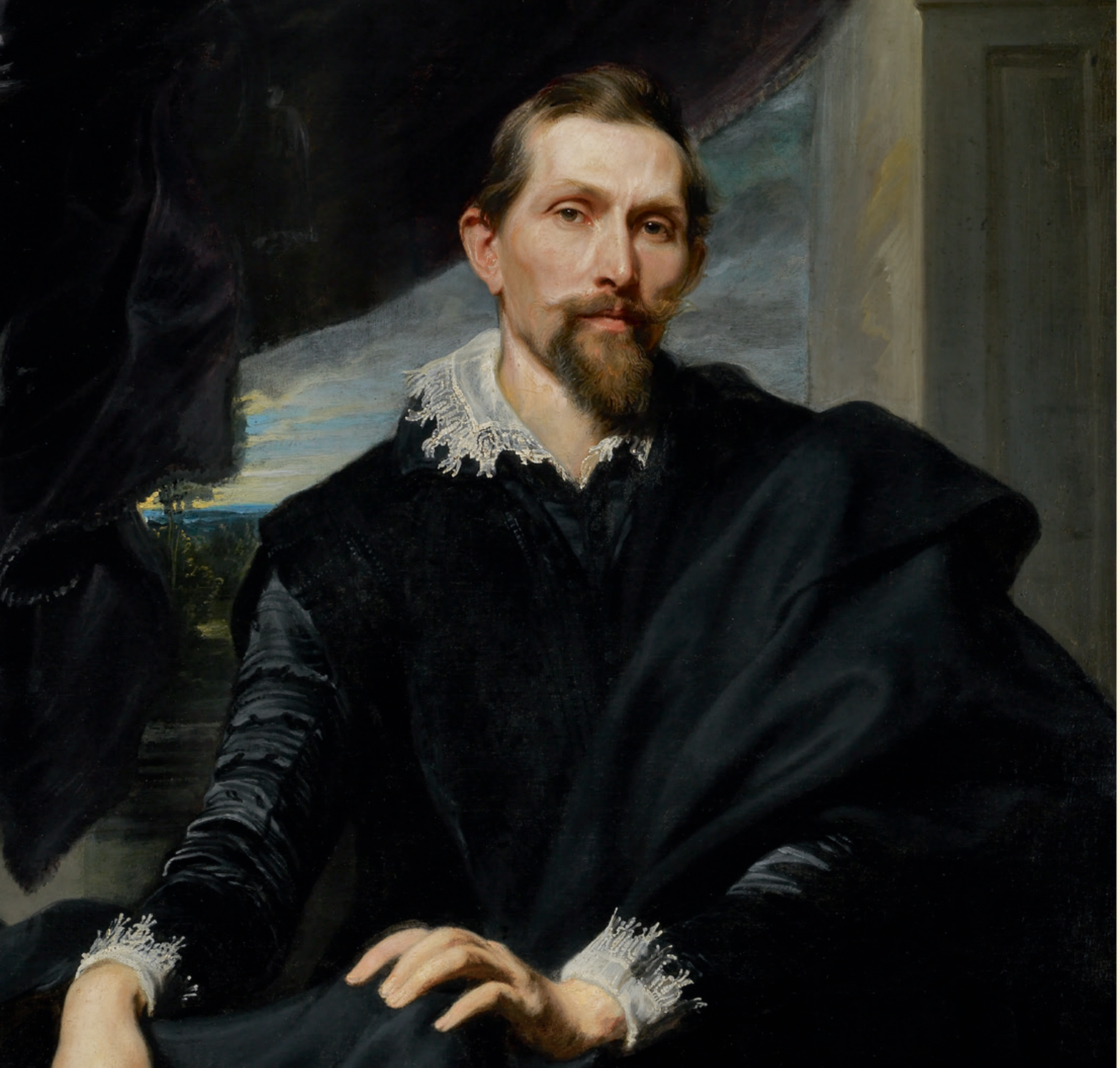

VAN DYCK

THE ANATOMY OF PORTRAITURE

Stijn Alsteens and Adam Eaker

With contributions by An Van Camp, Xavier F. Salomon, and Bert Watteeuw

THE FRICK COLLECTION, NEW YORK

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FRONTISPIECE: detail of *Frans Snyders*, ca. 1620 (cat. 10)
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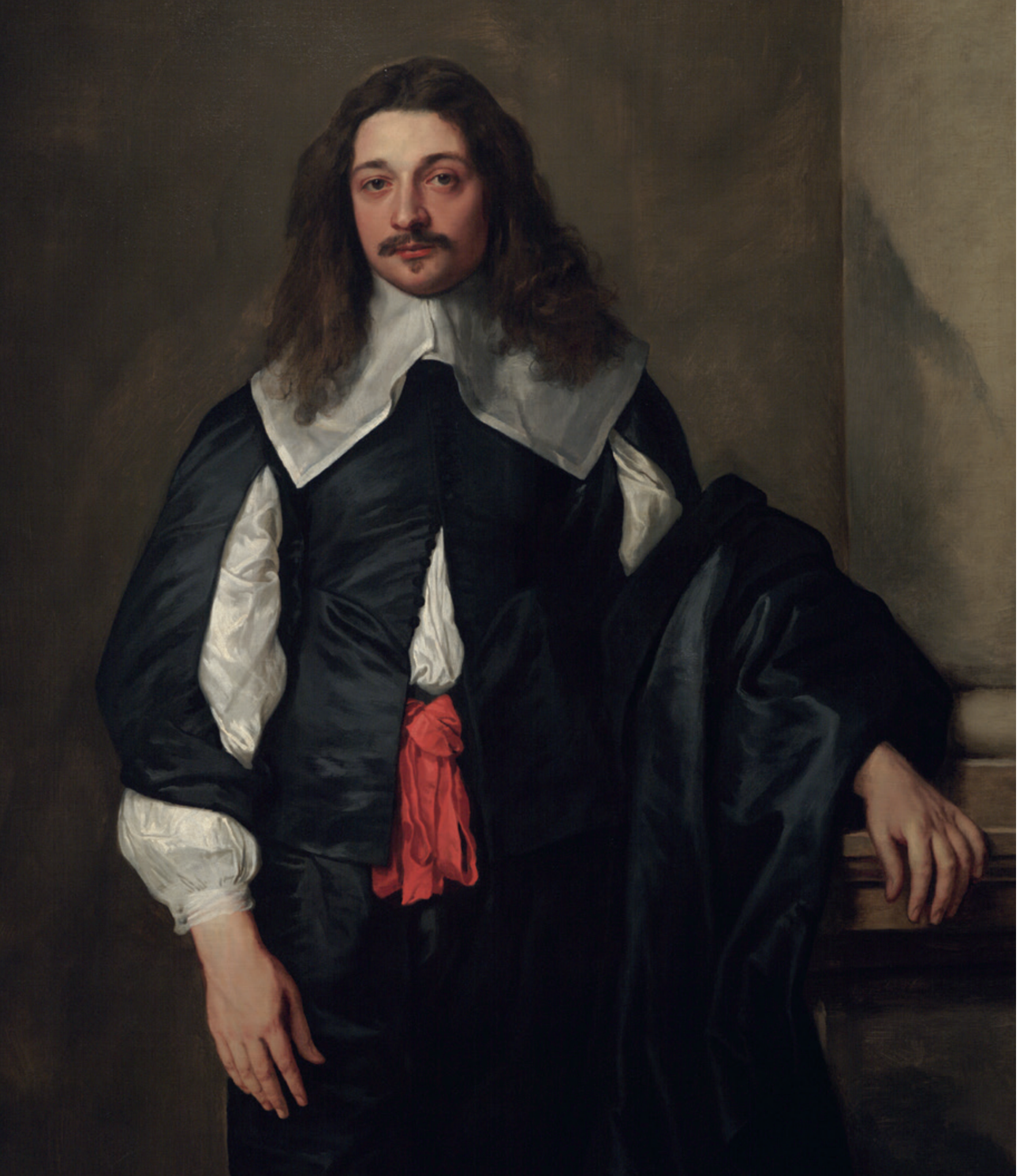

