

C33/Ptg/Dutch/Rembrandt
St. Bartholomew

NEWS from WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

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A REMBRANDT FOR WORCESTER

A powerful early Rembrandt, a painting of St. Bartholomew, has just been purchased by the Worcester Art Museum through the Charlotte E. W. Buffington Fund. It depicts the saint in half-length, holding in his right hand a knife, symbol of his martyrdom, and is particularly notable for the intense, tragic treatment of the head.

It is the first painting by Rembrandt to enter the collection and will be shown to the members of the museum at a special preview on Thursday, October 30, and next day to the public.

AN INTERESTING HISTORY

The picture has had an interesting history. It was discovered in Paris about 1920 and purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss of Washington, D. C. For years it hung in Dumbarton Oaks, the Bliss House, more or less ignored by scholars until Dr. Jakob Rosenberg of Harvard University, the well-known authority on Rembrandt, identified it in his book on the master in 1948. Before that time it had been confused with another version of the subject, formerly in the Michael Friedsam Collection, which is now regarded as a pupil's copy. The Friedsam copy is today the property of St. Bonaventure University near Olean, New York. When Mr. and Mrs. Bliss presented Dumbarton Oaks and its collection to Harvard, the University was permitted to sell certain pictures so as to specialize in Byzantine and Early Christian art which are the major fields of its interest. In this way Worcester acquired the painting.

AN EARLY WORK

Dr. Rosenberg and other scholars believe that the painting was done about 1632, a year after the young Rembrandt had left Leyden for Amsterdam.

While it exhibits some Flemish realism in its detail, it lacks the forced note of Rembrandt's beginnings to concentrate on the haunting, human visage of the old man. The model may, indeed, have been Rembrandt's own father, a miller of Leyden, for the young artist often employed members of his family as models. Painted on an oak panel, 24 7/8 x 18 3/4 inches, it is signed "Rembrandt" on the knife.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Daniel Catton Rich, director of the Worcester Art Museum, today commented on the acquisition. "I believe we are most fortunate to have purchased this outstanding Rembrandt. Such works are incredibly rare, and it is only the happy chance of Dumbarton Oaks's wishing to concentrate on Byzantine material that made it possible.

"The picture is a fascinating one. Occasionally in his early period, Rembrandt steals a glance at Rubens and there is something in the rich, ruddy color of St. Bartholomew's face that reminds one of the Flemish master. But the deep, haunting psychology with which the head is painted is all Rembrandt. Incidentally, there is an amusing mix-up in the 18th century in regard to the subject. Rembrandt's St. Bartholomews were sometimes called portraits of his cook because of the knife.

"The Worcester painting was done just before Rembrandt entered into his early success in Amsterdam and began to turn out rather slick, social portraits. Its deep, inner power foretells the late, introspective Rembrandts and is an interesting link between his youth and old age when he painted some of his greatest works. The theme fascinated him and the artist returned to it several times. The Worcester St. Bartholomew is the earliest known version."

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Art Museum

Buyer Buys Painting

By Rembrandt

Acquisition of its first Rembrandt, an early painting of St. Bartholomew, has been announced by Worcester Art Museum.

The painting was described as the most valuable and important purchase in many years by Director Daniel Catton Rich. Price was undisclosed, although any Rembrandt on the market today is considered by experts as "worth a small fortune".

Purchase was made through accumulated income of a \$150,000 bequest made in 1940 by the late Charlotte E.W. Buffington, a former trustee of the museum.

Wanted Rembrandt

No restrictions on the type of art to be purchased was made in her will, museum officials said, although she expressed the hope that the fund might be used to acquire paintings of the Barbizon or early Dutch schools, and that she would "very much like to have it used for a Rembrandt."

Most income from the fund has been saved for the current purchase to carry out her wish, trustees said.

A quarter-length portrait painted on a 24-inch oak panel, the picture shows the saint holding a knife in his right hand as a symbol of his martyrdom.

The first known version of the saint by the famous Dutch painter, it was executed in his early powerful style about 1632 and displays the dramatic use of light and shadow for which he was known.

Comes from Capital

The painting comes from the Dumbarton Oaks branch of Harvard University in Washington, C.C., where it was singled out by Harvard's Dr. Jakob Rosenberg, considered America's outstanding authority on Rembrandt, as of "high excellence."

It was discovered and bought in Paris about 1920 by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss of Washington, who later presented Dumbarton Oaks and its art collection to the university.

Rich said the local museum is "most fortunate to have this outstanding Rembrandt. Such works are incredibly rare and it is only Oaks' wishing to concentrate on Byzantine material that has made it possible."

The work will be displayed to museum members at a special preview Oct. 30 and will be hung for the public the next day.

C33 / Ptg Dutch / Rembrandt
St Paulsbury

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Prorogation At Long, Long Last

THE Great and General Court of Massachusetts has finally reached the end of its 1958 trail. As usual, there was the rush of legislation crammed through at the last minute and without time for proper digestion by the weary legislators. As usual, there was the seemingly endless waiting around for the bills to be engrossed on the fine parchment stipulated by Massachusetts custom.

Does it always have to be this way? Must Massachusetts make a yearly spectacle of itself in the field of government? Students of the subject say no. There is no reason, they say, why the legislative session has to run into August, September, October, and even November. In 1951, the Legislature adjourned on Nov. 17, an all-time record.

The fact is that our state legislative process is woefully inefficient. Yet the legislators refuse to do anything about it. They could, for instance, adopt the electric roll-call, and cut down the voting time on bills from half an hour to half a minute. They could set up some method of screening repetitive petitions, so that the second session of the Legislature would not have to go through the same wearisome process of holding hearings on petitions that it turned down in the first session. Some of

come a roadblock to Nasser's dreams of expansion westward through North Africa.

Bourguiba's stand is also a blow to the Algerian terrorists, who rely on Nasser for support. If Bourguiba closes the Tunisian border to Algerian rebels, one of their main sources of strength will be cut away.

Bourguiba's action may be significant in another way, too. It may mean that he backs De Gaulle's program for Algeria. As a man who has always emphasized North Africa's need to be linked closely with France, he may become a key figure in helping De Gaulle work out a permanent solution in Algeria. At the very least, his strong new stand is good news for the West and very bad news for Nasser and the Arab extremists.

A Rembrandt For Our Museum

DANIEL CATTON RICH has made an auspicious debut as director of the Worcester Art Museum. His first major purchase is a Rembrandt portrait, "Saint Bartholemew," from Harvard University. This is one of the most impressive acquisitions by the museum in many years.

Fine as the museum collection is it has lacked a painting by the great Dutch master. Goya, Raphael, Gainsborough and Hogarth are represented. So are Matisse, Gauguin, Fragonard, Massys, Saenredam, Monet, Cezanne, Cosimo and many others. But Rembrandt has been elusive. Only a recent decision by Harvard to concentrate on other fields of art made the new acquisition available to Worcester.

Those who remember the splendid Rembrandt exhibition that Francis Henry Taylor hung at the museum back in the thirties will recall the deep impression that those great paintings made on everyone. Now Worcester has one that will hang here permanently. There is little doubt that it will become one of the most distinguished and favorite items in the museum's extensive collection.