Rembrandt was deeply interested in the Jerusalem Temple, especially the Second Temple, the sacred setting for Christ’s infancy and ministry. From the beginning of Rembrandt’s career to the end of his life, the artist produced at least twenty-two works portraying Christ’s interactions with the priests, ceremonies, Pharisees, and Scribes of the Temple. These works also reveal Rembrandt’s abiding interests in the details of the Temple in all its aspects – elaborate architecture, furnishings, priestly vestments, and rites. Some of these Temple settings are theatrical, grand, and opulent, while others are sparse, with little detail. The artist’s fundamental conception of the Temple, in all its ramifications, however, was firmly grounded in the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets Haggai and Malachi, precisely as interpreted in Christian historical and contemporary biblical and extrabiblical texts.

Like many ancient and contemporary writers on the Temple, the artist emphasized the opulence and scale of the sacred complex that King Herod rebuilt in 37–34 B.C.E. This is especially evident in The Hague Sim- eon’s Song of Praise of 1631, where the artist evokes vast spaces and soaring heights that dwarf the figures within it [Fig. 1]. Rembrandt’s Temple interiors feature grandiose pillars, fine stone pavements, heavily draped

2 See Hannah and Simeon in the Temple, c.1627–28, Hamburg, Kunsthalle (Bredius 535); The Repentant Judas, 1629, England, private collection (Bredius 539A); Christ Disputing with the Doctors: Small Plate, etching, 1630 (Bartsch 66); The Presentation in the Temple: Small Plate, 1630, etching (Bartsch 51) [Fig. 5]; Simeon’s Song of Praise, 1631, oil on panel, The Hague (Bredius 543) [Fig. 1]; Christ Driving the Money Changers, 1635, etching (Bartsch 69); Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); Peter and John at the Temple Gate, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94).
3 Christ Disputing with the Doctors: Small Plate, etching, 1630 (Bartsch 66); Simeon’s Song of Praise, 1631, oil on panel, The Hague (Bredius 543) [Fig. 1]; Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery, oil, 1644, London, National Gallery (Bredius 566); Peter and John at the Temple Gate, 1659, etching (Bartsch 94); Presentation in the Temple: In the Dark Manner, etching, 1654 (Bartsch 50) [Fig. 5].
Fig. 1. Rembrandt, *Simeon’s Song of Praise*, 1631. Oil on panel, 60.9 × 47.8 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis, Bredius 543. The Hague, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis.