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*Van Dyck's Collection: A Document Rediscovered**

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The purpose of this paper is to announce the rediscovery of a document which concerns the collection of works of art owned by Anthony van Dyck at the time of his death and the discovery of three more which touch on the same subject. The first document, the rediscovered one, is an indenture dated July 11th 1650 which was mentioned in print for the first (and as far as I know the only) time by Professor Ellis Waterhouse in a letter to the Editor of the *Burlington Magazine* in February, 1945.[1] Professor Waterhouse described the indenture on the basis of a photograph which he had seen; he believed the original to be in private hands in Sydney, Australia, though he did not know the name of the owner.

The inventory is, in fact, among the Wittewronghe Papers which have been deposited by the present baronet at the County Record Office in Hertford. Also among the Wittewronghe Papers are three other documents which throw light on the circumstances in which the indenture was drawn up. As far as we are concerned, the real importance of the 1650 indenture lies in the schedule of paintings formerly in the possession of van Dyck which is attached to it. However, a brief description of the nature of this indenture is necessary as it illuminates the circumstances of the dispersal of van Dyck's collection after his death. Professor Waterhouse wrote that the pictures in the attached schedule 'were being used by the executors of van Dyck's widow (who had remarried Sir Richard Price) and the trustees of his daughter, Justina, during her minority, as collateral against a loan from Sir John Wittewronghe and the estate of a certain Dame Anne Middleton.' This is an incorrect reading of what is a complicated, even obscure, document. The indenture was drawn up by two men, Sir John Wittewronghe and John Jones, and no executor or trustee of van Dyck's estate is party to it. Of Jones we know nothing except that he came from Cardiganshire. Of Sir John Wittewronghe we know a good deal: he was in fact the son of Lady Anne Middleton, the widow of Sir Thomas Middleton, an alderman of London (who is mentioned by Pepys), by her first marriage to Jacob Wittewronghe, a Dutch immigrant. She too was of Dutch extraction, having been born Anne van Ecker.

Wittewronghe in his capacity as executor of his mother's will considered himself to be in a position to dispose of the paintings listed in the schedule, and the circumstances by which this came about are explained by two of the three other documents in his family papers at Hertford. These are both dated 1644 – 6 years before the indenture – and emanate from 'the committee for seizing and sequestering the Estates of delinquents and Papists in the City of London and all within the Jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor sitting at Camden House.' The first is an order, dated 20th December, recording that a 'second seizure and restraint' has been made 'upon certain goods and pictures as the proper goods of Sir John Price Knight and Baronet.' (After van Dyck's death, his widow, Maria, as Vertue records, 'was courted by divers of quality – at last she marryed one Price of Wales whose father expected much money to pay debts saying that pictures could pay no debts.'[2] In fact, Maria died early in 1645, not long after the marriage, having had no children by Price.) The

* The existence of documents relating to van Dyck among the Wittewronghe Papers at Hertford was brought to my attention by Robert Bolleurs, who had stumbled across them when he was tracing the history of a Dutch painting from the Wittewronghe collection. I intend to publish full transcriptions of the four documents discussed here in the near future.

1 *Burlington Magazine*, LXXXVI (1945), 51.

2 *The Walpole Society*, XVIII (1929-30) (Vertue Notebooks Vol. I), 114.

order of the committee goes on to say that Sir John Wittewronghe has appeared before it to declare that Price's goods had in fact passed into the possession of Lady Anne Middleton 'by virtue of an execution for debt' prior to the committee's first seizure. The reason for Wittewronghe's submission was that if he could prove that this had happened, the goods belonged to his mother's estate (of which he was both executor and beneficiary) and could not therefore be sequestered by the committee on the ground that Price was either a delinquent or a Papist. I suspect he was a delinquent, probably a bankrupt. Wittewronghe then offered to assist the committee's officers in the preparation of an inventory of the goods in question. The second document, dated January 6th 1644 (Old Style), is a submission to the committee from Wittewronghe concerning the difficulties of making Lady Middleton's goods available to the committee's valuers: they were at Blackfriars in the house of a Mr. Andrews, who was 'always absent and out of the way.' Mention of Andrews is fascinating, because we know that a year later (March 25, 1645/6) Patrick Ruthven, the father of Lady van Dyck, addressed a petition to Parliament stating that his daughter was dead and that the pictures and works of art which van Dyck had left in his house in Blackfriars had disappeared, some of them having been smuggled onto the Continent by one Richard Andrew. Ruthven requested an injunction to prevent Andrew from removing the rest of the collection but clearly without much success as two years later (February 26, 1647/8) he was obliged to renew his petition with further complaints against Andrew.