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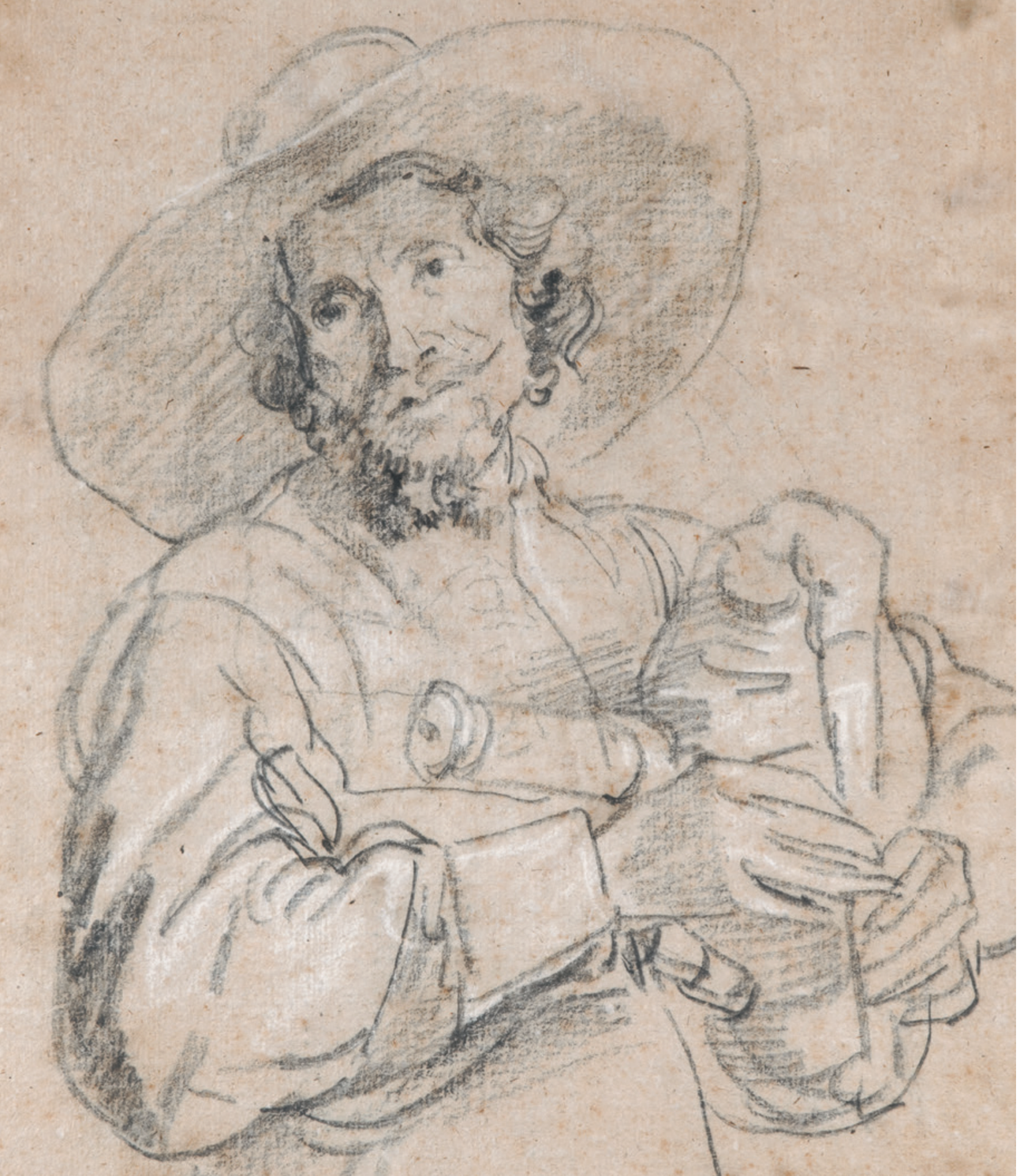


Cat. 95 (detail)

A Portraitist's Progress

STIJN ALSTEENS

"The greatest perfection of a portrait," wrote the French art critic Roger de Piles in 1708, "is extreme likeness."[1] Like a topographer, a portraitist has to translate incisive observation into an accurate record. In the age before photography, the critical moment in this process was when the artist met with the sitter and was given the opportunity to capture the features of his subject. This catalogue examines how portraits were created by the best and most influential of all seventeenth-century portraitists — the Flemish painter, printmaker, and draftsman Anthony van Dyck.[2] Of course, portraiture — in Van Dyck's time as much as in ours — is more than the faithful reproduction of the sitter's likeness; as with any successful work of art, execution, composition, atmosphere, in sum the artistry, all contribute to a portrait's inimitable effect. In his 1672 life of Van Dyck, the art historian and critic Giovan Pietro Bellori wrote that "apart from the likeness he gave a certain nobility to the heads and grace to the poses."[3] And to Van Dyck's gift for the genre might also be applied the words of a malicious eighteenth-century French critic who described the key to the success of portraitists as "the art of flattering their models with enough skill to persuade them that they were not flattering them at all."[4]

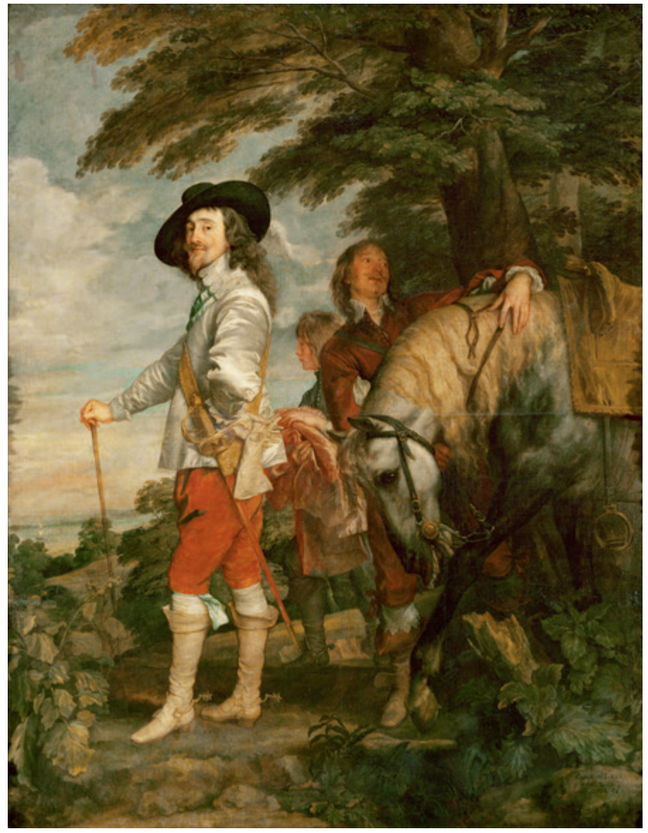
While Van Dyck's genius as a portraitist cannot be fully explained, we can examine how he worked on his portraits and developed finished paintings and engravings from preparatory drawings, oil sketches, and the proof impressions of prints. This may well offer an alternative to the romantic view of Van Dyck's nineteenth-century compatriot Jean-Baptiste Madou (fig. 1).[5] In Madou's lithograph, the painter is seen in a sumptuous studio in London at work on one of his masterpieces, a large portrait of Charles I described at the time as *Le Roi alla ciasse* (fig. 2),[6] in the presence of the king himself, a crowd of ladies and gentlemen of quality, some boys, and a gambist and a harpist, as well as a dog or two.

FIG. 1. Unknown artist, after Jean-Baptiste Madou, *Anthony van Dyck I in London*, in L. Alvin et al., *Scènes de la vie des peintres de l'école flamande et hollandaise* (Brussels 1842). Lithograph, 12 ¼ × 17 in. (31.1 × 43.3 cm). Avery Library, Columbia University, New York (ND634 M26 F)

Madou's vision is not entirely ahistorical. Bellori records that Van Dyck, "without interrupting his work, would keep his sitters with him over lunch" and "even though they might be dignitaries or great ladies, they came there willingly as though for pleasure, attracted by the variety of the entertainments."[7] To some extent, the liveliness of this scene recalls the visit to Peter Paul Rubens's studio in 1621 by the Danish doctor Otto Sperling, who witnessed the master painting, supervising assistants, dictating a letter, having Tacitus read to him, and carrying on a conversation with his guests — all at once.[8] But Van Dyck's studio was worldlier. Having gained the king and queen's favor after his definitive move to London in 1632 (see under cats. 67, 68), "he dissipated his great gains, for the highest nobility frequented his house, following the example of the king, who used to visit him and took pleasure in watching him paint and passing the time with him," says Bellori; and he kept "servants, carriages, horses, players, musicians, and jesters, and with these entertainments he played host to all the great personages, knights and ladies, who came daily to have their portraits painted at his house."[9]

