



THE LEIDEN
COLLECTION





Death of Lucretia

Frans van Mieris
(Leiden 1635 – 1681 Leiden)

1679

oil on panel with arched top

38.2 x 26.7 cm

signed and dated in dark paint, front surface of
stone ledge, lower left quadrant: “Fran Mieris
1679 / Lig. Basta.”

FM-103

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Painted in 1679, just two years before the artist's untimely death at the age of forty-six, *Death of Lucretia* is one of the finest paintings from the latter part of Frans van Mieris's extraordinary career. In this painting Van Mieris avoided the hard and enamel-like surface that characterizes so many of his late works;^[1] instead, by combining imperceptible brushstrokes and subtle details, he brought to life a drama from ancient Rome first recounted by Titus Livius (Livy) in his monumental publication *The History of Rome*.^[2] The circumstances surrounding Van Mieris's depiction of this subject are not known, but the care with which he executed this painting (described below) indicates that he put inordinate effort into realizing his remarkable interpretation of the discovery of Lucretia's death.^[3]

Van Mieris could have consulted various Dutch translations of Livy while painting this work.^[4] Livy describes the story of Lucretia's death as having taken place in Rome in approximately 500 B.C., at the end of the Imperial Era. He describes how Lucretia's husband, the high-ranking soldier Tarquinius Collatinus, and several of his fellow soldiers place wagers on which of them has the most beautiful wife. When Tarquinius Collatinus wins the bet, Lucretia invites the men to dinner to thank them for the honor. One of them, Sextus Tarquinius, is overwhelmed by Lucretia's beauty. In the middle of the night, he overpowers Lucretia in her sleep and rapes her. The next morning, Lucretia's husband and her father rush to her from their army camps, each accompanied by a friend. After telling them what happened, she stabs herself in the heart with a knife hidden inside her dress, hoping that her self-sacrifice will allow her to escape disgrace. In her dying words she expresses the wish that no unchaste girl will ever think of her as an exemplar of human behavior. Those present at her suicide were dumbstruck. One of them, Lucius Junius Brutus, pulled the bloody knife out of her body and swore to kill Sextus Tarquinius, his family, and all his descendants. This vendetta led to a revolt that resulted in the founding of the Roman republic.^[5]

Paintings of the suicide of Lucretia by Northern Netherlandish artists are rather rare.^[6] A painting that Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) made in 1664 shows Lucretia on the point of plunging the knife into herself.^[7] Like Rembrandt, Van Mieris deviated in fundamental respects from Livy's account. Both artists omit the four men who rushed to Lucretia's side, but Van Mieris also invented a scenario not described by Livy: an old maidservant who discovers the heroine just after her suicide.^[8] Lucretia, whose partly exposed breast alludes to the rape, as does the bed behind her, has slid off the chair, and all the color has drained from her face. No blood flows from her body, but the knife with which she killed herself lies at her feet. Her dog barks at her, thus reflecting, as it were, the old maidservant's dismay.

The dramatic power of the scene of Lucretia's suicide—the almost ineluctable fate of

Comparative Figures

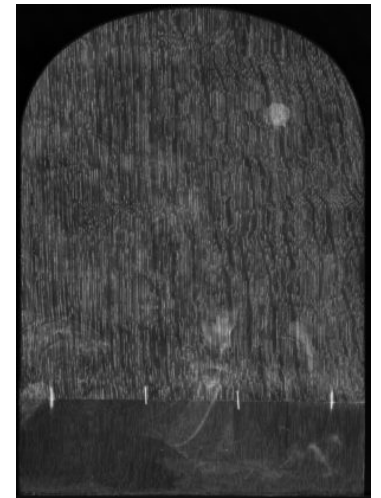


Fig 1. X-radiograph of FM-103



Fig 2. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *A Sleeping Courtesan*, 1669, oil on copper, 27.5 x 22.5 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890, no. 1263, © 2015. Photo Scala, Florence, courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali



the protagonist—is succinctly expressed in a play by the Dutch poet Jan Neuye (b. 1637), *De gewroke Lucretia, of Romen in Vryheit* (*Lucretia Avenged, or Rome in Liberty*). Its title page carries the announcement that the play was performed in 1669 at the Amsterdam Municipal Theater.^[9] Neuye's play must have been a source of inspiration for Van Mieris. In it, Lucretia laments: "My good name is quite lost. And honor have I none . . . The court, the Council, and the People will surely suspect / My virtue . . . I'll seek a safer place." Her father responds, "Whither would you fly?" and Lucretia replies, "Where vengeance, fate, and love will lead me. / Come Father, support me before my untimely fall."^[10] It must be noted, however, that in Neuye's play Lucretia lies in her father's arms, which is not the case in this picture. Van Mieris adapted the story as he saw fit, so that this history painting resembles at first glance his many genre pieces, a number of which highlight the contrast between young and old.

In Van Mieris's painting the old woman's fierce reaction has a theatrical character. She is rendered with great feeling for drama, her face contorted in anguish as she wrings her hands, distraught at her helplessness before the situation. The histrionic despair of the hand-wringing, nearly toothless crone would not be out of place on a large stage. Lucretia's strikingly rendered curved arms are a deliberate attempt on the part of the artist to express elegance and refinement. The interior, too—in which high-ceilinged corridors lead to more distant rooms, and architectural elements and life-size statues in wall niches suggest a palatial, "antique" setting—could easily be thought of as stage scenery. The interior in the foreground would have seemed modern to Van Mieris's contemporaries, as it features furniture and tapestries they would have found familiar.^[11]

Van Mieris paid a great deal of attention to the composition, as evidenced by a striking modification he made to the painting's format presumably during the painting process. As is evident an X-radiograph of the painting (**fig 1**), he enlarged his painting by joining a smaller panel to the lower edge of the original panel (which is rounded at the top).^[12] Initially, Van Mieris's composition would have ended just below Lucretia's knees, much as in a painting of 1669 in which the body of a sleeping courtesan is rather abruptly cut by the bottom edge of the picture (**fig 2**).^[13] Although unusual in its scope, such changes in composition and dimensions do exist in other of his paintings.^[14]

Van Mieris must have felt that the first conception of *Death of Lucretia* seemed too compact, and wanted to add pictorial elements to give the painting a greater visual power and pictorial context.^[15] Because he used a different ground on the added panel, some of the paint layers are slightly darker than those on the original panel. This difference in tonality is discernible mainly in the satin of Lucretia's clothing.

Fig 3. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Doctor's Visit*, 1667, oil on panel, 44.5 x 31.1 cm, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. no. 86.PB.634



Fig 4. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *The Letter Writer*, 1680, oil on panel, 25 x 19.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-261

The intervention underscores the extent to which Van Mieris was constantly seeking, even in his later works, to produce the perfect composition. One may well ask, moreover, whether the young woman in the painting had originally been cast in the role of Lucretia; a change in the subject might explain the lack of blood and the presence of the old maidservant.

The compositional character of Van Mieris's painting is closely related to that of his genre scenes.^[16] The figural arrangement, for example, is comparable to that of his *Doctor's Visit* of 1667 (fig 3).^[17] In that scene, an older maidservant attends to her mistress, who has fallen from her chair in a faint. Another parallel exists with one of Van Mieris's drawings, *Unwelcome News*, ca. 1660, which portrays a woman who has fainted in a pose similar to that of Lucretia. The maidservant who has rushed to her side wrings her hands and expresses a feeling of powerlessness, exactly like the old woman in the present painting.^[18]

The painter's correspondence indicates that he preferred to paint subjects that he could observe with his own eyes, which may help explain why he painted this historical subject in such a genre-like fashion.^[19] A number of the elements in the painting seem to have been based on studies from life. For example, the old woman also appears in other late paintings by Van Mieris, such as *Woman with a Lapdog, Accompanied by a Maidservant* of 1680 in the Leiden Collection (FM-105) and *A Woman Weeping* of around 1678 in a private collection in England.^[20] It is not impossible that the model for this figure was actually a man; her face displays similarities to male *tronies* painted by Van Mieris, an example being a recently rediscovered painting of 1673.^[21] The lute with a conspicuously broken string (perhaps an allusion to a life abruptly cut short) seems to have been one of the painter's own belongings. The same instrument recurs in other works, such as *The Letter Writer*, a painting completed a year later, in 1680 (see FM-105, fig. 1).^[22] The dog, too, appears in an even earlier painting, made in 1678.^[23] Evidently, Van Mieris based this animal on a now unknown preparatory drawing.^[24]

The *Death of Lucretia* has an impressive provenance.^[25] One of its previous owners was Willem Lormier (1682–1758) of The Hague,^[26] a well-known collector and dealer, whose seal with coat of arms is still on the back of the panel. This painting and a number of other important works were acquired from Lormier's collection by his nephew Adriaan Leonard van Heteren (1722–1800), a director of the Dutch West India Company, who amassed a large art collection.^[27] In 1809 Van Heteren's entire holdings ended up in the Koninklijk Museum (Royal Museum) in Amsterdam, the forerunner of the Rijksmuseum. Less than twenty years later, however, it was sold again. In 1828 the director of the Koninklijk Museum, Cornelis Apostool (1762–1844), organized a public auction in Amsterdam of so-called doubles:

paintings that could be disposed of, because the museum had comparable works by the same artists.^[28] The sale catalogue described the painting as depicting “a Lady dressed in satin, swooning and sinking to the ground as though dead, with her left hand over a chair, a knife lying before her.”^[29] By this time, evidently, the subject of the painting was no longer known.

The forty-six paintings sold at this auction fetched much more than expected, so much more that Apostool felt obliged to defend his policy by declaring that the paintings that had been sold were “not worthy” of being kept in the museum. A salient detail is that the proceeds of the sale were used that same year to defray the cost of Rembrandt’s *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, which was installed, remarkably enough, not in the Rijksmuseum but in the Mauritshuis in The Hague.^[30] In 1828 or shortly thereafter, *Death of Lucretia* came into the possession of Johan Steengracht van Oostkapelle (1782–1846), the first director of the Mauritshuis, who had a large collection of his own. It remained with his descendants for decades, until it was again sold at public auction in 1913, this time in Paris.^[31] The number “44” on the back of the panel still recalls this high-profile sale.^[32] The painting then passed through various European collections, after which it was purchased in 2002 for The Leiden Collection, the first of the many Van Mieris paintings in this large and diverse collection of the artist’s works.

- Quentin Buvelot, 2017

Endnotes

1. See the remarks in Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:78–86.
2. This depiction is unusual in Van Mieris's oeuvre because it is one of the few based on the history of Rome. For other examples, see Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:92–94. In about 1670, Van Mieris painted *Gyges Spying on the Wife of Candaules* (Staatliches Museum, Schwerin; *ibid.*, 2: no. 84), basing his work on a story told by Herodotus. *Mercury and Herse* in a private collection (*ibid.*, 2: no. D 19) proved to be an autograph work dated 1670 by Frans van Mieris; see Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), 38, fig. 16, and 238, no. 129.
3. The alterations Van Mieris made to the panel, which are discussed in the text, explain the striking location on the edge of the table of the painter's signature and the date, "F van Mieris. 1679," and an inscription rarely used by the artist: "Lüg. Bata." (Lugdunum Batavorum = Leiden). In *Young Woman at Her Toilet* of 1667 (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden), we find a similar inscription, "Anno 1667. / Jüni / Lüd. Bat. / F van Mieris. f." The inscription highlighting Van Mieris's hometown of Leiden might have been placed there for a foreign buyer.
4. Jan Frans Vanderheijden, *De Livius-vertaling van 1541* (Ghent, 1959), 5–19; Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 2:122.
5. Livy, *History of Rome*, 1.58–59.
6. See Andor Pigler, *Barockthemen: Eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Budapest, 1974), 2: 406. A drawing of Lucretia committing suicide in the presence of her husband and her father, convincingly attributed to Frans van Mieris's son Jan (1660–90), is in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, MB 1988/T 13; see J. van Tatenhove and R. J. A. te Rijdt. "Enkele tekeningen door Jan van Mieris (1660–1690)," *Delineavit et Sculpsit* (December 2007): no. 31, 43–55, fig. 14. It is not related to the painting discussed here. Frans van Mieris's other son, Willem (1662–1747), painted the subject in 1709 (see Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. [Doornspijk, 1981], 2:121).
7. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1937.1.76; see Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *The Collection of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogues: Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, (Washington, 1995), 280–87, with a discussion of the possible interpretations of the subject in Dutch painting.
8. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 93–94, referred to Thomas Heywood's play *The Rape of Lucrece*, published in London in 1608, which contains a scene showing Lucretia and her maidservant before the former's suicide; see Emily Detmer-Goebel, "What More Could Women Do? Dramatizing Consent in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece* and Middleton's *Women*

Beware Women,” Women’s Studies 36 (2007): 141–59.

9. Neuye, *De gewroke Lucretia, of Romen in Vryheit. Rijxs-Treurspel* (Amsterdam, 1669). The copy consulted is in the National Library in The Hague, inv. 447 G 190.
10. The Dutch original reads as follows: “Mijn achtbaarheid is uit. Myn luister hebb’ ick niet. . . . My dunkt dat ’t hof, de Raet en ’t volk in twijffel trekt / Mijn deugt. . . . Ick seek een veil’ger plaats”; “Waerwiltge henen vlieden?” “Daermy de wraek, en ’t lot, en liefde sal gebieden. / Kom Vader, ondersteun my eer ick plots ter neer.” Quoted from J. Neuye, *De gewroke Lucretia, of Romen in Vryheit. Rijxs-Treurspel* (Amsterdam, 1669), 34. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 2:122, was the first to connect Neuye’s play to this painting.
11. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:94. For the Persian carpet, see Onno Ydema, *Carpets and Their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings, 1540–1700* (Leiden, 1991), 185, no. 795. Van Mieris was to reuse the dressing gown in a contemporary scene the following year, *The Letter Writer* (Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. [Doornspijk, 1981], no. 118; see FM-105, fig. 1); see also Peter Sutton, ed., *Love Letters: Dutch Genre Painting in the Age of Vermeer* (Exh. cat. Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland; Greenwich, Conn., Bruce Museum of Arts and Sciences) (New Haven, 2003), no. 24.
12. Quentin Buvelot and Otto Naumann, “Format Changes by Frans van Mieris the Elder,” *Burlington Magazine* 150 (February 2008): 102, 104.
13. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: no. 75.
14. Various other artists of the Dutch Golden Age also extensively modified their paintings, among them Pieter Codde (Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 445) and Gerrit Dou (including works in the Leiden Collection). In Dou’s case, some alterations are autograph, whereas others are later additions; see Ronni Baer, “Of Cats and Dogs: Domestic Pets in Rembrandt and Dou,” in *Een kroniek voor Jeroen Giltaij*, ed. Jaap van der Veen and Friso Lammertse (Amsterdam, 2012), 67n16; Paulus Potter (Staatliches Museum, Schwerin, inv. no. G 131; with thanks to Gero Seelig, Schwerin); and Godfried Schalcken (Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 162).
15. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. has suggested that Van Mieris perhaps felt the need to make a major change to the composition; instead of adding a piece to the panel, he may have cut off the bottom third of the original panel and replaced it with a different piece (written communication to the author, 4 September 2012).
16. As already pointed out in Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:83, and David Smith, “[Review of Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981)],” *Art Bulletin* 65, no. 4 (December 1983): 698.
17. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 83, 2: no. 71-I; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), no. 40.
18. For the drawing, see Otto Naumann, “Frans van Mieris as a Draughtsman,” *Master Drawings*, 16, no. 1,