If we now return to the original indenture, its contents will to some extent become clearer. It states quite unequivocally that the pictures in the schedule had come into the hands of Lady Anne Middleton and Wittewronghe. Wittewronghe must therefore have extracted at least some of the pictures from Andrews' house. It then recites the terms of van Dyck's will which, in brief (it was published in full by Carpenter),[3] divided his English property between his wife and his newborn daughter Justina. It names the three executors, Maria van Dyck, Katherina Cowley and Aurelius de Meghem. Maria and Katherina proved the will, it records, and Maria subsequently married Price, but both died before the estate could be wound up. At this point in the indenture the mysterious Jones affirms that both Maria and Katherina are dead and that de Meghem had renounced the executorship. We learn that Jones owed Wittewronghe £1500 and then comes the nub of the document – Wittewronghe declares that if he and any persons deriving title to the pictures from him enjoy them without any opposing claims then the recognizance (that is, the £1500) shall not apply. Reduced to its simplest terms, Jones is let off the debt in return for providing Wittewronghe with a sort of insurance against claims from anyone claiming title to the pictures under the terms of van Dyck's will.

There is no doubt far more to this than meets the eye; perhaps Jones (who came from the same part of the world as Price) was himself a claimant and the recognizance was an award of damages and costs against Jones after an unsuccessful claim. Legal documents of this type were often drawn up in order to disguise their real, illegal, purpose. However, as far as we need to be concerned, these documents do clarify the fate of some of the works of art in van Dyck's possession at his death. According to Ruthven's petition, they were carried away from van Dyck's studio by Richard Andrew or Andrews. Some at least of them were seized at Andrew's house by Wittewronghe in payment of a debt owed by Price to Wittewronghe's mother or step-father. As we shall see, Wittewronghe must have then disposed of some or all of them and as a consequence of a counter-claim for them, he drew up the indenture with Jones.

We now come to the more interesting matter of the schedule of paintings attached to the indenture of 1650. At this point I must introduce my third new document, a valuation of the items on this schedule. It is loose in the Wittewronghe Papers, in a hand quite different from that of the indenture and there is no firm indication of whether it is contemporary with the indenture – as seems likely, since the items exactly correspond to those on the schedule – or whether it is the inventory referred to in the second document of 1644: Wittewronghe says that as access to Andrews' house is proving so difficult, he will supply the committee with an inventory in his possession. This could be that inventory.

In neither the schedule nor the valuation are the artists of the works named, but here we can call on the evidence of the 1644 list of van Dyck's paintings which is held in the Austrian National Archives in Vienna. I am relying on the description of this document published by Jenny Müller-Rostock.[4] The list is in Italian and from Müller-Rostock's silence we must for the time being presume that neither the document itself nor its loca-

3 W.H. Carpenter, *Pictorial Notices, consisting of a memoir of Sir Anthony van Dyck...* (London, 1844), 75-7.

4 'Ein Verzeichnis von Bildern aus dem Besitze des Van Dyck,' *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, n.f. XXXIII (1922), 22f.

tion in the Vienna archives give any clue as to its authorship; nor does it possess any more precise date than the year, 1644. If we compare the 1650 list and the 1644 list, there are some striking similarities. In both lists the first two items are the same: 'One picture called the Senators' and *'Tre senatori di Venezia con loro figlioli in un quadro di Titiano;* 'One picture called the Andromeda' and *'L'Andromada con Perseo et il monstro.'* Now it is also noteworthy that in the valuation of the 'English' list, these two items are valued far higher than the rest: *The Senators* at £50 and the *Andromeda* at £20. The highest figure in the rest of the list is £8, for a double portrait, *The Prince and Princess of Orange. The Senators* and the *Andromeda* are on the Vienna list in the group of paintings by Titian, and they have been identified as the *Vendramin Family,* now in the National Gallery, London, and the *Perseus and Andromeda* in the Wallace Collection. There is at least one further twist to this matter. In 1955 Sir Oliver Millar published a payment in the archives at Alnwick, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, in which the purchase of a painting 'called the Senators' and a second 'the Andromida' is recorded.[5] These were the two Titians. The payment is dated 17th January 1645 (O.S.). From this it seems likely that the indenture of 1650 refers at least in part to paintings which had already been disposed of, presumably by Wittewronghe. No wonder Wittewronghe was so keen to establish his absolute right to the pictures. Perhaps Northumberland had questioned his ownership of them after the sale.

