I cannot avoid to look at other types of paintings too. And though I am foremost interested in Dutch paintings, it doesn't take much time before I start to inspect the examples of other schools present in the sale-rooms too

This ended then in the mixing up of all the information I had gathered, and so I've radically decided to stop confusing myself by hanging around too long on the premises of the auction houses. As an afterthought I've later added the opinion that it is not to be considered as my task to select from the mass of paintings coming up for auction, those which are marketable, since I am (and probably never will be) a dealer like you are, but only a studious mind that wants to detect influences, recognize motifs, and make more complete his knowledge about the oeuvres of individual artists. So during the rest of my time in England, I've used my time to visit the information desk of the National Gallery, the bookshop there, and talked to the secretary of Christopher Brown. And of course I've tried to see some Bloemaerts which I had not yet seen and which I knew to be in (or close to) London (among them Roethlisberger cat. no. 499 which Mr. Derek Johns refused again to bring over from his house to the gallery (as he in the past had promised to do in order to please me), regrettably without any immediate success. Negative experiences don't fail to stimulate me, however, and thus the owner of two Bloemaerts who's refused to open her door must by now have received my extensive letter, which hopefully convinces her of my serious intentions and creates the chance to see the paintings next time I'll be in the British capital. Furthermore I've visited some art dealers, among them as you know Mr. Clovis Whitfield, who, I am sure will appreciate a copy of Ann Adams's article in 'Shop Talk'; please fax this to him, I cannot send it since I sadly still have not seen this book (though I am so curious)), the Warburg Institute, the Witt Library, made a number of important calls, and selected two very attractive things for the last afternoon of my stay: a visit to Apsley House (where I've got the catalogue and was seriously disappointed about the lux-level inside the House) and a visit to the beautiful exhibition 'Dynasties' in the Tate Gallery (when I entered it was snowing). From that exhibition I've got two copies of the catalogue, a book that will serve me for many years to come; I've already read the essays and enjoyed it very much.



Reading the books make me remember lively what I have seen, and the time I've spent to visit the House and the Gallery was extremely well-used, since it has also supplied the stimulus for tackling the contents of the books I've bought as souvenirs. By the way, my second copy of 'Dynasties' was transferred to Volker, who's visited me here for half a day. But that's another story Let's return to a reply to the first issue of your letter. I certainly would love it to see (both of) you for more than just a few minutes, either here in Utrecht or in far away Milwaukee.

It doubtlessly is most attractive to plan another visit to that part of the world where you are living, and it's true that I am considering visits to Hornstein's collection (which I surely must see next time I'll make the trip), to Toronto (where the marvellous collection of drawings of Frank and Marianne Seger deserves much of my scholarly attention), to Minneapolis (I've just ordered the latest issue of the Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which no doubt has many interesting articles, vide : Historians of Netherlandish art Newsletter , November 1995, 18 !), to Indianapolis, to Notre Dame (where an interesting collection of Dutch old masters must be - I've heard about a new catalogue of it, but have lost the reference and wasn't successful when asking for the book at the R.K.D. and the Rijksprentenkabinet), and of course I like it most of all to visit a very hospitable home in Milwaukee, a private museum where recently a painting has entered (which will be dealt with in the second part of this letter) that I dearly want to see in the real sooner or later, and to meet your restorer is still another long cherished wish in me (see my letter d.d. 31 X 1995, pag. 4), but I don't yet know whether I'll make the trip again, and if yes when. It's quite an investment, and as long as I haven't talked to my friend Karl Johns, who lives in Riverside (and whom I possibly might wish to visit on a new trip to your country too), I cannot give you a final answer. In fact I had expected to hear from him these days, but much to my irritation, he still hasn't contacted me. Well, let me in view of these circumstances, therefore say for the moment : if I decide to come over again it won't be earlier than in May. For the rest everything remains open for the moment. It could very well be that our next meeting takes place here in Utrecht, next summer or autumn. It'll be a great pleasure to welcome you.

Well, the time has come to start writing about the second half of your letter : your new 'Ersteigerungen'. What it means to have bought shares in paintings, I don't understand; this method of acquisition belongs to the semi-publicly sphere, where before during and after the sale dealers make their arrangements, and that's a world which still has many secrets to me, a lot remains to be learnt there for me.

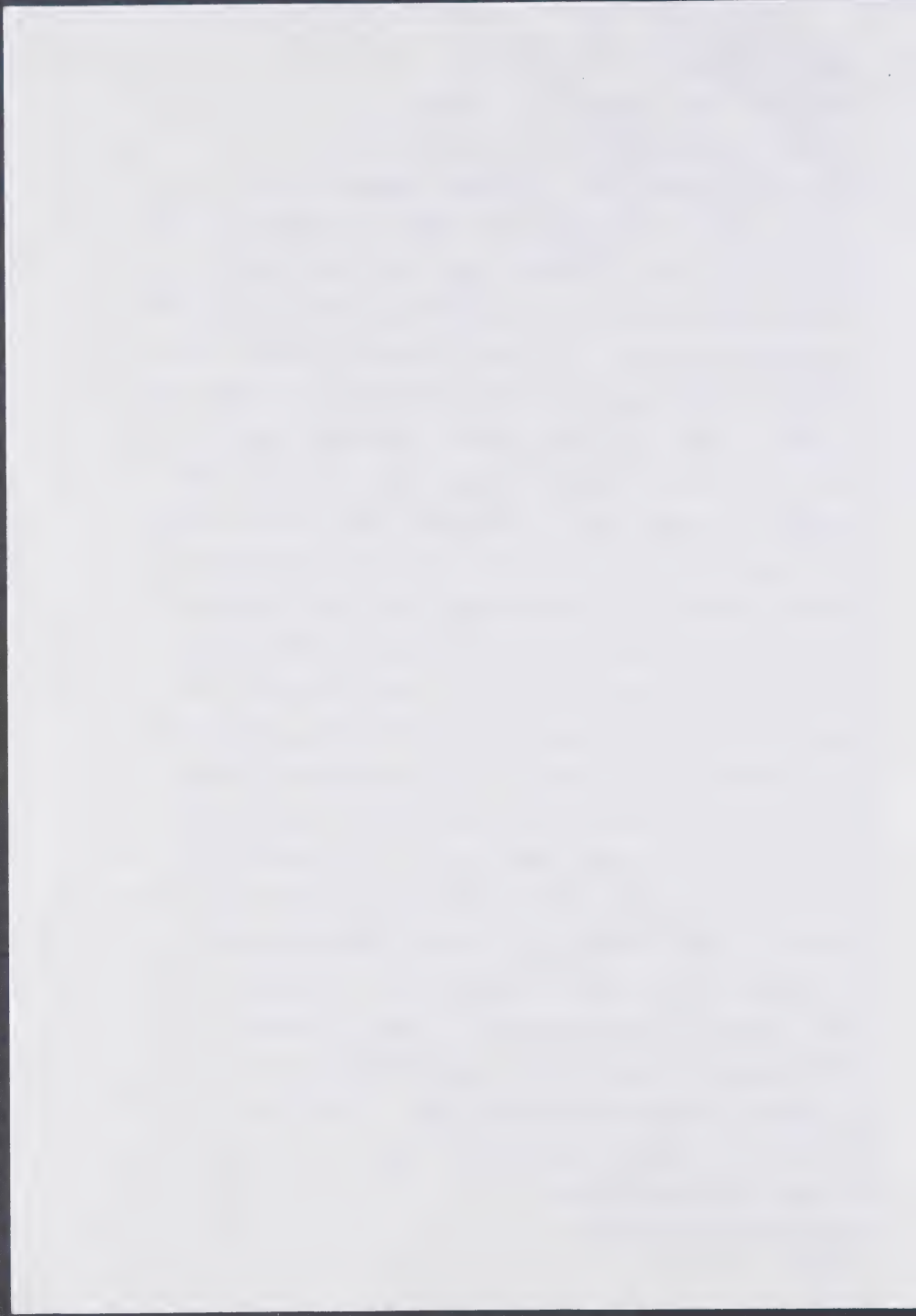
As your visit and subsequent acquisition at Christie's South Kensington is concerned, I must say (and I do hope I've chosen the right words) : you've



stolen a march on me / you've foxed me off. It was a pleasure to learn about the existence of this painting when your letter arrived; but at the same time it has generated my bitterness/envy : I should have discovered it myself. I am convinced this real discovery gives you a great deal of pleasure/satisfaction (just this morning I've read in an old exhibition catalogue Kalamazoo 1967 : 'He enjoys searching through unlikely or out of the way places to come up with his finds'). The triumph is yours and you are certainly to be congratulated. I am pleased to see that you really like paintings by Abraham Bloemaert, since as you know, he's my absolute favourite artist (also as a draughtsman and a designer of prints !).

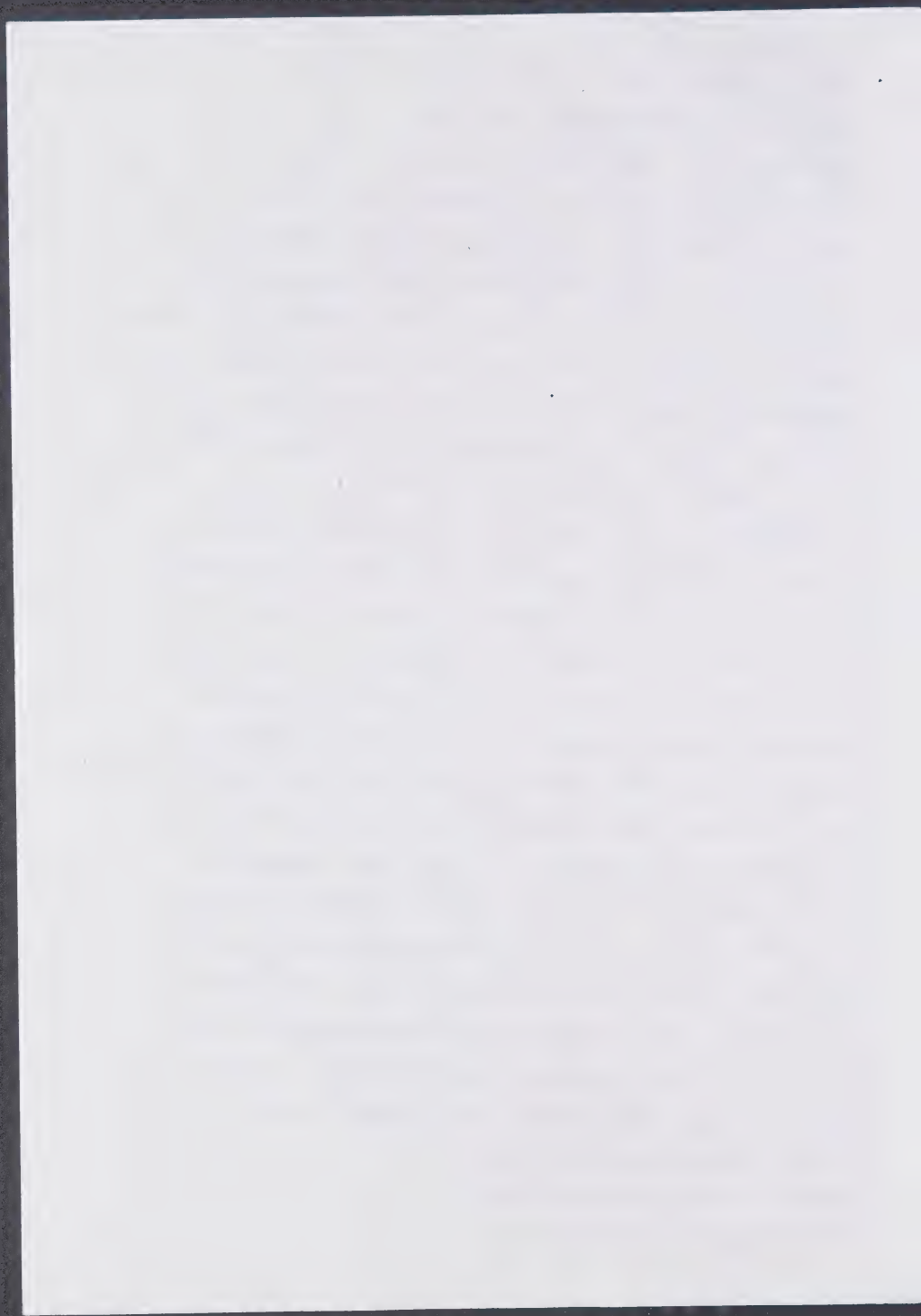
I doubt whether your well-known dictum 'one is enough' (which I've heard you saying in relation to the issue whether to acquire a new painting by Rombout van Troyen or not) also applies here. If it does, please let me know which of both Bloemaerts in your collection you wish to sell. It's for sure : should I have found your new acquisition myself, I should have tried to buy it immediately (though of course I couldn't outbid you).

I think the work shows so many characteristic features of genuine Abraham Bloemaert paintings, that this certainly could well be an authentic painting by him. Since the formal characteristics are much crisper and don't give the impression to be derived from another source than in the painting illustrated by Roethlisberger (the formal qualities of your painting are fresher), the ex Christie's South Kensington Bloemaert might be considered to be the original of this Bloemaert invention. It could well be that you've acquired a painting of a sort that used to be labelled as a 'principael'. Let me try to put into words why I consider your new painting to be a real Abraham Bloemaert. It is virtually an assemblage of motifs recruited from his stock to which he reverted throughout his long career. The angel on the surface with his head in a very characteristic pose, is to be seen in (or could be imagined to have functioned in) (the design for) a print which shows a moment of the sacred history (cf. Roethlisberger cat. no. 51). The forshortened figure of the lying Jacob is just another example of Bloemaert's inclination to show his artistic capacities in the rendering of obliquely positioned resting bodies. Jacob's face is of a design favoured by him. Bloemaert's tendency to emphasize the rural origin of figures in his compositions by means of an almost atavistic profusion of hair is already detectable in his beautiful 'Joseph with his brothers' here in Utrecht. What is also most characteristic is the prominent presence in the scene of tree-trunks and foliage. The patches of reddish paint to the right of Jacob's head (with which fern is indicated ?) remind me to a detail of Bloemaert's painting in Ottawa. And if you compare the way in which Bloemaert has indicated the upper part of Jacob's boot with the way in which he has enlivened the coiffure of the woman with the yellow dress in a painting in a private collection in Zug, a striking similarity is undeniable. Generally speaking the basic



compositional scheme of the most important part of your painting harks back to representations of the annunciation to the shepherds. The very fact that the composition is a repetition of so many well-known (standard-) motifs is fully in keeping with Bloemaert's habitual way of doing. Almost everything else I could tell you about this picture is to be found in Roethlisberger's trilogy (as I grudgingly have to admit). There are only two additional remarks to be made (and nobody else but you is so well aware of one of them). Primo : Bloemaert's fondness of the artistic 'Aufgabe' to represent a foreshortened figure (clearly manifest in this painting) is already to be noticed in the very early 'Slaying of the Niobids' (a painting by the way that doesn't stop to amaze me because of its quality; it is not a painting in other words that perfectly fits in Bloemaert's artistic development ...). Secundo : the composition of your new Bloemaert (yes even its colouristic appearance) is THE source which has inspired Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout, when he has created his representation of the same biblical story (today in Kingston). *Full in Milwaukee*
In sum I consider your picture as a very serious candidate for the tag : the 'principael' of the composition which formerly was only known by means of a not authentic copy of indeterminate origin (Roethlisberger cat. no. 64). This copy might well have been produced in Bloemaert's workshop, by one of his many assistants or students. I think we'll never know who's been the author of this (cat. no. 64) piece.

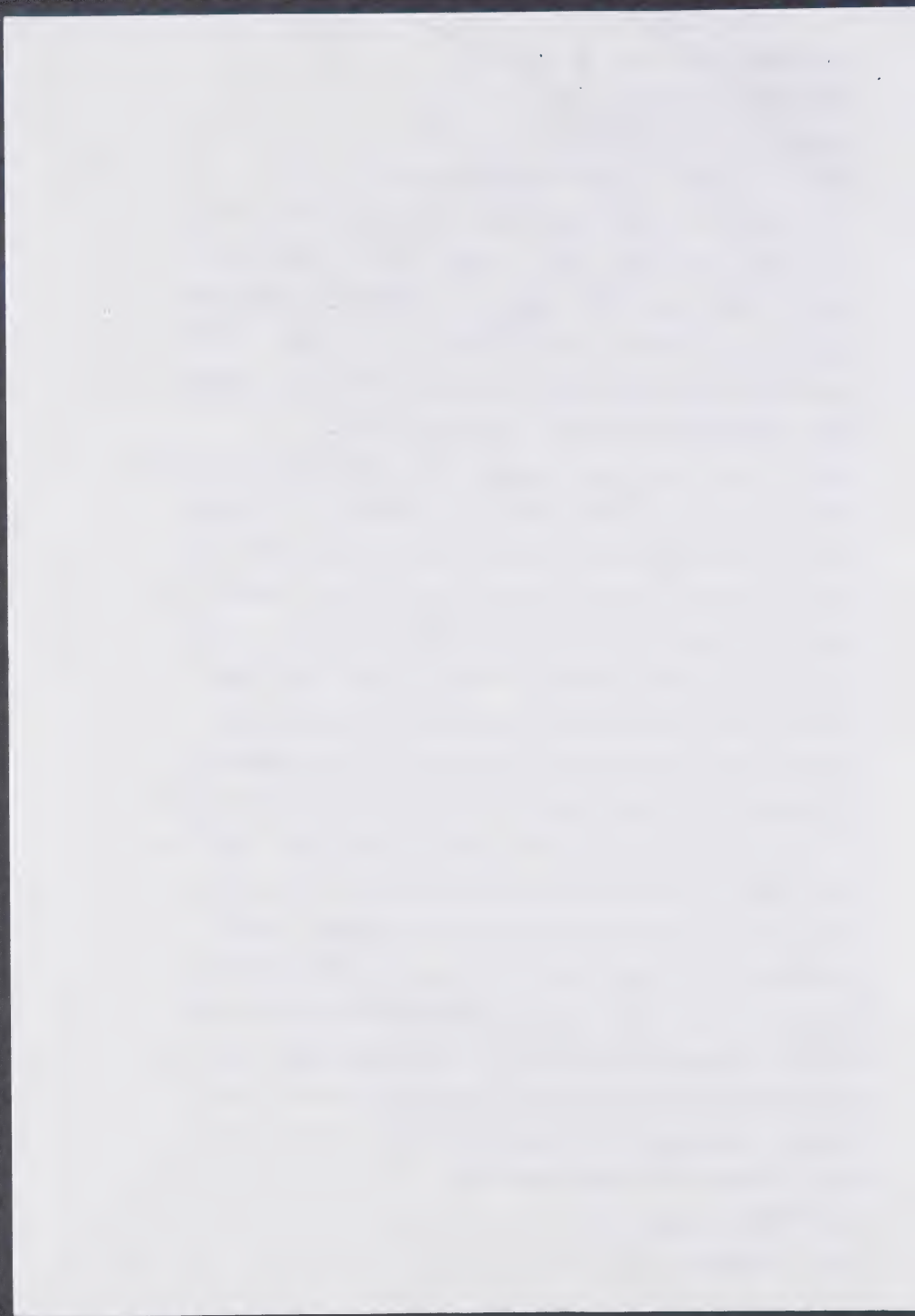
Before finishing this epistle, I of course have to make some cautious reservations. It might turn out in the process of cleaning of your picture (of which I dearly hope to receive some information some day) that my provisional judgement described in these lines is completely mistaken. The cause for that then certainly was the fact that I had to work with only a (forgive me to say it) weak, reddish colour reproduction (which I am aware you've very kindly especially arranged for me) of the painting in its dirty/not cleaned state. In fact the final judgement (if at all possible to supply) can only be given by autopsy of the picture. As you've informed me that you'll see the author of the Bloemaert trilogy in Milwaukee within a few months from now, you once again exactly have that what is ideally to be deserved : the most authoritative man at the right place (in front of your painting). Here I am approaching a most delicate theme : my position towards Roethlisberger. It is true, I am anxious (afraid) to meet him (I know his nature; it is sensible when you read many of his articles/books), but on the other hand it would be very attractive to meet this man, with whom I share a profound love for an artist. And although I am critical about much of what he's written, I am also full of admiration for his cataloguing activity; for the immense 'Ausdauer' he has shown in collecting and publishing almost all Bloemaert information. What I've written here is meant to remain confidential. One day Roethlisberger and I will meet, but the time is not yet ripe.



Well Alfred, so far as the two main items of your last letter were concerned, I cannot tell you how delighted I was to receive it. Let me finish by returning to the first line of this letter. Normally catalogues are not allowed to borrow from the library of the university here. But exceptionally this can be done (if I have the luck to find an employee who knows me very well and is well-tempered at the moment of my request). Last Saturday I was lucky and thus used the chance to loan for a very long weekend (which exactly was the cause of my attempt to get the privilege of a special loan that morning) two catalogues. The title of one was : 'Die Grafen von Schönborn / Kirchenfürsten / Sammler / Mäzene (exhibition catalogue Nürnberg 1989)'; of the other : G. Jansen & G. Mitten : 'Italianisanten en bamboccianten. Het italianiserende landschap en genre door Nederlandse kunstenaars uit de zeventiende eeuw (collection catalogue Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam 1988)'.

In the first book I've found a beautiful portrait by Bartholomeus van der Helst. And the unexpected acquaintance herewith (though I knew of the existence of this picture before) has generated the following thought in me. It might be useful for you to know it (should I have developed the thought earlier, and should I have as much resources as you, the thought could have served me also very well). As you probably know Johnny Van Taaften had not very long ago a beautiful portrait of a man by B. van der Helst, which once belonged to the Schönborn collection. Indeed it was the pendant to the above mentioned female portrait. (See Johnny Van Taaften's Catalogue Eight, cat. no. 15.) I think you could have tried to buy it in order to offer it to the count Schönborn subsequently. This might have brought you in a position in which you could have successfully acquired another painting from the famous collection of the house Schönborn (which you possibly could have selected according to your own taste) in exchange for the van der Helst. If I had to act in your place I would have chosen the Schönborn Bloemaert which today hangs in Toronto (where I've seen it twice thanks to your help). It would have been a very clever way of acquiring a to my mind utmost attractive picture. Studying the Schönborn catalogue (which alas had sold out as I experienced when visiting Nürnberg not long ago), made me come across another fact which might interest you : the collection at Pommersfelden once contained a painting depicting the 'Hexe von Endor' which in the past has been attributed to Rembrandt (mentioned on pag. 123 of the Nürnberg'sche catalogue). I haven't pursued this matter but perhaps this painting was in one way or another connected to 'The Bible through Dutch Eyes' cat. no. 44 . Or perhaps that purported Rembrandt was the model after which your cat no. 44 has been made. Probably we'll never know; nevertheless I find this an interesting coincidence.

In the second publication which I've intensely studied last weekend, I've found a reference to a painting by Nicolaes Ficke which you've owned long



ago. This painting wasn't reproduced. But I've by now traced an illustration of it in the catalogue of the exhibition from paintings in your collection which was held in Kalamazoo as long ago as in 1967. I believe this is the only catalogue of exhibitions in which exclusively paintings from your collection were shown, which is missing in my library. So if you perhaps still have an extra copy of it somewhere, I really would be very happy to receive it.