- 1978, 28, no. 14; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), 139–41, no. 23, repr.
19. In 1675 Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany wanted Van Mieris to paint an image of Saint Francis Xavier preaching in the Far East, but Van Mieris refused because he only wanted to paint something that he could see in nature; Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 185; see also Peter Hecht, *De Hollandse fijnschilders: van Gerard Dou tot Adriaen van der Werff* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) (The Hague, 1989), 234 n. 1.
20. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), no. 115; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), 53, fig. 10.
21. Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), 168, fig. 34a, and 238, no. 130; Peter C. Sutton, *The Hohenbuchau Collection: Dutch and Flemish Paintings from the Golden Age* (Exh. cat. Vienna, Liechtenstein Museum) (Vienna, 2011), 272–75, no. 56.
22. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), no. 118; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), no. 48.
23. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-C-184; Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), no. 113.
24. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:83; see also Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (New Haven, 2005), 142.
25. For almost a century, from 1738 until 1828, *The Death of Lucretia* belonged to the same collection as another work by Van Mieris, *Woman Tuning a Theorbo, With a Company in the Background*, signed and dated 1665 (Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder*, 2 vols. [Doornspijk, 1981], no. 119), which remained in the Rijksmuseum (cf. Ernst Wilhelm Moes and Eduard van Biema, *De National Konst-Gallery en het Koninklijk Museum* [Amsterdam, 1909], 193). The popularity of *The Death of Lucretia* is demonstrated by the existence of a number of painted and drawn copies (see Versions).
26. For Lormier, see Everhard Korthals Altes, “The Eighteenth-Century Gentleman Dealer Willem Lormier and the International Dispersal of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Paintings,” *Simiolus* 28, no. 4 (2000–1): 251–311 (reprinted in Dutch in Everhard Korthals Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt door de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst: Enkele studies over de verspreiding van Hollandse schilderijen in de eerste helft van de achttiende eeuw* [Leiden, 2003], 48–121).
27. On the Van Heteren Gevers Collection, see Th. Verroen, *Inventarisatie en documentatie van straatmeubilair uit de periode van de Amsterdamse School* (Amsterdam, 1985), and Eva Geudeker, “Het Kabinet Van Heteren Gevers: Een achttiende-eeuwse schilderijenverzameling “waarvan de rénommée

zo groot ims,” 2 vols. (PhD diss. University of Amsterdam, 2005).

28. For the 1828 sale, see Jan Piet Filedt Kok, “The 1828 Sale of Paintings from the Rijksmuseum,” *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 57 (2009): 283–311.
29. The Dutch original reads: “Eene in het satijn gekleede Dame, in bezwijming en als stervende op den grond gezegen, leunende met de linkerhand over eene stoel, voor haar ligt een mes.” See *Catalogus van eene uitgebreide en voortreffelijke verzameling zeer fraaije schilderijen, waaronder veel door de voornaamste Nederlandsche Meesters* (Sales cat. Amsterdam, De Vries et al., 4 August 1828), 18, no. 88, and Jan Piet Filedt Kok, “The 1828 Sale of Paintings from the Rijksmuseum,” *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 57 (2009): 302.
30. For the supposed unworthiness of the paintings put up for sale, see Ellinoor Bergvelt, *Pantheon der Gouden Eeuw: Van Nationale Konst-Gallerij tot Rijksmuseum van Schilderijen (1798–1896)* (Zwolle, 1998), 114–16. The forty-six paintings fetched 22,701 guilders and 25 cents. The Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis also sold paintings at this auction, but the proceeds from these were considerably less.
31. On the Steengracht Collection, see Quentin Buvelot, “Oude meesters in Den Haag,” in Annette de Vries and Quentin Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen: De verzameling Steengracht van Duivenvoorde* (Voorschoten and Leiden, 2012), 36–55, and “Catalogus verzameling Steengracht van Duivenvoorde: Oude meesters in Den Haag,” in *ibid.*, 84–109, nos. 1–90.
32. A clipping from the sale catalogue is still glued to the back of the panel.

