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Christopher Brown, *Van Dyck*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982. 240 pp., 234 plates (including 37 in colour), $66.00 (cloth)

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picting the struggle of good and evil on the façades. The ubiquitous equestrian statue is also interpreted at more than one level having Roman, Carolingian and contemporary connotations. It is equated with the rider on the monumental triumphal arch as seen on Augustan coins, a victory iconography that is adapted for Christian expression with the inclusion of the riders as soldiers of Christ on the inside of Einhard's Arch. It is then as a soldier of Christ that the rider takes on contemporary meaning on the Aquitainian façades in commemorating and glorifying the local patron knight of Christian virtue fighting against the Muslim vice, an interpretation for which Seidel cites analogues in *The Song of Roland, Chansons de Geste,* and the *Pseudo-Turpin.* In the case of the rider, such multiple meaning may be taken even further. Seidel takes up Zarnecki's parallel between the rider at Parthenay-le-Vieux and the St. George tympanum at Brinsop (Herefordshire) which, incidentally, she wrongly attributes to the patronage of Oliver de Merlimond, founder of Shobdon. The stilted arch and flying cloak of the rider in both works are common to scenes of Mithras Killing the Bull in which the stilted arch forms the entrance to the cave, while the Brinsop dragon is closely akin to the snake of the cult image in the Mithreum at S. Maria Capua Vetere. When read in connection with the many similarities between Mithraism and Christianity such parallels may suggest a link between Mithras Killing the Bull and the Christian equestrian statue. Such multiple interpretation should not make us lose sight of what seems to me to be a prime source for the rider which is not sufficiently stressed by Seidel, namely the bronze equestrian statue of Constantine alias Marcus Aurelius in Rome. In his twelfth-century description of Rome Master Gregory tells us that the Romans refer to the statue as Constantine, that the horse's hoof tramples on a dwarf and that a bird is set between the horse's ears; the tramples foe and bird are motifs that appear regularly in the riders of Aquitaine.

For the lion-killer, paired with the rider at Parthenay-le-Vieux and other façades, Seidel is less open with her multiple interpretation, opting for identification with David rather than Samson; but reference to the two long-haired Herefordshire derivatives at Stretton Sugwas and Leominster suggests a possible dual meaning of the French figures.

The themes of Christian triumph are embellished with a network of small-scale sculpture reflecting images found on contemporary luxury objects representing 'the pleasurable pastimes to which Muslim princes aspired both in this world and the next.' These reflect at once the relatively high social status of the patron knight and his wordly struggle for morality.

Seidel's contribution to scholarship on Romanesque sculpture goes well beyond the immediate reference to the façades of Aquitaine. Her careful integration of Roman and Carolingian iconographic traditions, secular references, contemporary literature and Islam may serve as a model for studies in other regions. Seidel herself hints at the possibility of this for Tuscan monuments (p. 19), to which I would add many in England which are closely allied to western France not least in their 'decorative' programmes and the west portals of Saint-Denis where certain decorative motifs belong to the tradition of lavish Carolingian church treasures exemplified by the patronage of Charles the Bald. Her references to Roman and Carolingian imperial and triumphal iconography may also be applied in a more strictly architectural sense, for example, in the use of the giant order and the great west arches following Charlemagne's Palace Chapel at Aachen.

While she does not go in for precise dating, opting for 'approximately 1090 until the close of the twelfth century' (p. 3), she does state that 'the emphasis on spiritual perfection in both life and art may provide support for dating much of the sculpture in the 1140s and 1150s, the years immediately surrounding the Second Crusade.' If that is the case then how are we to explain the western French influence at Old Sarum and Herefordshire in the 1130s? Thus while Seidel's approach enriches our understanding of the Romanesque period we must not lose sight of the traditional questions of chronology, archaeology, inter-school and inter-workshop relationships.

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CHRISTOPHER BROWN *Van Dyck.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982. 240 pp., 234 plates (including 37 in colour), $66.00 (cloth).

Sir Anthony Van Dyck has not been accorded a serious, comprehensive book in English since 1900. In that year Sir Lionel Cust published his noble folio, which is still a pleasure to read and a mine of information. Inevitably, some of the latter has been made obsolete by later research, or the change of location of works. The volume under review, by the Curator of the Flemish and Dutch collections at the National Gallery, London, is designed to provide an up-to-date replacement for Cust's work.