Well Alfred, I think I've asked a lot of your patience and energy to read my poor text. Therefore I prefer to stop writing here.

I wholeheartedly hope everything will be well with Isabel and you in 1996, and I am looking forward to see you again.

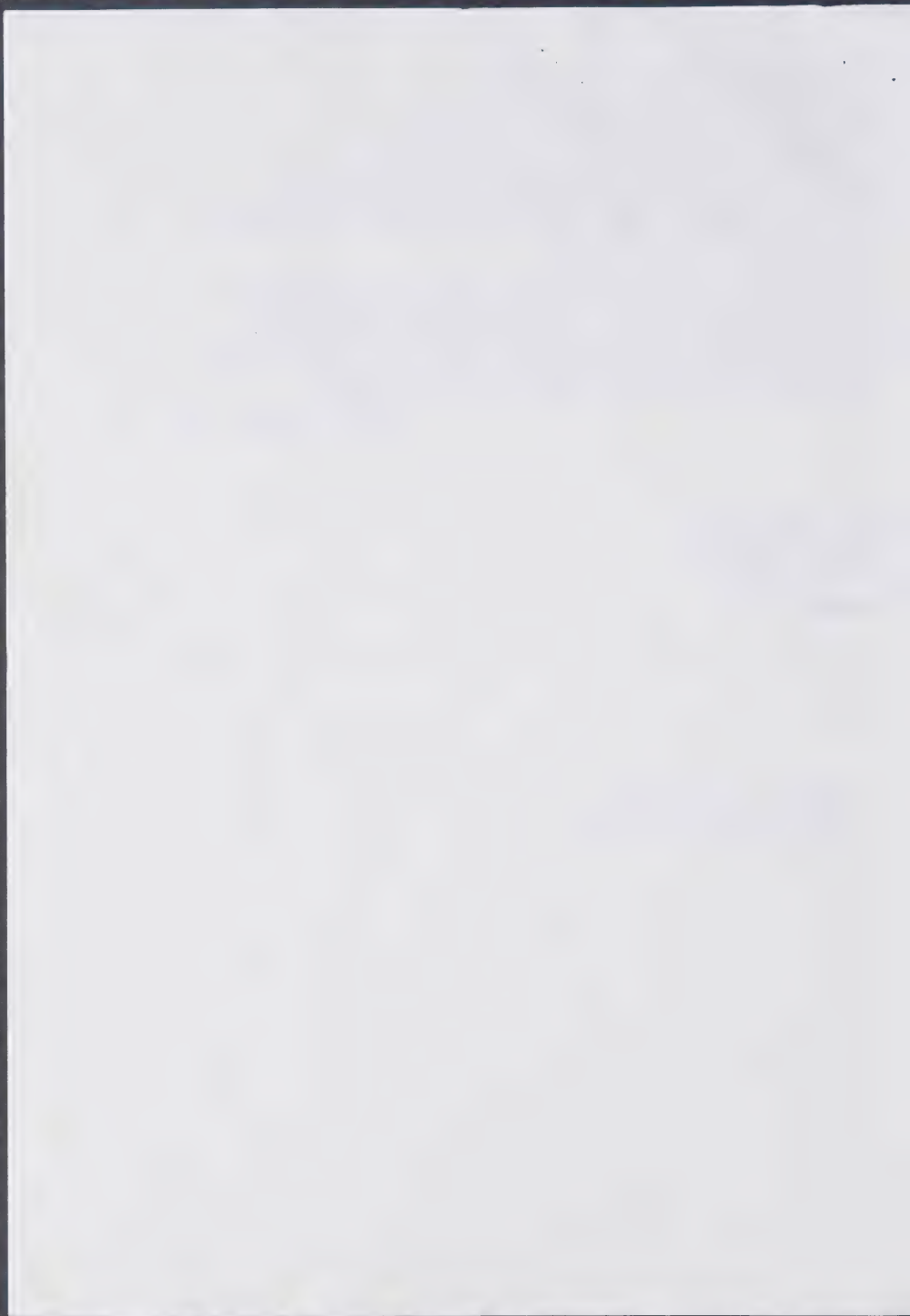
With my kindest regards

Robert

Dhr. H. van Baarle
Dorstige Harthof 32
3512 NW Utrecht
Nederland

Written 26-28 XII 1995

Typed twice 28 XII 1995



THE
J. PAUL
GETTY
MUSEUM

A Bloemert drawing
(all pink), of the Morgan,
somewhat comparable
to your painting.

I passed on the Layton
material to Lynn M.

As ever
Marcel



11



THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

30 January 1997

Dr. Alfred Bader
924 East Juneau, Suite 622
Milwaukee WI 53202

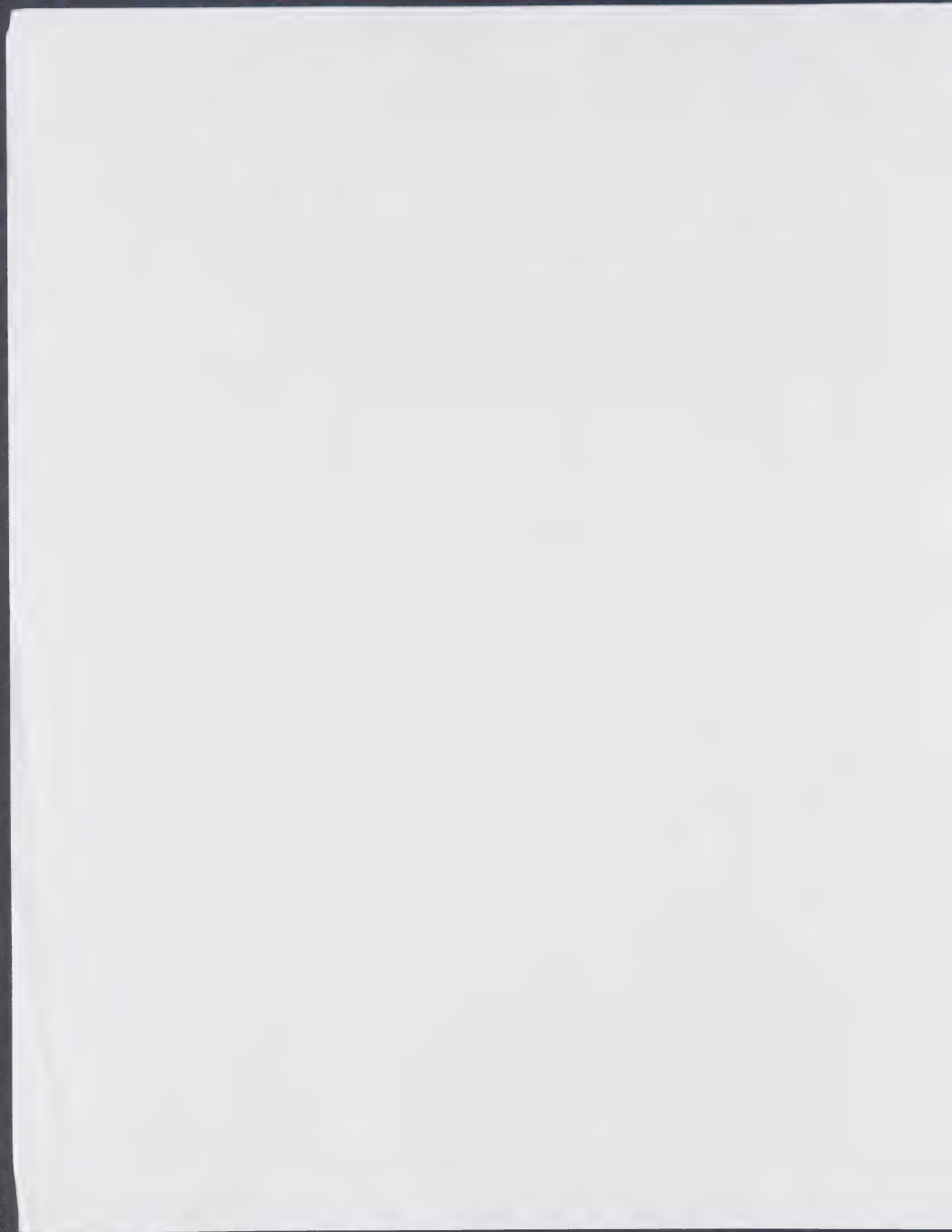
Dear Dr. Bader,

Thank you for your letter addressed to Gary Vikan and the photo of your painting *Jacob's Dream* by Abraham Bloemaert. From the photo it looks to be a very nice painting. We completed the selection process for the section on religious painting some time ago and there were indeed many works by Bloemaert as well as other artists that it simply was not possible to include.

We very much look appreciate your loan of Bloemaert's *St. Jerome* and look forward to seeing you in Baltimore.

Sincerely,

Joaneath Spicer
The James A. Murnaghan Curator
of Renaissance and Baroque Art



January 27, 1997

Professor Marcel Roethlisberger
Université de Genève
Histoire de l'art
22, Bd des Philosophes
1205 GENEVA
Switzerland

Dear Professor Roethlisberger:

I am happy to be able to tell you that I have now received the *Jacob's Dream* which I purchased in the sale of Christie's South Kensington on December 7th, 1995, back from my restorer and I'm very happy with the result.

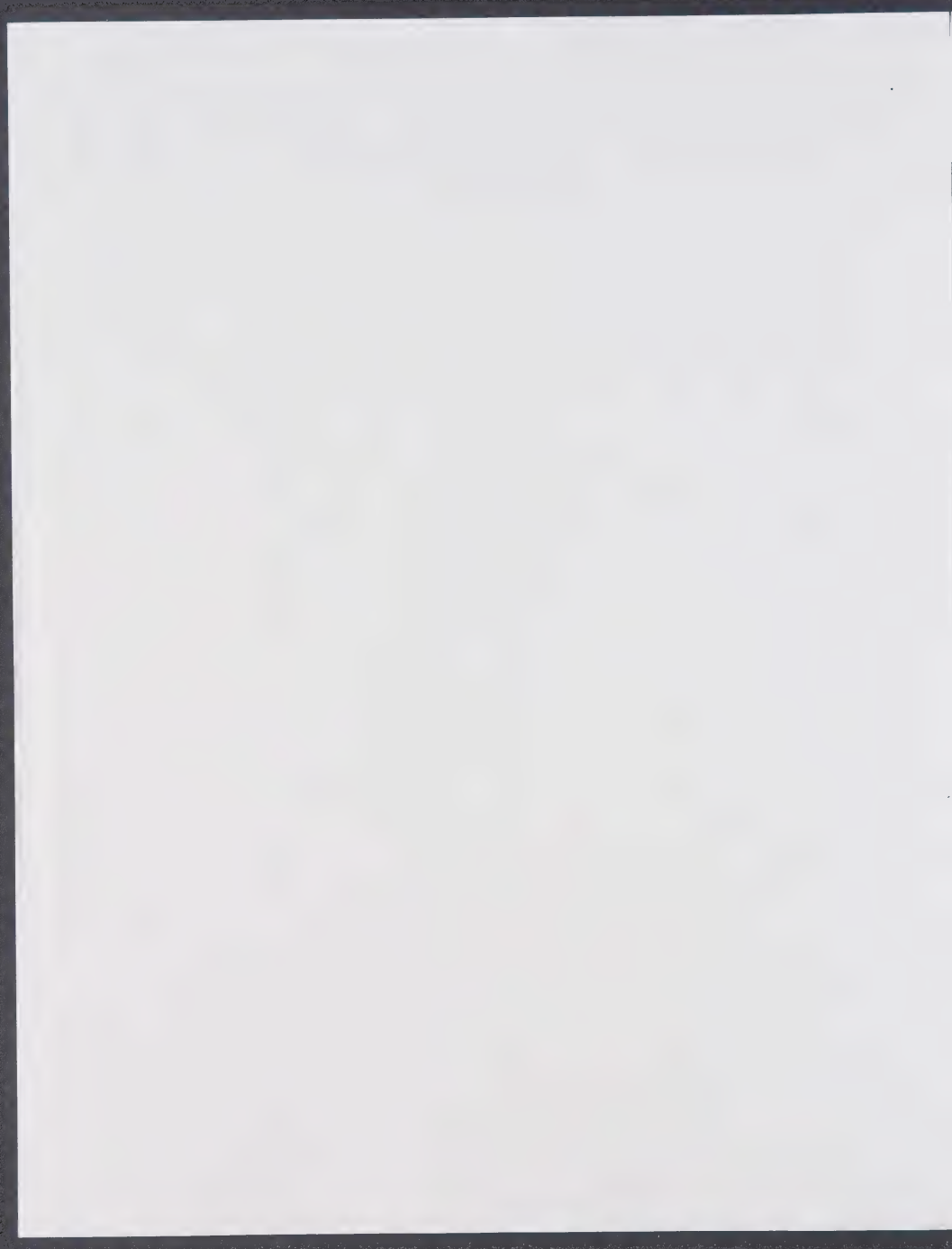
I enclose a snapshot of the painting stripped, and from that you will see that it is now slightly larger than was apparent before.

Some years ago, I saw the painting which is catalogue #64 in your book at a gallery in London, Harari and Johns, and I didn't like that particularly.

I'm sure that you know from long experience that owners of paintings often tend to be optimists and I certainly like my work considerably better. A photograph and a detail are enclosed.

I hope that before long you will again have a chance to visit Milwaukee and then look at the painting here.

May I ask you a personal question? As you know, my painting was sold in London as a copy with an estimate of £2,000-3,000 but I was bidding against someone on the telephone and had to go to a hammer price of £17,000. I would indeed be honoured if it was you who was bidding against me. Or did you, per chance, tell someone in London, during your visit that week that you weren't certain that the painting in South Kensington is a copy?



Professor Roethlisberger

Page 2

January 27, 1997

May I ask you for your help in yet another matter?

Some years ago you looked at a beautiful painting of a horse, which I owned, and you then told me that you believed that that painting is by a Swiss artist working in London, Agasse. Subsequently a number of experts confirmed your attribution.

A good friend of mine owns a painting depicting several horses, of about the same period as Agasse. I enclose a black and white photograph and a small transparency.

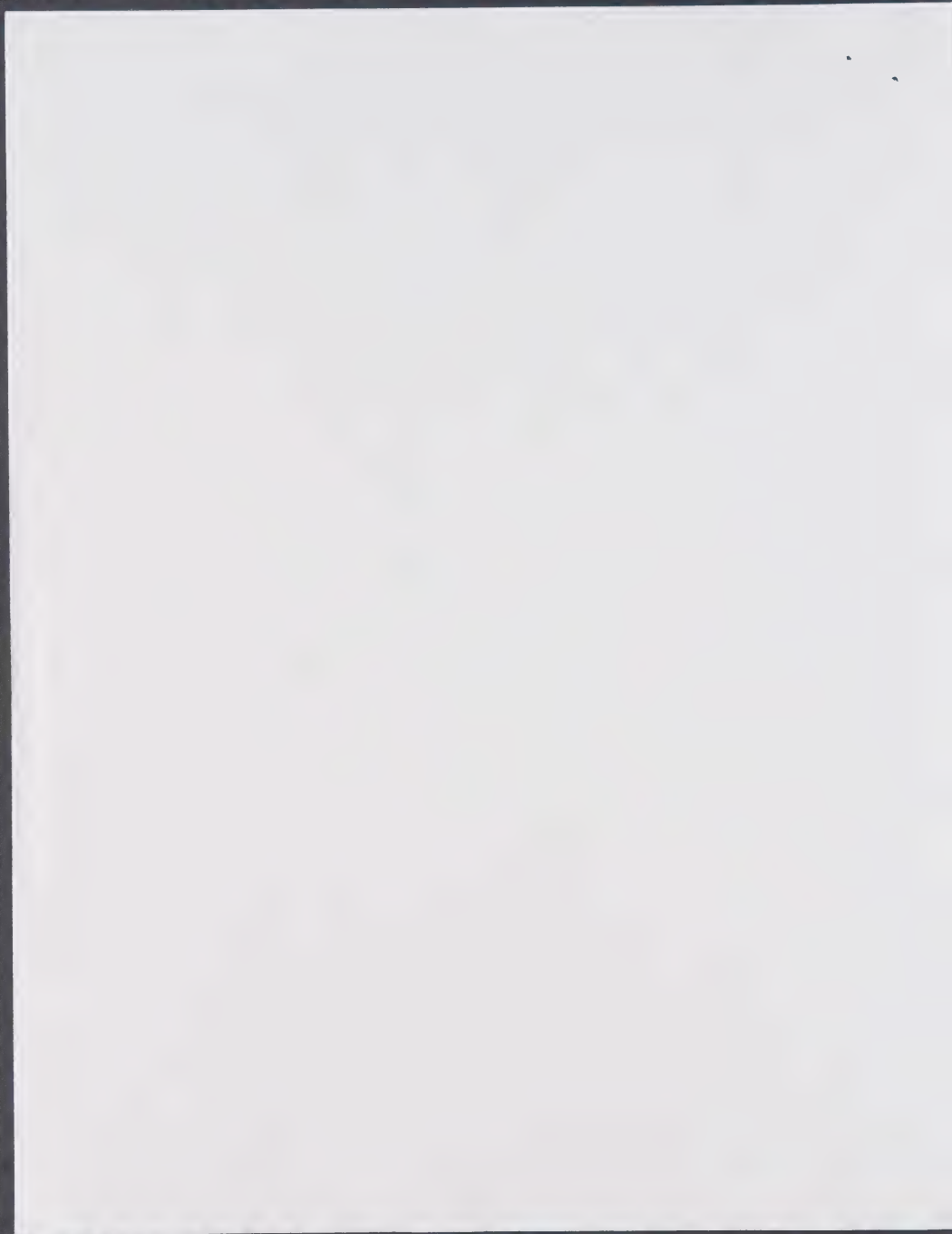
My friend has wondered whether that painting could be by Agasse also. I wish I knew more about such paintings of that period but you surely do and I would appreciate your letting me know whether you think this painting is also by Agasse.

With many thanks for all your help and with best personal regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

AB/nik

Enclosures





The National Gallery

TRAFALGAR SQUARE · LONDON · WC2N 5DN

Telephone 0171-839 3321 Fax no. 0171-753 8179

Dr Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee
Wisconsin 53211
U.S.A.

26 February 1997

Dear Alfred,

Thank you very much for your kind letter of 3rd February.

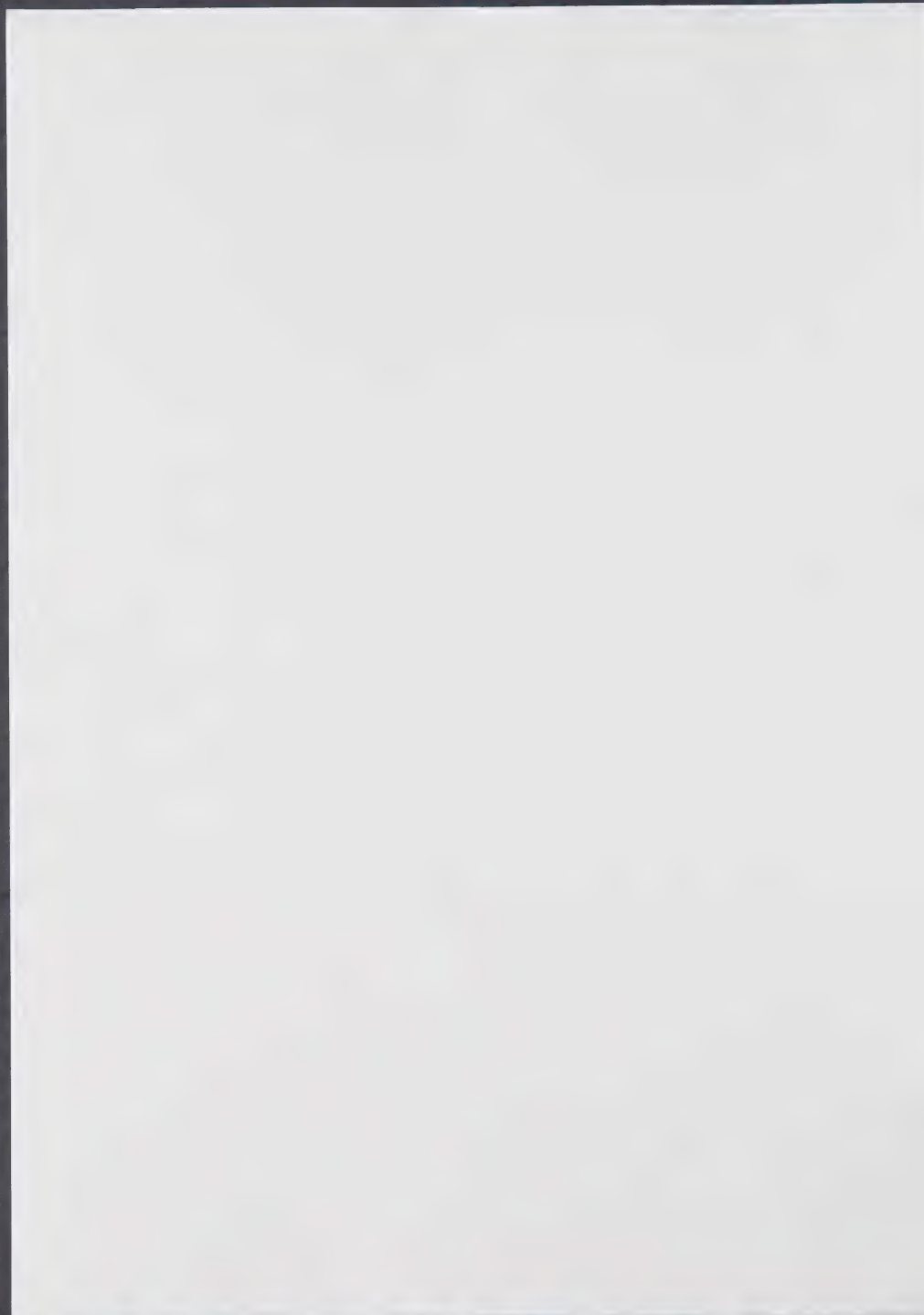
We are indeed taking on the Utrecht School exhibition which is being prepared by Joaneath Spicer in Baltimore and Lynn Orr in San Francisco. I have passed your photographs on to them but there are already a number of important Bloemaerts included, and I doubt whether at this stage it would be possible to add another. It does look like very beautiful painting.

I very much look forward to seeing you soon, perhaps next week in Maastricht.

