

The Metropolitan
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*Anthony
van
Dyck*

Walter A. Liedtke

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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On the cover: Van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man*, probably *Lucas van Uffel* (see also details on inside front cover and back cover and fig. 22)

The appeal of Anthony van Dyck has been remarkably unaffected by changes in taste. In the three hundred years since his death, nothing has essentially threatened his reputation as one of the most gifted of portrait painters. His graceful images of Genoese, Flemish, and English aristocrats are among the most memorable of any age.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art owes its collection of van Dyck's works, the most important in this country, not to any systematic program of purchases (although some of our van Dycks were indeed bought by the Museum) but rather to gifts and bequests. To those donors who, happily, succumbed to this artist's ubiquitous appeal, mainly that of his portraits—so full of charm, warmth, and courtly elegance—we are immensely grateful.

The first painting by van Dyck to enter the Metropolitan, the important ex-voto composition *Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-stricken of Palermo*, was part of the initial purchase for the Metropolitan, made in 1871 by two of the most enterprising of this institution's founding trustees, William T. Blodgett and John Taylor Johnston. These men knew that to earn the name "Museum," the Metropolitan, by then incorporated but little more than a concept, would require a solid foundation. For a number of years, the 174 pictures they bought—most of them seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish—formed the core of the European paintings collection.

In 1889 Henry Marquand, who very early in the Museum's history gave many truly great works, such as Vermeer's *Young Woman with a Water Jug*, presented van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man* and that archetype of aristocratic reserve, the *Portrait of James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox*, both of which Marquand had acquired in 1886 from the famed collection of Baron Methuen at Corsham Court, Wiltshire. Then, separated by rather long intervals, came two pairs of superb van Dyck portraits, which had been sold to their donors by America's most prodigal and influential purveyor of Old Masters, Joseph Duveen. The *Portrait of a Lady, called the Marchesa Durazzo* and the fluid and highly expressive *Portrait of a Man, probably Lucas van Uffel* were part of the Benjamin Altman bequest of 1913, one of the finest and largest in the Museum's history. Van Dyck's restless and romantic early *Self-Portrait* and the grand *Portrait of Robert Rich, Second Earl of Warwick*, belonged to the Jules Bache Collection, which entered the Museum in 1949.

Two small equestrian studies assigned convincingly to van Dyck were given to the Museum in 1949 by Mr. and Mrs. Siegfried Bieber, and in 1957 the *Study Head of a Young Woman* was donated by Mrs. Ralph J. Hines. One of our finest van Dycks, as well as one of the most significant contributions to the Flemish collection, was Lillian S. Timken's 1959 bequest, the rapturously spiritual *Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria*.

Since 1871 the Metropolitan has made only two van Dyck purchases: in 1922, *Study Head of an Old Man with a White Beard*, which, until 1973, was attributed to Rubens, and in 1951, the small, freely painted *Virgin and Child*.

While we can speak with pride of our van Dyck holdings, the Museum also boasts five fine drawings and a number of etchings by the artist, it will become evident to readers of this *Bulletin* that van Dyck is not represented "whole," so to speak, to the New York public. His genius extended beyond portraiture and religious paintings to historical and mythological pictures, often done on a surprisingly grand scale. The absence of such works from the Metropolitan is a serious void that we hope someday to fill.

The illuminating essay on van Dyck in this *Bulletin* was written by Walter Liedtke, Associate Curator of European Paintings. He is also the author of the first complete, two-volume catalogue of the Metropolitan's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Flemish paintings, published by the Museum last spring.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Anthony van Dyck

1. Anthony van Dyck at about the age of twenty-one (1620). Detail of the Museum's *Self-Portrait* (fig. 15)

Van Dyck (1599–1641) is now considered in the most international context. He is perhaps best known as “Sir Anthony Vandyke,” the highly favored artist of the court of Charles I. Scholars would add that he was the premier portraitist in Italy during the 1620s and the most influential portrait painter in northern Europe from about 1630 until—and in England well beyond—the end of the seventeenth century.

Van Dyck might also be described, in the more restricted context of the southern Netherlands, as one of the many gifted artists who worked in Antwerp during the early 1600s. This community included Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, Jan Brueghel the Elder, Frans Snyders, Cornelis de Vos, Adriaen Brouwer, and (in the next generation) David Teniers the Younger, Jan Fyt, and the Dutchman Jan Davidsz. de Heem.

Antwerp had been, throughout the previous century, the principal artistic and commercial center in northern Europe. Her economy languished in the early 1600s, when the Dutch blocked the port's channels to the sea, but Flemish painters prospered because of the resurgence of the Catholic Church in the wake of the Counter-Reformation and the comparative security provided by the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–21). The Church and the Spanish government of the southern Netherlands supported those artists whose talents were devoted mostly to large-scale figure compositions: history pictures (the category includes religious and mythological subjects) and the grander forms of portraiture. Other painters, specialists in genres such as landscape, still life, and scenes of everyday life, continued the native tradition of earlier Antwerp painters, the most prominent of whom



2. This detail of van Dyck's portrait of Robert Rich, Second Earl of Warwick (fig. 38), shows the artist's ability to suggest the textures of sumptuous materials

was Pieter Brueghel the Elder. The importance of the figure for elevated themes was the essential reason van Dyck and Rubens, but not Jan Brueghel, Brouwer, or Teniers, were so profoundly influenced by recent artistic developments in Italy.

The nature of seventeenth-century patronage also explains, to some extent, the character of American collections of Flemish art. Some very imposing pictures notwithstanding, there are no great altarpieces, decorative ensembles, or state portraits by either van Dyck or Rubens in the Metropolitan Museum. The two artists worked mostly for the Catholic Church and for the monarchies of England, France, Spain, and the Spanish Netherlands; many of their paintings have been retained by these institutions or have been transferred to national museums. It is not surprising, then, that in a collection including more than twenty Rembrandts, ten paintings by Frans Hals, and five by Vermeer there are only thirteen each by van Dyck and Rubens.

Van Dyck, born in Antwerp on March 22, 1599, was one of twelve children of Frans van Dyck and his second wife, Maria Cuypers, who died in 1607. The artist's father was a prosperous merchant of silk, linen, and other fabrics, and his mother earned a reputation for embroidery. Even by Baroque standards, van Dyck's use of drapery in his paintings is generous, and he was especially adept at arranging it, making the folds flow flatteringly, and suggesting the different qualities of fine materials (see fig. 2). He was also known for his own costly and stylish attire. One imagines that the family business and home were the sources of this interest and perhaps of some of the fancy stuffs van Dyck must have had in his studio.

Frans van Dyck's prominent position in the commercial community of Antwerp is attested to by records of his property and honorary positions, such as his presidency of the lay confraternity of the Holy Sacrament. The family was a religious one: Anthony's younger brother was a priest, and the two sisters to whom the artist was particularly close entered a convent. Anthony also joined a lay confraternity, and he appears to have remained strong in his faith, however much he became accustomed to worldly affairs.

At the age of ten, van Dyck became a pupil of Hendrick van Balen (see fig. 33). Although this master was dean of the painters' guild in Antwerp, his small figure compositions must have meant little to van Dyck compared with the magnificent religious and mythological pictures that Rubens and his workshop were producing from about 1609. It has now become evident that van Dyck was more familiar with Rubens's paintings dating from around 1615 than has previously been assumed.