It is stated on the dust-jacket that this work 'throws new light on Van Dyck's early career, particularly on his relationship with Rubens.' There is indeed a substantial survey of Rubens' early career and works. Brown observes that Rubens had brought back the first version of the Chiesa Nuova altarpiece with him to Antwerp and had set it above his mother's tomb in the Abbey of St. Michael. 'This altarpiece', he says, 'was one of the first of Rubens's works to be shown in a prominent position in Antwerp and it must have been studied with the greatest interest by the young Van Dyck.' (p. 15).

Continuing his discussion of the first Chiesa Nuova altarpiece Brown writes:

> 'Rubens had employed the familiar High Renaissance formula of the *sacra conversazione* ... in this particular case Rubens' model was Titian's *Virgin and Child in Glory with Six Saints* which he had seen in the Church of the Frari in Venice ... Rubens' profound debt to the Antique is also clear – the figure of St. Papianus, the second from the left, is based on the famous statue of *Mars Ultor,* now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome.' (p. 15).

Brown's first sentence in the preceeding passage is a paraphrase of Hans Vlieghe (Corpus Rubenianum, *Saints,* II, p. 44): 'Rubens's composition would not be imaginable without the example of the *Sacra Conversazioni* of the Italian High Renaissance' – a statement which does not contain the misleading implication of Brown's, that the *sacra conversazione* was a High Renaissance invention. Both Vlieghe and Brown are imprecise about the original location of Titian's altarpiece. The former says it was 'in the Frari Church in Venice', which in Brown's version becomes 'in the Frari Church

at Venice'. But in Rubens' time there were two Frari churches in Venicé. This Titian altarpiece was in the smaller, S. Nicolo dei Frari, which was demolished in the eighteenth century. The larger church was S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the church now known as 'the Frari'. As for the last sentence in the passage from Brown quoted above, Vlieghe's text reads: 'The two martyrs on the left are shown in a characteristic attitude of triumph, closely related to such works of antique sculpture as the *Mars Ultor* in Rome.'

On page 24 Brown writes: 'The façade of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp, with its coupled pilasters, scroll-shaped buttresses, and niches for statuary, is based on the Gesù in Rome, the first church of the Order.' This repeats almost *verbatim* the opening sentence of the last paragraph of page 25 of J.R. Martin's *Ceiling Paintings for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp* (Corpus Rubenianum), and most of the rest of Brown's paragraph follows Martin's, again almost word for word.

Pace Martin and Brown, I see no coupled pilasters on the façade of the Antwerp Jesuit Church – only coupled columns and pilasters, and superimposed pilasters. But my reason for drawing attention to these passages in Vlieghe/Brown and Martin/Brown is not to score pedantic points. We know that it is only too easy to incorporate unwittingly another author's wording into one's own, especially in the case of technical or factual descriptions. All the same, these passages make the reader uneasy: they suggest that he may not be getting what he has every right to expect in a volume of this sort, viz. a well-digested synthesis of previous literature, along with fresh, independant views.

The reader's confidence in the author is further weakened by the account of Rubens' working methods. Certainly the idea of surveying Rubens' drawings, in order to contrast them with Van Dyck's is a good one. However, Brown dates the well-known Rubens drawing *The Descent from the Cross* in the Hermitage to the year 1611. Yet as long ago as 1959, Julius Held demonstrated convincingly that this drawing should be dated about 1598-1602 (*Rubens: Selected Drawings*, n° 3).

For students of Van Dyck, the point in obtaining a clear understanding of Rubens is to be able to comprehend the younger artist. In Van Dyck's first Antwerp period it is notoriously difficult to separate some of his work from that of Rubens. In part this is because of the lack of dated or dateable works by Van Dyck, and the consequent problem of establishing a coherent chronology. In the context of a general book, Brown was perhaps wise not to introduce the disputed Chatsworth *Antwerp Sketchbook*. But it is difficult to see why the same restriction should apply to the 1616 *Jan Vermeulen* in the Liechtenstein collection. This picture has been attributed to Rubens, and to the young Van Dyck. Arguments can be presented for both. This reviewer happens to think it is by Van Dyck, because of (amongst other things) its strong sense of pattern, in place of Rubens' feeling for volume. But whether one attributes the *Jan Vermeulen* to Rubens or to Van Dyck, it should be a key picture in any discussion of the young Van Dyck and his relationship with Rubens because of its date and because it is a portrait.