Bellori's description brings to mind accounts of Lucian Freud's endless number of sittings, his cultivation of the art of conversation, the suppers shared with his models at the Wolseley, etc.[10] But, although there must be some truth to Bellori's story, Van Dyck could not have allowed himself to lose so much time. However well informed Bellori may have been through Van Dyck's English friend and occasional model Kenelm Digby, [11] the Veronese-like feasts described by him must be an exaggeration. More than 260 portraits by Van Dyck survive, many of them full length, from the time of his arrival in London in 1632 until his death in 1641.[12] That is an average of one every two weeks — and many more

FIG. 2. Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I in the Hunting Field*, ca. 1636. Oil on canvas, 106 ¼ × 82 ⅝ in. (2.7 × 2.1 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris (1236)



are now lost. Like Rubens, he must have run a highly efficient studio, especially during his English period; he has rightly been credited with a "positively inhumane appetite for work."[13] Something of that efficiency shines through in a revealing passage from a treatise by the English miniaturist Edward Norgate, who knew Van Dyck in both Italy and London and noted that "the long time spent in curious designe he reserved to better purpose, to be spent in curious painting, which in drawing hee esteemed as Lost. For when all is done, it is but a drawing, which conduces to make profitable things, but is none it selfe."[14]

Certainly not all portraitists tried to minimize the amount of time spent on drawing as Van Dyck appears to have done in his English years. The earliest preserved examples from northern Europe, such as the portraits of clergymen by Jan van Eyck and Jean Fouquet, are rendered in the painstaking manner made possible by metalpoint, the medium often employed by fifteenth-century artists and required by the detailed painted portraits that

FIG. 3. Willem Key, *Portrait of a Man*, 1543 or before (?). Black and red chalk, 8 ½ × 6 ½ in. (21.7 × 16.6 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (KdZ 14727)

these artists would base on such drawings.[15] The structure of the face, every crease, every wrinkle, would have been carefully observed and recorded in an attempt to stay as close to reality as possible. Fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian examples, although mostly executed in black chalk, are comparable and would equally have provided accurate models for the meticulous style generally favored at the time, before certain painters, mainly in Venice, began opting for a looser manner with more apparent brushwork.[16]

The rarity of preserved Netherlandish portrait drawings from the first half of the sixteenth century, which makes it difficult to say much about the practice of portraitists at the time, makes particularly precious the survival of an example for which the related painting is also preserved: a sheet in Berlin by Willem Key, one of Van Dyck's most prominent Netherlandish predecessors as a portrait painter (fig. 3), which can be assumed to be directly preparatory to a painting, dated 1543, in Antwerp.[17] The drawing's inscription by a later sixteenth-century hand — *carbone lapidoque rubro* (with black and red chalk) — highlights what seems to have become the medium of choice in the north for portrait drawings by Key's time.[18] The practice was certainly more widespread than can now be substantiated with extant drawings. For instance, no drawings preparatory to paintings are known by Jan Gossart, called Mabuse, arguably the greatest of sixteenth-century Netherlandish portraitists, but a later source records the existence of a portrait "marvelously drawn from life by Mabuse in black and red chalk."[19]

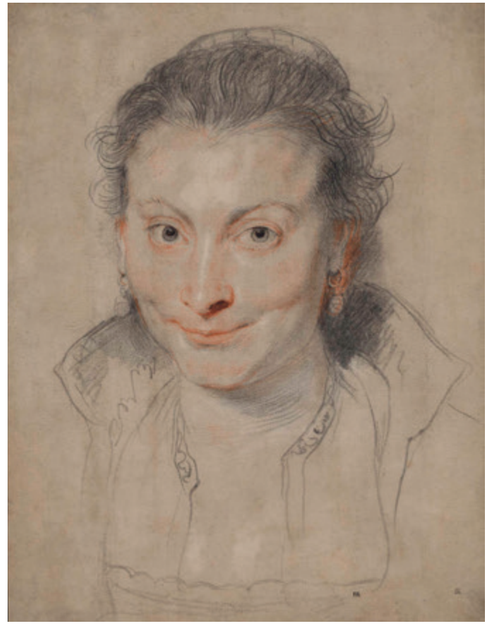


FIG. 4. Peter Paul Rubens, *Isabella Brant*, ca. 1621–22. Black and red chalk on light gray-brown paper, 15 × 11 5/8 in. (38.1 × 29.4 cm). The British Museum, London (1893,0731.21)

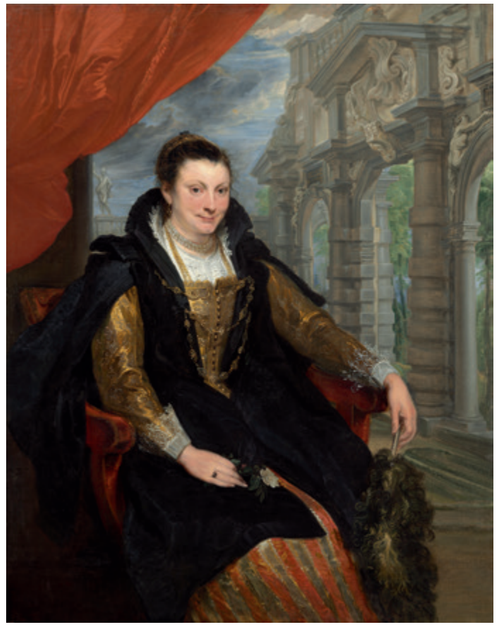
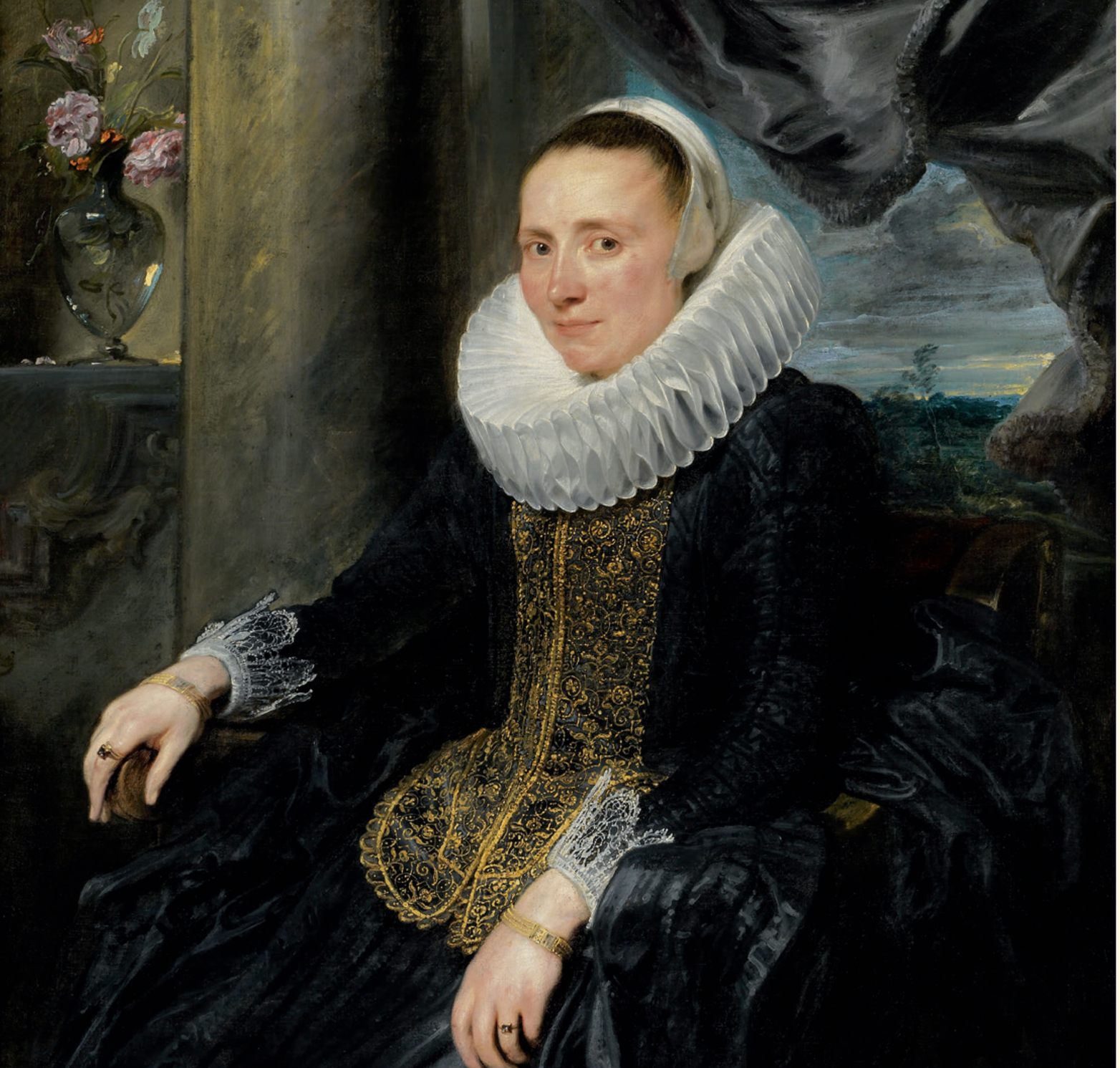