Provenance

- Thomas François Joseph (1647–1738), Count of Fraula, Brussels (his sale, Brussels, 21 July 1738, no. 245 [for 700 francs]).^[1]
- Gerard Bicker van Zwieteren II (1687–1753), The Hague, by 1738 (his sale, The Hague, 12 April 1741, no. 50 [through Jacques de Roore for Willem Lormier for 960 guilders]).^[2]
- Willem Lormier (1682–1758), The Hague, by 1741 (his sale, The Hague, 4 July 1763, no. 166 [to Adriaan Leonard van Heteren for 625 guilders]).
- Adriaan Leonard van Heteren (1722–1800), The Hague, by 1763; by descent to Adriaan Leonard van Heteren Gevers (1794–1866), Rotterdam; through Cornelis Apostool to the Royal Museum.
- The Royal Museum, Amsterdam, 1809 (sale, Royal Museum, Amsterdam, 4 August 1828, no. 88 [to C.S. Roos for 490 guilders]).
- C.S. Roos, Amsterdam.
- Johan Steengracht van Oostkapelle (1782–1846), The Hague; by descent to his grandson, Hendrik Adolphus Steengracht van Duivenvoorde (1836–1912), The Hague (his sale, Galerie G. Petit, Paris, 9 June 1913, 60, no. 44 [to Bousquet for 3,100 francs]).

- (Sale, Ader, Picard and Tajan, Paris, 8 December 1977, no. 25 [to Keyer].)
- (Sale, Sotheby's, London, 16 April 1980, no. 57).
- [Gallery Pieter de Boer, Amsterdam, by April 1983].
- Private collection, Sweden.
- [Johnny Van Haeften Ltd., London; to Saul P. Steinberg.]
- Saul P. Steinberg (1939–2012), New York [to Richard L. Feigen & Co.].^[3]
- [Richard L. Feigen & Co., New York, April 2000; to Johnny Van Haeften Ltd.].
- [Johnny Van Haeften Ltd., London, November 2000; to Otto Naumann Ltd.].
- [Otto Naumann Ltd., New York, March 2002].
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2003.

Provenance Notes

1. Caspar Netscher's *Lucretia*, now in The Leiden Collection, was also formerly in the collection of Thomas François Joseph, Count of Fraula, and sold in his 1738 sale.
2. Frans van Mieris's *A Young Woman Writing a Letter*, now in The Leiden Collection, was also formerly in the collection of Gerard Bicker van Zwieten II.
3. Rembrandt van Rijn's *Bust of a Bearded Old Man*, now in The Leiden Collection, was also formerly in the collection of Saul P. Steinberg.

Exhibition History

- London, Johnny van Haeften Ltd., "Dutch and Flemish Old Master Paintings," 2002, no. 19.
- Greenwich, Conn., Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, "Pleasures of Collecting: Part I, Renaissance to Impressionist Masterpieces," 21 September 2002–5 January 2003 [lent by Otto Naumann Ltd.].
- The Hague, Mauritshuis, "Frans van Mieris 1635–1681: Painted Perfection," 1 October 2005–22 January 2006, no. 47 [lent by the present owner].
- Washington, National Gallery of Art, "Amorous Intrigues and Painterly Refinement: The Art of Frans van Mieris," 26 February–21 May 2006, no. 47 [lent by the present owner].
- Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, "Emotions: Pain and Pleasure in Dutch Painting of the Golden Age," 11 October 2–15 February 2015, no 31 [lent by the present owner].
- Beijing, National Museum of China, "Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection," 17 June–3 September 2017, no. 38 [lent by the present owner].
- Shanghai, Long Museum, West Bund, "Rembrandt, Vermeer and Hals in the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection," 23 September 2017–25 February 2018, no. 38 [lent by the

present owner].