If, as seems probable, the first two paintings on the 1650 indenture list, the ones that are so highly valued, are by Titian, it is likely that most of the others are by van Dyck himself. There are six portraits of members of the Royal Family (it is not surprising that these were valued at such low figures in 1650): 'The King on Horseback' – this could not have been the National Gallery's painting, nor the supposed *modello* for it in the Royal Collection nor *Charles I with Monsieur St. Antoine* (in view of the fact that the first two items on the list went to the Duke of Northumberland, I wonder if it would be the reduced copy of the latter now at Petworth which was seen by Richard Symonds at Northumberland House on 27th December 1652 and which is described in a Northumberland inventory of 1671[6]); 'The King in Armour' whole-length – this calls to mind the picture in Leningrad but that was apparently presented to Lord Wharton soon after its execution in about 1638; 'Prince Charles,' 'Princess Mary,' and 'The Queens pictures 2, 3 quarters.' These last are valued extremely low, 10 shillings for the two. The highest valuation among the van Dycks is 'The Prince and Princess of Orange,' £8. This presumably refers to the full-length double portrait of *William II of Orange and Charles I's daughter Mary* which is now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The couple were married on 12th May 1641 and so this marriage portrait must have been amongst the very last pictures painted by van Dyck. Other portraits are of 'The Lady Aubeney': this is Katherine Howard, Lady d'Aubigny. This mention makes it unlikely, as Oliver Millar assumes in the Royal Collection catalogue, that a single portrait of Lady d'Aubigny was never painted by van Dyck and that the copy in the Royal Collection is taken from the famous double portrait of her and a woman thought to be Frances Stuart, Duchess of Portland, in the Hermitage.[7] Katherine Howard, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Suffolk, married George Stuart, Seigneur d'Aubigny, in 1638, and so this painting too must have been painted towards the end of van Dyck's career. Also here are Lady Bedford and Lady Portland, who in the valuation is ungraciously listed with 'a courtisan in red.' There is a portrait of van Dyck, presumably a self-portrait, and a portrait of the painter's coachman.

There is at least one copy after Titian, 'Venus Blinding Cupid.' This can be identified in the Vienna list in the section devoted to copies by van Dyck after Titian: *'Una fictione Pœtica di 3 Donne et diesi Cupidetti,'* and the Borghese painting had, of course, been copied in the *Italian Sketchbook.* Also in the *Italian Sketchbook* is a drawing of that curious pastiche of Titian known as 'Titian and his sweetheart' or 'Titian and his mistress' which van Dyck, suspending his critical judgement, believed to be an original. A painting of the composition attributed to Titian was in the Villa Borghese when van Dyck was in Rome: a painted copy presumably by van Dyck, 'Titian and his sweetinge', is in the 1650 schedule and *'Ritratto dil modemo Titiano con una Cortegiana'* is in the Vienna list under the copies by van Dyck after Titian. There is in addition the engraving by van Dyck of this unlovely composition with a dedication to Lucas van Uffel. Also worth noting in the English list is 'Phyllis and Coridon'; as far as I know there is no example of this pastoral subject by van Dyck. There remain works that are neither by Titian nor van Dyck: 'Two Italian Pictures 3 quarters'; '2 Alabaster boyes called Stattues' and 'the Kings picture in plaster of Paris.'

5 'Notes on British Painting from Archives: III,' *Burlington Magazine,* XCVII (1955), 255-6.
6 O. Millar, *Pictures in the Royal Collection: Tudor, Stuart and early Georgian Pictures* (London, 1963), I, 94.
7 Idem, 107.

Our knowledge of van Dyck's collection is incomplete, indeed it is sketchy in the extreme. That he owned an important group of paintings by the artist he admired above all others, Titian, we know from Pierre de la Serre.[8] In addition to the *Vendramin Family* and the *Andromeda*, the Vienna list mentions another 17 paintings by Titian, as well as 2 by Tintoretto, 3 (or 4) by Anthonis Mor, 3 by Bassano and *Ritratti d' diversi Mæstri.*

8 De la Serre, Marie de Medici's secretary discussing her visit to van Dyck's Antwerp studio in October 1631, writes of: 'le cabinet de Titien: Je veux dire tous les Chefs d'œuvre de ce grand Maistre.' J.P. de la Serre, *Histoire de l'entrée de la Reyne mère* (Antwerp, 1632), 69.

We also know that van Dyck's studio was more or less ransacked after his death and the unseemly wrangle which followed involving Andrews, Wittewronghe and Ruthven amongst others is to some extent clarified by the documents which I have been considering. This wrangle was not just over van Dyck's collection but also his own paintings left in his studio at his death. This presumably explains why so many of the paintings by van Dyck himself are from his last years. The rediscovery of the indenture and elucidation of its contents by the discovery of the three other documents I have discussed add a sizeable piece to the jigsaw which will eventually allow us to gain a clear idea of the contents of van Dyck's studio and of his collection at the time of his death.