With very best wishes from all of us to all of you,

Yours

Dr Christopher Brown
Chief Curator



artibus et historiae

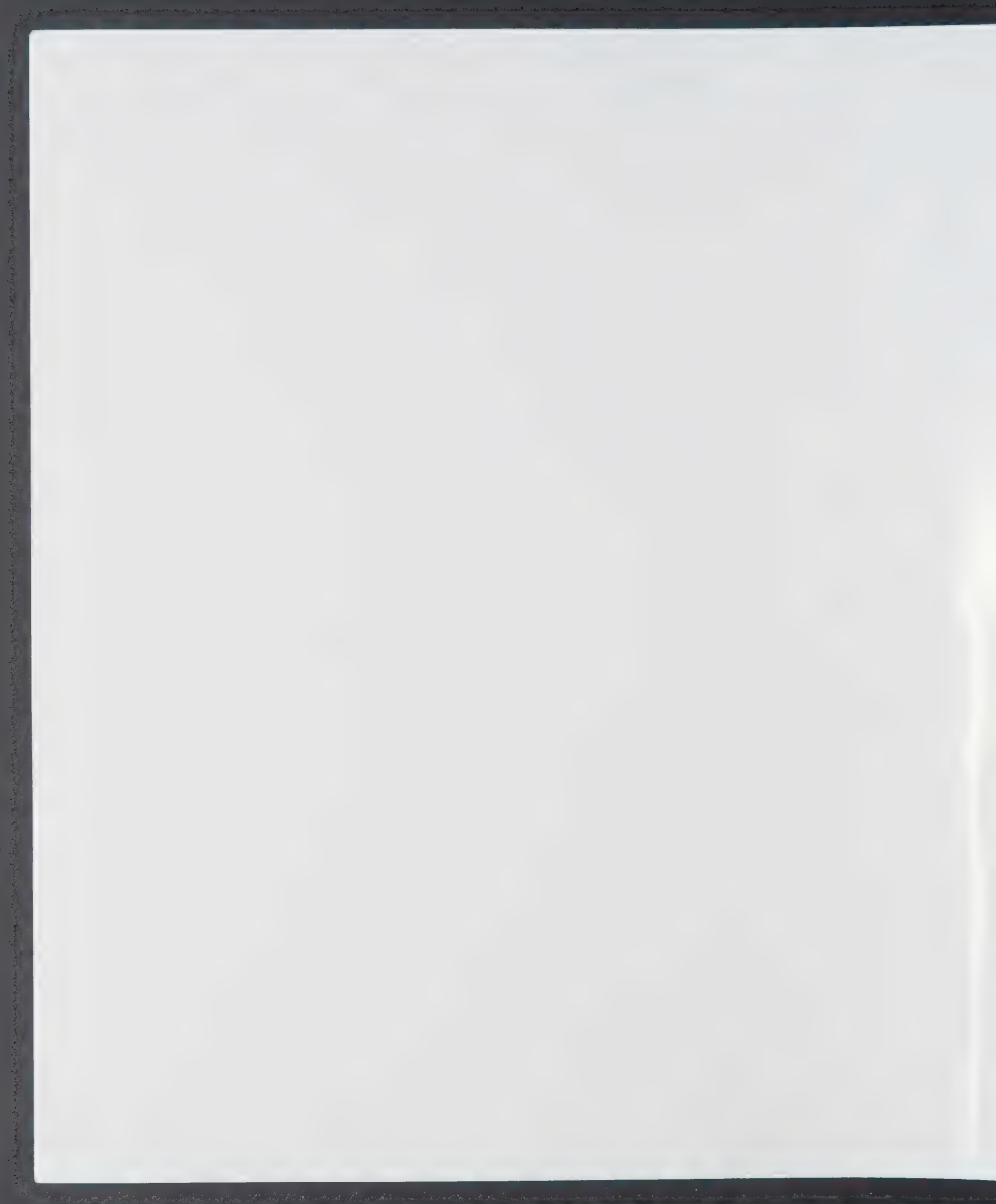
an art anthology

*For Dr. A. Bacie
with my best
regards.*



IRSA

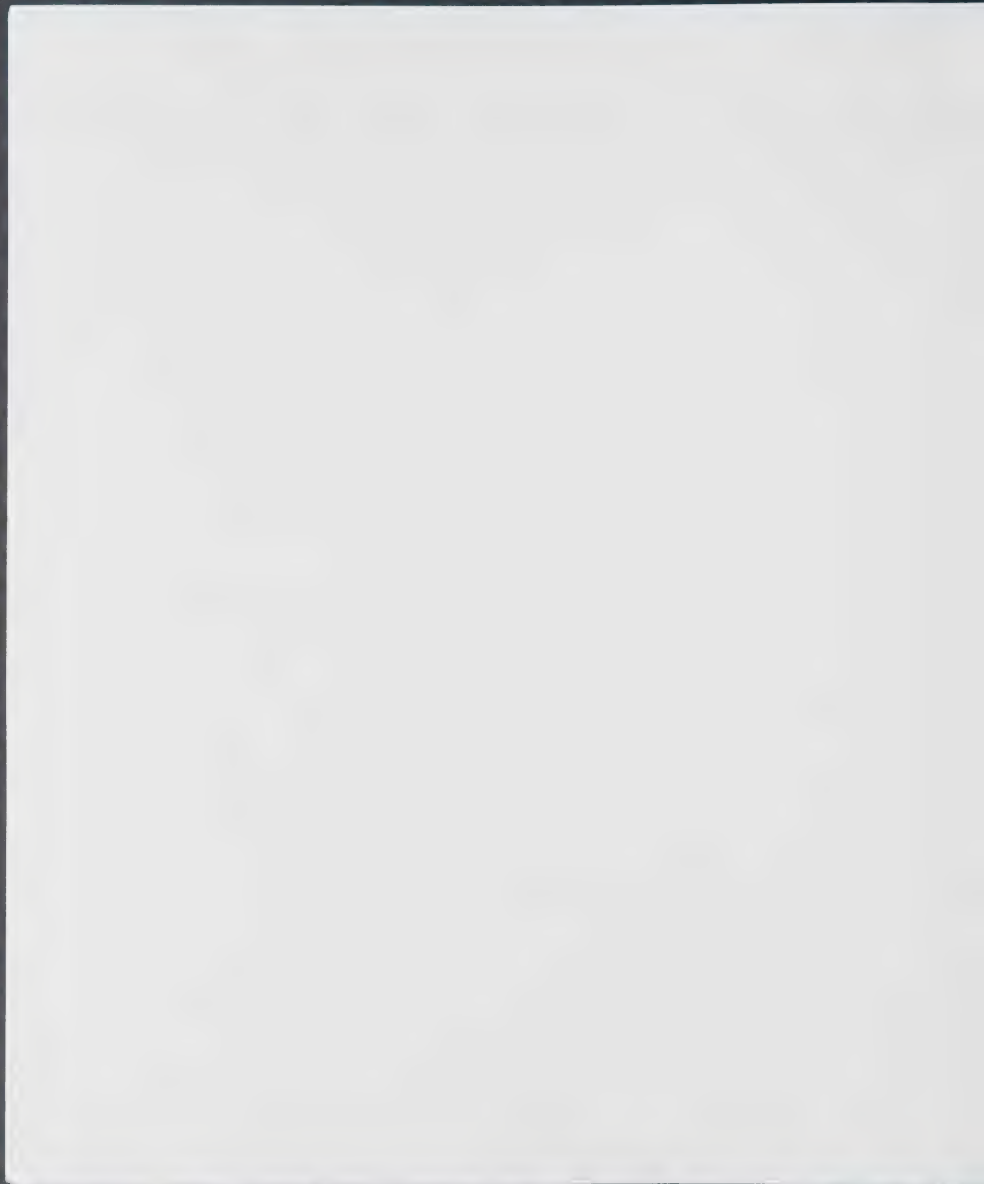
no. 41 (XXI)
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2000



artibus et historiae no. 41, 2000

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Abraham Bloemaert: Recent Additions to His Paintings

Cornelis van Haarlem and Abraham Bloemaert

The exemplary recent monograph of Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638) by Pieter van Thiel not only affords us for the first time a full survey of this artist. It contributes to reassess the perception of Dutch art, which for the wider public is still to a good extent dominated by the notion of a Golden Age extending after mannerism from the Caravagggists to Vermeer, a concept still largely sustained by exhibitions, the choice of works on permanent display in museums, and by books. Such a view does not emphasize the fact that from 1590 to 1620 the foremost Dutch painters were Cornelis and the Utrecht master Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651). Karel van Mander, whose painted oeuvre is small,¹ belongs to an earlier generation, and Hendrick Goltzius, though incomparably influential on account of his prints, only painted from 1600 to his death in 1617.²

More particularly, the monograph on Cornelis also sheds new light on the relationship with Bloemaert. Although no document attests an encounter, the evidence of the works indicates provoking links, especially during their early maturity. They shared certain friends (Van Mander), patrons (Razet), engravers (De Gheyn, Jan Muller, Jacob Matham, Saenredam), and print publishers. Cornelis's inventory contains an

unidentified painting by Bloemaert, a *Young Tobias*. Bloemaert lived in Amsterdam, a short way from Haarlem, from April 1591 to November 1593, a period during which the artistic contacts with Cornelis were particularly close,³ major recent paintings by the latter being at the time in collections of his Amsterdam patrons. Only at that point might Bloemaert have perceived Cornelis as a rival. In matters of attribution, their names have in fact on quite a few occasions been confused.⁴

If we compare the personalities and the overall output of these two long-lived masters (Bloemaert was to survive his colleague by twelve years), there are admittedly profound differences. Most of all, Bloemaert's art is permeated by his fervent commitment to religion and his close links to the Jesuits. His nearly twenty altarpieces, though not nearing the output of many Flemish contemporaries, represent the core of his art. An active Catholic in an adverse society, he propagated religious themes and the cult of saints in seventy individual prints, many of them ranking among his finest, and in nine series of prints totalling 170 plates. Cornelis does not emerge as a profoundly religious master in his numerous paintings with sacred themes. This is partly owing to the fact that in many of his works up to 1600, such as the *Fall of Lucifer*, the bravura of his staging and the presence of his nudes are bound to arrest the spectator before any other aspect.



1) Here attributed to Abraham Bloemaert, «Cupid and Psyche». Private collection (courtesy Jack Kilgore).



2) Here attributed to Abraham Bloemaert, «Cupid and Psyche» (detail). Private collection (courtesy Jack Kilgore).

Contrarily to Cornelis, Bloemaert created few history paintings and few nudes, though he excelled in them when it came to it. Unlike Cornelis, he eagerly engaged instead in landscape and farmhouse views (some 55 paintings with figures, against very few in Cornelis, plus 80 prints, and many drawings), furthermore in genre scenes of country folk, in Caravaggism, and he shunned portraits. In keeping with his personality, he enjoyed moralizing themes in painting and prints, creating many series of traditional as well as innovative themes such as the *Otia* prints. He was one of the most prolific Dutch draughtsmen, whereas but a dozen drawings by Cornelis exist, none after 1600. In the same spirit, Bloemaert designed 625 prints, Cornelis only two dozen, none after 1605. Some three hundred paintings survive by Cornelis, against a good two hundred by Bloemaert (though expressed in square feet they may be equal, if that mattered at all). It is to be expected that quite a few works will still come to light on either side.

Bloemaert displayed a more tenacious vitality. While Cornelis's most stunning inventions precede 1600, without a climax later on, the Utrecht master's creativity grew and unfolded steadily, with the highlights of the altarpieces in the 1620s and the princely commissions in the 1630s (*Apollo and Marsyas* in Berlin). Only during the last decade did his productivity slow down. Finally, on account of his numerous pupils and of the widespread propagation of his prints, his art had a more durable impact than Cornelis's.

Beyond these basic differences, we are on the other hand struck by constant artistic affinities between the two artists, verifiable in specific works. A decisive span of four years older, Cornelis was always a length ahead. Dated works by him survive from 1583 and ever since 1587, whereas Bloemaert's exact profile before the *Niobids* of 1591, his first dated work (for a long time regarded as by Cornelis), is still unclear. Cornelis's *Caritas* of c. 1582 already determines Bloemaert's Holy Family of 1592.⁵ The impact of such early, vigorous works by Cornelis as *Lucifer*, the *Baptism of Christ* of 1588, the *First Family* of 1589, the *Massacre of the Innocents* of 1590 on Bloemaert's *Niobids*, his *Deluge*, the lost *Apollo and Daphne* of 1592 and other early works is by now well understood.⁶

Both artists painted c. 1593 the *Wedding of Peleus and Thetis* and nocturnes with *Judith Showing the Head of Holofernes*, but significantly also a few large kitchen pieces with figures and still lifes in the Flemish tradition.⁷ Both painted the *Four Evangelists*. With both, the *Preaching of the Baptist* and the *Baptism of Christ* take an important place. In 1606 Bloemaert took up the rare theme of the *Purification of the Israelites*, painted by Cornelis the year before (and in 1600). Bloemaert's *Vertumnus and Pomona* of 1620, even though the figures are fully dressed, incorporates much of the spirit of ear-

lier works by Cornelis. The visual analogy to Cornelis's many isolated heads or busts of young men and women—variously as Magdalen, Venus, Juno, Diana, or Flora—which he painted throughout his career, are Bloemaert's equally repetitive heads of old women and men of the 1630s. Even in their late works there exist singular affinities, in particular in small panels of the *Rest on the Flight*, *Christ as Man of Sorrows*, the *Crucifix*, or small female nudes (*Cupid and Psyche* by Cornelis, *Venus and Cupid* by Bloemaert).⁸ Both artists treated several times the *Judgment of Paris*; their two versions dated 1636 breathe a related classical air.⁹

Most of these contacts go in the sense of a reception by Bloemaert, though not in terms of direct formal borrowings. They may partly result from the spirit of the time, the same artistic environment, and similar patronage. Yet it would seem that Bloemaert remained well informed about his colleague's work. Whether Cornelis took in turn continuous notice of him is less evident.

Cupid and Psyche

The *Niobids* of 1591,¹⁰ painted at the age of twenty-four in Utrecht, just before he moved to Amsterdam, is Bloemaert's earliest dated painting and also the first work which Van Mander singled out in his biography as important (he may not have seen other early works). It is a masterpiece in the mannerist vein of Spranger, a style which we find similarly in the Copenhagen *Lucretia* and the Munich *Wedding of Peleus and Thetis*, both c. 1588/91. A solid experience must have preceded such achievements. The only earlier date is on a tiny drawing of a putto of 1590. His formation gives no clue about his beginnings, as he trained with insignificant artists by whom no works are known, except for a brief stay with Hieronymus Francken in Paris, 1584/85. In this perspective, the clumsy *Adoration of the Shepherds* in Heiloo¹¹ might, on account of its Flemish affinities, be a work of the mid-eighties. But what leads to the *Niobids*?

At this point, the large *Cupid and Psyche*¹² [Figs. 1, 2; canvas, 127.7 x 174.7 cm] draws our attention. Its brief history deserves to be told: it belonged since an unknown date to Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, in whose estate it was sold in New York in 1996 as circle of Spranger (with reference to a London sale of 1946, sold for 4 gns as "Death of Procris" by Giordano), acquired at the sale by the New York art dealer Jack Kilgore. Having shortly before sold Bloemaert's *Charity* of c. 1592 to the Cleveland Museum of Art,¹³ he recognized the same personality in *Cupid and Psyche*. A stylistic similarity between the two forceful works indeed leaps to the eye. Kilgore thus presented the picture as an early work by

Bloemaert at two Maastricht fairs, where it met officially with reservations, privately with approval, though nobody committed himself to print.

The painting can hardly be overlooked. It comes as a shock on account of its lifeseize, of *Psyche's* provocative pose and Cupid's bold intrusion into the image. The composition is limited to few, large shapes. The two contrasting figures are set between the red drapes and the bluish bedcloth. Projected towards the spectator with her white flesh, the rigidly modelled, sleeping *Psyche* resembles a manikin. Bending forward on his knees, Cupid is spreading the curtain with one arm, tickling her neck with the other hand. His face is hidden, his arm awkwardly bent, his back a Herculean, yet soft bulge of muscles with small wings, as unlike a conventional Cupid boy¹⁴ as can be. A garish nocturnal illumination freezes the scene.

The painting is intended as a *tour de force*. It stands isolated, no drawing, print, painting, or document relate directly to it, which may explain the hesitant reaction of the experts at its appearance. The brashness of the staging and flaws of the anatomy of the two figures could point to a young artist. To look for the author among the young generation impressed by Spranger and the Haarlem masters around 1590 seems to make sense. For each motive one can invoke comparative examples. The pose of *Psyche* carries many echoes of the Italian Renaissance transmitted through reproductive prints.¹⁵ More immediate affinities exist with Spranger (*Cupid and Psyche* engraved by Muller, the large painting of *Venus and Adonis* in Duchcov, c. 1607-10), though they all stress the contrast rather than the similarity. The lateral curtains are a standard feature of many representations of *Psyche*, of *Venus and Mars*, *Danaë*, the toilet of *Venus*, and ladies in the bath of the Fontainebleau school.

The young Bloemaert is one likely candidate for the painting, whereas such other names as Gillis Coignet, Jacob de Backer, Gerrit Pietersz, or Maerten Pepyn are in the end to be discarded. The closest links are with his *Lucretia* [Fig. 3; panel, 93.5 x 71.3 cm] (down to details of navel and bosom), the *Niobids* (the male back), and the *Flood*. The main difference is that Bloemaert's works are from the start of the utmost elegance even in scenes of violence — compare a similarly posed figure in the small, early painting of *Semele*¹⁶ — while *Psyche and Cupid* has a rigidity encountered nowhere else. A comparison with his print of the same subject engraved in 1607 by Matham [Fig. 4], his most Italianate composition, could not be more telling. Yet we should be prepared for surprises in the development of an emerging artist during his early twenties, confronted with Cornelis and the example of Spranger. In my view, *Cupid and Psyche* would necessarily have to pre-date the *Niobids* and would thus be an ambitious effort of the young master to place



3) Abraham Bloemaert, «Lucretia». Copenhagen, State Museum of Fine Arts. Photo: Museum.

himself into the limelight. Other names remain admittedly void for us; in particular, already in the early 1590s both Bloemaert and Cornelis had several pupils, whose works are unknown. All things considered, an attribution to Bloemaert before 1590 (cf. *Bacchus* hereafter), seems at this point a plausible hypothesis. Exactly how much earlier (a year or two?) remains open.

Bacchus

Early paintings by Bloemaert which came to light after the monograph of 1993 are the circular pair of *Ceres and Bacchus*, the *Rest on the Flight* of 1592, a small *Rest on the Flight*, and



4) Jacob Matham after Abraham Bloemaert, «Cupid and Psyche», engraving.

the *Kitchen Piece* (several versions).¹⁷ During the years around 1600 we witness in several schools a multiplication of images of Bacchus,¹⁸ Venus, Ceres, and the emergence in Rudolfinian, Dutch, and Flemish art of the allegorical subject linking these three gods (*Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*, as in the Bloemaert/Saenredam print of c. 1600). Bloemaert's circular panels of *Bacchus* [Fig. 5] and *Ceres* (both: diameter 70 cm, Lord Faringdon collection) are almost certainly the pair seen by Buchelius in Utrecht in April 1590 or on 17 January 1591¹⁹ and



5) Abraham Bloemaert, «Bacchus». The Faringdon Collection Trust, Buscot Park, Ox.

are thus his earliest secure works known up to now. They show bust figures of the two gods leaning out in *trompe-l'oeil* fashion from an oculus-shaped stone window.

Another *Bacchus* reaching out from an oval window appeared in 1997 and was acquired a year later by the Rouen museum [Fig. 6; panel, 82.7 x 101 cm].²⁰ The virtuosity of its rapid handling with translucent glazes is here even more apparent; it goes from sketchy portions to forceful highlights and deep shadows. This technique could hardly be more different from that of *Cupid and Psyche*. Of identical style and type as the Faringdon tondi, this *Bacchus* is more complex, differing from them in all the details: the size is notably larger, the shape oval on a rectangular panel, enriched by female spandrel figures in grisaille, which serve to accentuate the illusionism of the main figure projecting out of the frame. Shown in motion, Bacchus flaunts a twisted moustache, side and chin whiskers, instead of a glass he holds grapes in one hand, ears of wheat in the other, on the head is a bunch of hibiscus flowers and leaves. This work was probably painted right after the tondi.



6) Abraham Bloemaert, «Bacchus». Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo: courtesy Clovis Whitfield.

Exuberant though this Bacchus is, the subject could also serve the moralizing purpose of exhorting moderation, which is the message of the verse in Bloemaert's *Sine Cerere* print.²¹ A Bacchus—for this he certainly is—with wheat, the attribute of summer, is unique. The turn of his head and the languid

lover's glance imply the existence of a pendant, preferably with Ceres, Venus, or Flora. In the absence of the one or more presumed companion pieces, the precise subject of this figure is not clear. The low reliefs of corner figures are kept, intentionally it seems, vague as regards their attributes.²²



7) Abraham Bloemaert, «Cain Slaying Abel». Dr. and Mrs. Gordon J. Gilbert, St Petersburg, Florida.

The type of a figure reaching out from an oculus goes back to the Italian Renaissance (Bronzino) and to gothic sculpture, but in the case of this painting, the oval window (whose thickness is barely perceptible) and the bas-reliefs bring to mind analogous motifs in the *dernier cri* of Dutch architecture of the period, Lieven de Key's City Hall in Leiden (1597) and his Meat Hall in Haarlem (1602).

The two tondi and this *Bacchus* appear to be the earliest Netherlandish paintings of the theme. The following are some comparable works. A *Head of Bacchus* is also the subject of a small painting of c. 1591 by Cornelis van Haarlem, who later painted several half-figures of *Venus and a Seated Bacchus with a Satyr*, 1618.²³ A famous "Federkunststück" drawing by Goltzius of c. 1600 represents the *Head of Bacchus with a Young Faun*; compare also his drawing of the *Head of Mercury*, 1587. In his orbit, his son-in-law Matham created three round prints of *Bacchus, Ceres, and Venus*²⁴ and engraved after Goltzius a circular, full-length *Autumn*²⁵ from a set of the Seasons. Jan Muller engraved two large heads propelled forward in an oval: the philosophers *Harpocrates* 1593 and *Chilon* 1596. In later years, Wtewael repeatedly painted busts of *Bacchus, Ceres, and Venus*.²⁶ None of these works is as dashing as Bloemaert's early *Bacchus*.



8) Abraham Bloemaert, «The Miracle of the Loaves». New York, private collection.

Cain Slaying Abel

Cain Slaying Abel [Fig. 7; panel, 61 cm] brings us back to the circular shape favored for quite a few of Bloemaert's paintings and prints of the 1590s (but never in the paintings by Cornelis). This work was first published in 1946 by J. van Gelder as "*Hercules and Cacus* by Cornelis or Bloemaert of about 1592, or Bloemaert shortly before 1590." It reappeared in 1989 as *Cain and Abel* by Bloemaert.²⁷ The fierce battle of men, virtually interchangeable as Cain, Samson killing the Philistines, or Hercules and Cacus (the two latter themes not depicted by Bloemaert), suited the artistic intentions of the moment. Here, the theme must be read as Cain and Abel — which Bloemaert also illustrated in two or three later drawings—since the composition appears to be a direct response to Jan Muller's print of this theme from c. 1590 after Cornelis,²⁸ in which Abel is seen foreshortened from the feet. Rather than placing them side by side, Bloemaert bound the two muscular fighters into a more commanding, intertwined group, framed at the top and bottom by pieces of drapery. As he would often do, he added two huge, bent tree trunks, an equation of the figure scene in terms of nature. The closest stylistic parallel is *Apollo and Daphne* of 1592 (compare the male torso), a date which can be applied to *Cain Slaying Abel* as well.