- Moscow, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 28 March 2018–22 July 2018, no. 39 [lent by the present owner].
- St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 5 September 2018–13 January 2019, no. 39 [lent by the present owner].
- Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, “Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age. Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre,” 14 February–18 May 2019, no. 70 [lent by the present owner].
- Amsterdam, Hermitage Amsterdam, “Rembrandt and his Contemporaries: History Paintings from The Leiden Collection,” 4 February–27 August 2023, no. 20 [lent by the present owner].

References

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Versions

Versions

1. Willem van Mieris, after Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, n.d., oil on panel with arched top, 38 x 17 cm, previous sale, Sotheby's, London, 16 April 1980, no. 57.
2. Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, d., oil on panel, 38.1 x 40.6 cm, previous sale, Christie's, London, 28 April 1933, no. 114.
3. After Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, n.d., medium unknown, 30.5 x 25.4 cm; previous sale, Edwards, London, 25 November 1802, no. 22.
4. After Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, n.d., medium and dimensions unknown, previously François Tronchin (1704–98), Geneva.
5. Tamboer, after Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, drawing, previous sale, J. Vollenhoven et al., Amsterdam, 11 February 1822, no. 30.

Print

1. Cornelis-Henricus van Meurs (b. 1680), after Frans van Mieris, *The Death of Lucretia*, etching, dimensions unknown, Bibliotheca Regia, Vienna.^[1]

Versions Notes

1. Cornelis-Henricus van Meurs also etched the following paintings in The Leiden Collection: Frans van Mieris, *Woman Reading and a Man Seated at a Table*, probably 1676; Caspar Netscher, *Lucretia*, ca. 1665–67; and Gerrit Dou, *A Young Woman Playing a Clavichord*, ca. 1665.

Technical Summary

The support is a rectangular-shaped composite panel with an arched upper edge composed of two vertically grained oak planks.^[1] Four metal pins secure the horizontal panel join, which extends across Lucretia's bent knees. The lower plank was added to allow the artist to extend the lower edge of the composition.^[2]

The composite panel has been thinned and marouflaged to an oak panel with bevels on all four sides and machine toolmarks along the reverse. The three oak planks have not been analyzed using dendrochronology; however, the marouflage panel and lower panel are remarkably similar and may originate from the same plank and may have been added at the same time.^[3] On the reverse is a red wax collection seal and three old paper labels but no import stamps, stencils or panel maker's mark.

The white ground along the upper plank is radio-opaque while the white ground along the lower plank is non radio-opaque, which indicates they are different grounds. A dark underpaint applied along the lower plank gives the lower portion of the composition a darker appearance than the upper portion, which accentuates the horizontal panel join. The image was constructed in successive thin layers with low brushmarking and transparent glazing. The contours of the forms are slightly raised.

No underdrawing is readily apparent in infrared images captured at 780–1530 nanometers. The images reveal a white opaque form that initially hung below the drapery drawn back along the bedframe above the left portion of the backrest of the chair. This form extended through the seatback and Lucretia's proper left upper arm.^[4] In raking light, a subtle S-shaped line of raised paint above the backrest of Lucretia's chair indicates an additional compositional change.

The painting is signed and dated in dark paint along the front surface of the ledge along the lower left quadrant of the upper plank.

The painting has not undergone conservation treatment since its acquisition and remains in a good state of preservation.

Technical Summary Endnotes

1. The characterization of the wood is based on visual examination of the X-radiograph and panel reverse images by Ian Tyers. According to Tyers, the curved edge of the upper plank and the lower edge of the lower plank both have good potential for dendrochronology.
2. Quentin Buvelot and Otto Naumann, "Format Changes in Paintings by Frans van Mieris the Elder," *Burlington Magazine* 150 (February 2008): 102–4, fig. 40.
3. According to Ian Tyers.
4. This was revealed in images captured with a Hamamatsu Vidicon camera at 1280–1530 nanometers by John Twilley, but not in infrared images captured at 780–1000 nanometers.