According to most authors, who have placed their faith in the memory and good intentions of a very old man who was a witness in a lawsuit heard in 1660–62, van Dyck had his own studio and pupils by 1615–16, when he himself was only about sixteen years old. This supposition seemed to support the view that the young man was a sort of Mozart with a brush. A new, more critical reading of the relevant documents by Margaret Roland now suggests that van Dyck—so often distinguished as never having







Left

3. Detail of the greyhound in van Dyck's portrait of James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox (fig. 41)

4. Van Dyck drew this compositional sketch for the equestrian portrait of Albert de Ligne, Prince of Barbançon and Arenberg, at Holkham Hall. However, he revised the horse's hind legs in the painting. A second drawing in the British Museum lacks the page, but represents the horse and rider in the same direction and position as in the painting. Pen drawing, 9 × 9½ inches. Gift of Harold K. Hochschild, 1940 (40.91.16)

Below

5. Studies for the greyhound in figure 3. Black chalk, with white chalk highlights, 18½ × 12¾ inches. London, British Museum



studied under Rubens—was indeed his pupil around the mid- to late teens, and then remained in Rubens's studio as the master's principal assistant after becoming a member of the guild in February 1618. The arrangement continued until van Dyck went to London sometime in the second half of 1620 (in July of that year he was described in a letter to the Earl of Arundel as still with Rubens). It was apparently only after his return to Antwerp from England in March 1621 and before his departure for Italy in October that van Dyck first had an independent workshop (the so-called Dom van Ceulen, or Cathedral of Cologne, studio) and a few pupils of his own.

Even before this revised history of the early Antwerp years was put forward, it was emphasized by Christopher Brown that van Dyck's first dated paintings are from 1618. While working for Rubens on large projects—though not, or not to any great extent, on the tapestry cartoons illustrating the history of the Roman Consul Decius Mus (these monumental canvases in the Collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein will be exhibited at the Museum in the fall of 1985)—van Dyck painted a considerable number of independent pictures. They reveal a close study of Rubens's working methods and style and, at the same time, a determination to be original. The most fecund faculty of the young van Dyck was fast, virtuoso execution; Rubens recognized this when he assigned his disciple the actual painting of the canvas ceiling pictures (now lost) for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp.

When van Dyck was working on his own designs he frequently made substantial changes as the work progressed; on several occasions he turned

6. Van Dyck's *Samson and Delilah*, painted when the artist was about twenty years old, was inspired by Rubens's design (see fig. 7). The younger artist's fluid brushwork and effortless suggestion of textures contrast to Rubens's emphasis on sculptural modeling and convincing space. More remarkable, however, is van Dyck's superficial treatment of the story: every gesture and expression concerns the immediate business of cutting the sleeping hero's hair. In Rubens's work Delilah's hands and face express resignation and regret, bringing to mind not only Samson's seduction but his pitiful decline, and therefore the fragility of human virtue. Oil on canvas, 58 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 90 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. London, Dulwich Picture Gallery



7. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) probably painted *Samson and Delilah* about 1610–12 for the wealthy Antwerp merchant, burgomaster, and collector Nicolaes Rockox. The dramatic and erotic composition draws upon antique sculpture and the works of Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Adam Elsheimer, and adds to these sources an energy and psychological intensity that were entirely new to Flemish art in the early seventeenth century. Oil on wood, 72 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 80 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. London, National Gallery



Right

8. The modeling and surface texture seen in this detail of *Portrait of a Man* (fig. 9) are inspired by Rubens, but van Dyck, even in this early work, is much less insistent than Rubens upon solidity of form.

out, within a short space of time, two or three renditions of a subject in which the initial design is transformed (for example, the three versions of *The Betrayal of Christ*, in the Prado, Madrid, in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and in the collection of Lord Methuen at Corsham Court). Like Rubens, van Dyck made sketches of broad compositional ideas (fig. 4), then studies of individual figures or motifs (fig. 5), and, finally, finished drawings that could be squared for transfer to the canvas. Rubens, however, usually appears to have been employing this procedure to realize an image that was already fully formed in his mind, whereas van Dyck's preliminary







Opposite

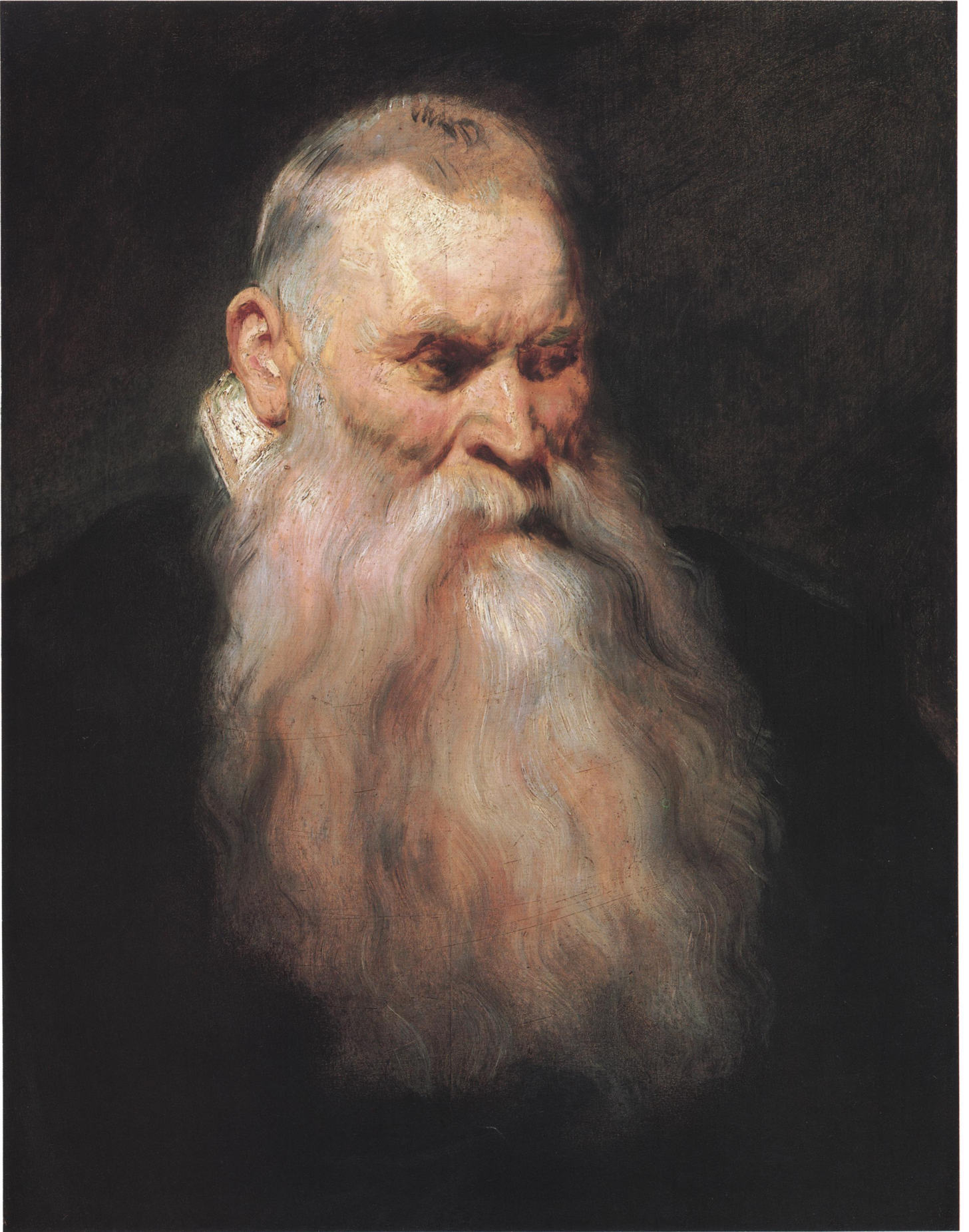
9. *Portrait of a Man*, painted when van Dyck was about eighteen or nineteen (1617–18), reveals his debt to Rubens and to earlier Flemish portraitists such as Anthonis Mor. However, in his early work van Dyck rarely followed Rubens's example of giving the sitter an expression of confidence and authority (see fig. 10). The introspective mood seen here, and in other contemporary portraits by van Dyck, is one of the young artist's most remarkable innovations. Oil on wood, $41\frac{3}{4} \times 28\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1889, Marquand Collection (89.15.11)

Left

10. *Portrait of a Man, Possibly an Architect or Geographer*, painted in 1597, is the earliest-known dated work by Rubens. The square and dividers are attributes of the sitter's profession. The other object is undoubtedly a watch in a gold case, and it serves here as a symbol of life's brevity. Oil on copper, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982 (1982.60.24)

work gives the impression of spontaneous invention. His finished pictures bear some resemblance to Rubens's oil sketches, from which van Dyck occasionally worked.

As a member of an upper middle-class family and as an artist working in such an important urban center as Antwerp, van Dyck would have aspired to be recognized as a painter of history pictures. Unfortunately, none of the remarkable religious and mythological paintings of van Dyck's early years has entered the collection of the Museum. The Metropolitan does, however, possess one portrait and two "study heads" that are excellent examples of his style around 1618. Although eagerly active as a religious artist, especially during the first half of his career, van Dyck never hesitated



to paint portraits, as Rubens and evidently Jordaens did. He was surely aware that all prominent Flemish painters of the preceding hundred years had produced portraits as well as works in more esteemed categories, and he would also have considered, if not calculated, that portraits were expected of court painters. Portrait commissions from private as well as public patrons were frequently an artist's entrée into more lucrative situations.

The early portrait of an unidentified man (fig. 9) is a rare example of van Dyck's first efforts in the genre. It dates from 1617–18, and compared to van Dyck's mature works or even to those dating slightly later (fig. 15), the picture is distinctively Flemish in style. As in Rubens's earliest known painting, the *Portrait of a Man, Possibly an Architect or Geographer* (fig. 10), the composition, the insistent sense of volume and texture, the patient reproduction of costume details, the passive pose and expression, and the close harmony of tones are traditional Flemish qualities, which may be traced back through the works of Frans Pourbus I and II and to those of Anthonis Mor (Antonio Moro, the Dutch portraitist to Charles V and Philip II). Only in the looser strokes on the sleeve, the pasty touches in the face and hair, and the draping of the hand are there hints of the painterly technique, and the elegant ease, that van Dyck was to assume during the next few years.

Three of the four or five portraits that could most instructively be set side by side with van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man* will be exhibited at the Museum in the fall of 1985: van Dyck's *Portrait of an Old Man* of about 1617–18, his *Portrait of an Old Woman*, dated 1618, and Rubens's *Portrait of Jan Vermoelen*, dated 1616, all in the Collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein. At the moment it may simply be observed that the comparison reveals Rubens's profound influence on the young van Dyck, who, still in his teens, was both a little unsure of his handling and independent enough not to imitate Rubens's vigorous modeling or his palette. Rubens's colors, especially in the flesh tones, are quite different from his former pupil's.

The close relationship between Rubens's and van Dyck's portraits and study heads painted around 1616–21 has caused some uncertainty about the attribution of particular pictures dating from this period. The *Portrait of Jan Vermoelen*, for example, is still considered by some scholars to be by van Dyck, and van Dyck is responsible for the *Portrait of a Man* in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Brunswick, West Germany, though it is assigned there to Rubens. The Metropolitan's *Study Head of an Old Man with a White Beard* (fig. 11) had been ascribed to Rubens, but when it was cleaned in 1973 the attribution was dismissed in favor of van Dyck.

To readers who are not specialists in Flemish art this changing of attributions between such accomplished artists as Rubens and van Dyck may seem surprising. Even setting aside problems of conservation, however, the portraits and particularly the study heads and the several painted series of Apostles (which were executed independently by Rubens, by van Dyck, by Jordaens, and no doubt by members of their studios) present complex questions of connoisseurship. Most of the similar portraits and study heads

11. *Study Head of an Old Man with a White Beard*, painted by van Dyck about 1618, was attributed to Rubens until about a decade ago, but it in fact provides an excellent example of how van Dyck's study heads differ from those by the older master (see fig. 12). Oil on wood, 26 × 20¼ inches. Egleston Fund, 1922 (22.221)



Above

12. Rubens's *Study of Two Heads*, which dates from around 1609, was probably done in preparation for an altarpiece, *The Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament*, in Saint Paul's, Antwerp, in which one of the saints resembles the figure on the right in this picture. The same head served as a model for a high priest and a river god in other paintings by Rubens, and around 1615 it was engraved as a portrait of Plato. The head on the left played similar but less important parts in later drawings and paintings by Rubens. Oil on wood, $27\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876–1967), 1967 (67.187.99)

Right

13. Van Dyck sketched the *Study Head of a Young Woman* about 1618. Undoubtedly taken from a live model and done quickly, it was perhaps a study for a Mary Magdalene or a mournful Virgin. Oil on paper, mounted on wood, $22\frac{1}{4} \times 16\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Gift of Mrs. Ralph J. Hines, 1957 (57.37)

date from within a few years of each other; they are almost never signed or dated; and in some instances a work, or even a group of pictures, depends upon the examples of another artist, usually Rubens. Study heads (such as fig. 12) were kept in Rubens's studio precisely for the purpose of being repeated, that is, for use as models for figures in religious or mythological pictures, or as exercises that pupils might emulate. The study heads were probably also valued as collectors' items. The various series of Apostles—sets of a dozen (or thirteen, with a painting of Christ) single-figure compositions, either half- or bust-length, which were often later dispersed and sometimes regrouped arbitrarily—exist, or did exist (lost works now compound the problem), in such numbers that confusion concerning their authorship has a long history of its own. The lawsuit of 1660–62 mentioned above was itself, like the various conclusions that have been drawn from it during the past fifty years, a colloquium of conflicting opinions concerning the attribution of an Apostle series to van Dyck.

The *Study Head of an Old Man* (fig. 11) is entirely consistent with van Dyck's indisputable paintings of Apostles and study heads in the fluid, imprecise description of the features, in the use of light and shadow, and in the thin, softly stroked treatment of the beard. The shaded, seemingly unfinished eyes, the nervous strokes suggesting but not defining the hair, and the broad application of white impasto are characteristic of van Dyck and not of Rubens. Also lacking, according to the standards set by Rubens (see fig. 12), is an impression of inner vitality: van Dyck's painting is remarkable more for its surface effects than for any sense of character. No finished picture has been connected with the work, and it may simply have been made to take advantage of an interesting, live (presumably) model than with any immediate purpose in mind.

The Museum's other early study head by van Dyck, that of a young woman (fig. 13), can hardly be faulted for its expressiveness. The painting must date from a little later than the *Study Head of an Old Man*, but still around 1618; the effortless flow of the cascading hair and the flair with which the area of white at the neck was painted in a few quick strokes may be described as signs of early maturity. In characterization, too, the *Study Head of a Young Woman* seems more mature, but the woman is also less of a stock type than the old man and may have been a model whom van Dyck found especially sympathetic.

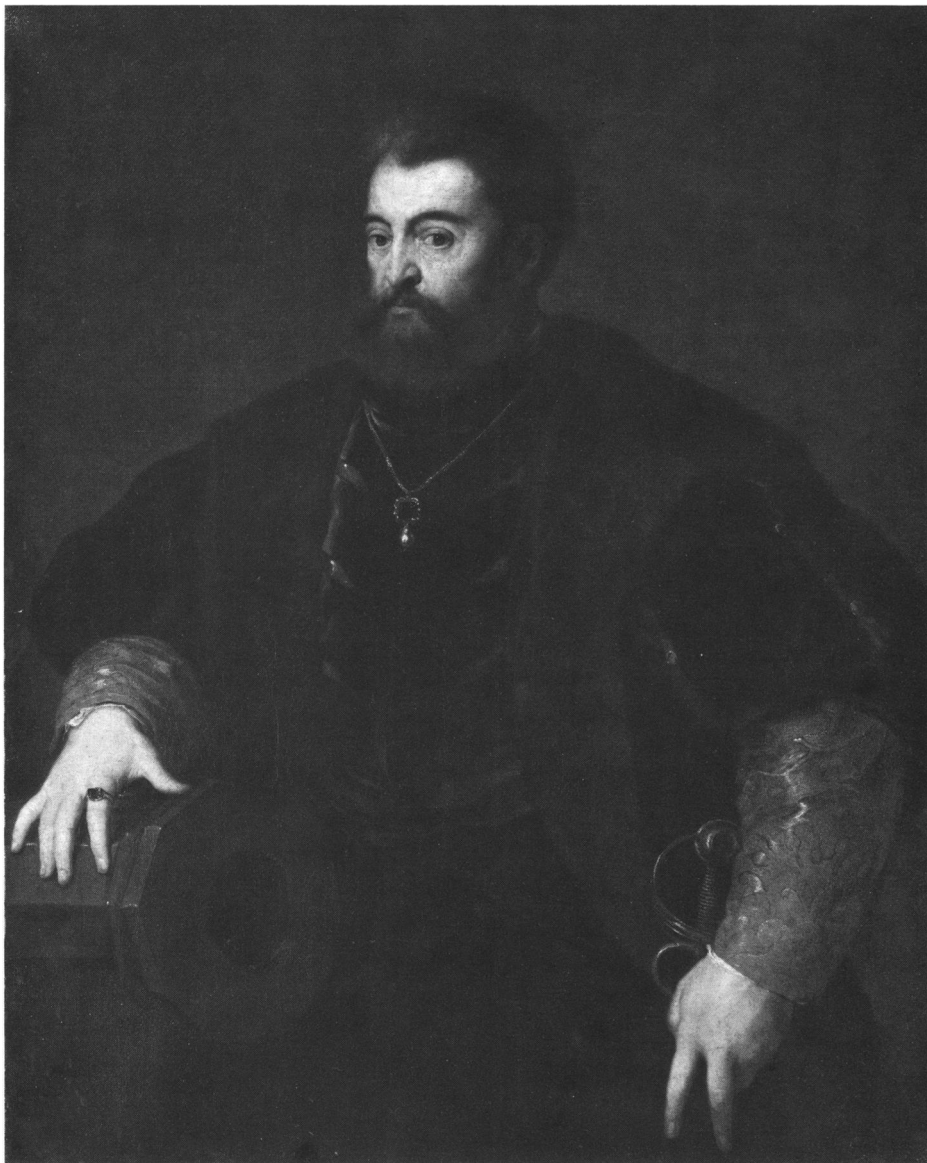
A very similar young woman appears in two other studies in oil on paper, one in a private collection in Los Angeles, the other in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. In the New York and Los Angeles paintings, there are ruled lines, writing—on our panel mostly in Italian—and, to the right (here along the bottom), numbers evidently recording payments, indicating that van Dyck took up the discarded leaves of an account book as an economical support. One wonders whether the handwriting could be that of Rubens or van Dyck—either would be consistent with van Dyck's authorship, since he worked in Rubens's studio at about this time—but too much of the writing is obscured, even in radiographs, to make an identification. One



14. Titian's portraits made an impression on van Dyck early in his career (see fig. 15). Although this one of Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, has been assigned to Titian himself, it is probably an Italian copy dating from the decades around 1600. A copy of the original portrait was apparently painted by Rubens and listed in his estate. The suggestion that the Museum's picture may be Rubens's copy is not supported by any reliable scholar of his work. Oil on canvas, $50 \times 38\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Munsey Fund, 1927 (27.56)

Right

15. The Museum's *Self-Portrait* is one of the first portraits by van Dyck in which his interest in the works of Titian is clearly evident, both in composition and technique (see fig. 14). The brushwork is exceptionally dry and departs radically from traditional Flemish practice. Oil on canvas, $47\frac{1}{8} \times 34\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The Jules Bache Collection, 1949 (49.7.25)



scholar thinks that the handwriting is not unlike van Dyck's, but it may be asked why van Dyck would be dashing off descriptions in Italian before he went to Italy, as there are no grounds for dating our study head and the related oil sketches later than the early Antwerp years.

Italian paintings, if not account books, were not uncommon in Antwerp houses, including that of Rubens. Nonetheless, van Dyck's first strong impression of Italian art would have been gained when he was in London in 1620–21, from pictures in the collections of the Earl of Arundel, the Duke of Buckingham, and James I. The Arundel collection, according to an inventory taken after Lady Arundel's death in 1655, included thirty-six paintings by Titian and more than fifteen each by Giorgione, Tintoretto, and Veronese.

The early trip to England was typical of van Dyck. He was remarkably precocious—Rubens's "first disciple" when still in his teens—and independent, the only young artist in Antwerp who could have served as Rubens's right-hand man and, at the same time, reveal such different sensibilities.





Left

16. This self-portrait may date from 1621, shortly before van Dyck left Antwerp for Italy. The pose apparently developed from that in the Museum's picture (fig. 15) but suggests greater confidence and poise. It resembles the more self-assured image that van Dyck adopted in his portraits of other artists (see fig. 18). Oil on canvas, $45\frac{7}{8} \times 36\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Leningrad, The Hermitage

Right

17. This is probably the last of van Dyck's three early self-portraits (see also figs. 15, 16), which were based on a single study. A radiograph has revealed that the right hand in this painting was originally in the same position as that in the Museum's picture. The gold chain is probably the one presented to van Dyck by the Duke of Mantua, whom the artist is said to have met in November 1622. Oil on canvas, $31\frac{7}{8} \times 27\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen



After a broad education, Rubens began his artistic studies late and continued them throughout his career; he did not assign himself the task of absorbing Titian's achievement (as if in recognition of the master's sovereignty) until he was in his fifties. Van Dyck was in his early twenties when he decided that Titian was the greatest painter who ever lived and his most appropriate model. Nothing changed his mind later on.

The *Self-Portrait* (fig. 15), in which van Dyck presents himself at about the age of twenty-one, recalls a number of three-quarter-length portraits by Titian (for example fig. 14, where allowance must be made for the dissimilar subject), and marks a moment several steps beyond the early *Portrait of a Man* (fig. 9). An intervening portrait of a man—that is, one of about 1619—was painted by van Dyck on the present canvas and then set aside, to be later (insofar as stylistic judgments may be made on the basis of radiographs) covered over by the paint surface seen today. Unfortunately, this surface has suffered considerably from overcleaning and relining in the past.

A single study, most likely a drawing, was probably employed for the Museum's *Self-Portrait* and for two others, now in Leningrad and Munich (figs. 16, 17). The question of the order in which they were painted is too complex to be considered here, except to state the most appealing hypothesis: our picture was probably executed in England around the end of 1620 (John Evelyn saw it in the Earl of Arlington's house in 1677); the Leningrad portrait may date from van Dyck's stay in Antwerp in 1621; and the Munich *Self-Portrait*, in which van Dyck wears a gold chain like the one given to him by the Duke of Mantua, was most likely painted in Italy around 1622–23.



18. The pendant portraits of the still-life painter Frans Snyders (1579–1657) and his wife, Margaretha de Vos, are among van Dyck's most impressive early works. They were probably painted in 1621, after van Dyck had returned to Antwerp from London. Van Dyck's picture of Snyders recalls Titian's portraits both in its painterly style and in the presentation of the artist as a gentleman, although Rubens and a number of earlier Flemish artists had also depicted themselves and their colleagues without the tools of their trade. Oil on canvas, $56\frac{1}{8} \times 41\frac{1}{2}$ inches. New York, Frick Collection

Comparisons of the three compositions support the conclusion that our *Self-Portrait* is the least mature. The Leningrad composition is at once more complex and better balanced; the head is more effectively the focus of the viewer's attention, which in the New York painting is distracted by the restless hands. One has the impression that in the Leningrad picture van Dyck has assumed for himself the image of the artist that he adopted at about the same time in his portraits of Frans Snyders (fig. 18) and Paul de Vos (Louvre). The young man in the Museum's painting does not appear that confident—or is he being a trifle coy?

Van Dyck left for Italy early in October 1621 and arrived at Genoa in late November. He stayed with two friends from Antwerp, the artists Cornelis and Lucas de Wael, to whom he returned repeatedly over the next six years. It is usually assumed that van Dyck—although he actually went to Antwerp—was headed for Italy when he left England in March 1621. His leave of absence for eight months, dated February 28, 1621, was obtained from



the king with the help of the Earl of Arundel; Lady Arundel had established herself at Venice a few months earlier, and van Dyck joined her entourage there in the late summer of 1622.

The artist did not approach the experience of Italy in the exploratory spirit of a student setting off on his *Wanderjahre*. He had already learned a great deal from Rubens, who, with Caravaggio and the Carracci, had been one of the most inventive painters of the Early Baroque period in Rome. Van Dyck's seeming self-sufficiency was largely facilitated by his relationship with Rubens: the older master had already absorbed and synthesized many of the lessons of ancient, Renaissance, and recent European art (including the works of such important northern artists as Dürer, Holbein, Lucas van Leyden, Frans Floris, and Hendrick Goltzius, who are rarely so much as mentioned in studies of van Dyck's art). Even in Rome van Dyck virtually ignored the traditional touchstones of classical antiquity, and Michelangelo, Raphael, Annibale Carracci, and Caravaggio, all famous names in Flanders, appear not to have engaged his attention, or at least not to have directly influenced his development.

His attitude toward the great masters allowed van Dyck to make Genoa—not Rome, Florence, Venice, or Naples—his home base. It is sheer speculation to suggest why the willful van Dyck would have favored any one situation over another: he may simply have felt at home in the north Italian port, and, perhaps through the de Wael brothers (who were dealers as well as painters), he may immediately have received attractive commissions. Like Rubens twenty years earlier, van Dyck found in Genoa aristocratic patrons who were suited to and in need of his abilities. The city had distinguished families who lived in magnificent style (as Rubens demonstrated in his book, *Palazzi di Genova*), but it did not have a worthy portraitist.

In art, as well as in society, van Dyck adapted gracefully to new milieux. His few earlier experiments in full-length portraiture done in Antwerp make the sitters look out of place next to the curtains and columns, as if they had only just arrived at a grand hotel. In van Dyck's Genoese settings, his patrons appear entirely at home in their spacious, shadowy, luxurious surroundings. All of van Dyck's later ideas about portraiture were essentially formulated in these years. With the help of what he had learned from Titian and from Rubens's Genoese portraits, van Dyck's half, three-quarter, and full-length figures assumed a patrician reserve; their bearing, enhanced by their elegantly tall and slender proportions, reveals a new stability (new to van Dyck, if not to his sitters) that is underscored by the framing elements of architecture (see fig. 19). The artist's first equestrian portraits and his first full-length family portraits date from this period.

The so-called Italian Sketchbook, now in the British Museum, is filled with van Dyck's records of compositions and motifs invented by Tintoretto, Veronese, and above all Titian. The Museum's *Portrait of a Lady, called the Marchesa Durazzo* (fig. 19)—her identity is uncertain—strongly brings to mind Titian's *Portrait of the Empress Isabella* (fig. 20). Van Dyck



Left
19. The identification of the sitter in the *Portrait of a Lady, called the Marchesa Durazzo* as a member of the Durazzo family appears to be modern and cannot be confirmed. However, the canvas is said to come from Genoa, and its style and that of the lady's dress support the supposition that van Dyck painted it there in the early to mid-1620s. This evocative portrait is strikingly effective in its suggestion of personality. Oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 37 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.615)

Above
20. Van Dyck's *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 19) may have been inspired by a copy of this portrait of Empress Isabella by Titian. The picture, painted in 1648, was evidently in Spain during the seventeenth century. Oil on canvas, 46 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 36 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Madrid, Museo del Prado

21. This portrait of Lucas van Uffel and the one in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 22) may have been painted about the same time and were probably based on a single drawing. Oil on canvas, $42\frac{1}{2} \times 35\frac{1}{16}$ inches. Brunswick, West Germany, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum

Right

22. *Portrait of a Man, probably Lucas van Uffel (1583?–1637)* was painted by van Dyck in Italy about 1622. Van Uffel was a wealthy Flemish merchant and collector in Venice. Here, his active role in worldly affairs is suggested by his pose and expression rather than by the objects on the table, which represent his intellectual pursuits. Oil on canvas, $49 \times 39\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.619)



rarely depicted female sitters who, as here and in Titian's picture, do not look out at the viewer. The windswept landscape and the billowing curtain, and the momentarily unattended book, heighten the impression of distant thoughts. This is at once one of the artist's most isolated sitters and one of the most approachable.

Sir Oliver Millar has spoken of an "underlying melancholy, an indefinably reticent and introspective mood" that sets the early Antwerp portraits by van Dyck (see fig. 9) apart from "the confidence that always pervades a portrait by Rubens." This mood continues and, if moods may, matures in the Italian portraits and, later, in the portraits of Charles I, but it was by no means the painter's standard formula. He was exceedingly sensitive to psychological subtleties and, apparently, to the particular viewers a portrait might have. Those sitters of whom something substantial is known, like Warwick and Richmond (figs. 38, 41), appear faithfully reflected in van Dyck's portraits of them. National character, too, is sensed in the disposition of each of his sitters: one is received differently in a Genoese palace than in an Antwerp home or an English country house.

Lucas van Uffel was a wealthy Flemish merchant and shipowner who





23. Painted in 1567–68, this late portrait by Titian represents Jacopo Strada, the greatest antiquarian of the time. The animated composition may have inspired the dramatic poses in some of van Dyck's portraits, such as the one of Lucas van Uffel (fig. 22). Oil on canvas, $49\frac{1}{4} \times 37\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

lived in Venice and formed an important collection of Italian and Northern paintings. In van Dyck's portrait of van Uffel in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Brunswick (fig. 21), the sitter's hand rests on a walking stick; in the background, ships sail off an Italianate coast. This image of a merchant prince is complemented by the Museum's portrait (fig. 22), which presents van Uffel as a man of learning. The antique head and the drawing probably allude to the plastic and the pictorial arts. Music is represented by the recorder and the bow of a viola da gamba resting on it. The celestial globe indicates a knowledge of astronomy, which is essential to navigation; the dividers could either refer to astronomy or to the virtues of prudence or temperance. Van Dyck rarely gave a sitter so many accessories, which suggests that these were at least partly van Uffel's idea.

It was Titian, however, and perhaps other Venetians such as Lotto, who inspired the animated composition. Titian's portrait of the artist, scholar, and collector Jacopo Strada (fig. 23) seems to anticipate van Dyck's *Portrait of van Uffel* (and his *Portrait of George Gage* in the National Gallery, London) in the energetic, inclined, turning pose, and perhaps in the sculpture and the folded note on the table. Nonetheless, van Dyck's picture remains an original, even surprising work when compared both with its antecedents and with approximately contemporary portraits of scholars and collectors by artists such as Rubens, Daniel Mijtens, and Thomas de Keyser.

Van Dyck's picture may have made an impression in an unexpected quarter: one of Rembrandt's most important paintings done in Amsterdam. Van Uffel retired to that city in the mid-1630s, and his collection was auctioned off there after he died in 1637. One of van Uffel's prize possessions, Raphael's *Portrait of Castiglione*, was in the second sale of 1639, and Rembrandt made a now-famous sketch of it. If the Museum's portrait was in Amsterdam as well, this might explain the striking resemblance between van Uffel's pose and that of the standing figure on the left in Rembrandt's *The Syndics of the Cloth Drapers' Guild* (fig. 24). Another intriguing comparison may be made between Rembrandt's *Portrait of Jan Six* (Six Foundation, Amsterdam) and van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man* (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden) dated 1619: the pose, the action of pulling on a glove, and even to some extent the preoccupied expression are similar. Perhaps Rembrandt, like Jan Lievens, Bartholomeus van der Helst, and Ferdinand Bol, was sympathetic to some of van Dyck's ideas, if not to those of his imitators.