A similar back of a male nude occurs in the foreground of Bloemaert's small *Miracle of the Loaves* of 1593 [Fig. 8; canvas on panel, 38.1 x 49.5 cm].²⁹ A small panel in Düsseldorf [Fig. 9; 30 x 37.5 cm]³⁰ is a study of this same nude, with loin cloth, and of a second head which is identical to one on the left half of *Moses Striking the Rock* of 1596 in New York. The fuzzy outlines suggest that the Düsseldorf panel is a copy, perhaps by a pupil.

The only violent subjects in Bloemaert are this one, the *Niobids*, the *Flood, Lucretia*, and *Semele*. After the early 1590s, they disappear completely from his painting (the same holds true of Cornelis ten years later), giving way to more lyrical themes and to landscape in accordance with his personality. Typically, in the *Adam and Eve* series engraved in 1604 by Saenredam, the killing of Abel is replaced by a moving lamentation of Adam and Eve.

Jacob's Ladder

Jacob's Ladder [Fig. 10; canvas, 116.3 x 96 cm].³¹ appeared in 1995, is a dense composition with bold clouds and tree trunks. It is a case in point leading from fierce figure pieces to the landscapes. Spread across the foreground, the sleeping Jacob has a pose which Bloemaert also used in two *Annunciation to the Shepherds* prints (1599) and the pictorial *St. Roch* drawing.³²



9) After Abraham Bloemaert, «Two Figures». Düsseldorf, Kunstmuseum.

which has similar, large tree trunks enhancing the figure. They all contain, like here, an angel with spread wings. The landscape motifs may be compared with the *Baptism of Christ* of 1602.³³ The painting also has a bearing on the question of studio production. Its design was already known from a version somewhat narrower on three sides (perhaps cut down, as seems conceivable by comparison), of which I presumed that it contained some studio collaboration. The new version has a better chance to be autograph; the hardnesses visible in the clouds and the distant portions result perhaps from earlier damage.

Moses Striking the Rock

The theme of Moses striking the rock was treated several times by Bloemaert, also in a small, crowded panel of 1624 by Wtewael, never by Cornelis. On 17 January 1591, Buchelius reported to have seen—place and date unspecified—a painting of this theme by Bloemaert, unheard of since, *maxima forma*, which in his context implies larger than the Niobids (203 x 249.5 cm, a size surpassed today only by the late *Apollo and Pan*).³⁴ The splendid version of 1596 in the Metropolitan Museum [Fig. 11; canvas, 80 x 108 cm] has received wide



10) Abraham Bloemaert, «Jacob's Ladder», Private collection.

recognition as a masterpiece of Bloemaert's mannerist period because of its location in the Metropolitan Museum, its impeccable condition, the seductive female protagonist, and the secure date.

An exceptionally large drawing in the Schlossmuseum at Weimar [Fig. 12; 340 x 487 mm]³⁵ was until now regarded as a study for the painting of 1596 or for an earlier supposed painting of this theme. Except for the kneeling, nude man in the foreground, taken over in reverse from the painting of 1596, the drawing shows in fact a different, less agitated layout with larger animals, which would point to a later date. It can now be understood as an advanced preparation for another, hitherto unknown painting done fifteen years after the Metropolitan version. This is one of the most interesting additions to Bloemaert's oeuvre [Fig. 13; panel, 85 x 120 cm], signed at the



11) Abraham Bloemaert, «Moses Striking the Rock». New York, Metropolitan Museum, Gift of Mary V. T. Eberstadt, by exchange, 1972. Photo: Museum.



12) Abraham Bloemaert, «Moses Striking the Rock», drawing. Weimar, Schlossmuseum.

bottom right A. Bloemart f. / 1611. Its history is known since 1804, when it was in a collection near Braunschweig, described as of "the most painstaking execution... undoubtedly the finest known Bloemaert."³⁶ In 1929 it came to the knowledge of Hofstede de Groot in the Rimpau collection near Halberstadt, and after 1945 it was assigned to the Staatliche Galerie in Halle. Alas it is now sunken and in need of restoration but nevertheless deserves to be presented here.

The painting is larger than the work of 1596 and done on panel. At first sight very different and less exalted, the composition is again highly elaborate. Mannerist traits are the empty center with the remote Moses—although the water gushing forth is now more in evidence—, the two infants in the foreground, and the intricate group of the two standing figures on the right, of which the man carrying a bucket on his head recurs identically in plate 98 of Bloemaert's *Tekenboek*.

Although the Weimar drawing, datable just before the painting, is carefully executed and finished, Bloemaert still made substantial, revealing changes in the foreground of the painting: the kneeling nude man (whom he was to take over identically into plate 97 of the *Tekenboek*) is now replaced by the seated woman. Next to her he added a second infant. On the left appears the head of a praying man, and a boy lying on the ground takes the

place of a goat. Three small angels are inserted above Moses. The changes are an improvement in as far as the woman, confronting the spectator, provides an edifying emotional note, absent from the earlier stage of the gesticulating mannerist nudes. Several figures manifest a religious expression,³⁷ beginning with the Magdalen-type woman seated on the ground. Other saintly women with spread arms occur in works of the same time: in the *Pietas* print of 1610, some of the fifty *Sacred Hermits* prints of 1612, the *St. Stephen* print, and the *Annunciation to the Shepherds* altarpiece of 1612. This is also the period of his *Moses* print. In 1647, close to the age of ninety, Bloemaert did a small monochrome panel of *Moses Striking the Rock* with in the foreground a somewhat similar seated woman.

Landscapes

Among the paintings by Bloemaert listed in January 1591 by Buchelius are "various fine rural images and landscapes." In 1604 Van Mander praised Bloemaert's "very attractive and funny farmhouses, farm tools, trees and backgrounds... for he does very much from life." Yet to our surprise no landscape painting from those years is known, which means that an



13) Abraham Bloemaert, «Moses Striking the Rock», Halle (Saale), Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg.

essential portion of his early oeuvre escapes us. What is certain is that throughout his life, Bloemaert was fond of landscape, farmyards, and rural lore, although the so-called Dutch realist landscape of a modern type was to be the business of the following generation (Averkamp, Esaïas van de Velde, Van Goyen). It is of interest to know that in addition to his principal town house, Bloemaert owned a fourteen-acre farm located in Oostveen/Martensdijk, five miles north of town,³⁸ adjacent to a hilly region of sand dunes which must have inspired many of his landscape paintings and drawings.

Only few dates are available regarding his landscapes, mainly some of the large landscape prints of 1603-05 with religious themes, the mountainous landscape drawings of 1605/06, the twenty prints of the *Farmhouse* series of 1613/14.³⁹ The most ambitious landscape paintings follow initially in the footsteps of Van Mander's composite inventions. They comprise the large *Preaching of the Baptist* in Amsterdam (1595-1600), *Pomona* (c. 1600), the *Sermon on the Mount* (c. 1605), *Tobias* (1605-10), the *Rest on the Flight* (1605-10), *St. John on Patmos* of 1614.⁴⁰



14) Abraham Bloemaert, «Farmstead with Fire». Private collection.

A simpler approach, closer to many of his nature drawings of barns, hedges, and trees, is seen in the farmhouse and farmyard views, a type essentially developed by Bloemaert, for which a specific term is lacking. The painted views are invariably enriched with an edifying figure theme such as Tobias, the Expulsion of Hagar, the parable of the Tares, or the Rape of Ganymede. Two examples shall here be discussed.

The exquisitely preserved *Farmstead with a Fire* [Fig. 14; panel, 60.5 x 87.8 cm], signed at the bottom right *A. Bloemaert. fe.*,⁴¹ shows Dutch farmhouses half destroyed by a fire which

is still raging in the background. A farmer and his wife are searching for debris; water buckets are on the ground. A girl is weeping, two firefighters are on the roof. In the left foreground, a seated woman clad in red is totally passive, the eyes shut. The composition is framed by the dark repoussoir on the left—the beam reaching into the sky acting as a pointer—and the trees on the right. There is a great chromatic intensity with yellowish-green grass, rich brick tones, a grey sky with yellow flames and dark smoke. As often in Bloemaert's panels, the grain of the wood remains perceptible across the light paint.



15) Abraham Bloemaert, «Farmhouse Landscape». Private collection.

Before discussing the subject, we have to place the painting within his oeuvre. Notably later than the large prints of 1603-05, notably earlier than the landscape with the *Parable of the Tares* of 1624 in Baltimore, it can be compared with the *Farmhouse* prints of 1613/14. A date within the second decade seems likely. The center of the house with the ruined chimney and the timberwork of the roof is seen similarly in a drawing in Berlin which appears to be a record from nature; hence the painting is not the record

of a specific fire. This drawing belongs to a group of three dozen sheets in Berlin, mainly depicting farmhouses, which has recently been discussed by J. Bolten and dated to the early Utrecht years, 1585-90, mainly on the evidence of slight architectural sketches on some versos which he ascribes to Abraham's father, the architect and engineer Cornelis Bloemaert.⁴² The argument is tenuous but interesting and would help to explain the Buchelius reference to landscapes by 1591. To conclude on an equally



16) Abraham Bloemaert, «Angelica and Medoro». Nice, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo: M. De Lorenzo.

early date for this painting would, however, be wrong. Frequent repetitions⁴³ or similarities in the landscape prints and paintings show that Bloemaert was for decades to perpetuate and vary certain motifs, at times reaching back to early drawings.

Although this type of image is characteristic of Bloemaert, *Farmstead with a Fire* is his only painted fire and the only landscape without a specific literary subject and without animals. More modestly, burning farmhouses recur in two of his prints of c. 1615.⁴⁴ The painting does not illustrate *Ignis*, less even an emblematic concept, which is never his way of thinking. His genre scenes of the 1610s and 20s assume an increasingly moralizing character of a personal kind, particularly explicit in

the *Otia* prints with their explanatory verses. To see the passive, seated woman as personifying sloth does not convince. Perhaps inspired by the experience of a fire, the painting is a meditation on disasters that may befall people.

The *Farmhouse Landscape* [Fig. 15; canvas, 68.9 x 91.4 cm]⁴⁵ is one of the works corresponding to the terms quoted by Van Mander. It has as its main theme the loving depiction of a house with figures, animals, and tools. There is a rich color scale of browns for the house and yellowish-green for the lawn, with accents in the red figure and the copper jar. The design corresponds exactly to a squared preparatory drawing, which is slightly increased at the bottom and on the right,



17) Abraham Bloemaert, «Venus and Adonis». Copenhagen, State Museum of Fine Arts. Photo: Museum.

showing in the middle distance a small Prodigal Son with the pigs in front of a hut.⁴⁶ The painting had no doubt originally the same extension. A tension thus develops between the spectator woman in the foreground and the remote religious event on the opposite side. The Dutch period farmhouse draws the Biblical episode into the present. As to the dating, the painting again compares to the *Farmhouse* prints of 1613/14, also to the Lübeck *Prodigal Son* painting of 1620. The shack on the left recurs identically in the panel of the same subject in Zurich,⁴⁷ which seems a few years earlier. A deci-

sive element is the kneeling woman, who has no equivalent before 1620. The two women milking a goat recur in turn identically, but reversed, in the *Expulsion of Hagar* of 1635. In conclusion, a date about 1620 is the most convincing.

Angelica and Medoro

We make a jump of twenty years, during which Bloemaert produced successively his main altarpieces, print series,

genre figures, Caravaggesque shepherdesses inspired by the example of his pupil Honthorst, and the superb court paintings illustrating the story of Theagenes. His thematic register broadened considerably. *Angelica and Medoro* [Fig. 16; canvas, 124 x 185 cm], one of the finest works of the early 1630s, came to light in 1996 as a gift to the museum in Nice, where it was published in a catalogue of the donation.⁴⁸ It is signed at the bottom right *A. Bloemaert f / 163.* The two lovers are carving their names *MEDOR ET / ANGELI* into the tree bark. The pastoral story illustrates Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, XIX: 36 (1516/32), an epic poem imagined in Carolingian times. Favored in the Bolognese and other Italian schools, the subject is rare in the Netherlands, but visually identical or close to such other bucolic episodes as the antique Paris and Oenone, Tasso's Erminia and Tancredi, Hooft's Granida and Daifilo, and Longos's Daphnis and Chloe.

The two elegant, idealized figures dominate the right half of the composition, backed by the large tree. Their yellow and red draperies form strong accents of pure color. Luxuriant plants adorn the foreground. The contrasting left half consists of a verdant landscape framed in itself with a distant river and mountains, a type which is rather unusual for Bloemaert. Angelica's iridescent skin still harks back to Rudolfinian taste, Medoro's feather hat has a Caravaggesque origin. The framing hut on the left recurs in another pastoral painting of the same years.⁴⁹

An obvious impulse for this type of image came from the large *Granida and Daifilo* of 1625 by Honthorst, who had returned from Italy in 1620. Bloemaert avoided the down-to-earth realism and narrative detail of his pupils Honthorst and Baburen. The experience of Rubens can likewise be felt—compare from the same years Rubens's *Meleager and Atalanta* in Munich—but it is transposed into the serene classicism of Bloemaert's late years. In his oeuvre, the closest links are with *Venus and Adonis* [Fig. 17; 134 x 191 cm], reported to have been dated 1632, and with *Apollo and Pan*,⁵⁰ both of which also include the same type of female figure. The same date must apply to *Angelica and Medoro*.

The Last Years

During the 1640s, the output of the aged master slowed down to some extent, but he still produced admirable and innovative paintings, chiefly four landscapes of 1645-47, a large, moving *Christ on the Cross* and a *Man of Sorrows*, he explored small grisaille panels (1647) and prepared the final 160 drawings for the *Tekenboek* (Drawing Book, drawings now at Cambridge), which his son Frederick was to engrave. He



18) Abraham Bloemaert, «Return from Egypt». Private collection.

also turned to smaller, less demanding religious paintings. Two panels of the *Rest on the Flight* under a large tree, one dated 1646, have a personal, meditative character.⁵¹ To the same moment of the mid-forties belongs a small *Holy Family on the Return from Egypt* [Fig. 18; panel, 34.8 x 27.8 cm],⁵² set in front of a nearly barren, dark angle of a house. It brings to mind the *Holy Family in a Farmhouse Interior* of 1632, but the technique and the mood seem different. The figures, limited to few, warm hues, stand out in the light. The thinly painted background, in which the vertical grain of the panel remains visible, acts like a sonorous resonance cage. It is a slight, intimate work, a long way from *Cupid and Psyche* and the initial mannerist works of fifty years earlier.

Bloemaert and Honthorst

Having at the beginning of this text compared Cornelis van Haarlem and Bloemaert, we can at the end usefully confront Bloemaert and his most famous pupil, Gerrit van Honthorst (1592-1656), whose entire production has just been made available for the first time in the exemplary monograph by Richard Judson and Rudolf Ekkart (Davaco, 1999). Honthorst embodies Dutch Caravaggism, the school of Utrecht, he also became the international court painter and portraitist. After a first presumed training under his father, he became Bloemaert's apprentice in about 1607; among others, ter Brugghen and Poelenburgh were his colleagues. It was the period of many of Bloemaert's print series. The decisive difference with Bloemaert lies in his Roman sojourn 1613-1620, which upon his return enabled him to become the leading innovator on the Dutch scene. For the next thirty years he worked side by side with Bloemaert in Utrecht, from the 1630s also in The Hague. Given their different specialties, there was room for both. Like Bloemaert, he trained numerous students (as many as 25 during the 1620s); more than his teacher, he relied increasingly on studio collaboration.

For Honthorst's mature style, the Italian experience proved determining, supplanting the model of Bloemaert. Aged fifty-seven on the pupil's return, Bloemaert effortlessly adopted the new style for a decade. His personal brand of single half-length figures, flutists, singers, and Arcadian shepherdesses is well known, his links with Honthorst have aptly been analyzed. Less exuberant, he shunned expressive gestures and faces, extreme candlelight effects, lutes, and violins. Conscious of his pupil's unreachable brio, he did not attempt to compete with his group pictures, banquets, card players, soothsayers, and tavern scenes.

A fellow Catholic, Honthorst received prestigious commissions of altarpieces in Rome—no mean merit for a young foreigner. Bloemaert could not know his Italian production. His own sequence of altarpieces took no notice of the pupil's religious works but developed unperturbed, with glances towards Rubens. In Utrecht, Honthorst's religious output eventually came to an end. Although he was a very forceful religious painter in works such as the *St. Sebastian* of c. 1623, the stylistic aspects are often so striking as to outweigh the emotion. Bloemaert's permanent religious engagement is of a more absorbing nature. For each, some themes turned out to be *chasse gardée*, such as for Honthorst the *Denial of St. Peter*,

the *Mocking of Christ*, the *Agony in the Garden*, for Bloemaert the *Sermon of the Baptist*. When they treated the same theme, such as the *Nativity*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, *St. Jerome*, the *Supper at Emmaus*, the *Liberation of St. Peter*, the results may at times look comparable but on closer view attest that they avoided contacts (only the Cincinnati copy of Honthorst's *Liberation of St. Peter* used to be ascribed to Bloemaert).

After Caravaggism, a further exchange took place on the level of court painting, with which one identifies Honthorst, but which started in 1625 with Bloemaert's *Theagenes* series painted for the new stadholder Frederik Hendrik. It is well known that in 1635 Honthorst borrowed the composition of his *Theagenes* and *Chariclea* for the Danish court from Bloemaert's example of 1626. The commissions for the Dutch court carried Honthorst further to the courts of England and Denmark. He produced numerous paintings for them, including ungratifying subjects from Danish history, comprehensive decorative schemes, and elaborate drawings destined to be executed on a large scale. Bloemaert was not entrusted with large-scale projects or did not seek them, but throughout the 1630s painted some of his finest works for the Dutch court, such as *Apollo and Pan*. Points of comparison between the two artists also exist in mythological and pastoral themes. As mentioned above, Honthorst's large *Granida and Daifilo* of 1625 may have animated Bloemaert to create his large-scale, more classical *Venus and Adonis* of 1632 and *Angelica and Medoro*.

During the first half of the 1630s Bloemaert produced as a sequel to the Caravaggesque half-figures of the preceding decade an entire group of heads of old men and women. From the mid-1630s onward, Honthorst engaged more and more in portraiture, from which Bloemaert intentionally stayed away (van Mander in 1604: "He allows no place for portraying from life."). On the other hand, the formally and socially more modest portraits of Hendrick Bloemaert, which set in at the same time, owe instead a debt to the example of Honthorst.

With the years, the two great artists naturally grew more asunder. Print-designing and landscape, two lifelong poles of Bloemaert's production, are absent from Honthorst. Against the latter's compositional drawings stands the extraordinary variety of the over fifteen hundred known drawings by Bloemaert. Despite the evolution from mannerist to classical style and the plurality of techniques and themes, the overall production of Bloemaert shows a great inner coherence.

- ¹ H. Miedema, *Karel van Mander*, II, Davaco 1995, p. 105-168, catalogues 26 paintings, 60 drawings and 165 prints after his designs.
- ² A complete study of his paintings is announced by L. Nichols.
- ³ See also the comments in M. Roethlisberger (and M. Bok), *Abraham Bloemaert and his Sons*, Davaco 1993, p. 19 (henceforth listed as R.), and P. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem*, Davaco 1999, p. 177 (henceforth listed as Van Thiel).
- ⁴ One example: Cornelis's *Virgin and Child*, c. 1591 (Van Thiel, fig. 75), was at its first appearance in 1982 sold as by Bloemaert (London, Sotheby's, 21 April, lot 1).
- ⁵ R., fig. 71, and another version of the composition, dated 1582 (M. Roethlisberger, "Early Abraham Bloemaert," *Tableau*, Dec. 1994, p. 45).
- ⁶ R., figs. 29, 34, 50.
- ⁷ Cornelis: Van Thiel, figs. 125f. Bloemaert: M. Roethlisberger, "Vijf versies van één keukenstuk," *Antiek*, Jan. 1996, p. 257-267.
- ⁸ Cornelis: Van Thiel, figs. 343-347, 350, 157 (early *Crucifix*). Bloemaert: R., figs. 747, 746, 745, 735f.
- ⁹ Van Thiel, fig. 349, R., fig. 731.
- ¹⁰ R., fig. 29 and pp. 44, 66. Mentioned in somewhat contradictory terms as extant in Utrecht by Buchelius on 17 Jan. 1591 and by Van Mander (1604) as painted in Bloemaert's large studio in Amsterdam. (Van Thiel, p. 177, only refers to Buchelius).
- ¹¹ R., fig. 18.
- ¹² Anonymous sale London, Sotheby's, 26 July 1946, lot 171, not repr. Wittkower sale (did colleagues see the picture while it was in their collection?), New York, Christie's, 12 Jan. 1996, lot 22, repr. ("The figure of Venus [sic] is based on a design by Michelangelo finished by Pontorno"). The subsequent cleaning removed the yellow varnish and revealed the whitish drapery between Psyche's legs. Ann Lowenthal kindly gave me her manuscript text about the painting, which concludes with an attribution to Bloemaert 1592/95.
- ¹³ R., fig. 72 and—meanwhile in Cleveland—in *Antiek* (as in note 7), p. 262, color repr.
- ¹⁴ A standard prototype is after the corresponding print by the Master of the Die in the *Psyche* series after "Raphael" (Coxcie).
- ¹⁵ The antique *Ariadne*, Bellini's *Noah*, Giorgione's *Venus*, Michelangelo, Bronzino, the Caraglio prints of Perino's *Loves of the Gods*, Bordone, Tintoretto, the school of Fontainebleau.
- ¹⁶ R., fig. 57.
- ¹⁷ The kitchen pieces published in *Antiek* (as in note 7), the others in *Tableau* (as in note 5); the *Rest on the Flight of 1592* is another version of an undated composition previously known (R., fig. 71).
- ¹⁸ Contemporaneously, yet unrelated with the North, also in Annibale Carracci (Naples, 1590/91) and Caravaggio (Uffizi, c. 1597).
- ¹⁹ *Tableau* (as in note 5), p. 44-49, repr. First known as attrib. to Goltzius (*Bacchus*) and Floris (*Ceres*), then as Floris.
- ²⁰ Sale London, Sotheby's, 3 July 1997, lot 21, repr. before cleaning. Mme C. Petry, of the museum, announces a publication in *Revue du Louvre*.
- ²¹ R., fig. 107, c. 1600, verse by the Haarlem Latinist Savius ("...should not indulge in too many cups of wine").
- ²² The two upper ones are lightly dressed (on the left holding a cornucopia?), those at the bottom fully wrapped (on the left with the fragment of a column).
- ²³ Van Thiel, figs. 77, 180, 232, 238.
- ²⁴ *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 4: *Netherlandish Artists*. Matham, Saenredam, Muller, ed. W. L. Strauss, New York, 1980, nos. 18-20.
- ²⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 142.
- ²⁶ A. Lowenthal, *Joachim Wtewael*, Davaco 1986, figs. 104 (1618)—107 (circular, with pendant: *Ceres*, sale Vienna, Dorotheum, 14 Oct. 1997, lot 82), 130, 131 (1628).
- ²⁷ Sale New York, Sotheby's, 30 Jan. 1989, lot 17.
- ²⁸ Van Thiel, fig. 53.
- ²⁹ Repr. *Tableau* (as in note 5), pp. 46-47 (first in R., 681, with wrong theme).
- ³⁰ From the Stiftung Bruder, 1947.
- ³¹ Sale London, Christie's, South Kensington, 7 Dec. 1995, lot 81, as after Bloemaert (before restoration). Cf. the other version: R., fig. 113 (100 x 73.5 cm).
- ³² R., figs. 90f., p. 114.
- ³³ R., fig. 111. Another unpublished *Baptism of Christ* in private hands, canvas, 99.2 x 122 cm, with larger figures and no trees is very badly damaged and thus hard to judge, but may have been by Bloemaert (1600-1610?).
- ³⁴ R., p. 92. A "masterly" canvas of this theme by Bloemaert, 127 x 274 cm, was sold by C. Stroo at Alkmaar, 29 July 1811, lot 56, hence unknown.
- ³⁵ Pen and wash, heightened, signed. Listed in R., p. 92 and R. Barth, *Rembrandt & seine Zeitgenossen / Handzeichnungen... zu Weimar*, Weimar 1981, no. 64. Repr. by Walsh in *Apollo* 1974, 340, and in exhib. *Great Dutch Paintings from America*, The Hague, Mauritshuis, 1990, 167.
- ³⁶ I am grateful to Dr. G. Weber in Dresden for drawing my attention to the painting. Described in R., p. 92 (the two citations concern the same painting), collection of J. F. Weitsch, Salzdahlum, father of the painter and director of the ducal Braunschweig gallery (which had for decades owned two lesser paintings by Bloemaert).
- ³⁷ The head of the praying, elderly man at the extreme left is a standard type in Bloemaert's paintings, not a portrait of a patron.
- ³⁸ M. Bok, in R., p. 580.
- ³⁹ R., figs. 345-368.
- ⁴⁰ R., figs. 96, 109, 115, 172, 176, 393.
- ⁴¹ Briefly listed in R., 681, and *Antiek* (as in note 7), p. 267. According to a note on the back, from the succession of a collection at Liège, notary Mersch, 1939. The use of panel, frequent in the early years but occurring until the end, gives no clue as to the date.
- ⁴² J. Bolten, "The Beginnings of Abraham Bloemaert's Artistic Career," *Master Drawings* 1998, pp. 17-25, the Berlin drawing reproduced p. 21. He implies too rigidly in terms of Van Mander, against the evidence of Buchelius, that Bloemaert only came under Spranger's influence in Amsterdam and only there painted large works. Bloemaert also did several other nature drawings of ruined or dilapidated farmhouses, e.g. two in Munich (cat. Wegner, 1973, no. 245).
- ⁴³ Thus, a farmhouse on a drawing in Otterlo from the same series (Bolten, fig. 12) served both for the painting of the *Rest on the Flight* (R. fig. 71) and for the *Prodigal Son* print of 1603 (R. fig. 126).
- ⁴⁴ R., figs. 378 and 427 (*Ignis*, from the *Elements* series). Smoking kilns in figs. 577, 763.
- ⁴⁵ Sale New York, Sotheby's, 12 Jan. 1995, lot 34. Compare also the paintings R., figs. 174-176.
- ⁴⁶ Ex Perman collection, Stockholm, R., p. 119, and W. Bernt, *Die Niederländischen Zeichner des 17. Jhs.*, Munich 1958, no. 71, repr.
- ⁴⁷ R., fig. 385.
- ⁴⁸ The date can to my mind reliably be read as 163-. *Revue du Louvre*, Dec. 1996, p. 104, repr. *De Jean Brueghel à Alfred Stevens / Chefs-d'oeuvre du legs Aline-Odet Avigdor* [misspelt] d'Acquaviva, Nice 1998, no. 1, repr., as c. 1620/30. If the given size, c. 160 x 203 cm, included the frame, which is by no means certain, it might have been the painting of this theme sold in Antwerp, 31 May 1768, lot 1, as Bloemaert, "capital and very artful, painted especially beautifully," sold for f. 235, a high price. See R., p. 767.
- ⁴⁹ R., fig. 663.
- ⁵⁰ R., fig. 729.
- ⁵¹ R., fig. 747 and a smaller panel published in *Antiek* (as in note 7), pp. 265, 266, together with a drawing of the same time.
- ⁵² Withdrawn from sale Amsterdam, Christie's, 6 May 1998, lot 125, as c. 1632. Listed in R., p. 385. The figure of St. Joseph compares with some plates of the small figure print series (R., figs. 465-512).