Several of Van Dyck's early compositions can be usefully compared with those of Rubens, because of the repetition of the same theme. An example is the story of the Emperor Theodosius whose entry to Milan Cathedral was refused by the Archbishop, St. Ambrose. Rubens' version, a large altarpiece, is at Vienna; Van Dyck's is a small picture, in the National Gallery, London, but is compositionally so close that it can be rightly described as a 'free copy'. Comparing the two pictures Brown writes:

'In Rubens' painting the figures have weight and substance. Saint Ambrose, we feel is capable of physically preventing Theodosius from entering the Cathedral. In Van Dyck's treatment, however, the encounter has lost that physical sense and the refusal has become an elegant ritual, at the centre of which is the delicate pattern made by the tapering fingers of the Emperor's and the Archbishop's hands. In Rubens' painting, Ambrose's cope is both weighty and elaborately patterned: in Van Dyck's, its thread of gold shimmers and appears to float on the very surface of the canvas' (p. 31).

Despite some fine observations, this paragraph fails to capture the essential differences between the two paintings, and the different achievements of their respective painters. In Rubens' version of the theme, the issue is not in doubt. The Emperor, and his followers, 'weighty' though they are, are visibly cowed by the Archbishop's authority. They are placid in gesture and expression. The soldier at the left seems especially to express resignation to the will of St. Ambrose in his slumping head and posture. By contrast, the powerful figure of the Saint is reinforced by the column above, which marks the edge, as it were, of the ecclesiastical territory which he is denying to the Emperor. (St. Ambrose took this stand because Theodosius had punished the people of Thessolonica for murdering one of his generals.) Symbolic of the victory is the placing of the archbishop's crozier directly over the emperor's head.

Van Dyck's interpretation is radically different as are the means of pictorial expression. He creates a scene of high drama where the issue of the quarrel is in doubt. The proportions of the figures are taller and more slender, as is the picture itself, features which in themselves help to enhance the atmosphere of tension. The cathedral architecture is less round and weighty, and extends behind much of the emperor, who is not placid, but rather seems like a tiger about to spring. He is not bearded, like Rubens' monarch: Van Dyck has given him a lean, tough, lined face, with expressive muscle chords in his throat. On the left Van Dyck has added halberds and a spear, menacing diagonals which are higher than St. Ambrose's crozier. The latter is lighter than Rubens' version, and further from the emperor's head. The soldier at the left has become tall, proud and defiant. The acolyte at the right, who is in Rubens' picture a mere spectator, has twisted his head and body in apprehension in the Van Dyck.

'A further valuable comparison in an attempt to define Van Dyck's early style' by Christopher Brown also fails, in my opinion, to characterize adequately Van Dyck's picture-making and story-telling. The theme is Samson and Delilah. Rubens' version was done for Nicholas Rockox about 1610-11 and is now in the National Gallery, London; Van Dyck's painting was made some years later, and is now at Dulwich (Fig. 1). Of the latter Brown writes:

'Van Dyck's treatment ... has little of Rubens' psychological subtlety. Delilah is merely apprehensive in case Samson should wake, while the younger of the two figures behind her reacts ... with outstretched arms, the most conventional of gestures employed to register surprise. The procuress strains forward to see Samson while the face of the Philistine who is about to cut his hair is obscured and his actions are simply businesslike ... Van Dyck has moved the scene from Rubens' richly appointed room, with its flickering shadows, to an outdoor ter-