The religious pictures that van Dyck painted in Italy are not well represented in American, or even transalpine, collections; the most impressive work of this period, *The Madonna of the Rosary* in the Oratorio del Rosario in Palermo, is seen only by diligent scholars and the most intrepid tourists. Some compensation for the remoteness of these works is provided by two paintings in the Museum, the small, sketchy *Virgin and Child* (fig. 26) and the very important *Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-stricken of Palermo* (fig. 25). The first work, inspired by Titian's late paintings, is probably a study for a more finished and, most likely, larger picture. Van Dyck must have been satisfied, indeed overburdened, by the demand for this subject in



24. The standing figure on the left in Rembrandt's *The Syndics of the Cloth Drapers' Guild* (1661–62) was possibly inspired by van Dyck's portrait of Lucas van Uffel (fig. 22), which may have been in Amsterdam, where van Uffel died in 1637. Radiographs show that Rembrandt arrived at this pose only after considering another, in which the figure does not look out at the viewer and is much less important to the action of the group. Oil on canvas, $75\frac{3}{8} \times 109\frac{1}{16}$ inches. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Italy. The intercession of Saint Rosalie, on the other hand, was a theme of immediate, not traditional, interest to patrons in Palermo, and was presumably a greater challenge to the artist.

Van Dyck was in the Sicilian city during the summer of 1624, when a severe plague decimated the population. The remains of Rosalie, Palermo's patron saint, were discovered on July 15, and an inscription, supposedly composed by the protectress herself, turned up forty days later. Van Dyck invented the saint's iconography and painted versions of two types of composition. One type, depicted here and in a larger replica in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, was based on paintings of the Assumption of the Virgin; the other, in which Rosalie kneels before her cave above Palermo, gestures toward the city, and turns her face to the light that descends from heaven, was inspired by pictures of the penitent Magdalene and, evidently, by Guido Reni's *Saint Francis in Ecstasy* in the Church of Saint Philip Neri, Naples. Finally, van Dyck's monumental *Madonna of the Rosary*, in which Rosalie is prominently featured, conflates these two "Saint Rosalie" types with the composition of Rubens's first version of the altarpiece for the Chiesa Nuova in Rome (*Saint Gregory and Other Saints Worshipping the Virgin*, now in Grenoble). Van Dyck fled Palermo with the *Madonna of the Rosary* in September 1624; it was completed in Genoa in 1627 and received in Sicily in 1628.

The urgent, or at least unanticipated, circumstances of van Dyck's interest in Saint Rosalie may be reflected in the fact that he took up a canvas on which an engaging self-portrait had already been sketched (fig. 27). This comparatively intimate record of the artist's appearance in, presumably, the summer of 1624 was recently discovered through autoradiography (see Bibliography). The self-portrait and the many alterations van Dyck made in the painting's design during its execution indicate the picture's priority over the version in Munich.

Overleaf

25. In van Dyck's *Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-stricken of Palermo*, the patron saint of Palermo is seen above the city. The skull and the gestures of the putti at the lower left refer to the plague of 1624. The crown of roses, known in the Renaissance as a reward to martyrs, refers to Rosalie's name. The painting was purchased between 1646 and 1649 by Antonio Ruffo, the collector who, in 1654, bought Rembrandt's *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, now in the Metropolitan Museum. Oil on canvas, $39\frac{1}{4} \times 29$ inches. Purchase, 1871 (71.41)

26. It is generally agreed that van Dyck painted this *Virgin and Child* in Italy as a study, or *modello*, for a more finished work. The study recalls Rubens's many treatments of the subject, but the composition and, to some extent, the type of the Virgin are derived from Titian. Oil on wood, $25\frac{1}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Fletcher Fund, 1951 (51.33.1)





27. Autoradiography has recently revealed this self-portrait sketched by van Dyck on the canvas that he employed for his painting of Saint Rosalie (fig. 25)

Right

28. *The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria* dates from 1628–32, when van Dyck was in Antwerp. It may have been painted for the Church of the Recollects in that city, where it was recorded in 1754. Saint Catherine was valued as an intercessor because of her mystical marriage to Christ. She was recognized as the patron of, among others, young girls, students, and philosophers. Oil on canvas, $43 \times 35\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Bequest of Lillian S. Timken, 1959 (60.71.5)



Van Dyck returned to Antwerp in the fall of 1627. During the next four years he was the leading portraitist in the southern Netherlands, and Antwerp's most prominent painter of altarpieces and private religious pictures. Rubens's absence from the city between September 1628 and March 1630 must have multiplied van Dyck's opportunities, but he already had a great reputation of his own, as well as a sophisticated style freshly informed by study in Italy. This is amply evident in *The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (fig. 28), which was probably painted about 1630. Catherine, like Rosalie, was a young noblewoman who renounced her riches and devoted her life to Christ. Her highborn station is suggested by a string of pearls in her hair, as it is in many paintings of the saint by Titian, Veronese, Correggio, and other Italian artists of interest to van Dyck.

Although van Dyck did not depend very much upon symbols to convey





29. Rubens submitted this design, *The Glorification of the Eucharist*, for an altarpiece ensemble for the Carmelite Church in Antwerp. The work was carried out by the sculptor Hans van Mildert and the painter Gerard Seghers in 1637–38. Oil on wood, 28 × 19 inches. Bequest of Ogden Mills, 1929 (37.160.12)

Right

30. Saint Catherine. Detail of figure 28

meaning—here, for example, expressions and gestures beautifully suffice—the present painting shows that he could incorporate them effectively. The figures are set beside a rose bush and beneath an apple tree. The apple symbolized the Fall of Man, but when it was shown with Christ or the Virgin it referred, by contrast, to salvation (in the Middle Ages Christ became known as the New Adam, Mary as the New Eve). The composition may also allude more specifically to the Song of Solomon (8:5): “I raised thee up under the apple tree.” The rose was one of the Virgin’s most common attributes; the red rose stood for martyrdom (as does the palm held by Catherine), the Passion of Christ, and the Virgin’s sorrow at his fate.

Like his symbols, van Dyck’s formal sources in the works of other artists are never obviously employed. To be sure, he had a wide knowledge of paintings, prints, and other fonts of information, but the same may be said for any astute artist of the age. What sets van Dyck apart, however, is that he referred repeatedly to Rubens and to Titian, and that he had the ability to make any idea seem spontaneously his own.

Rubens’s presentation of spiritual subjects was informed by a profound understanding of sacred iconography (see fig. 29), just as his religious convictions were supported by stoical philosophy (which he discussed in his letters). It takes nothing away from the emotional resonance of Rubens’s religious works to observe that they seem to some extent rationalized by his interest in church history and doctrine. Van Dyck, though by no means unfamiliar with these matters, was much more inclined to religiosity, to emotionalism in the rendering of a spiritual scene. In representations of martyrdoms and subjects such as the Lamentation, van Dyck’s protagonists appear rapturous; similar paintings of a saint by van Dyck and by Rubens might be entitled as an Ecstasy and a Vision, respectively. The emotions are quieter, but as deeply felt, in the Museum’s pictures by van Dyck—*The Virgin and Child* (fig. 26), *Saint Rosalie* (fig. 25), and *The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine* (fig. 28). His spiritual disposition is also sensed in the *Study Head of a Young Woman* (fig. 13), which may have served as a model for a painting of the Virgin or the Magdalene. The nature of van Dyck’s religious beliefs must have affected his responses to Italian art, and in part determined which Italian artists he found most meaningful.

Van Dyck presents plethoric problems of attribution, since (especially in England from 1632 to early 1634 and from 1635 to his death in London in 1641) he employed a number of assistants, and the portraits he painted, particularly those of imperial personages (see fig. 37), were often reproduced for distribution to relatives, friends, and supporters. Later painters produced pastiches as well as copies of his work; some of the prettiest as well as the most prosaic are plainly alien to van Dyck’s oeuvre.