And Jacob went out from Be'er-she'ba, and went toward Ha'ran.

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was sets, and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed, and behold a

ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

And thy seed shall be
of the north, and thou
art to the west, and
in thee and in thy
families of the earth
will keep thee in all
thou goest, and will bring

Rembrandt School, ca. 1650.

Panel, 25 x 19 inches.

Private American collection.

Provenance: Sir Upton Greville-Smythe,
M. Welti.

Galerie Fischer, Lucerne, June 26, 1954, No. 2263, ill. (as
Tobias and the Angel, by Ferdinand Bol).

Galerie Fischer, Lucerne, November 25, 1972, No. 2465 (as
Isaac's Dream, attributed to Ferdinand Bol).

Jacob's Dream, with concentration on two figures and not stressing the ladder, was a popular Rembrandt School subject. The sleeping figure of Jacob is based on a drawing attributed to Rembrandt (fig. 8, in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin). It has been questioned by Benesch (cf. comments to BENESCH 880) and defended by Jakob Rosenberg (E. Bock-Jakob Rosenberg, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Die Zeichnungen alter Meister, Die niederländischen Meister*, Berlin 1930, p. 221, No. 2696) and Slive (*Drawings of Rembrandt*, New York, 1965, No. 1, 27).

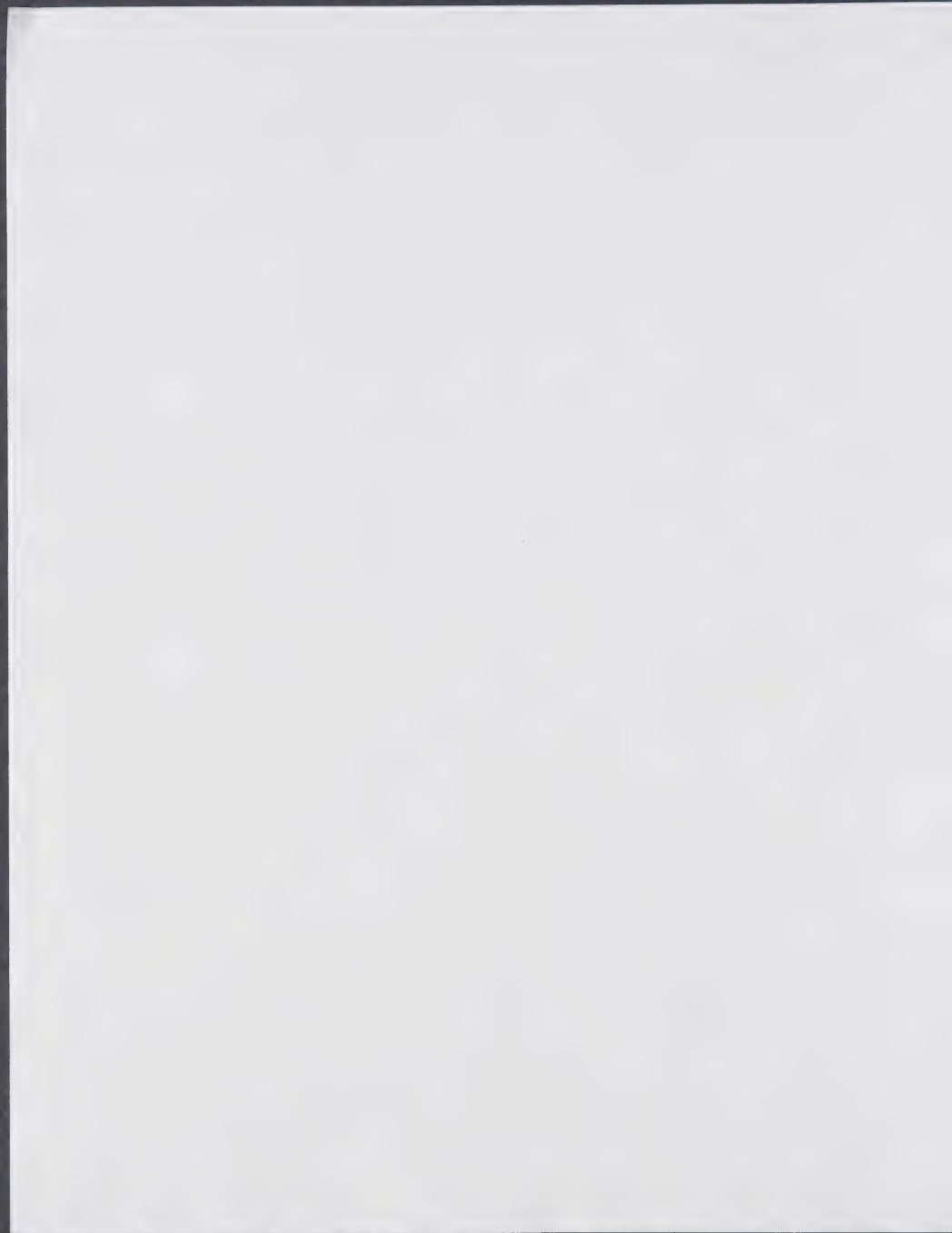
This work is related to paintings by Ferdinand Bol (e. g. the work in Dresden, 1920 cat. No. 1604, ill. in H. Gerson, *Het Tijdperk van Rembrandt en Vermeer*, Amsterdam, 1952, pl. 37) and G. v. d. Eeckhout (cf. the painting of 1669 in Dresden, 1930 cat. No. 1618A, ROY 14).

The vision of a ladder with angels going up and down on it is unique in Biblical imagery, and so *Jacob's Dream* has aroused artists' imaginations for centuries.

The Bible is the book of dreams, par excellence: dreams of individuals, dreams of a people, dreams of all mankind. It is surely no accident that the very first well-known dream in the Bible is not that of a king or of a general but of a man at the lowest point in his life — homeless and hunted, yearning for God's promise that He would return him to his country.



Figure 8



CHARLES MUNCH & JANE FURCHGOTT
S10093A Bear Valley Rd., Lane Rock, WI 53556
608 583-2431

Date 12-16-96

CONDITION & TREATMENT REPORT

Artist *Bloemaert, Abraham*

Signed

Dated

Title *Jacob's Dream*

Type of object

oil on fabric

Size H. $45\frac{3}{8}$ " W. $37\frac{3}{4}$ " T.

Owner *Dr. Alfred Bader*

SUPPORT

- fabric *fine weave*
 wood *linen*
 paper
 metal
 cardboard

- stretcher
 strainer rigid
 keys (secured)

- ADDITIONS
 lining *glue loose*
 cradle (rigid) *some edges*
 solid mount

CONDITION

- canvas margins _____
 slack
 brittle
 hole
 tear
 bulge

- depression *puncture like dents*
 ripple *at center*
 unglued *left in sky*
 warped *at top*
 cracked *in lower right*
 enlarged
 reduced-
some orig. paint around edges on margins.

Filled tack holes show painting was once stretched smaller: $43\frac{1}{4}$ " x $34\frac{1}{2}$ ", although originally was slightly larger than the present size.

TREATMENT

Removed old lining canvas and scraped off old glue. Lined with BEVA film onto the primed side of oil-primed linen. Stretched on new G-member keyed stretcher.

PAINT FILM

- smooth
 impastoed
 thick
 thin

- glazed
 dry
 ground *gray*

CONDITION

- generally sound
 cracked _____
 blistering
 flaking
 cupping

- scratched
 abraded
 losses *at corners - from protrusion of object*
 retouching *under canvas*

much retouching along edges and in a line 2" in from left edge. After cleaning it could be seen that clouds at top are very abraded. Tack holes from smaller stretching evident $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from top, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " from left edge, 1" from right $3\frac{1}{4}$ " from bottom; these holes being 2" apart. Filled losses along top, right edge. Filled loss below Jacob's knee. Filled losses along leaf area, angel's face, clouds, skin of yellow angel, Jacob's legs + sack. Deteriorated glaze in middle angel's wings.

TREATMENT: Filled low paint losses with gesso. Retouched losses using dry pigments in a PVA medium, and fixed with PVA spray varnish.

SURFACE COATING

- unvarnished
 varnished
 thick *drippy veils at upper right*
 thin

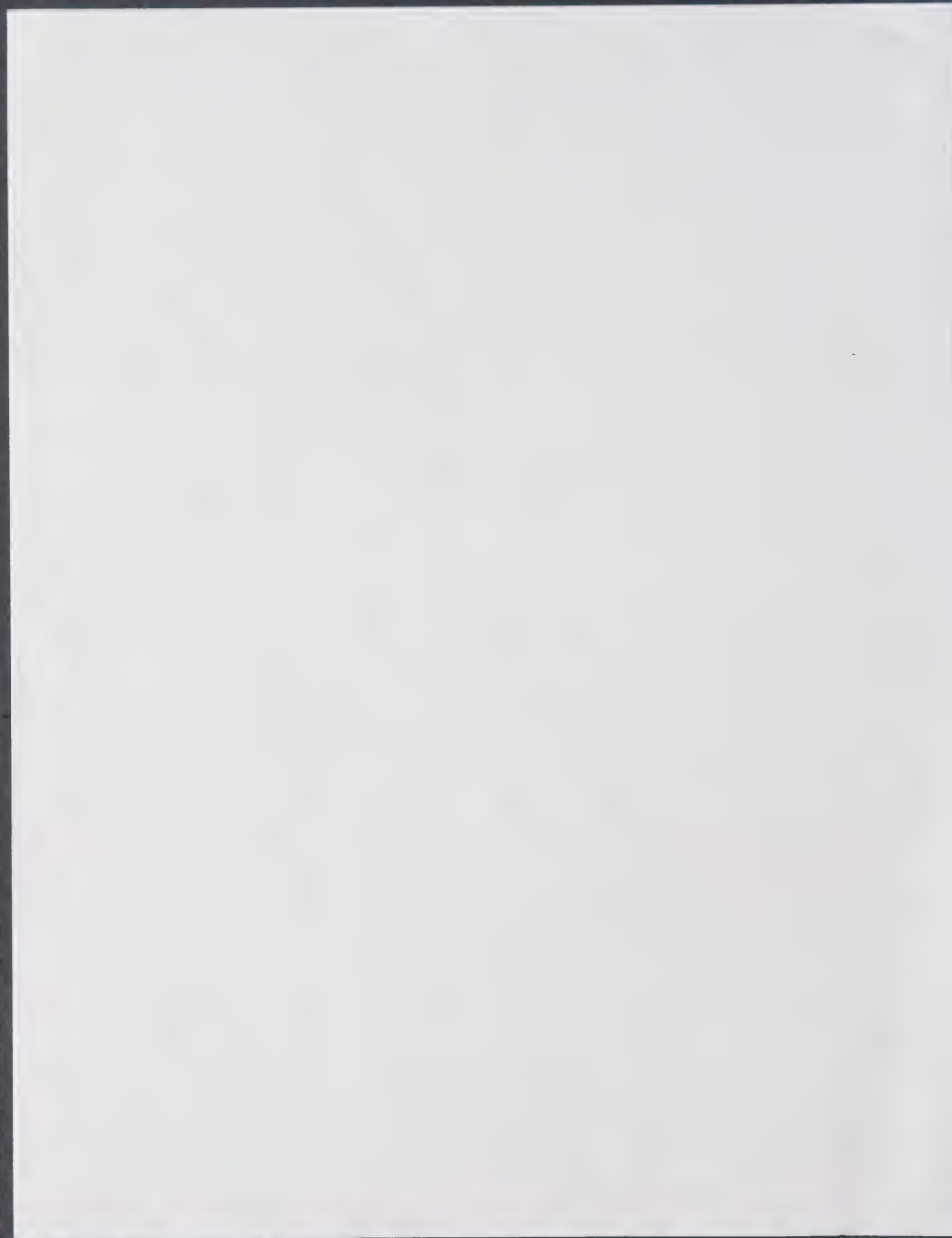
- CONDITION
 grimy
 darkened
 yellowed
 blooming

- shiny / dull *matte + dirty looking*
 scratched
 marred

No canvas texture visible under thick dirty varnish.

TREATMENT

Removed grime with ammonia water. Removed varnish with ethanol, acetone and a mixture of ethanol + xylene + water. Used acetone and methanol + dichloroethane to remove thick retouchings at top. In isolating coat of Rembrandt Talens retouching varnish was brushed on the cleaned painting. The final varnish was Rembrandt Talens picture varnish, followed by a thin spray of PVA varnish.





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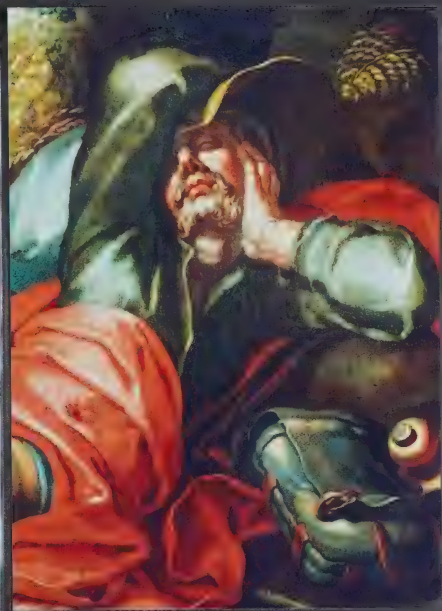
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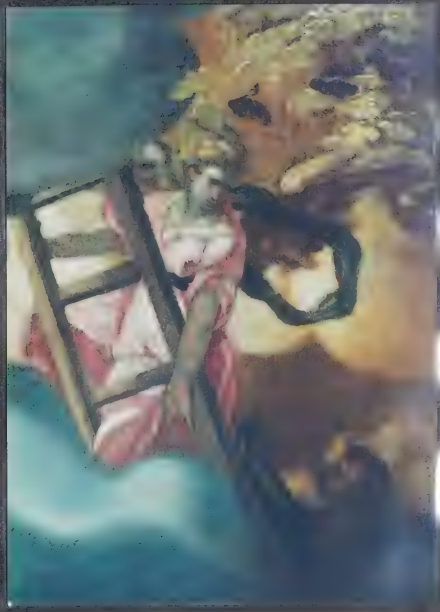
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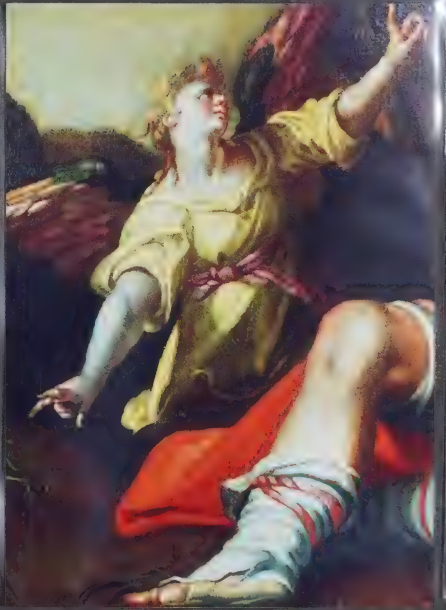
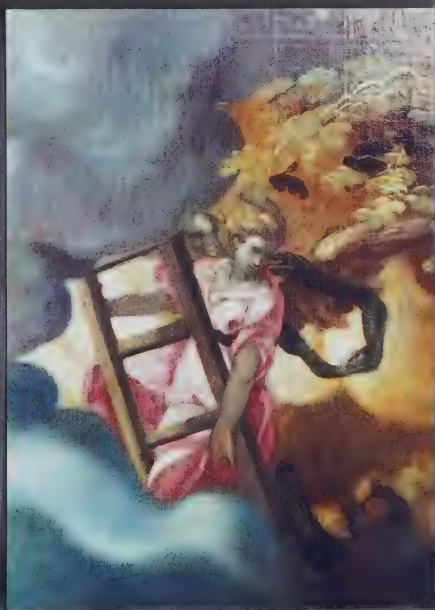
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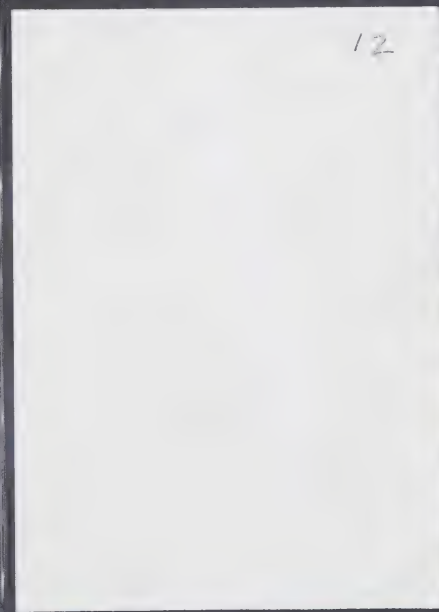
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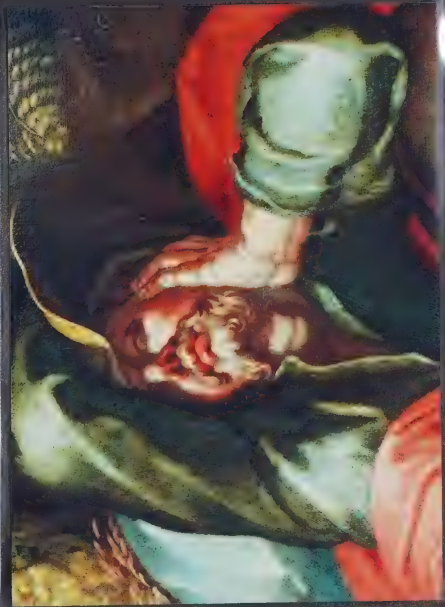
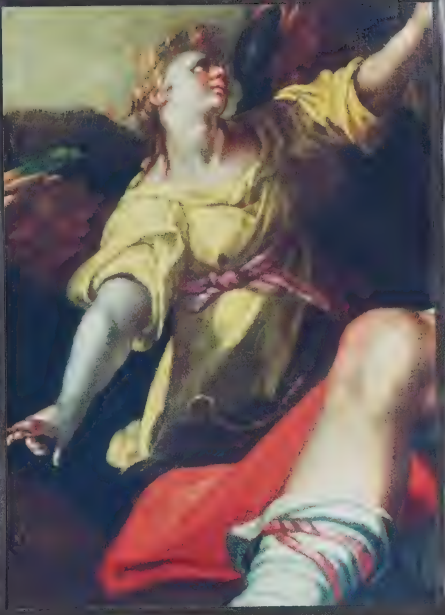
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Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

May 27, 1997

Professor Marcel Roethlisberger
Université de Genève
Histoire de l'art
22, Bd des Philosophes
1205 GENEVA
Switzerland

Dear Professor Roethlisberger:

As you will be able to imagine, I so appreciated your phone call and then receiving your letter.

I like my *Jacob's Dream* very much indeed.

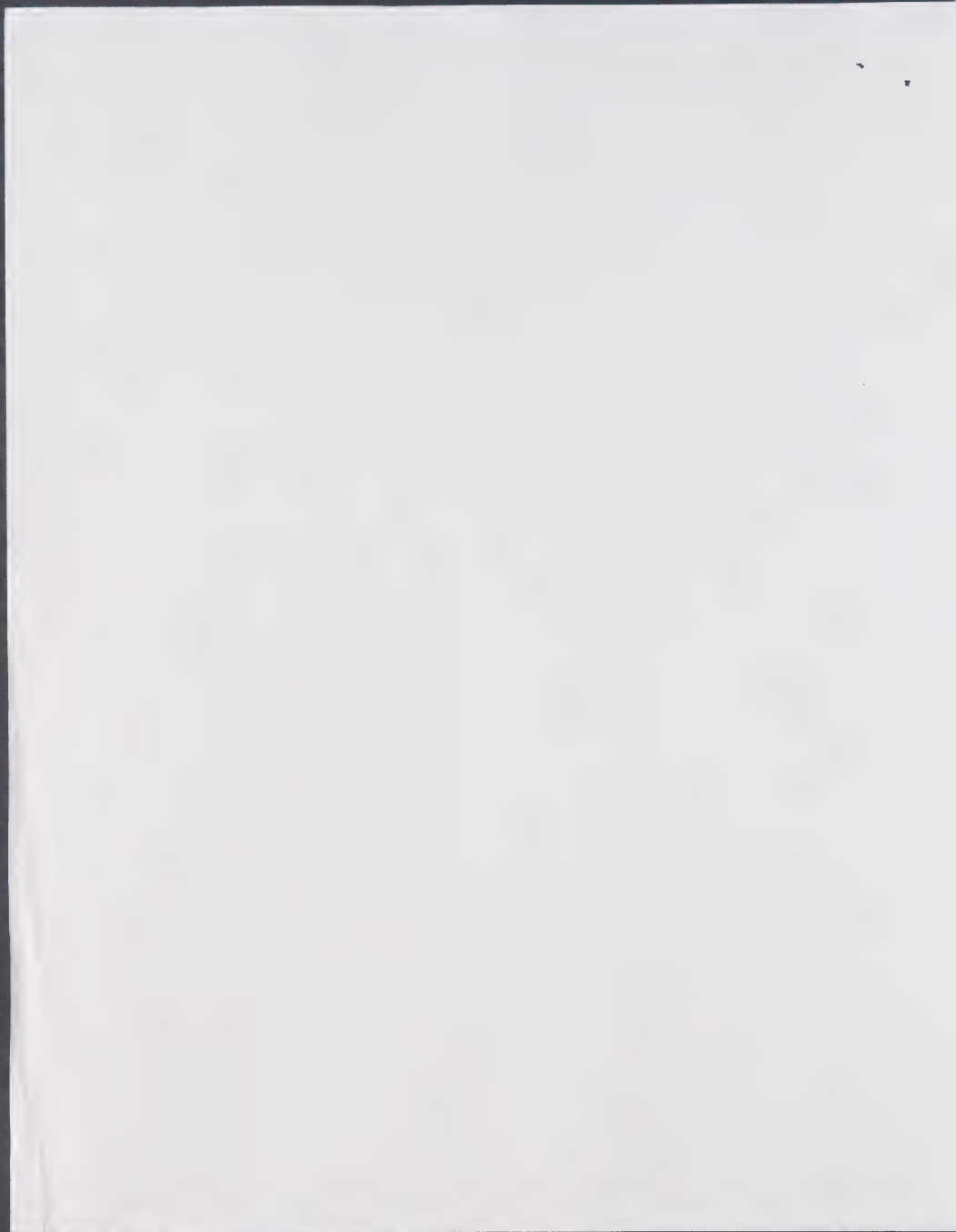
How lucky that no one talked to you about that painting before the sale.

My restorers, Charles Munch and Jane Furchgott, have become my very good friends, and I enclose their condition report which also gives the size after restoration.

The painting is in much better condition than I feared. The worst abrasion was in the cloud and also in quite small, isolated areas as recorded in the condition report.

I certainly like this version much better than the other version which I had seen in London some years ago.

We are just leaving for Europe and will return at the end of July. After that, I will take the painting to have a good black-and-white photograph made for you. I am always reluctant to have transparencies made because these change in color so quickly, but I would be happy to send you slides, of the whole painting and of details, if you wish.

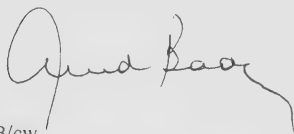


Professor Marcel Roethlisberger
May 27, 1997
Page 2

My good friend, Lee Howard, was so happy to receive your comments about the painting which he had thought might be by Agasse.

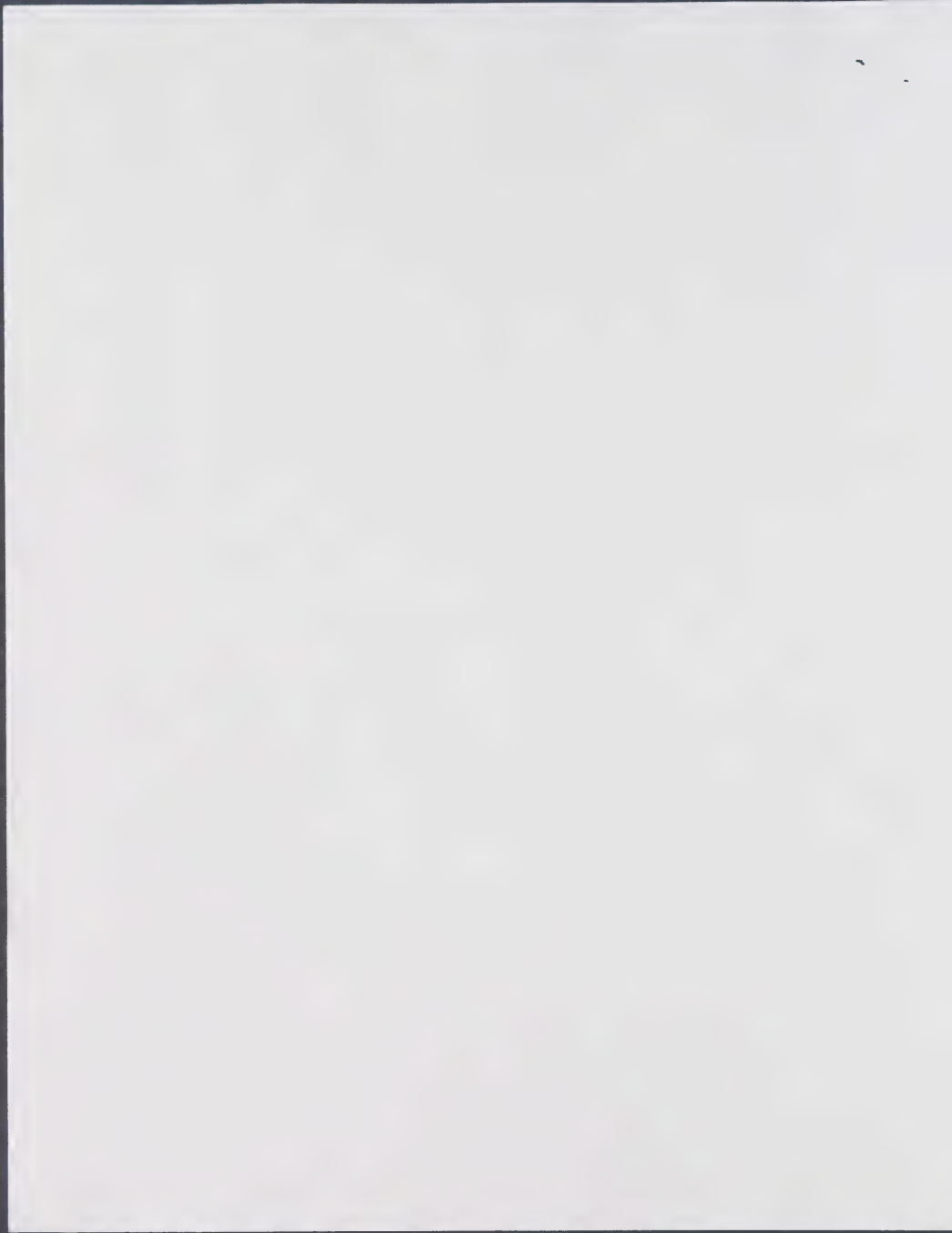
With many thanks for your help and all good wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "André Baer". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper.

AB/cw

Enclosure



Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

May 27, 1997

Professor Marcel Roethlisberger
Université de Genève
Histoire de l'art
22, Bd des Philosophes
1205 GENEVA
Switzerland

Dear Professor Roethlisberger:

As you will be able to imagine, I so appreciated your phone call and then receiving your letter.

I like my *Jacob's Dream* very much indeed.

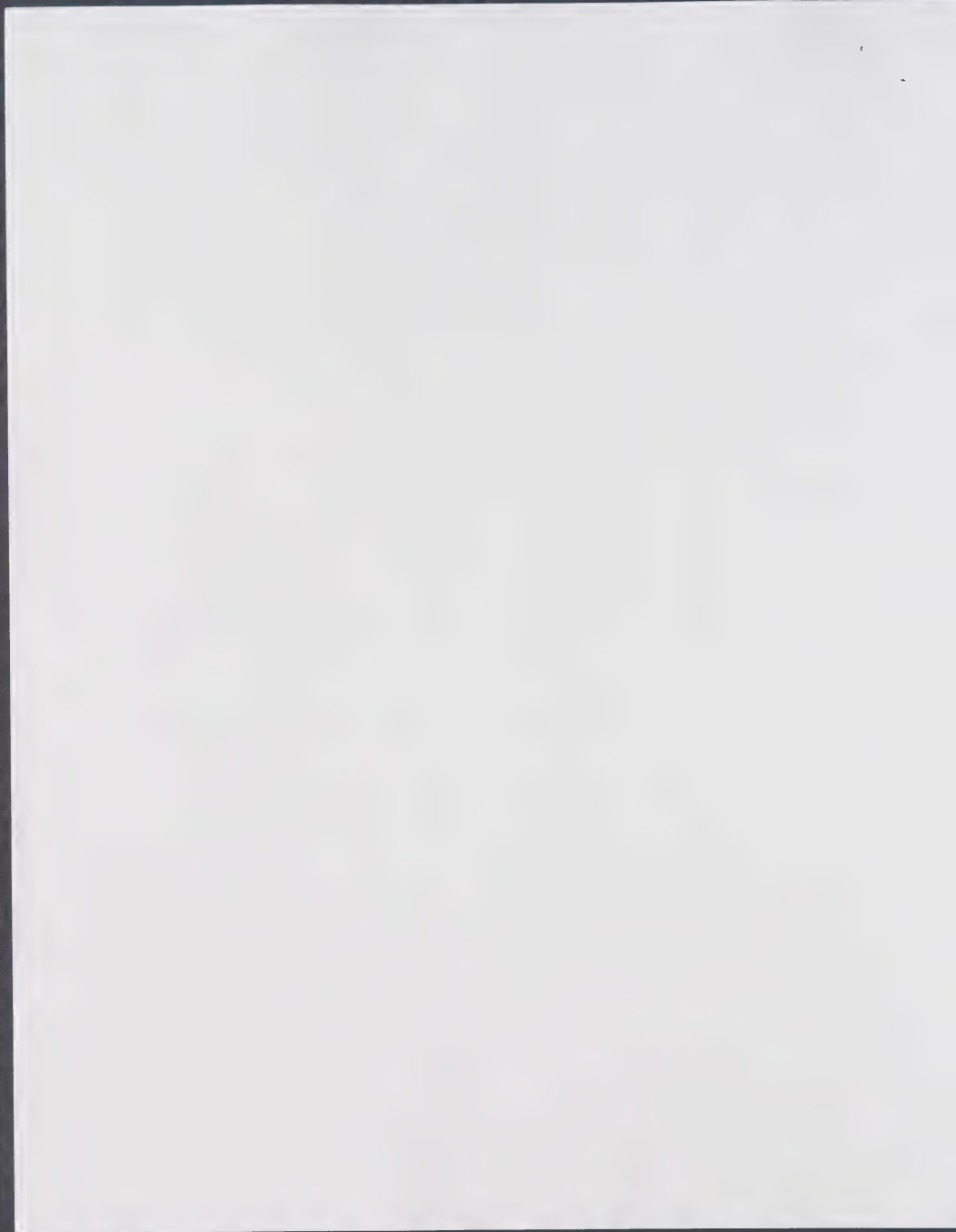
How lucky that no one talked to you about that painting before the sale.

My restorers, Charles Munch and Jane Furchgott, have become my very good friends, and I enclose their condition report which also gives the size after restoration.

The painting is in much better condition than I feared. The worst abrasion was in the cloud and also in quite small, isolated areas as recorded in the condition report.

I certainly like this version much better than the other version which I had seen in London some years ago.

We are just leaving for Europe and will return at the end of July. After that, I will take the painting to have a good black-and-white photograph made for you. I am always reluctant to have transparencies made because these change in color so quickly, but I would be happy to send you slides, of the whole painting and of details, if you wish.



Professor Marcel Roethlisberger

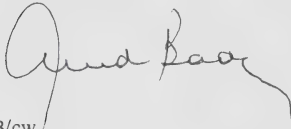
May 27, 1997

Page 2

My good friend, Lee Howard, was so happy to receive your comments about the painting which he had thought might be by Agasse.

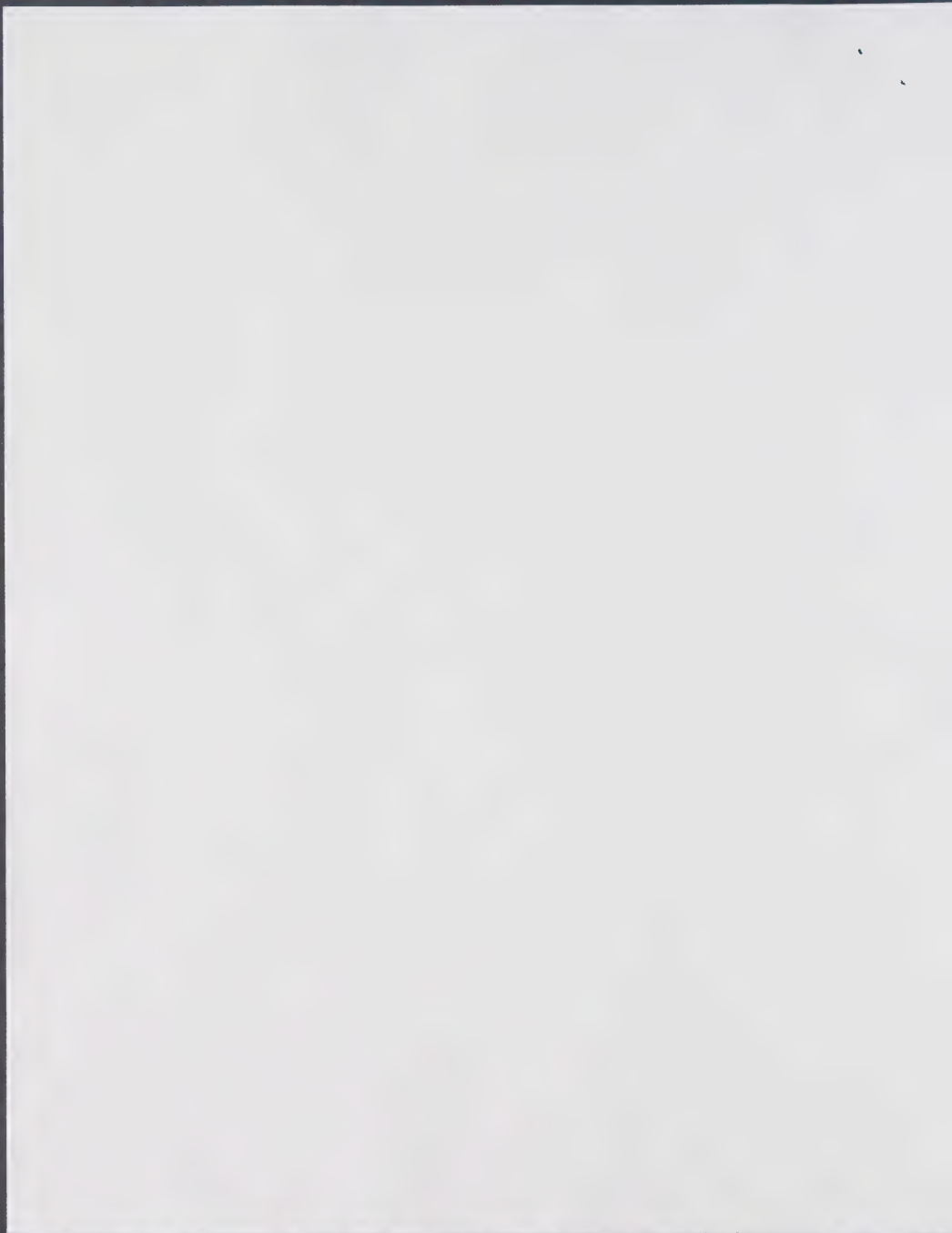
With many thanks for your help and all good wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew Bagg". The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long tail.

AB/cw.

Enclosure



Prof. Dr. Marcel Roethlisberger
University of Geneva
private: Graviers 12, CH VERSOIX, Switzerland
phone 0041 22 7554351, fax 0041 22 7790006

8 Feb. 1997

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Ave
Milwaukee WI 53211

Dear Dr. Bader:

It was nice to hear from you, thank you for your letter and the photographs. I am much interested to see how *Jacob's Ladder* has come out. I saw the painting at the sale viewing in London. As you know it was quite dirty, fine in some area and abraded in others; I felt it was difficult to know what was underneath, but it looked interesting and seemed worth a try. I mentioned it to nobody, nor did anybody ask me, to my surprise. I could not stay for the sale but it was indeed I who bid on the phone, not suspecting that it was against you, otherwise I would have abstained. As to Mr. Johns's version, I remember it well; as you know I catalogued it as a copy of a presumed, lost Bloemaert; its execution did not show the quality of Bloemaert's hand.

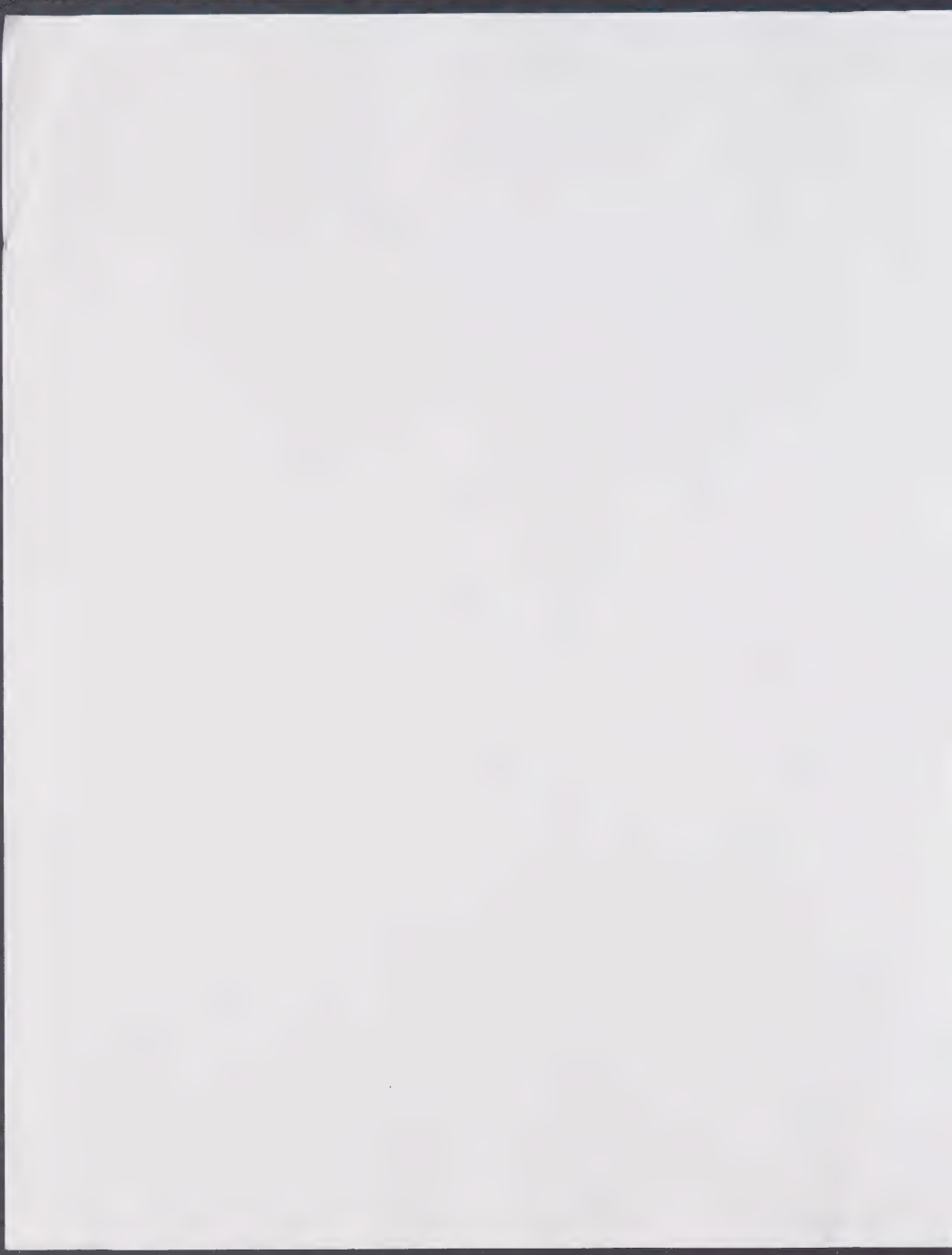
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I looked at the genre picture with horses. Unfortunately I have no convincing name to suggest. Agasse is an informed suggestion, I know his production well (there is also a recent book), but this work does not measure up to him in quality, perfectly lovely though it is. The period is the same, the school seems to me French, but many painters worked in that genre, and I have alas no solution.

I have no immediate plans to come to the States, but I hope to see you again, in Geneva or London or wherever, and I send you and Mrs. Bader my warmest regards.