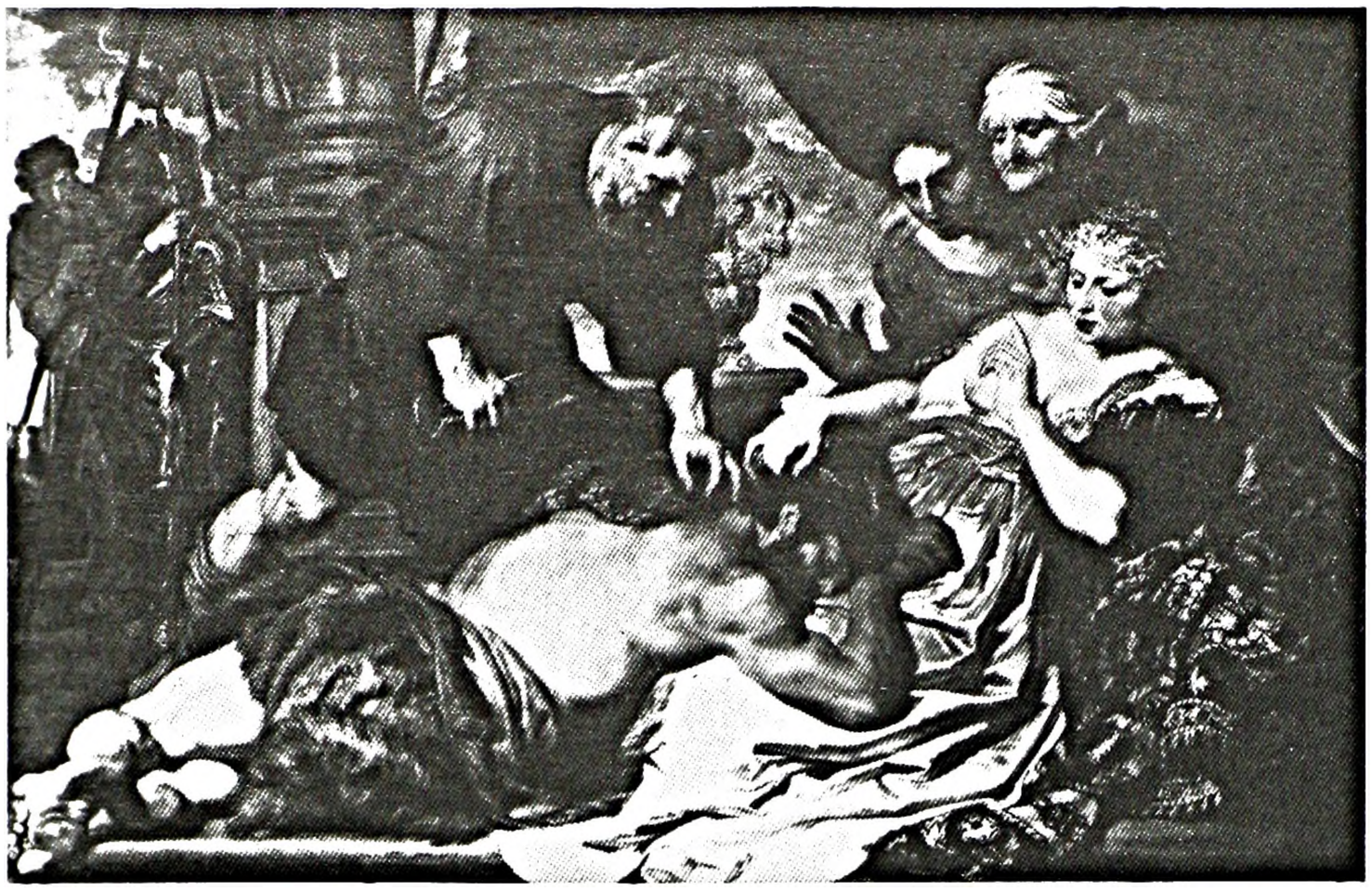

FIGURE 1. Van Dyck, *Samson and Delilah*. Brown, pl. 22.

FIGURE 2. *Samson and Delilah,* detail of the wine ewer.

race. The blue sky can be clearly seen between the Philistine and the group of women, while the Philistine army cowers behind a massive pillar. This setting not only contradicts the story, it also undermines its credibility. Van Dyck places the scene within a building which makes little architectural sense (what function, for instance, does the column serve?) and, most importantly of all, this setting has the effect of dissipating much of the tension of the moment' (p. 34).