Some of the thorniest areas of expertise are those relating to van Dyck’s oil sketches. A pair of small grisailles in the Metropolitan (figs. 31, 32)—which, although acquired in 1949, were first published only recently—are a case in point. At least three distinguished scholars of van Dyck accept the panels as being by the artist; others, including two former members of the





Museum's Department of European Paintings, are not convinced of his responsibility. The same type of horse and style of execution are found in three oil sketches by van Dyck that date from about 1630: *The Beheading of Saint George* in Oxford, *The Crucifixion* in Brussels, and *The Raising of the Cross* in Bayonne. Drawings also stand in support of his authorship, among them two pen drawings, one in the Museum's collection (fig. 4) and one in the British Museum, that are both studies for the *Equestrian Portrait of Albert de Ligne, Prince of Barbançon and Arenberg*, at Holkham Hall. Unlike Rubens, van Dyck favored preparatory sketches in pen on paper over those in oil on wood or another support. These two panels, however, and a third, a very similar oil sketch of a man mounting a horse that was sold in Berlin in 1930, would have served a special function in van Dyck's studio as models for pictures of horses and riders in various positions, whether in portraits or in other compositions. A large canvas from Rubens's studio, the so-called *Riding School*, formerly in Berlin, had the same purpose and was to some extent the source of van Dyck's equestrian motifs. The type of horse, on the other hand, is obviously van Dyck's own, an equine counterpart to thoroughbreds like Richmond and his dog (fig. 41).

If van Dyck ever, in his youth, subscribed to the academic view that "face



31,32. These small panels, *A Man Mounting a Horse* and *A Man Riding a Horse*, were probably painted by van Dyck around 1630 as models for equestrian portraits or historical compositions. Oil on wood, monochrome; $10\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$ inches, $10 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Siegfried Bieber, 1949 (49.145.2,1)

painting” was a low art form, he must have abandoned it in Italy. The example of Titian and other great artists, and van Dyck’s own success as a history painter, may have made him feel more comfortable with his specialty, portraiture. As he matured, he clearly came to appreciate the variety of human nature—and no wonder, given the personalities he knew. This interest is impressively evident in the *Iconography*, a series of prints conceived by van Dyck to represent important people of the day (see figs. 33, 34). Who they might be was largely determined by the artist himself. The eighty engravings comprise three groups: the first includes sixteen princes and military leaders; the second, twelve statesmen and philosophers; and the third, fifty-two artists and collectors. The project was begun around 1628–30 and was still in progress in 1636. Van Dyck drew the sitters in black chalk, in some cases from life, and in others from portraits that he or another artist, such as Rubens, had painted earlier. Monochrome oil sketches were then made by van Dyck or by his assistants as guides for the various engravers he employed. In addition to the eighty engravings, there are fifteen plates that van Dyck etched himself (see fig. 34).

A small panel in the Museum (fig. 35) is a good copy after an oil sketch that was painted for the *Iconography* by van Dyck, most likely one of the



HENRICVS VAN BAELEN



Left

33. This print from the *Iconography*, the portrait series begun by van Dyck around 1628–30, represents the painter Hendrick van Balen (1575–1632), with whom van Dyck began his apprenticeship at the age of ten. It was engraved by Paulus Pontius. $9\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{16}$ inches. Gift of Mary W. Tweed, 1929 (29.52.7)

Right

34. Fifteen of the plates in the *Iconography* were etched by van Dyck himself. The technique was better suited than engraving to his fluid style. Here, he has portrayed the highly skilled engraver Lucas Vorsterman, who is said to have been driven to an emotional breakdown by Rubens's demanding supervision of prints of his works. Vorsterman later worked with van Dyck. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{32}$ inches. Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929, H. O. Havemeyer Collection (29.107.42)

two sketches depicting Rubens that are now in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch at Boughton House. A self-portrait by Rubens dating from the late 1620s or early 1630s was probably van Dyck's model.

Early in the spring of 1632 the artist went to England at the invitation of Charles I. He was knighted on July 5 of that year and granted an annual pension of £200 in addition to whatever prices he placed on his pictures (which were substantial, even after the king knocked them down) and a splendid house on the Thames. A beautiful mistress was secured by the artist himself. In 1639 van Dyck married one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting, Mary Ruthven.

Although portraits of the royal family were usually dispatched elsewhere, Charles I kept many by van Dyck in his own collection. It is not surprising that the Museum has none. A superb portrait of the queen, Henrietta Maria (fig. 37), now in a private collection, graced the Museum's large Flemish gallery in the summer of 1983. The Metropolitan owns a good copy of van Dyck's canvas at Windsor Castle representing the future Charles II and James II and their sister Mary in 1635 (fig. 36) that gives some idea of the artist's ability to capture the charm of children without sacrificing an aristocratic ambiance or resorting to cuteness. Van Dyck had a keen eye for the signs of a sitter's age, whether he or she were a child, a teenager (for



35. This is a contemporary copy of an oil sketch of Rubens by van Dyck. He probably followed a self-portrait by Rubens, but the arrangement of the hair and especially of the hands is more likely van Dyck's invention. Small oil sketches like this were used as guides by the engravers of the *Iconography* (see figs. 33, 34). Oil on wood, monochrome, 10 × 7⁵/₈ inches. Bequest of Bertha H. Buswell, 1941 (42.23.1)

example, the *Portrait of Maria de Raet* in the Wallace Collection, London), in early or late maturity (see figs. 38, 41), or venerably aged (like the Genoese senator and his wife depicted in the pair of portraits in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin).

English portraits account for a large proportion of van Dyck's surviving pictures. His entire oeuvre comprises about nine hundred works, which is, if allowance is made for very modest losses, about one for every week of his comparatively short career. The most monumental, such as *Charles I on Horseback with M. de St. Antoine* in Buckingham Palace, or the most famous, such as *Le Roi à la chasse* in the Louvre, cannot be considered here. And we need not consider the many English portraits in which van Dyck left almost everything but the face to his assistants. The Museum's two full-length portraits of English noblemen, both dating from the early to mid-1630s, are entirely by van Dyck and demonstrate his inexhaustible inventiveness. Time and time again he took on the seemingly restrictive task of depicting one or two figures in a limited space, and almost every



36. *The Three Eldest Children of Charles I* is a copy of the canvas by van Dyck at Windsor Castle. It may have been painted after his death, but its standard of execution appears to be that of a replica produced in his studio. Oil on canvas, $50\frac{1}{8} \times 58\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900 (25.110.48)

37. Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), the wife of Charles I, is depicted here at twenty-seven, when she was expecting her sixth child. This is probably the portrait van Dyck painted in 1636 for Francesco Borromini, “Cardinal Protector of England.” Van Dyck’s awareness that the picture would be judged by this distinguished connoisseur may account in part for its exceptional quality. Oil on canvas, $41\frac{1}{2} \times 33\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Private Collection

composition has the life of a new idea and something of the life of the individual.

Robert Rich, Second Earl of Warwick (fig. 38), was a revolutionary and privateer, an adventurer who gave up the rather loose company of the court of James I for a career as a sailor of fortune. He founded companies in Virginia and the West Indies and colonies in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. In the teens he attacked Spanish ships in the East Indies on behalf of the Duke of Savoy; from 1627 he served Charles I in the same capacity. Warwick was soon speaking out against the king’s suppression of civil rights, and from 1642 he was commander of the navy for Parliament. A man of great integrity and genuine faith, Warwick could not approve the abolition of the monarchy and so held no public office during the Commonwealth. Nonetheless, he was a strong supporter of Cromwell, whose daughter married Warwick’s grandson and heir.

The spirit, if not the letter, of Warwick’s life is embodied in van Dyck’s portrait of him. The same sitter was depicted in 1632 by Mijtens, the Dutch







Opposite

38. Robert Rich (1587–1658), Second Earl of Warwick, seen here as he appeared in 1632–35, wears the everyday dress of a wealthy aristocrat. His silver and red costume, enriched by an embroidered doublet, allowed van Dyck to exercise his formidable powers as a colorist. Warwick's service at sea is indicated by the armor and commander's baton at his feet and by the naval battle in the background. Oil on canvas, 81 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 50 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. The Jules Bache Collection, 1949 (49.7.26)

Left

39. Daniel Mijtens's style was far more advanced in its realism than that of most earlier English portraitists, but his conservative compositions, such as this portrait of Charles I (1600–1649) painted in 1629, must have seemed lifeless to prospective patrons once they had seen examples of van Dyck's work. Oil on canvas, 78 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 55 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Gift of George A. Hearn, 1906 (06.1289)

painter who was van Dyck's most accomplished predecessor at the English court, but along with almost all English portraiture up to then, the picture went out of fashion with van Dyck's arrival in London in 1632. Mijtens's portrait of Charles I, dated 1629 (fig. 39), has none of the naïveté of Elizabethan portraiture in its description of form in space, but it falls flat anyway compared with van Dyck's suave characterization of the king.