30 Apr. I can't imagine why this
was not mailed right away. I came
on it by chance today.
With my best regards

Marcel Roethlisberger



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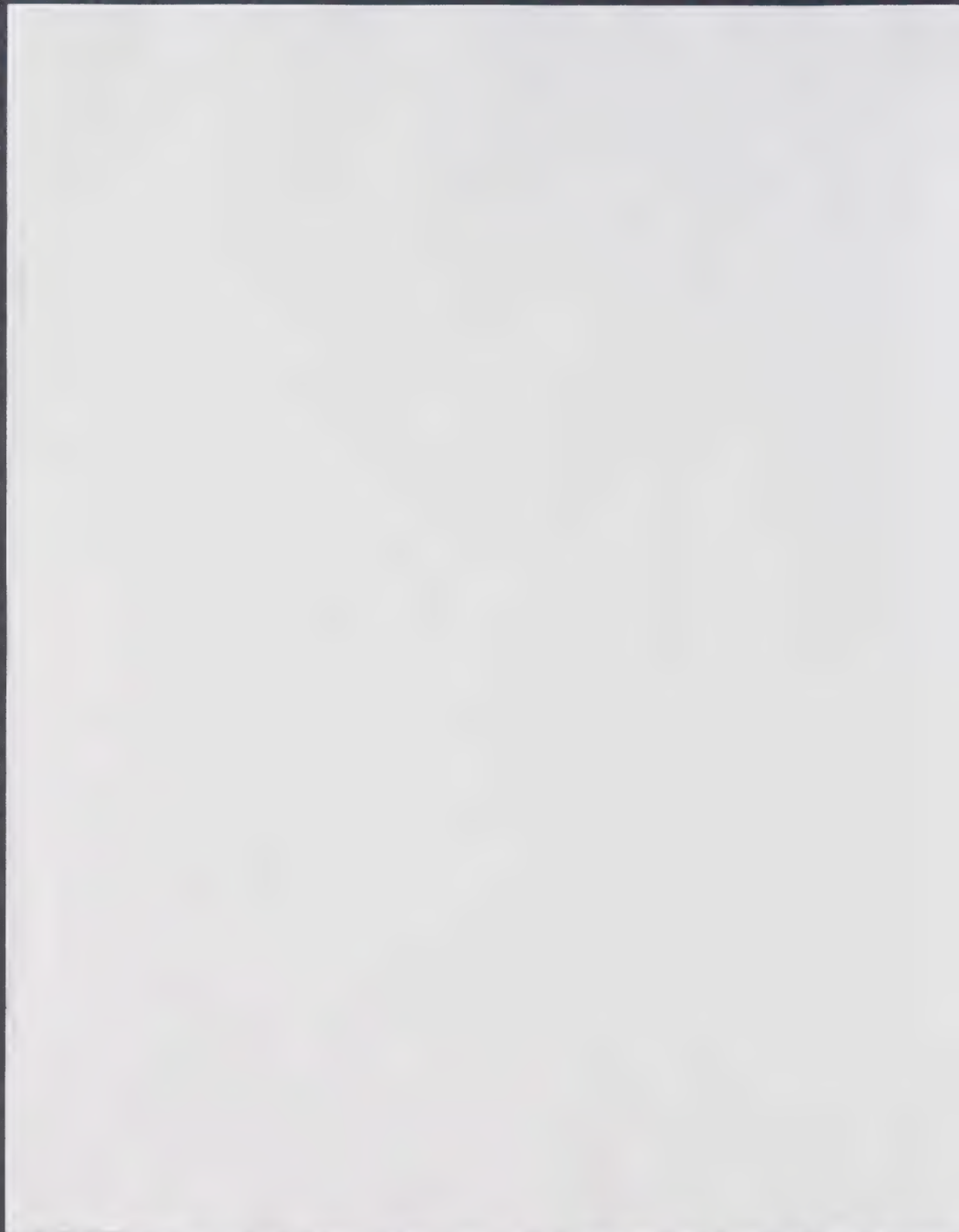
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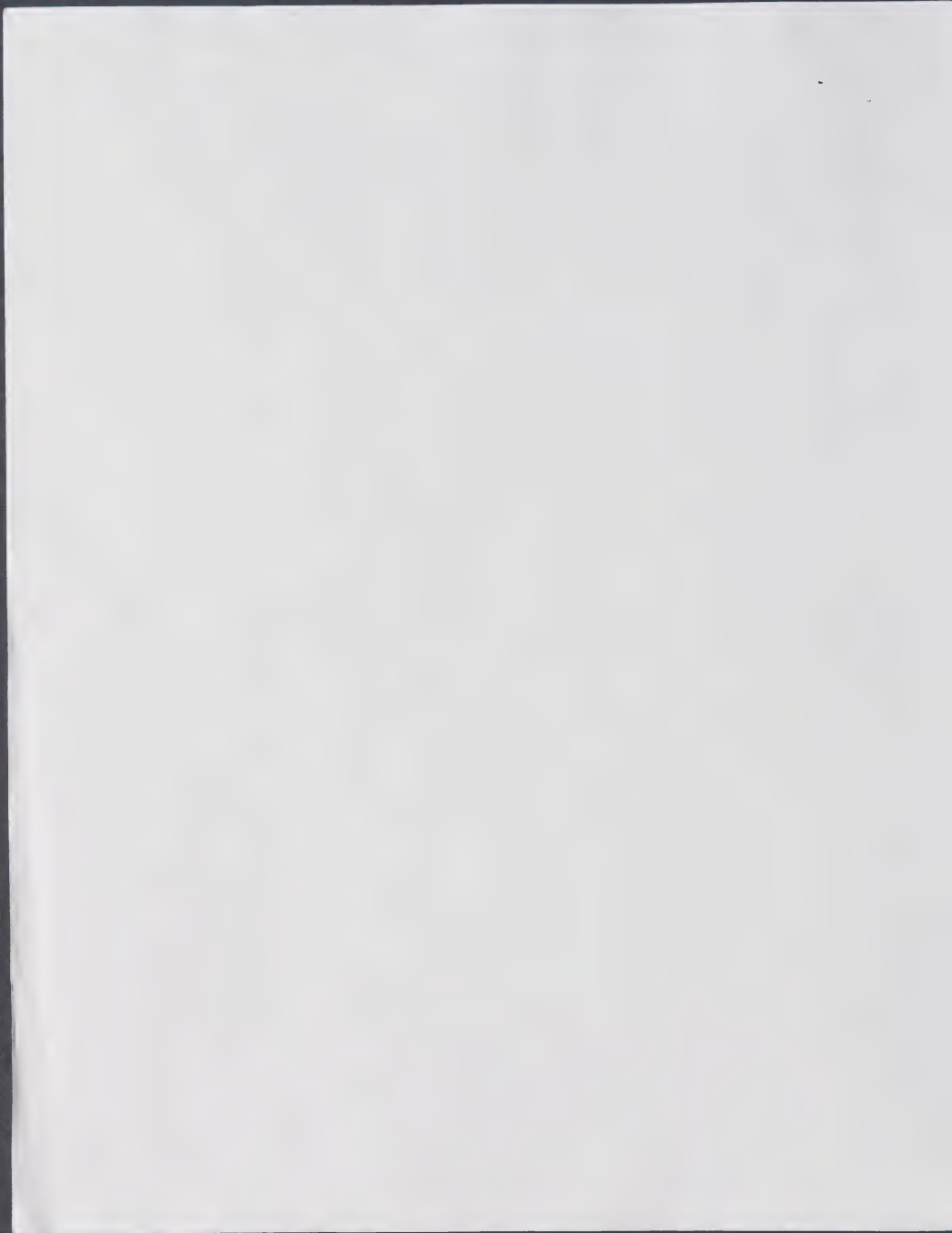


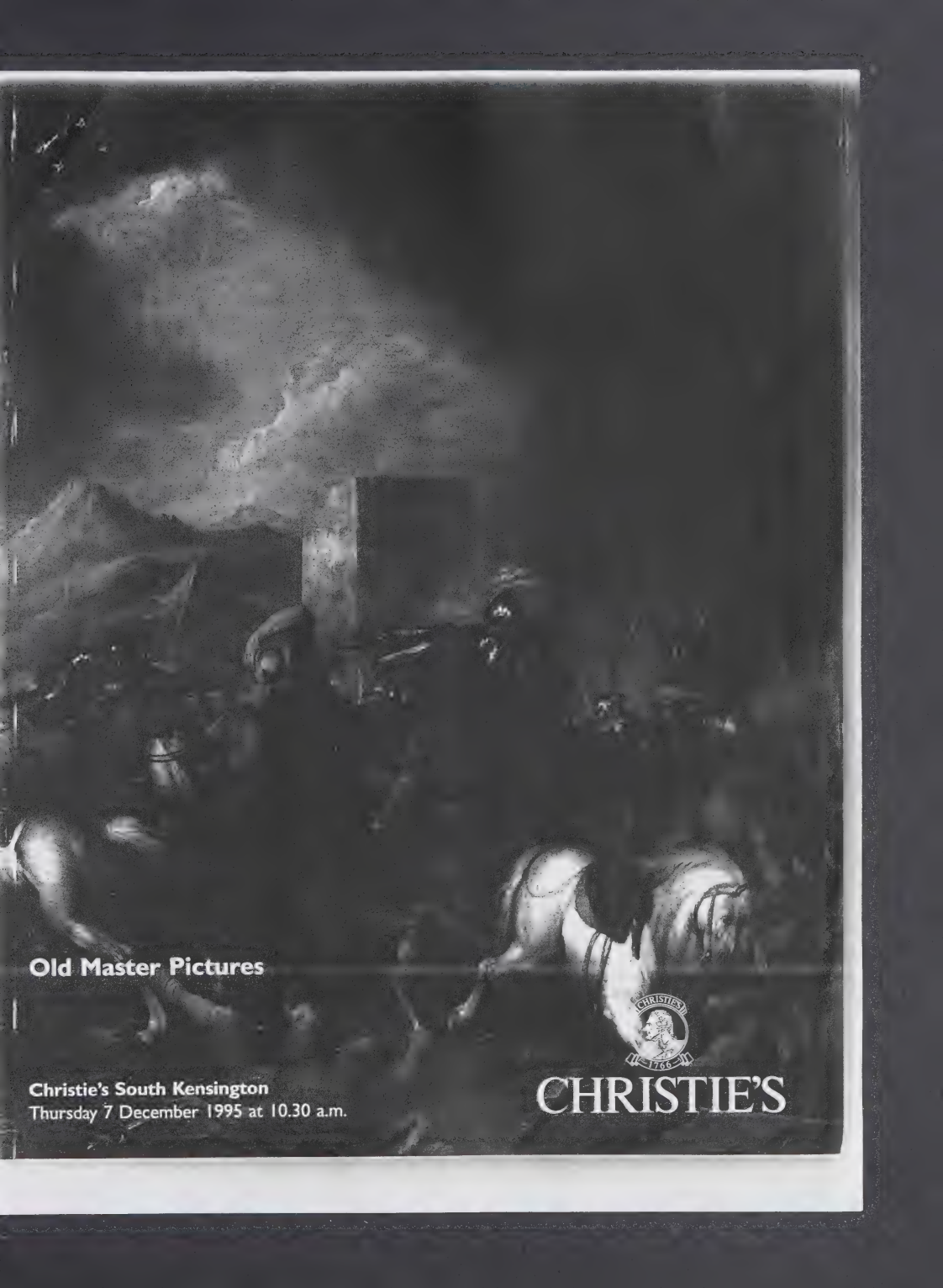
81

81
After Abraham Bloemaert
 The Dream of Jacob
 oil on canvas, unframed
 45½ x 37¾in (116.3 x 96cm)
 £2,000-3,000

82
Follower of Gerard de Lairesse
 An Allegory of Beauty and Valour
 oil on panel
 13½ x 11in (34.3 x 28cm)
 £500-700

83
Follower of Antonio Bellucci
 A Nymph, bust length, looking upwards
 oil on canvas
 17½ x 14¼in (44.5 x 37cm)
 £800-1,200





Old Master Pictures

Christie's South Kensington
Thursday 7 December 1995 at 10.30 a.m.



CHRISTIE'S



2110 Blue Ridge Road

North Carolina MUSEUM of ART

Raleigh

North Carolina

27607-6494

1 September 1997

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

Dear Dr. Bader,

Director

Lawrence J. Wheeler

Thank you for your letter and the loan of the black and white photograph and transparency of your wonderful **St. Jerome**. I return both with my thanks. I am only sorry that Joaneath was able to secure it as a loan before I could ask. Nevertheless, your Van Campen is great consolation.

Based on the photo you sent me, your recently acquired **Jacob's Ladder** appears to be a fine work. The figure of Jacob seems to have all the qualities one wants in a Bloemaert. Congratulations. If I ever do an exhibition that is more mannerist in its tone I may well ask you for a loan.

Governor

James B. Hunt, Jr

Although I do not have firm dates as yet, I certainly plan to come to Milwaukee for the exhibition, now entitled *Sinners and Saints, Darkness and Light: Caravaggio and His Dutch and Flemish Followers*. Hopefully, we will meet then if not before. Again, thanks for all your help. All the best.

*Secretary, Department
of Cultural Resources*

Betty Ray McCain

Sincerely yours,



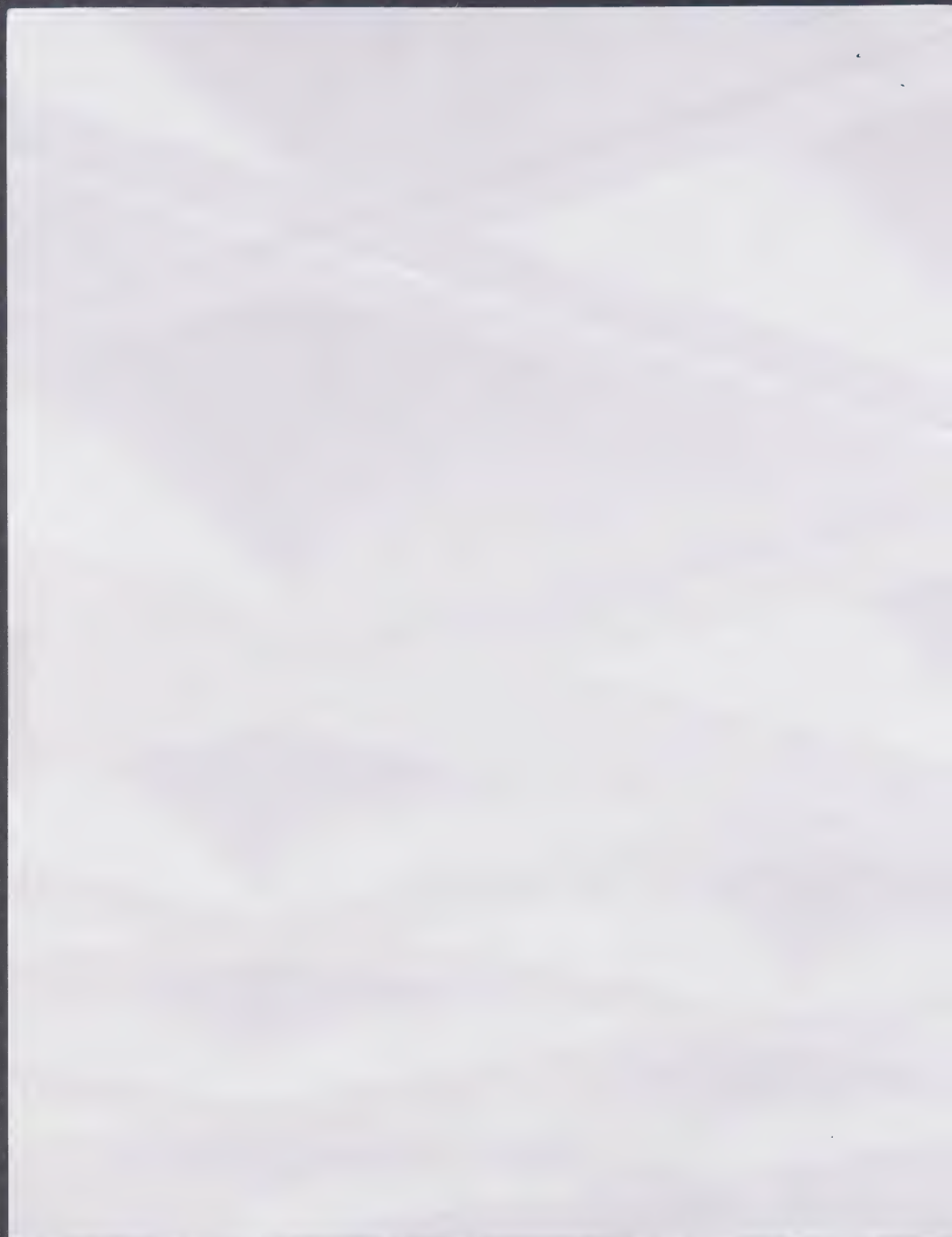
Dennis P. Weller
Associate Curator of European Art

phone

919.839.6262

fax

919.733.8034



Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

September 8, 1997

Dr. Dennis P. Weller
Associate Curator of European Art
North Carolina Museum of Art
2110 Blue Ridge Road
Raleigh, NC 27607-6494

Dear Dr. Weller:

Thank you for your letter of September 1.

I would very much like to show you my collection, but as I travel a great deal please let me know well in advance when you are coming.

Bloemaert's *St. Jerome* has been exhibited a great deal. But I must tell you that if I had the choice of trading two such paintings for my *Jacob's Dream*, I would take the latter.

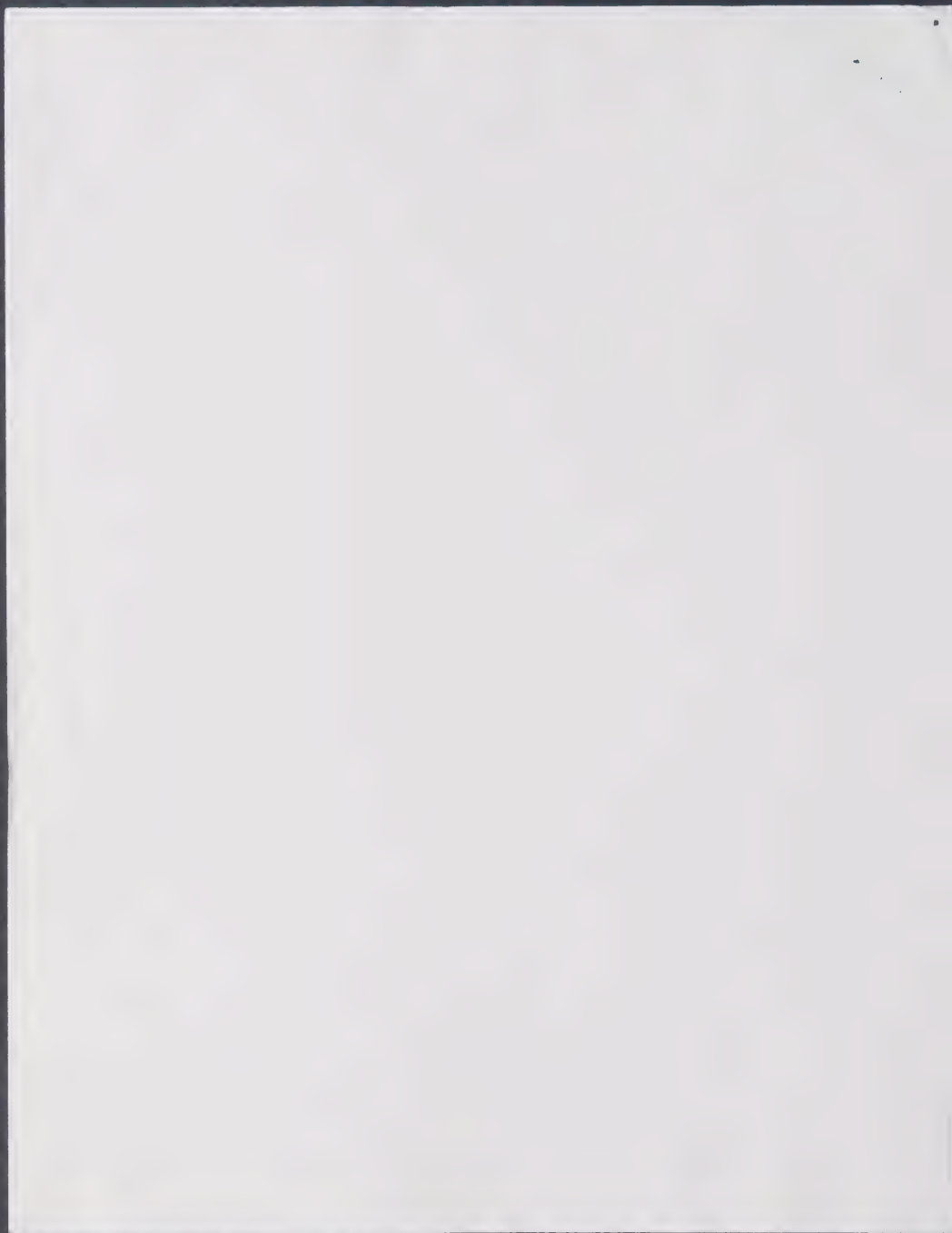
That painting has a curious history: it was offered at Christie's South Ken as a copy after Bloemaert, but as you will see from the enclosed copy from Professor Rothlisberger he recognized, as I did, that this was really the original and so he bid it quite high. The abrasion of which he speaks is pretty much limited to the edges. I know the painting which Professor Rothlisberger published in his two volume book and that is certainly a second version, probably with a lot of workshop assistance.

I look forward to meeting you and remain,

Yours sincerely,

AB/nik

Enclosure





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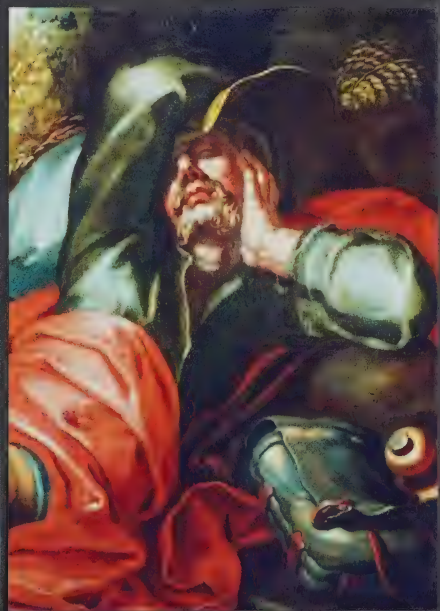
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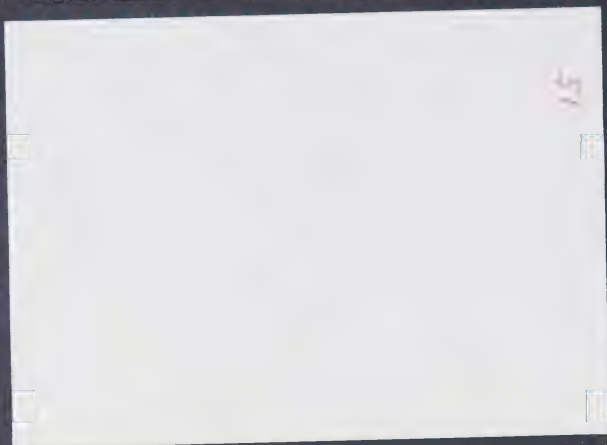


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11

7





North Carolina MUSEUM of ART

4 February 1999

Dr. Alfred Bader
924 East Jeneau Ave. Suite 622
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Director

Dear Dr. Bader,

After my brief visit to Milwaukee last week, I am safely back in Raleigh. Thankfully the weather was agreeable (at least it wasn't snowing), and the opening of *Sinners and Saints, Darkness and Light* appeared to be a great success.

I don't know if Laurie Winters mentioned it to you, but there were over 800 in attendance for my lecture at the opening. I am only sorry to have missed you. Hopefully you had some success at the auctions in New York.

I want to thank you for allowing me to visit your home during my visit. It was quite an experience to see your wonderful collection. As you may have suspected, I particularly intrigued by the two Bloemaerts, especially *Jacob's Ladder*.

Again, thank you for everything, especially the Van Campen loan. I hope you enjoy the exhibition. All the best.