There need be no surprise about Van Dyck's use of an outdoor setting, since it was a sixteenth-century northern convention for the subject, as Madlyn Kahr demonstrated in her article on Delilah (*Art Bulletin,* LIV, 1972, pp. 282-99). Also, I fail to see Van Dyck's barber as 'simply businesslike'. On the contrary, he seems a menacing figure. His hands and wrists are tense, and with a lunging posture he looms over Samson; the barber's scale is further exaggerated by the forced perspective of the small figures behind him and the ugly, foreshortened view of his head and hair. From his appearance and gestures it is not difficult to imagine the tragic brutality of the Samson story in its following phases – the blinding, and the chaining of the hero. The presence of the column, which Brown finds so out of place, would probably be seen by contemporaries as a reference to Samson's last heroic act – the pulling down of the pillars of the Philistine temple. The column was, after all, a symbol of Fortitude, and Samson, because of his exploit was a great exemplar of that virtue.

The virtue of Fortitude lay at the heart of neo-stoicism, the philosophy so popular in Van Dyck's day. Rubens' connexions with Justus Lipsius, one of the principal exponents of neo-stoicism, are well known. The young Van Dyck may also have been attracted to the philosophy. In one of his early self-portraits (New York, Metropolitan Museum, pl. 43) he used a prominent column; in another (Leningrad, The Hermitage) a truncated column appears behind him. In both self-portraits he is dressed in black, a properly sober neo-stoic colour.

For the Neo-stoic, the attainment of true virtue meant the control of the passions by reason. Although Samson's heroic actions made him an exemplar to be followed, he of course also had sins, for which he was punished. His capture by the Philistines, through the agency of Delilah was the result of alcoholic and sexual indulgence (the former a particular sin because of his status as a 'Nazarite', see Kahr, *loc. cit.*). In Rubens' picture these two aspects of Samson's downfall are indicated by vessels with wine on a shelf in the background, and nearby a statue of Venus and Cupid in a niche. Van Dyck also alludes to Samson's two indulgences, although in so 'hidden' a fashion, that no one seems to have commented on the allusion. On the plinth, in the centre of Van Dyck's picture stands a golden vase, *all'antica*, superbly silhouetted against the sky. The vase is a wine ewer (Fig. 2). It has grape decoration around it and the handle is formed by a satyr. In itself the satyr is generally a symbol of uncontrolled passions, and lust; Van Dyck makes the message quite clear by showing his satyr with an erect member. Furthermore, it is to this ewer and the satyr in particular that one's eye is naturally led by the gesture of the young girl – a gesture which Brown finds 'most conventional'.

In 1962, Horst Vey (*Die Zeichnungen Anton Van Dycks,* n° 3) suggested that Van Dyck had based the pose of his Samson on the Borghese *Hermaphrodite,* the famous antique statue discovered early in the seventeenth century, of which Rubens had made a drawing while in Italy. In 1970, Gregory Martin (*National Gallery Catalogues: the Flemish School, c1600-1900,* p. 31) suggested that the face of Theodosius in Van Dyck's picture discussed above, 'may have been inspired by an antique bust of the Emperor Galba, of which a copy drawn by Rubens was known to van Dyck.'

Brown mentions neither of these suggested links between Van Dyck and the Antique. He believes that Van Dyck '... was not learned as the Humanist painters of the Renaissance were; in fact he was uninterested in classical culture' (p. 7). This is a view of Van Dyck which has become prominent in recent years. It was adopted by Alan McNairn in his catalogue of *The Young Van Dyck* exhibition (Ottawa, 1980), and strongly espoused by Sir Oliver Millar in his *Van Dyck in England* exhibition catalogue (London, 1982).

With all due respect to these scholars, I profoundly disagree with their views on this subject (cf. my reviews of the two exhibitions in the *Burlington Magazine*, 123 (1981), pp. 120-5, and *RACAR*, XI (1984), pp. 159-61; see also in *RACAR*, special issue on Van Dyck, Vol. X (1983), my paper, pp. 57-68).

