

	Object:	The Battle of Constantine and Maxentius
	Museum:	Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de
	Collection:	Alte Meister, Gemälde und Skulpturen
	Inventory number:	251-1903/4

Description

In AD 312, Constantine emerged victorious over his co-emperor and adversary, Maxentius, in the decisive Battle of the Milvian Bridge before the gates of Rome. With this event, a nocturnal vision of Constantine’s was fulfilled that had foretold he would be victorious under the sign of the Cross. Pieter Lastman depicts the crucial scene of the struggle in a great circular movement: Constantine, who had ordered the standards to be adorned with the Cross and an Eagle, plunges into battle from the picture’s left, helmeted with a crown and laurels. Maxentius, on horseback at the lower right of the painting, recoils in panic. Above him, the bridge has given way, causing his soldiers to plummet into the Tiber. Lastman has placed accents of color along the picture diagonal using the soldier with his back to us, the rider on the white horse and the fallen body clad in armor. Lastman introduced history painting in Dutch art as an independent genre. He was Rembrandt’s teacher and the leader of the so-called Pre-Rembrandtists, their history paintings being characterized by epic narrative and a precise adherence to the story rendered in rich detail.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Oil on canvas
Measurements:	161.5 x 170.0 cm

Events

Painted	When	1613
	Who	Pieter Pietersz Lastman (1583-1633)
	Where	

[Relationship to location]	When	
	Who	
	Where	Rome

Keywords

- Combat
- Painting