FIG. 5. Anthony van Dyck, *Isabella Brant, Seated Outdoors*, 1621 or ca. 1628. Oil on canvas, 60 ¼ × 47 ¼ in. (153 × 120 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington (1937.1.47)

Detailed drawn portraits in black and red chalk, sometimes with additional white heightening, continued to be created in the Low Countries, as elsewhere in Europe, into the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[20] The technique, with its effective evocation of flesh tone, seems to have been especially cherished for drawing *ad vivum*. Among the most accomplished practitioners were Hendrick Goltzius from the Northern Netherlands, working in the 1590s,[21] and, closer to Van Dyck, the Flemings Jan Cossiers (see fig. 153) and Rubens. The ravishingly beautiful drawing of his first wife, Isabella Brant (fig. 4), is typical of Rubens's work as a portrait draftsman in that it was probably made in the relaxed context of the artist's home and for no other purpose than his own and the sitter's pleasure.[22] However, the drawing seems to have directly served Van Dyck when he was at work on his portrait of Isabella, generally dated to 1621 and often reputed to have been made as a parting gift for his master before he left for Italy (fig. 5).[23] Why Van Dyck based his portrait on Rubens's drawing rather than on direct study of the sitter herself may be explained if one follows the suggestions that Van Dyck's portrait should be dated later, to around 1628, when he had just returned from Italy.[24] Brant had died in 1626, and Van Dyck would have had little choice but to turn to the existing drawing, which Rubens undoubtedly cherished as a memento of his late beloved wife.

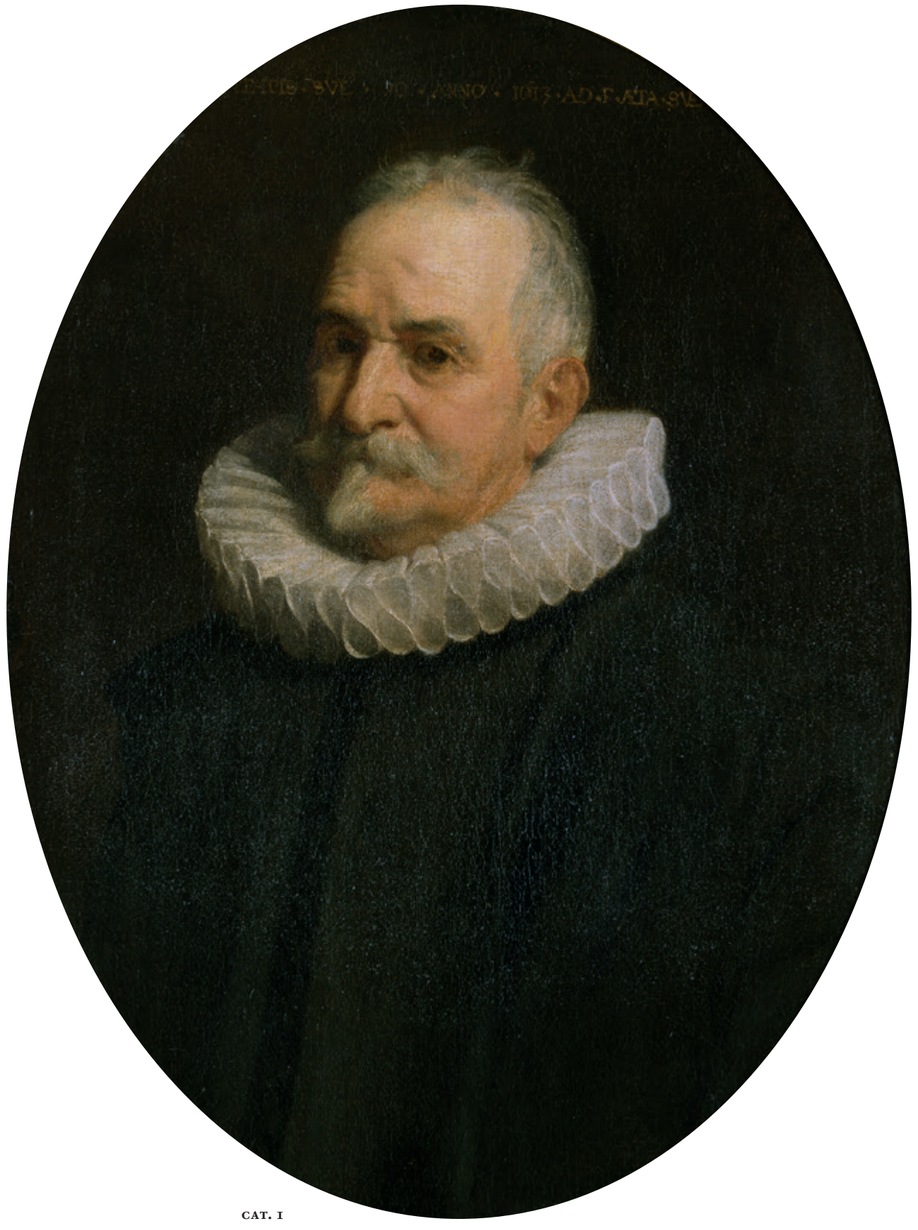
Van Dyck's use of Rubens's drawing highlights the peculiarity of his drawn oeuvre that is at the core of this exhibition: Van Dyck, one of the greatest portraitists of all time,

CATALOGUE



First Antwerp Period

Van Dyck's earliest portraits reveal his roots in the rich artistic tradition of his native Antwerp. Born in 1599, Van Dyck came from a family with ties to the city's mercantile and artistic communities. He was apprenticed in 1609 to the painter Hendrick van Balen (cat. 37) and became a master painter in his own right on February 11, 1618. Apart from these documented dates, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the length of Van Dyck's training with Van Balen and his early contact with Peter Paul Rubens, the preeminent painter in Antwerp at that time. In April 1618, when Van Dyck had already become a master in the painters' guild, Rubens referred to an artist believed to be Van Dyck as "my best pupil," but the latter's role in the studio of the older artist must be understood more as that of an assistant or collaborator. His debt to Rubens is especially clear in his use of so-called head studies to record the intriguing physiognomies that would eventually populate his history paintings (cats. 4, 5). In these works, Van Dyck's precocious talent as a portraitist emerged, along with an affinity for sitters with a more melancholy or soulful appearance. Although he was fully able to emulate Rubens's style, the contrast between the two artists' draftsmanship becomes especially clear in the drawings they appear to have made of the same sitter, the Jesuit missionary Nicolas Trigault (cats. 7, 8). Van Dyck also prepared more traditional portraits, most often half-length figures that looked back to Flemish tradition while incorporating Italianate innovations of pose and background. This synthesis reached its apex in the pendant portraits of Frans Snyders and Margareta de Vos (cats. 10, 11), in which Van Dyck confidently portrayed one of the leading painters in Antwerp and his wife. Between the fall of 1620 and March of the next year, Van Dyck visited London in pursuit of commissions from the English court. By the end of the following year, however, he was in Italy, where his deepened encounter with Italian art and especially with Titian's legacy would prove decisive for his development as a portraitist.



CAT. 1

1

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

***Portrait of a Seventy-Year-Old Man*, 1613**

Oil on canvas, 24 ¾ × 17 ⅛ in. (63 × 43.5 cm)

Upper center, *ÆTATIS · SVE · 70 · ANNO · AVD* [*AVD* interlaced] · *F ÆTA · SVE 14*

Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België / Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels (6858)

HAD THIS CANVAS not been inscribed, it would have puzzled collectors and art historians even more than it does now. Not typical in style for either Van Dyck or Flemish painting of the early seventeenth century, it would probably be attributed to a Fleming of slightly later date who had spent time in Italy. Instead, as the inscription at top states, this portrait of a man aged seventy is the work of the fourteen-year-old Van Dyck, painted almost a decade before he left his hometown. While the age of a sitter is often included on portraits,[1] it is highly unusual to mention the age of the *painter*; there can be little doubt that Van Dyck added it to emphasize the precociousness of his talent. Although the authenticity of the date and the monogram, and even the attribution, have been doubted, the inscription has repeatedly been confirmed to be original or at least close to the painting's age.[2] In fact, a recent examination of the canvas revealed that the inscription goes back to an earlier one that has since been overpainted. This earlier inscription, at the level of the man's eyes, reads *AETATIS SVE* to the left and, to the right, *70 A 1613*.[3] It seems likely that Van Dyck, perhaps judging that the first inscription interfered too much with the portrait itself, decided to move it to the top of the canvas and to add his monogram and age.[4] The inclusion of the monogram and the artist's age suggests that the painting was destined for and portrayed a relative or acquaintance to whom this information would have been relevant, but attempts to identify the man — as the painter's father or grandfather — have not been convincing.[5]

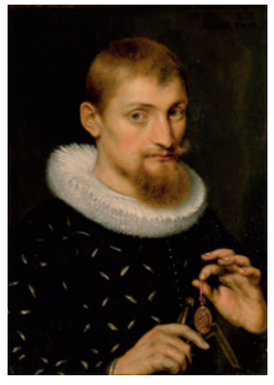


FIG. 37. Peter Paul Rubens, *Portrait of a Twenty-Seven-Year-Old Man*, 1597. Oil on copper, 8 ½ × 5 ¾ in. (21.6 × 14.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982 (1982.60.24)

Van Dyck's early accomplishment is highlighted by the comparison with the earliest dated painting by Rubens, which also happens to be a portrait (fig. 37).[6] While Rubens's sympathetic portrait of a young man from 1597 is still firmly rooted in the work of Netherlandish artists of previous generations such as Antonio Moro (see fig. 9) and Otto van Veen,[7] Van Dyck's canvas, painted a little more than fifteen years later but by an artist more than twenty years Rubens's junior, is unlike any other portrait known to have been produced in the Netherlands before that year, although it is not yet as bold and personal as the self-portrait in Vienna (cat. 2), which cannot have been made much later. Although previously described as a "workmanlike job" and "competent, conventional likeness," whose style is "rather nondescript,"[8] Van Dyck's painting in Brussels is a successful exercise in a use of color and a loose manner of painting that is less descriptive than that of most earlier Netherlandish paintings. Rather, the picture brings to mind portraits such as those by Jacopo Tintoretto (fig. 38).[9] This Italianate quality, an intriguing aspect of many works from Van Dyck's first Antwerp period, is difficult to explain. A small number of Venetian paintings are recorded in Antwerp collections of the first decades of the sixteenth century.[10] Certainly, both his first master, Hendrick van Balen, and Rubens — artists with a known interest in the history of art and who had visited Italy — would have introduced the young Van Dyck to Venetian and, more generally, Italian art.[11] Still, it presupposes an extraordinary gift for such fragmentary knowledge to result in anything as mature as the style of the Brussels portrait. As in the self-portrait in Antwerp (cat. 3), only certain pentimenti — here one along the man's proper right cheek, already noted in the first mention in print of the painting — could be pointed to as indications that the painter was not yet a fully formed master.[12] — S.A.

FIG. 38. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1561. Oil on canvas, 44 ⅜ × 35 in. (112.7 × 88.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.100.12)

PROVENANCE: Joseph-Antoine Borgnis, Paris; his sale, Paris, May 23, 1804, lot 17; Georges-Jules-Auguste Cain (1856–1919), Paris; Galerie Franz Kleinberger, Paris; Charles-Léon Cardon (1850–1920), Brussels; his sale, Brussels, June 27–30, 1921, lot 56; acquired at the sale by Siméon del Monte (d. ca. 1929), Brussels; his heirs; their sale, London, Sotheby's, June 24, 1959, lot 37; acquired at the sale by the museum.

LITERATURE: Kramm 1857–64, vol. 2 (1858), p. 403; Van den Branden 1883, p. 696; Cust 1900, p. 7, 236, no. 53; F. M. Haberditzl in Thieme and Becker 1907–50, vol. 10 (1914), p. 264; Brussels 1921, lot 56; Glück 1928, p. 9, fig. VII; Rosenbaum 1928, p. 326, as not by Van Dyck; Antwerp 1930, no. 130; Glück 1931, p. 527, ill. p. 75; "Nouvelles acquisitions" 1959, p. 172; Gerson and Ter Kuile 1960, p. 190, n. 19, as not by Van Dyck; Larsen 1980, vol. 1, pp. 5, 84, no. 1; *Koninklijke Musea* 1984, p. 94; Müller Hofstede 1987–88, p. 143, figs. 14, 16; Larsen 1988, vol. 1, p. 126, fig. 14, vol. 2, no. 1; Susan J. Barnes in

Washington 1990–91, no. 1; Spear 1995, p. 29; Doron J. Lurie in Tel Aviv 1995–96, no. 2; Martin 2001, p. 6, as doubtfully attributed to Van Dyck; Nora De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, no. I.149; Friso Lammertse and Alejandro Vergara in Madrid 2012–13, p. 25, fig. 1; Martin 2013, p. 125; Alsteens 2014, p. 88.

1. For examples from Van Dyck's first Antwerp period, see Nora De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, nos. I.118, I.119, I.130, I.131, I.132, I.147, I.150.
2. See, for instance, F. M. Haberditzl in Thieme and Becker 1907–50, vol. 10 (1914), p. 264; and, more recently, Martin 2013, p. 25. See also the letters of Michael Jaffé and Christopher Brown (mentioned in Tel Aviv 1995–96, p. 33), apparently both expressing their doubts about the attribution. As remarked by Susan J. Barnes (in Washington 1990–91, p. 80), a similar monogram, consisting of the letters AVD in ligature, is also found on a painting of Silenus in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, 1017 (Nora De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, no. I.83).
3. Report by Marie-Annelle Mouffe, May 2015. I am grateful to Sabine Van Sprang, Joost Vander Auwera, and Liesbeth De Belie for making this report available and for discussing the painting with me. In the spring of 2015, the painting also underwent a surface cleaning.
4. As suggested in the report mentioned in the previous note.
5. De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, pp. 129–30.
6. Liedtke 1984a, vol. 1, pp. 187–91, vol. 2, color pl. xvi, pl. 73.
7. For portraits by Van Veen, see Justus Müller Hofstede in Cologne / Antwerp / Vienna 1992–93, nos. 11.1, 11.2.
8. The quotations are taken, respectively, from Larsen 1988, vol. 1, p. 126; Barnes in Washington 1990–91, p. 80; and Friso Lammertse and Alejandro Vergara in Madrid 2012–13, p. 25.
9. Rossi 1974, vol. 1, pp. 50–51, 62, 102, 106, 117, fig. 111; Paola Rossi in Venice / Vienna 1994, no. 25.
10. For the presence of paintings by, attributed to, or after Titian and Tintoretto in Antwerp collections before Van Dyck's trip to Italy, see Duverger 1984–2009, vol. 1 (1984), pp. 283, 307, vol. 2 (1985), p. 176, vol. 3 (1987), pp. 106, 109, 337. See also Alan McNairn in Ottawa 1980, pp. 18–23.
11. For Van Balen and his collection, see Werche 2004, especially pp. 23–25. For Rubens's collection, see Muller 1989.
12. Catalogue quoted in Kramm 1857–64, vol. 2 (1858), p. 403.

2

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

Self-Portrait, ca. 1613–15

Oil on panel, 10 1/8 × 7 5/8 in. (25.8 × 19.5 cm)

Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna (686)

Both as an exceptionally direct portrait and as a likeness of the artist, the painting in Vienna has become one of the most beloved works from Van Dyck's first Antwerp period. The identification of the sitter is obvious from a comparison with self-portraits of about 1621 in New York, Munich, and Saint Petersburg (cat. 12, figs. 48, 49),[1] although the portrait shown here was made several years before, probably even before the one in Antwerp, which for some time was thought to be by Peter Paul Rubens but now has been convincingly reattributed to Van Dyck himself (cat. 3). In its rough, pastose execution, this earlier work is comparable to many by the young Van Dyck but is also bolder than his portrait of a man from 1613, his first known work (cat. 1). The Vienna self-portrait must have been made somewhat later; on the basis of Van Dyck's estimated age at the time the panel was painted, it has been dated to 1615 or slightly earlier, in the years leading up to his sixteenth birthday.[2] In the form of the nose and the reddish hue of the hair, the youth in the Vienna portrait looks remarkably similar to the girl in an oil sketch in New York (cat. 5), which may represent one of the artist's siblings.