Sincerely yours,

Dennis

Dennis P. Weller
Associate Curator of European Art



Genève, le

2 Ju. 99

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES

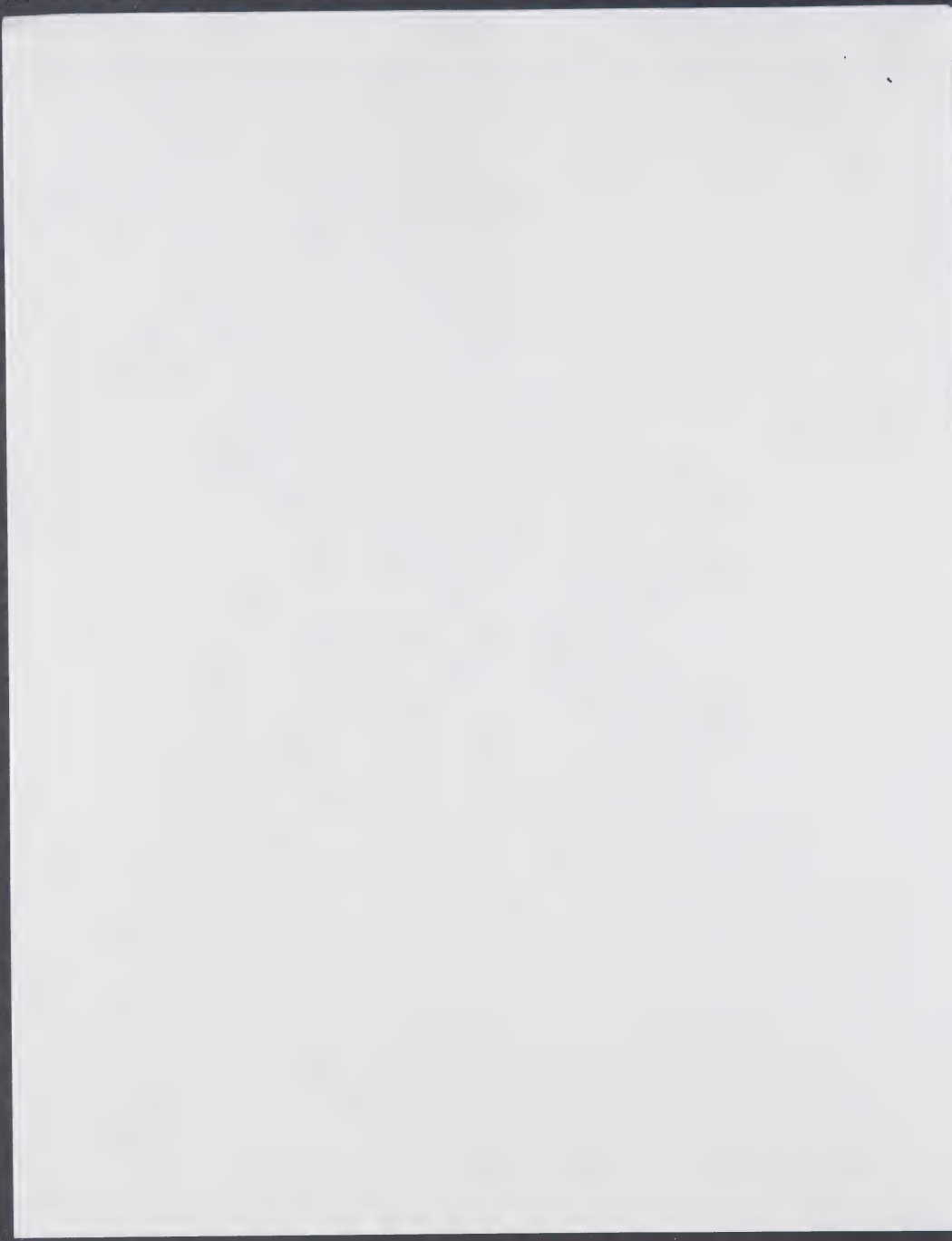
Histoire de l'art
22, Bd des Philosophes
1205 Genève

Dear Dr. Bades:

I should have thanked you long ago for your letter of 13 Oct. and for the photographs. But at that time we were in Japan for a Claude Lorrain exhibition which I made at the request of the Tokyo National Museum of Western Art (an exhibition which in the end proved wonderful, despite some initial refusals of loans) - paintings and drawings.

Then I thought I might see you at the December sales viewings in London - you were probably there but I didn't see you.

Thank you for the photos of your Bloemert, Jacob's Ladder. After



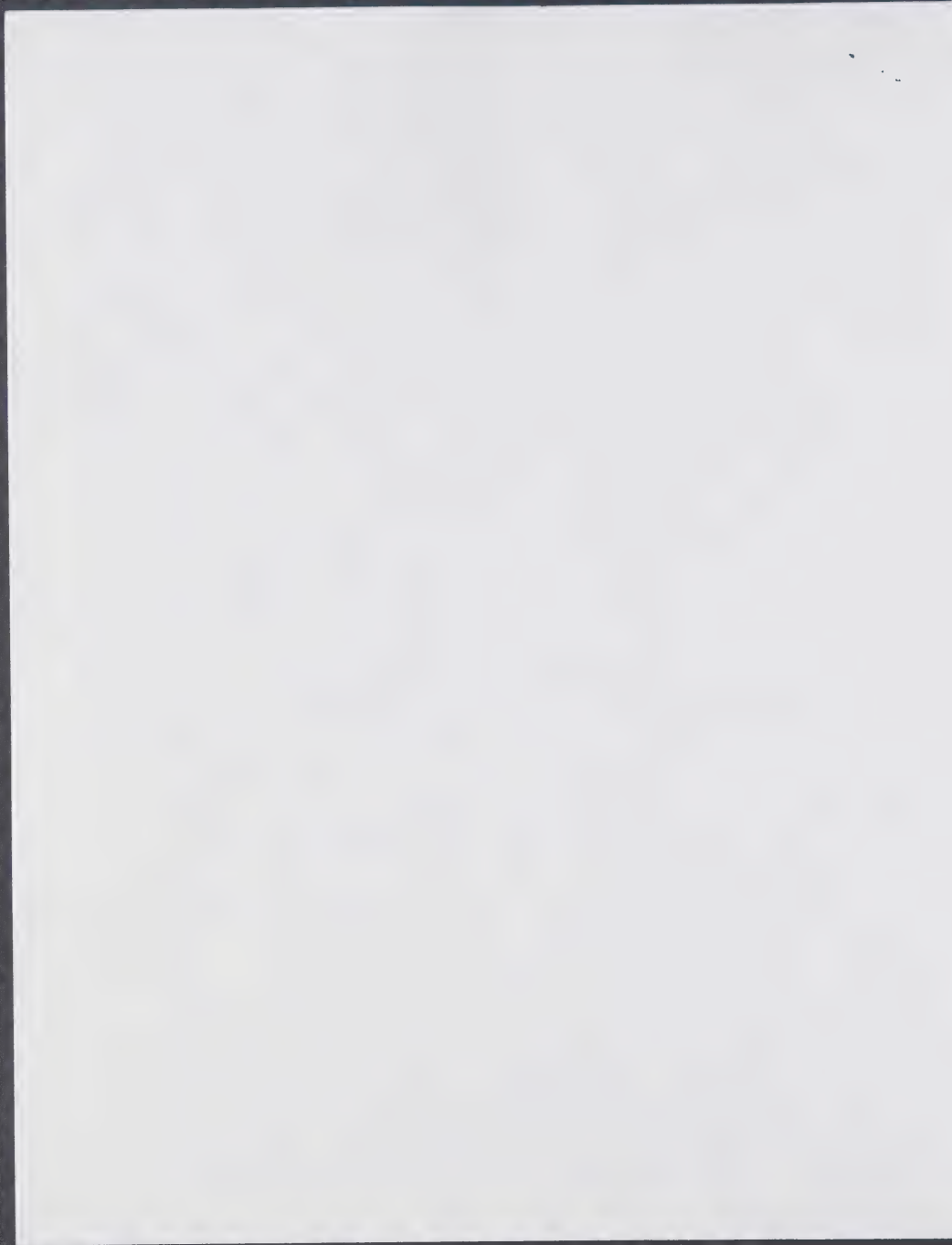
clearing it looks in photograph certainly more interesting than the other version which I had published in my book (fig. 113), though the cloud still leaves me somewhat baffled. I hope I shall soon have the good fortune to see it. Interesting other new Bloemaert have also turned up. The Utrecht museum ought now to make a Bloemaert exhibition, but nothing seems to be under way.

You also sent me the oval head of a girl (I do think it's a girl) "circle of Paudhon" - a very striking picture indeed. My colleague Vaisse, to whom I showed the photograph, had no convincing attribution either.

I am now working on Liotard, in case you have some work by him (or know of some hidden work).

I always remember with pleasure my visits to you. For the new year I send you and Mrs. Bader my very best wishes,

Yours
Maxwell Roethlisberger



Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

A Chemist Helping Chemists

January 27, 1997

Professor Marcel Roethlisberger

Université de Genève
Histoire de l'art
22, Bd des Philosophes
1205 GENEVA
Switzerland

Dear Professor Roethlisberger:

I am happy to be able to tell you that I have now received the *Jacob's Dream* which I purchased in the sale of Christie's South Kensington on December 7th, 1995, back from my restorer and I'm very happy with the result.

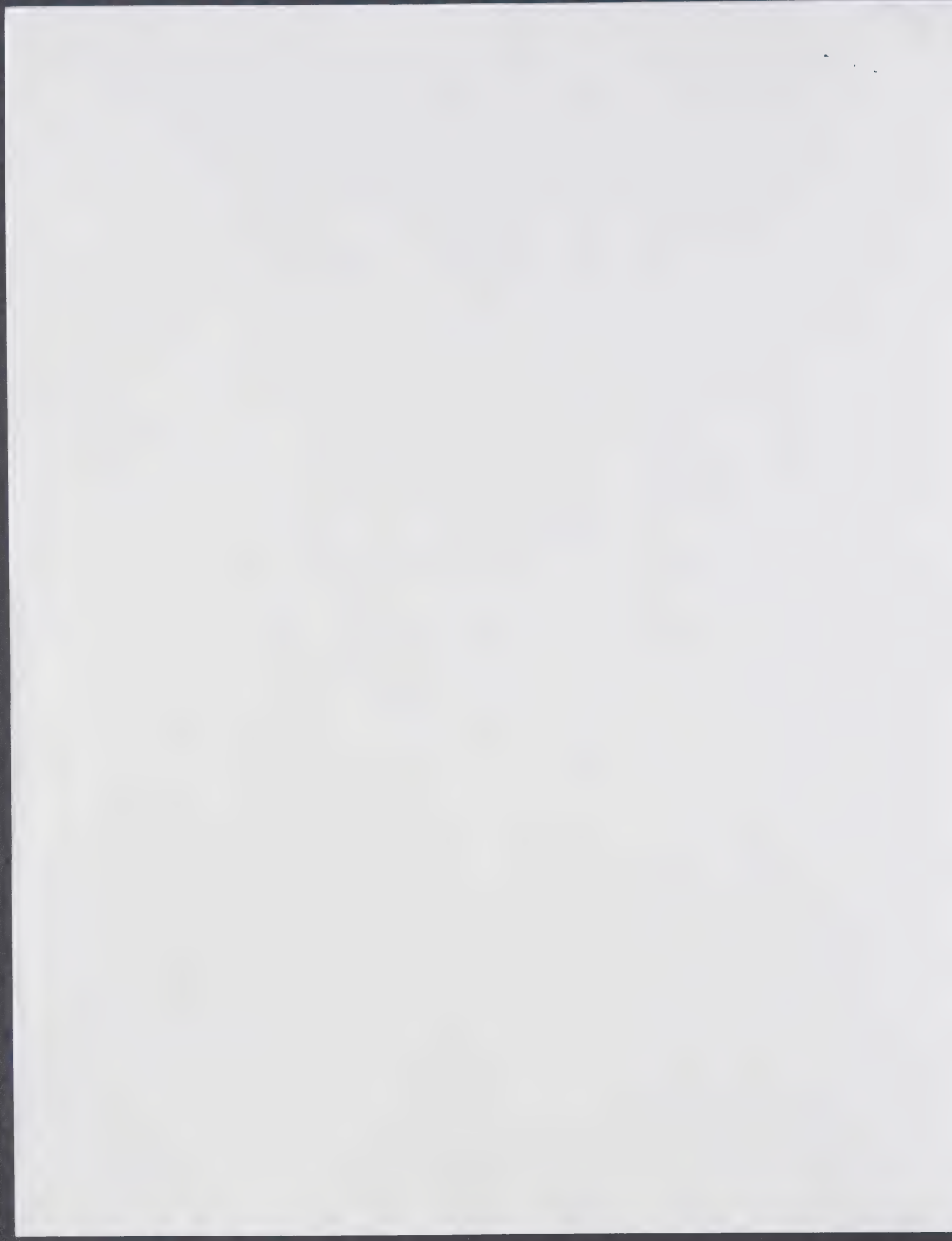
I enclose a snapshot of the painting stripped, and from that you will see that it is now slightly larger than was apparent before.

Some years ago, I saw the painting which is catalogue #64 in your book at a gallery in London, Harari and Johns, and I didn't like that particularly.

I'm sure that you know from long experience that owners of paintings often tend to be optimists and I certainly like my work considerably better. A photograph and a detail are enclosed.

I hope that before long you will again have a chance to visit Milwaukee and then look at the painting here.

May I ask you a personal question? As you know, my painting was sold in London as a copy with an estimate of £2,000-3,000 but I was bidding against someone on the telephone and had to go to a hammer price of £17,000. I would indeed be honoured if it was you who was bidding against me. Or did you, per chance, tell someone in London, during your visit that week that you weren't certain that the painting in South Kensington is a copy?



Professor Roethlisberger
Page 2
January 27, 1997

May I ask you for your help in yet another matter?

Some years ago you looked at a beautiful painting of a horse, which I owned, and you then told me that you believed that that painting is by a Swiss artist working in London, Agasse. Subsequently a number of experts confirmed your attribution.

A good friend of mine owns a painting depicting several horses, of about the same period as Agasse. I enclose a black and white photograph and a small transparency.

My friend has wondered whether that painting could be by Agasse also. I wish I knew more about such paintings of that period but you surely do and I would appreciate your letting me know whether you think this painting is also by Agasse.

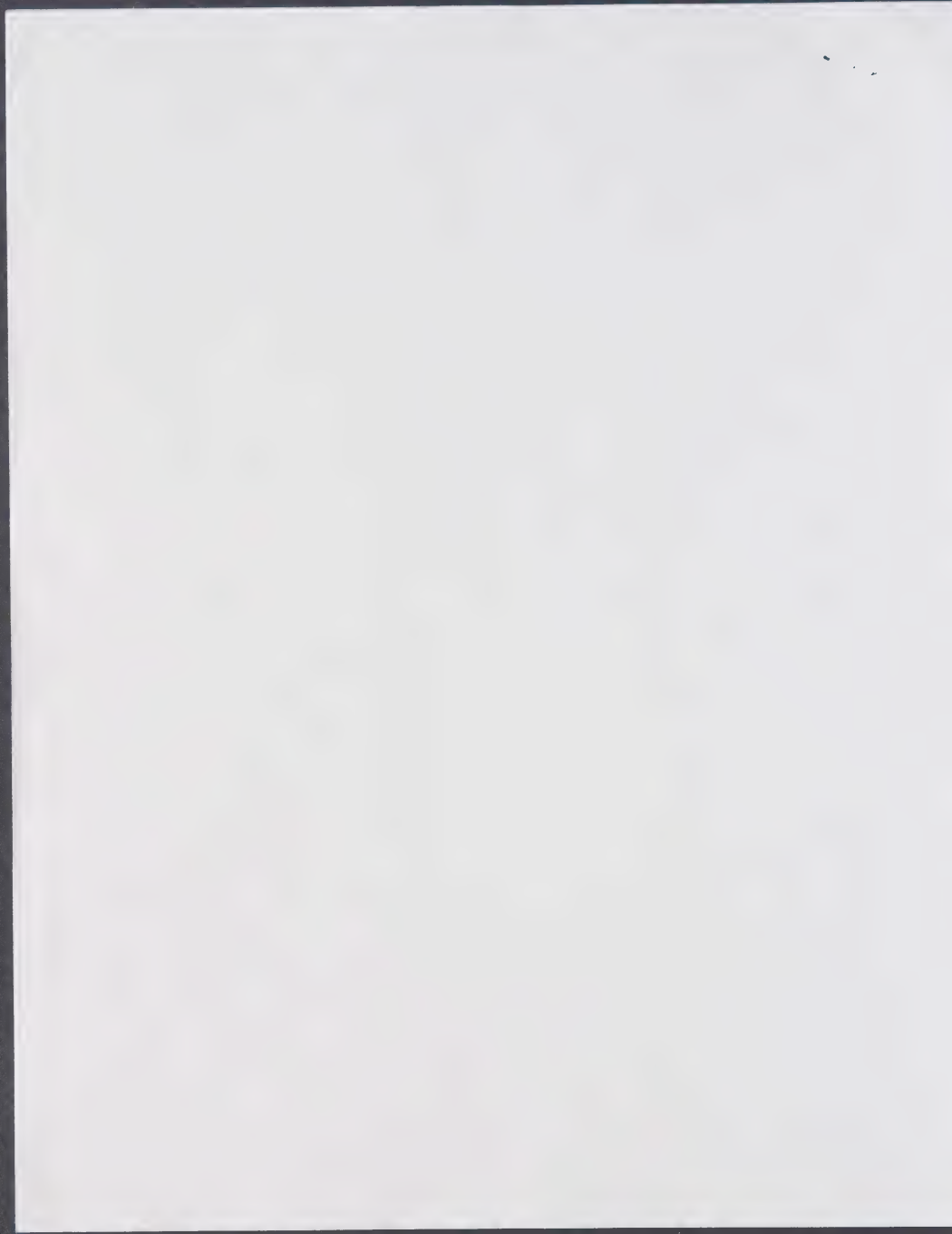
With many thanks for all your help and with best personal regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "André Baas". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with the first name "André" being more prominent than the last name "Baas".

AB/nik

Enclosures



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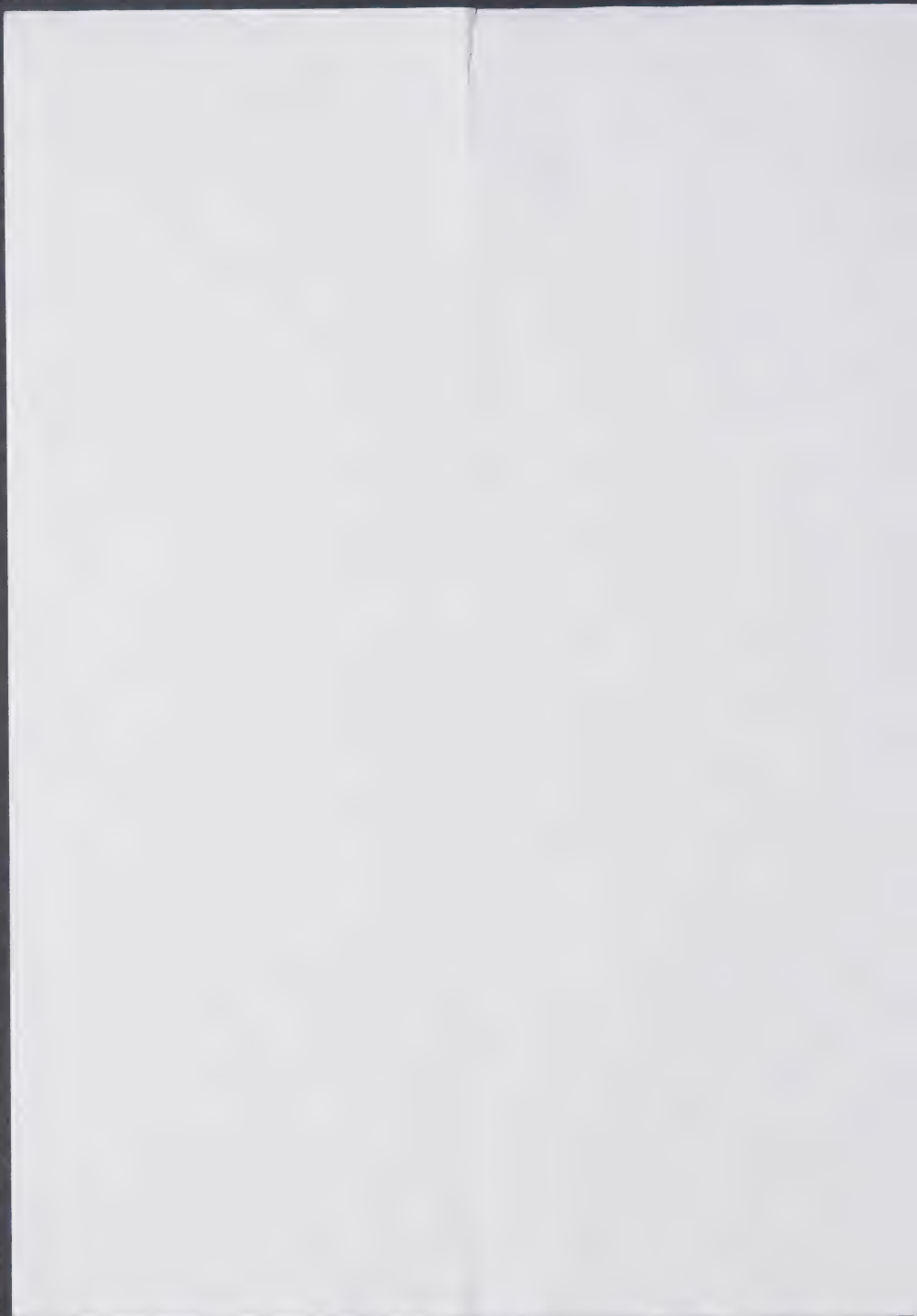
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With my best regards

Marcel Roethlisberger







5078

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepart Av.
Milwaukee, WI 53211

3 March 2001

Dear Dr. Bader:

Thank you so much for your letter of 6 February. Please find enclosed my note on Bloemaert with your *Dream of Jacob* (the page layout was not in my hands). Privately I am still a little puzzled by the details of the clouds, but perhaps this has merely to do with the former condition; I recall that it was after all very dark at the sale.

The small Bloemaert show in St. Petersburg Florida (of all places!: their initiative - instead of Utrecht's), to whose opening I went, turned out to be very nice, especially because they succeeded in securing important, fine loans. In fact your two Bloemaerts would have been a fine complement there as well. Alas I still only have a single catalogue, but though small, it is a nice publication.

Now you are asking about the Agasse horse. I do remember, of course. Since her Agasse exhibition in Geneva and London in 1988, my friend Renée Loche reigns as "Madame Agasse." She told me that Agnews already wrote to her in January about your painting, and she confirmed that, while not a piece of central importance, it is a perfectly genuine Agasse. And that is the opinion which matters. *and which is mine as well.*

Perhaps I see you in Maastricht? Meanwhile with my best regards to you and to Mrs Bader

*Sincerely,
Marcel Roethlisberger*

Marcel Roethlisberger
private: Graviers 12, Versoix 1290 CH
phone 41 - 22 - 7554351, fax -7790006
Marcel.Roethlisberger@lettres.unige.ch