James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox (fig. 41), was not, like Warwick, an exponent of *la vita activa*, but he did pursue the alternative, having studied at Cambridge, traveled on the Continent, and served as privy councillor. A royalist, he was known for his even temper and lack of enemies, even among those of Charles I. The latter gave away Richmond's bride, Mary Villiers, daughter of the king's favorite, Buckingham.

In many of the portraits he painted in England (and in the southern Netherlands in 1634–35), van Dyck's rich and refined effects are enhanced by a subtle simplicity. Here, for example, Richmond stands at ease in a bare space, accompanied by a loyal greyhound. The dog serves to bring the eye up from the floor and the pale green stockings to the red and gold Jewel, or Lesser George, on the duke's chest and to his confident stare.

Van Dyck's technical facility, the effortless fluidity of his brushwork, and his exquisite sense of tonal values speak for themselves in such mature works as the portraits of Richmond and of Warwick. It might be suggested (at the risk of sounding somewhat formalist) that these refinements were ends in themselves, certainly more than they were for Rubens, and perhaps more than for almost any other contemporary painter. Even in a portrait with a neutral background Rubens is descriptive: he conveys a clear impression of solidity and three-dimensional space (see fig. 10). So does van Dyck in his portraits, but not with the same sculptural effect. Van Dyck thought more in terms of patterns, which in their enhancement of the surface make his subjects assert themselves in a decorative as well as an expressive way. This quality is inherent in any painting, but in Rubens's work, and in most Renaissance and Baroque art, it is countered by conspicuous cues to depth. Van Dyck's approach encourages a painterly technique, but there is more to the distinction than this, for Rubens's style is also painterly. One might speak of a predisposition to think of pictures as designs rather than illustrations.

Van Dyck's cultivated style was, it must be admitted, more suited to the portrayal of high society than to the expression of weighty ideas (how lightly Rosalie, in figure 25, assumes the role of intercessor). A history painting by Rubens, such as *Samson and Delilah* (fig. 7), resembles a moment in the course of a narrative, whereas van Dyck's version (fig. 6) might strike one as a visualization of that moment only, the counterpart to a well-turned phrase rather than a paragraph of text. Rubens could supply lengthy explanations of his allegorical pictures; van Dyck almost never painted one. This circumstance, surprising for a "disciple" of Rubens, reveals how arbitrary, how essentially artistic, was van Dyck's admiration of Rubens, Titian, Veronese, and Correggio. He had his own ideas about religious, historical, and other themes, but style he readily recognized.

No wonder that Joshua Reynolds, the painter but also the pedant, had reservations about van Dyck, while Thomas Gainsborough (see fig. 42) was prepared to take him at face value. The two artists were linked by their unquestioning faith in the beautiful: that alone, in van Dyck's work, seems sufficient evidence of virtue in a sitter, or of meaning in a spiritual or mythological scene. Perhaps Gainsborough, on his deathbed, really did say, and really believed, that "we are all going to Heaven and Vandyke is of the party."

But how, finally, may van Dyck be described in more down-to-earth terms? Like Gainsborough, he is at once familiar and elusive—we are put at ease in the presence of his work and yet go away unsure about our knowl-





edge of the man. (It was not, to be sure, a Baroque painter's purpose to convey something of his own personality in his pictures, but we know more about Rembrandt, Jordaens, and perhaps even such a public man as Rubens—more about what they knew, thought, and valued—from their paintings than from their biographies.) Scholars describe van Dyck as willful, nervous, highstrung, or hypersensitive, mainly on the basis of his work, and then—always with Rubens's career in mind—see signs to support their analyses in the painter's aloofness from his fellow artists, in his long bachelorhood, and in his seemingly unstable tendency to shift location. One wonders how much of this is romantic elaboration. Van Dyck's "nervous manner" might have been a carefully considered style (as it was for other spirited artists of the time, some of whom are now called Mannerists), while a few of his peculiar personality traits could be interpreted as expectable reactions to excessive popularity.

Van Dyck's manner may be difficult to describe objectively because he acquired it with ease: prodigies are always a problem for historians. Rubens, despite the extraordinary fertility of his intellect and imagination, is easier to deal with; his development may for the most part be examined in the customary way, with reference to his sources in the works of other artists, his sophisticated treatment of subjects and symbols, and his deliberate innovations in style. Van Dyck, by contrast, had little patience for programs, whether of training, of learned ideas, or of organization (one cannot imagine him taking on, as Rubens did, a commission to design and execute twenty-two large canvases describing in allegorical terms the politically delicate details of the life of Maria de' Medici). This may be why he was in his element when one image, and especially one figure (though he could subtly arrange two or more), was to be presented. For Rubens, a single figure existed within the great scheme of things—of history, or religion, or contemporary society. Van Dyck's approach was more intuitive; his figures seem more isolated and more subjectively conceived.

Even the most forthcoming of van Dyck's figures, such as Richmond (figs. 41, 43), appear to reflect something of the artist's nature, or his ideals, as well as the subject's. Van Dyck's religious figures, too, betray a peculiar expressivity (and we have seen that he was a religious man), but it is in van Dyck's portraits, and the portraits considered as a whole rather than particular works, that one most strongly senses his personality. His attraction to aristocratic sitters—it might be called a middle-class love of luxury and courtly manners—did not obscure his perception of individuality, and yet almost all of van Dyck's sitters share in a certain state of grace, of serenity, suavity, and elegance. If Holbein, in his incisive drawings and paintings, recorded the court of Henry VIII, then van Dyck might be said to have invented the court of Charles I—that is, the image of it that spread throughout Europe in his own time and has endured until ours. How different would be our idea of this age in England, and how altered the history of English portraiture, had van Dyck not accepted the invitation of the king to be his court painter.

41. James Stuart (1612–1655), Duke of Richmond and Lennox, was painted by van Dyck about 1634–35. The portrait is a good example of van Dyck's sensitivity to closely valued tones, which were generally lighter and somewhat silvery in his later works (compare the earlier portrait of van Uffel, fig. 22). The greyhound, a hunting dog, was an unofficial sign of nobility. Its inclusion here was inspired by Titian's *Portrait of Charles V with a Hound* (Prado), which in van Dyck's day was in the collection of Charles I. Oil on canvas, 85 × 50¼ inches. Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1889, Marquand Collection (89.15.16)

42. In portraits such as this one of Mrs. Grace Dalrymple Elliott (1754?–1823), Gainsborough appears to have made van Dyck's style his own. The tall proportions and graceful pose of the subject, as well as the attention to rich materials, the virtuoso brushwork, and the simple background, recall van Dyck's most accomplished English portraits (see fig. 41). Oil on canvas, 92¼ × 60½ inches. Bequest of William K. Vanderbilt, 1920 (20.155.1)

Right

43. James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox. Detail of figure 41

These considerations may partly explain why until recently little of lasting value has been written about van Dyck. Artists who solve problems, who work hard for solutions, are more conveniently analyzed. Van Dyck is not so easily understood: his creations are often brilliant, which is not something higher than what Rubens achieved, but different and indeed less substantial. A painter so appealing on the surface is seductive yet unsettling for many modern viewers—van Dyck does not speak to all ages. He spoke for his own time, to kindred spirits like Gainsborough, and he speaks now to those who value the fictions as well as the facts of human history.





Inside back cover: Detail of van Dyck's portrait of James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox (fig. 41)

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