The small size and seductive immediacy of the painting suggest that it was probably intended for the painter or someone from his close circle. In this way, it differs from the three more representative self-portraits from around 1621 mentioned above. The pose — with the artist staring intently at himself in the mirror, and thus at the viewer, over his shoulder — has been related to that in works by Netherlandish predecessors, but, as argued by Michael Jaffé, Van Dyck need not have looked further than his master Peter Paul Rubens, whose similar self-portrait from his Italian years (1600–1608) is recorded in several versions.[3] Compared to the self-portrait in Antwerp (cat. 3), the Vienna self-portrait is at the same time simpler and more daring — an informal display of unfettered bravura, nowhere more so than in the white line representing the artist's shirt — "a brushstroke of extraordinary confidence for so young an artist."[4] The painting remains the image par excellence of Van Dyck as a child prodigy, uncannily able to evoke human presence and to handle paint in an inimitable way. — S.A.

PROVENANCE: Franz von Imstenraedt (1632–1694), Cologne and Vienna; acquired from him in 1678 by Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein (1611–1684), Vienna; by descent to Prince Johann Nepomuk Karl von Liechtenstein (1724–1748), Vienna; Count Anton Lamberg-Sprinzenstein (1740–1822), Vienna; given by him to the Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1822.

LITERATURE: Hymans 1899, pp. 400–420; Cust 1900, pp. 19, 235, no. 39; Schaeffer 1909, p. 129; Fleischer 1910, p. 60, no. 82; Cust 1911, no. 1; Eigenberger vol. 1, 1927, pp. 119–20, vol. 2, ill.; Rosenbaum 1928, p. 31; Glück 1931, p. 3; Glück 1934, p. 195; Van Puyvelde 1941, p. 182; Van Puyvelde 1950, pp. 45, 123, pl. 16; Münz 1955, pp. 20–21, no. 25; Baldass 1957, p. 256; Van Puyvelde 1960, pp. 110, 130, 143, pl. 14; M. Jaffé 1966b, vol. 1, pp. 47–48; Poch-Kalous and Hutter 1968, p. 181; Poch-Kalous and Hutter 1972, pp. 98–99, no. 170; M. Jaffé 1977, pp. 605–8; Alan McNairn in Ottawa 1980, no. 1; Liedtke 1984a, vol. 1, pp. 68–69; George Keyes in Minneapolis / Houston / San Diego 1985, no. 11; Müller Hofstede 1987–88, pp. 140–42; Larsen 1988, vol. 1, p. 126, fig. 15, vol. 2, no. 2; Trnek 1989, p. 69; Susan J. Barnes in Washington 1990–91, pp. 19–23; Tel Aviv 1995–96, no. 1; Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Christopher Brown in Antwerp / London 1999, pp. 39–40, 42, no. 1; White 1999, p. 634; Nora De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, no. I.99; Teresa Posada Kubissa in Madrid 2012–13, no. 1.

1. The painting was already recognized as a self-portrait when it was sold in 1678 to the reigning prince of Liechtenstein, Karl Eusebius (see the document published in Fleischer 1910, p. 60).
2. For a recent discussion of the painting's date, see Nora De Poorter in Barnes et al. 2004, p. 92; Teresa Posada Kubissa in Madrid 2012–13, p. 94; and Alsteens 2014, p. 90.
3. For different versions of this portrait of Rubens (not all of them apparently autograph), see M. Jaffé 1977; and Christopher Brown in Antwerp / London 1999, p. 94. For earlier precedents in Netherlandish art, see Liedtke 1984a, vol. 1, pp. 68–69; and Brown in Antwerp / London 1999, p. 94.
4. Brown in Antwerp / London 1999, p. 94.

CAT. 2

31

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

***Justice Flanked by Seven Magistrates of the City of Brussels*, ca. 1634**

Oil on panel, squared in oil, 10 3/8 × 23 in. (26.3 × 58.5 cm)

École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris (MU 11750)

32

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

***Portrait Study of a Man, Facing Right*, ca. 1634**

Oil on canvas, with paper extensions along the four sides, 25 × 19 1/2 in. (63.5 × 49.5 cm)

Verso: on a piece of canvas (fragment of an old relining?), *Vandyke. ipse pinx. / Collection de Tallard*; on the stretcher, *57A Collection of the Earl of Aldborough / The property of T. Best Esq.*

Private collection

33

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

***Portrait Study of a Man, Looking Left*, ca. 1634**

Oil on canvas, 21 3/4 × 17 3/4 in. (55.3 × 45.1 cm)

Private collection

FIG. 77. Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Man, Looking Upward to the Right*, ca. 1634. Oil on canvas, 20 1/2 × 18 1/8 in. (52 × 46 cm). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (WA1855.172)

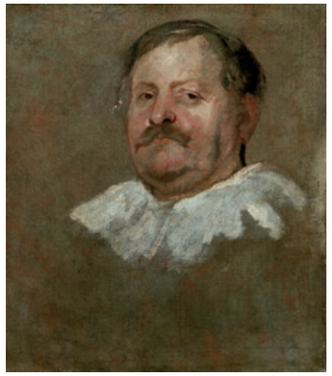


FIG. 78. Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Man*, ca. 1634. Oil on canvas, 20 1/2 × 18 1/8 in. (52 × 46 cm). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (WA1855.173)

FATE HAS BEEN UNKIND to some of Van Dyck's most ambitious painting projects, leaving the portrait of Philip Herbert and his family, now at Wilton House (see under cat. 79), as the sole witness to Van Dyck's work as a portraitist on a monumental scale. An oil sketch in Oxford is the only surviving record of the design of what would probably have become the artist's largest work — a tapestry depicting a procession of Charles I and the Knights of the Order of the Garter, possibly commissioned from Van Dyck around 1639.[1] Disagreements with the king regarding his fee had not been resolved when Van Dyck's death in December of the same year halted the project. Two earlier commissions for paintings for the Brussels town hall fared somewhat better: both were delivered by Van Dyck and admired by visitors to the building, before the French bombardment of the city in August 1695 largely destroyed the famous Gothic structure and the paintings with it.[2]

No visual evidence can be securely connected with the first and largest of the two, for which Van Dyck had received the commission by April 1628 — a considerable honor for the young artist whose reputation must have reached the Netherlands even before his return from Italy in the winter of 1627.[3] Several seventeenth-century descriptions of the work inform us about its general appearance and quality: "a piece representing many portraits of the former city council of Brussels," which to the Flemish writer Cornelis de Bie "appears like a wonder of the world by its trueness to nature and inventive genius which one can sense in it."[4] Because the city council was reelected every year, the painting was no doubt finished and installed shortly after Van Dyck received the commission, probably in 1628 or 1629. Other sources provide additional information: the group of magistrates depicted comprised no less than twenty-three men, painted life-size, who were shown "seated in their college according to their custom, rendering judgement in the cases before them," but the painting may have contained an allegorical element as well.[5] For "the size of the work, the sparkle which radiates from the eyes of each distinguished senator, and the fresh and vivacious colour of their faces," the painting was hailed as one of the artist's best works.[6]

The magistrates of Brussels must have been pleased with the painting, which was on permanent view in the town hall, as they commissioned another work. It has been dated to Van Dyck's stay in the Southern Netherlands after he had moved to England in 1632, in the winter of 1634.[7] An identification of the composition with one recorded in the oil sketch in Paris discussed here is made possible by a few seventeenth-century sources, most notably an epigram by the English author John Elsum, titled "A Representation of *Justice* at the Stadthouse in *Brussels*, by *Vandyke*" and published in 1700:

Incorrupt Justice here you may descry,
Among her *Ministers* I'th' Treasury,
And at her Feet see *Weights and Measures* lie.
The Great *Vandyke* to do his Justice right,
Has plac'd the *Goddess* in the clearest Light.
Some Painters say he should have made
her blind;
They paint the *Body*, but he paints the *Mind*.[8]

The personification of Justice at the center of the Paris sketch *is* blindfolded, but Elsum probably knew Van Dyck's painting firsthand from visiting Brussels before its destruction in 1695.[9] The objects at Justice's feet in the oil sketch, presumably identical to Elsum's "Weights and Measures," suggest that the finished painting may have been very close to the sketch.

