A CORPUS OF REMBRANT [*sic*] PAINTINGS

If one is not too picky about the attribution of the pictures and the authenticity of their signatures, this tentative and idiosyncratic catalogue of paintings graced with the rare signature "Rembrant" would include some eighteen works (for the etchings, see entries 6 and 12). I list them here summarily with their Bredius numbers and dates, where applicable:

> Br. 12, Br. 16 (1631), Br. 30, Br. 159 (1632), Br. 165 (1632), Br. 187 (1633), Br. 337 (1633), Br. 403 (1632), Br. 406, Br. 407, Br. 430 (1631), Br. 468 (1634), Br. 491 (1633), Br. 494 (1632), Br. 505 (1637), Br. 547 (1633),
> to which should be added Sumowski 2005a by F. Bol.

The very least that can be said is that there is a definite coherence in the dates. The majority of these paintings are dated between 1631 and 1634, and Rembrandt chose his definitive, enhanced first-name signature in 1633. The change of spelling from "Rembrant" to "Rembrandt" was thus neither arbitrary nor incidental. Considering the persistence of the "Rembrant" [*sic*] spelling on documents from the hand of other parties during his lifetime, I am inclined to think that no one cared very much about how names were spelled back then—except for Rembrandt (see entry 31). The persistence of this error during his lifetime was largely compensated afterward by the opposite error in the scholarly literature, in which "Rembrant" paintings were often reported as having been painted by one "Rembrandt". It even took a long time for the RRP to recognize "Rembrant" as the original and correct version of his first name (see note below).

Note: a newcomer has been edged into this select catalogue by no less an authority than Dr. van de Wetering, alias the Rembrandt Research Project, in the newly published fourth volume of the Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings (2005). It is a miniature Self-portrait duly signed "Rembrant f" and dated "1632". As I said, I am not being picky about the attributions here, and I will surely write a few more lines about this singular event.

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