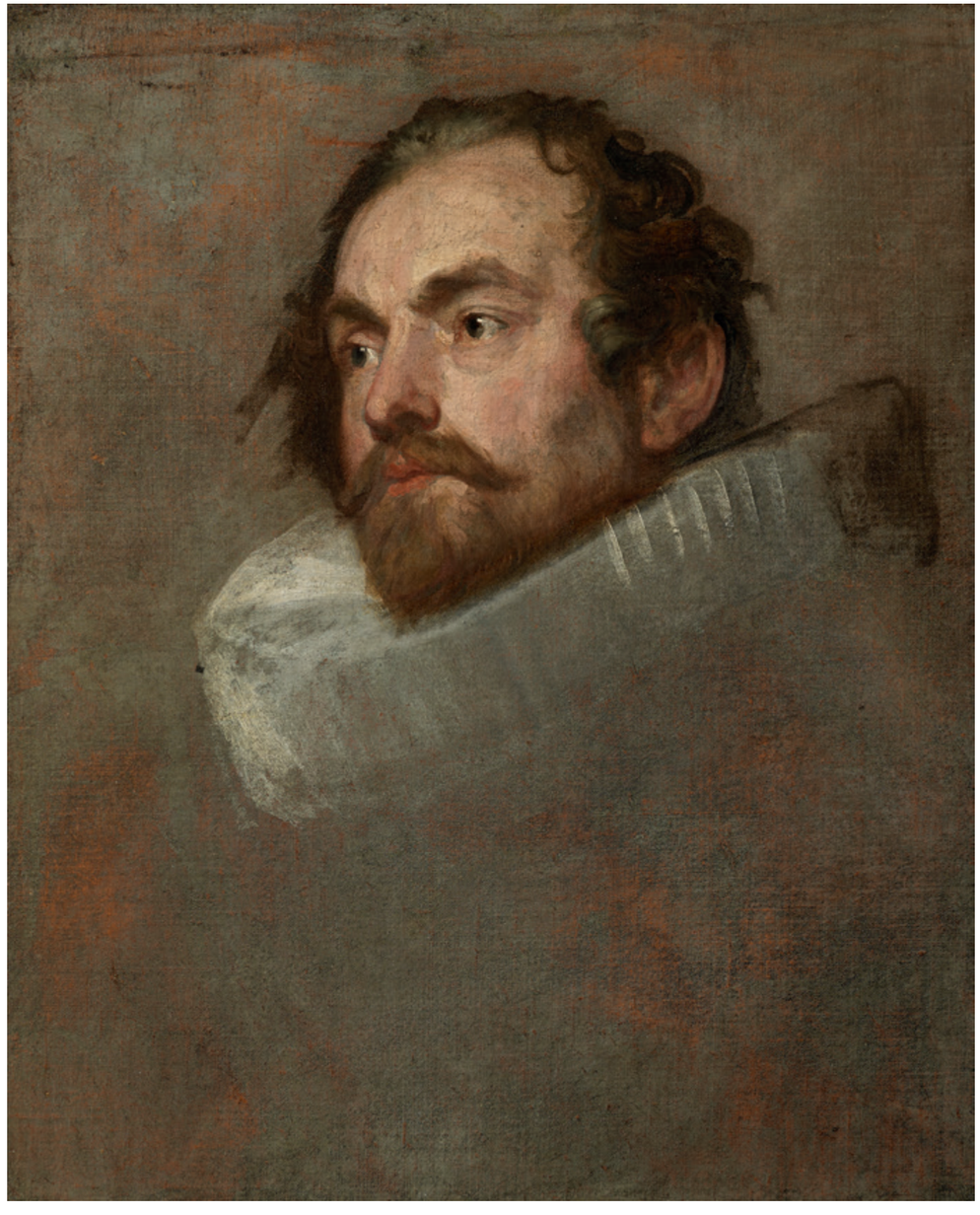
This is also indicated by a group of five head studies in oil on canvas that survive for the painting, some of which can be related to figures in the composition sketch. Paul Buschmann first remarked in 1916 that the men portrayed in two paintings in Oxford (figs. 77, 78) may be those immediately flanking Justice in the oil sketch.[10] Nearly a century later, three additional head studies related to the Brussels group portrait were rediscovered. These share with the Oxford pair an almost complete focus on the men's heads, a lively execution that characterizes them as sketches done from life, an uncovered gray ground, and roughly the same canvas size. Until recently, all three were heavily overpainted in an attempt to pass them off as finished paintings, an intervention that disguised their attractive roughness and true quality. Although one of the two presented here (cat. 32), until relatively recently in St. Louis, had been connected with the second man from the left in the Paris sketch as early as 1962, its overpainted state led most modern authors to dismiss it as a copy.[11] Sold in 2010, it was cleaned and given back to Van Dyck by Fergus Hall. In quick succession, two more sketches were found. The so-called *Vicar's Van Dyck* resurfaced in the British Broadcasting Company's *Antiques Roadshow* in 2000 (see cat. 33); and a sketch appeared at auction in 2014 (fig. 79).[12]

The sitter seen in this last study appears to be the same, perhaps at a slightly less advanced age and seen from a slightly different viewpoint, as that in a copy after a lost original by Van Dyck in Poznań (fig. 80).[13] This copy is related to a group of six autograph portraits of middle-aged or older men wearing ruffs that are, apart from the trompe-l'oeil stone oval frames,[14] similar to the five head studies for the 1634–35 commission. The belief that the six and the lost original recorded in the Poznań sketch were made in preparation for the 1628 group portrait[15] is supported by the appearance of the same man in the two groups: he must have been a reelected officer of the Brussels city council, serving around 1628 and then again around 1634. Research in the Brussels archives might yield his name, as well as that of the other magistrates depicted in the two group portraits.[16] That so many sketches related to the two commissions survive, and almost none for other portraits by Van Dyck from the period, could be a coincidence but could also be explained by the number of sitters and the large scale of the final paintings, which must have made it hard to paint from life directly on the large canvases, apparently Van Dyck's method when working on smaller portraits (see p. 18). Because in the latter, the freshly observed study was covered with finishing layers that made the final portrait look smoother, the group of portraits connected with the Brussels commissions offers a rare opportunity to examine the kind of portrait study Van Dyck made with the model before him. While the level of information on the sitter's appearance exceeds that of the artist's drawings related to portraits, the head studies in oil appear to be done quickly, in short sessions, and offer a lively resemblance, rather than a highly detailed one.

It is difficult to establish whether Van Dyck produced the head studies before or after the compositional sketch, which was squared in the wet paint to enlarge the design (the final canvas may have measured as much as three by eight meters). Although cursory in the manner of English-period grisailles preparing paintings (see p. 29), the Paris sketch is more sophisticated in technique than it may at first appear: the artist employed brown, red-brown, and black paint and heightened the design with white. The composition seems entirely resolved, and although it has been

CAT. 31

CAT. 32



CAT. 33

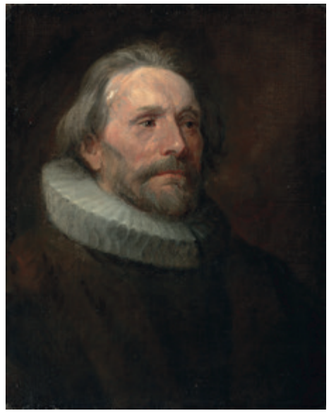


FIG. 79. Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Man, Looking Right*, ca. 1634. Oil on canvas, 20 7/8 × 17 3/4 in. (53 × 42.5 cm). Private collection

FIG. 80. Unknown artist after Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Bearded Old Man, Looking Right*, after an original of ca. 1628 (?). Oil on canvas, 23 5/8 × 22 1/2 in. (60 × 57 cm). Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, Poznań (Mo 541)

described as "quite mechanical,"[17] it in fact strikes a felicitous balance between a formality undoubtedly requested by the patrons and a lively and flattering portrayal of the sitters. The head studies may have been made when Van Dyck had not yet fully developed his final design, just as in some of the portraits for the *Iconographie*, where chalk studies from life preceded more fully worked out models for the engravers (see cat. 43). A drawing that seems to be a faithful copy of a lost sketch by Van Dyck for the man depicted in fig. 81.[18] indicates that Van Dyck worked out the pose and costume of the figures in greater detail in sketches in black and white chalk on blue paper, as was his practice from at least about 1628 (cat. 20). In the case of portraits of single figures, Van Dyck does not seem to have made oil sketches, but the size and relative complexity of commissions such as the Brussels group portraits may have necessitated such an additional step.[19] Despite the fact that the painting itself has been lost, the Paris panel, the series of preserved head studies, and the copy of a chalk study just mentioned give an unusually complete insight into Van Dyck's working method. — S.A.

CAT. 31 | PROVENANCE: Possibly Philips de Flines (1640–1700), Amsterdam, and his sale, Amsterdam, April 20, 1700, lot 29; possibly Slade collection, and its sale, London, Christie's, November 13–14, 1801, second day, lot 31;[20] John C. Robinson (1824–1913), London; his sale, Paris, Drouot, May 7–8, 1868, lot 21; Alfred Armand (1805–1888), Paris; his nephew, Prosper Valton (1836–1906), Paris; his widow; bequeathed by her to the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1908.

LITERATURE: Possibly Amsterdam 1700, lot 29; possibly Christie's 1801, p. 7; Hoet 1752–70, p. 55; Mensaert 1763, pp. 122–23; Guiffrey 1882, pp. 88–90, 254, under no. 286; Buschmann 1916, p. 50; Glück 1939, pp. 2–4; Van den Wyngaert 1943, p. 142; Paris 1947, no. 2; Antwerp 1949, no. 52; Van Puyvelde 1950, p. 164; London 1953–54, no. 532; Vey 1956, p. 198; Roger-A. d'Hulst and Horst Vey in Antwerp / Rotterdam 1960, no. 133, pl. 80; Vey 1962, vol. 1, p. 268, under no. 197; Brussels 1965, no. 76; Monique Nonne in Paris 1977–78, no. 44; Brown 1982, p. 161, fig. 163; Larsen 1988, vol. 1, pp. 470–71, fig. 494, vol. 2, no. 490, p. 300, under no. 756; Christopher Brown in Washington 1990–91, p. 38, fig. 2; Judy Egerton in Antwerp / London 1999, no. 84; Duverger and Maufort 1999, fig. 1; Vey 2001, pp. 71–72, 73, fig. 9; Horst Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, no. III.169; Christie's 2010, p. 80, under lot 177; Emmanuel Schwartz in Oklahoma and other cities 2014–15, no. 60.

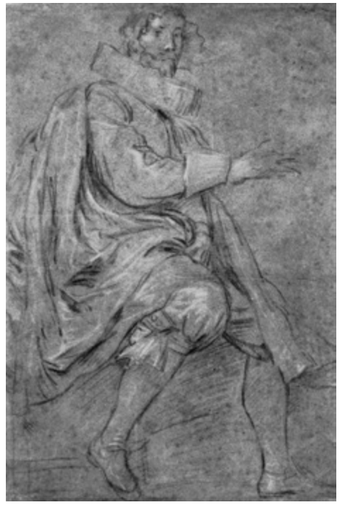


FIG. 81. Unknown artist after Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Seated Man, Facing Right*, after an original of ca. 1634. Black and white chalks, on gray (previously blue?) paper, 18 1/8 × 12 1/4 in. (46 × 31 cm). Location unknown

CAT. 32 | PROVENANCE: Probably Tallard collection;[21] possibly John Stratford, 1st Earl of Aldborough (1698–1777);[22] T. Best; Frank T. Sabin, London, by 1927; J. L. Galleries; acquired by Sydney M. Shoenberg, Sr. (1881–1975), St. Louis, by 1933; given by him to the Saint Louis Art Museum, 1952 (acc. 408:52); deaccessioned by the museum at sale New York, Christie's, January 27, 2010, lot 177; acquired at the sale by Fergus Hall, London; acquired from him by the present owner.

LITERATURE: Advertisement placed by Frank T. Sabin in *The Art News* 225, no. 32 (May 14, 1927); Glück 1931, ill. p. 286; Saint Louis 1953, p. 28; Saint Louis 1953, p.98; Vey 1962, vol. 1, p. 269, under no. 197, as a copy after Van Dyck; Monique Nonne in Paris 1977–78, p. 84, under no. 45, as a copy after Van Dyck; Larsen 1988, vol. 2, no. 756; Vey 2001, p. 73, as possibly a copy after Van Dyck; Horst Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, no. III.A33, as possibly a copy after Van Dyck; Christie's 2010, lot 177, as by a follower of Van Dyck.

CAT. 33 | PROVENANCE: Jamie Macleod, High Peak, Derbyshire; sale London, Christie's, July 8, 2014, lot 18.

LITERATURE: Smith 1829–42, vol. 3 (1831), pp. 195–96, no. 677; Borenius 1941, p. 200, pl. 1D; Christie's 2014, lot 18.

1. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. WA2002.55 (Oliver Millar in Barnes et al. 2004, under no. IV.59); for the commission, see ibid.
2. For these two commissions, see Vey 2001, and the literature referred to in notes 5 and 7.
3. For this commission, see also Horst Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, p. 396, under no. III.208.
4. De Bie 1662, p. 352; the translation is quoted after Vey 2001, p. 67.
5. Vey 2001, p. 68. The quote is from Bellori 1672, p. 259; the translation by Alice Sedgwick Wohl is quoted after Bellori 2005, p. 218. For the allegorical element, see the description of the lost sketch related to the painting in the Nourri catalogue, referred to in n. 19.
6. Bullart 1682, vol. 2, p. 477.
7. For this commission, see also Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, p. 374, under no. III.169.
8. Elsum 1700, p. 24 (epigram XXXI).
9. Elsum's biography has not been established (see Nicholas Grindle in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004, vol. 18, p. 339).
10. Buschmann 1916, p. 50. For these two paintings, see also White 1999, p. 38; and Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, nos. III.196, III.197.
11. Vey 1962, vol. 1, p. 269, under no. 197. Ironically, Erik Larsen (1988, vol. 2, no. 756) was the only modern author to accept the painting, despite the disfiguring finish, thereby at the same time reaching the correct conclusion and once again demonstrating his lack of understanding of Van Dyck's style and technique. Basing himself on an older inscription in graphite previously on the stretcher of the painting, Larsen also unconvincingly suggested that the portrait represents the Antwerp-born portraitist Justus Sustermans, whose portrait was etched by Van Dyck (Turner 2002, vol. 1, no. 11; Ger Luijten in Antwerp / Amsterdam 1999–2000, no. 16).
12. Formerly at the sale London, Christie's.
13. Vey 2001, p. 71, fig. 8; Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, no. III.A32.
14. As also remarked by Vey (in Barnes et al. 2004, p. 386, under no. III.190), the painted frames may be later additions, either by Van Dyck or by a different hand, meant to give the studies a more finished appearance.
15. Vey 2001, p. 71, figs. 3–8; Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, nos. III.190–III.195, III.A31–III.A32.
16. Gustav Glück (1939, p. 4) suggested — not entirely convincingly, in my opinion — that the sitter of the Oxford study reproduced here as fig. 78 could be Justus van Meerstraeten, Brussels *raadspensionaris* and member of the council of Brabant, whom Van Dyck portrayed in a painting in the Gemäldegalerie, Museumlandschaft Hessen Kassel, inv. 126 (Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, no. III.106) A drawing depicting Van Meerstraeten is at the Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford (Vey 1962, vol. 1, no. 202, vol. 2, fig. 249; Byam Shaw 1976, vol. 1, no. 1385, vol. 2, fig. 817; Christopher Brown in New York / Fort Worth 1991, no. 77).
17. Glück 1939, p. 2, where it also repeated that "it is well known that composition was not Van Dyck's strongest point." These remarks echo one already made by Giovan Pietro Bellori (1672, p. 264; for an English translation, see Bellori 2005, p. 220).
18. Location unknown; formerly at the sale Amsterdam, R.W.P. de Vries, July 12–15, 1930, lot 45; and around 1939 in the collection of Louis Polak, Amsterdam (Glück 1939, p. 3, pls. 2–3, as by Van Dyck; Delen 1943b, p. 137, fig. 108, as by Van Dyck; Vey 2001, p. 73, fig. 13). In addition, there are two sheets at the British Museum, London, that correspond in reverse to the composition of the Paris sketch: one is an offset that repeats the entire composition on blue paper (inv. 1846,0509.213; see Hind 1923, p. 78, no. 106, pl. XXXIX); the second, on white paper, a brush drawing of the three men in the left half (inv. 1925,0406.10). The two works, and especially the former, seem to go back to the Paris sketch.
19. An oil sketch on canvas related to the earlier group portrait is recorded in the catalogue of the Nourri collection (Paris, February 24–March 14, 1785); its size is given as 13 *pouces* by 22 *pouces* 9 *lignes*, i.e., approximately 35 by 61.5 cm). The sketch is possibly identical with works auctioned in 1700 and 1801, although the available records do not allow us to distinguish them from the Paris oil sketch (see the provenance for cat. 31).
20. The works described in the catalogues of the de Flines and Slade collections could also be the one discussed in n. 19.
21. See the inscription previously on the painting's verso. The painting does not appear (at least not under Van Dyck's name) in the catalogue of the sale (Paris, March 22–May 13, 1756) of the rich collection of Marie-Joseph d'Hostun de la Baume, duc de Tallard (1684–1755).
22. The provenance until the 1930s is based on Larsen 1988, vol. 2, p. 300; and on Vey in Barnes et al. 2004, p. 416.