Christopher Brown is certainly consistent in his view. He writes about the *Italian Sketchbook:* 'One of the most striking aspects ... is the virtual absence of drawings after the Antique ... The solitary drawing in the Sketchbook after antique sculpture is of a statue of the philosopher Diogenes, which is now in the Louvre. Van Dyck saw it and sketched it in the Villa Borghese' (pp. 70-71). Brown's statement that the *Diogenes* is the only drawing after antique sculpture in the *Italian Sketchbook* is not quite true. Folio 49 was identified by Adriani as a copy of an elaborately sculptured antique table base. (Evidently there is a similar one in the Vatican Museum). Also, it is interesting to note that when Van Dyck copied the famous antique wall-painting, the *Aldobrandini Wedding* (pl. 60), he paid particular attention to the decorative sculptural details, like the end of the bed, with its turnings and scroll, the large footed bowl at the left, and the font at the right. His interest in these features is adumbrated by several of his pre-Italian works which contain decorative pieces of sculpture *all'antica*. Attention has been drawn to the ewer in the Dulwich *Samson and Delilah;* but there is also the splendid composite capital in the Prado *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* (pl. 35), in which there is also depicted a very elaborate column base and plinth, the latter with a Greek key design. (The column base and plinth appear to derive from Rubens' portrait of Peter Peck, Brussels, Museum of Fine Arts, of ca. 1615, but must ultimately come from the antique.) However, the picture painted before Van Dyck went to Italy which shows most clearly the painter's interest in antique decorative sculpture is undoubtedly *The Continence of Scipio* (pl. 45), now at Christ Church.

The fact that there are only one or two copies after antique sculpture in Van Dyck's *Italian Sketchbook* is not conclusive evidence of the artist's lack of interest in the subject. For one surely would not pretend that the *Italian Sketchbook* contained all the copies made by Van Dyck during his Italian sojourn. Even if one consults Horst Vey's volumes on Van Dyck's drawings, one finds two further elaborate drawings after antique reliefs, which were in Rome in Van Dyck's time (Vey, nos 158, 159); and there are three other drawings which Vey suggests are after antique sculptures, as yet unidentified (nos 118, 156 and 157).

By the time Van Dyck returned to Antwerp from Italy his father had died. He commemorated his parent in a large altarpiece of the Crucifixion with Saints Dominic and Catherine (pl. 107). In front of Christ's cross is a large boulder, on which there are a Latin inscription and a putto with an inverted torch. The latter, as Rensselaer Lee noted in 1963, is a motif derived from antique sarcophagi. Since the altarpiece was a personal gift, we may be sure that its motifs and inscription were the painter's choice. They are emphatically not those of someone 'uninterested in classical culture'.

It would be quite wrong to give an entirely negative impression of Christopher Brown's book. There are many good things in this volume. For example, it is very good to see that he praises as a 'magnificent composition' Van Dyck's *Philip, 4th Earl of Pembroke and His Family* (Wilton), which as Brown notes, 'has received a poor critical press' from Cust, and more recently (pp. 198-9). Brown's volume, in addition to surveying Van Dyck's career and *oeuvre,* contains a useful concluding chapter on Van Dyck's influence and reputation. There is a very extensive bibliography (something that cannot be said for many recent publications on Van Dyck).

Moreover, in general, as one expects from this press, the Brown volume is handsomely produced. There is a great range of plates, both black and white and colour, and they include many details, which enable one to see the artist's handling of paint at successive stages of his career. Many of Van Dyck's drawings are illustrated, including a good selection from the *Italian Sketchbook.* There are also very useful comparative illustrations through the various phases of Van Dyck's career, including those of Italian followers, such as Carbone, and English contemporaries or near contemporaries.

Admittedly, some of the black and white illustrations are too dark, others suffer in different ways. Occasionally plates are badly cropped, e.g. *Mary Villiers as St. Agnes* (pl. 191), on all sides; *Sir Kenelm Digby* (pl. 148), on the bottom; *The Aldobrandini Wedding* (pl. 60), on the right. In the early Vienna *Self-portrait* (pl. 2) the artist seems to have caught some dreadful skin disease!

Faulty plates can be blamed on the printers. Yet, ultimately, authorship is all about business. What frustrates the reader of Christopher Brown's *Van Dyck* is not simply aspects of this volume, but also the fact that one knows that its author can do infinitely better than this. His book on Carel Fabritius, and his exhibition catalogues such as *Art in Seventeenth Century Holland* (National Gallery, London, 1976) are ample proof of this. Let us hope that Christopher Brown's new edition of the *Italian Sketchbook* will see the author return to these standards. Meanwhile, sadly and reluctantly, I must state that, eighty-five years after it was published, Sir Lionel Cust's volume still awaits an English replacement.

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MARGARET A. ROSE *Marx's Lost Aesthetic: Karl Marx and the Visual Arts.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984. 216 pp., 71 illus., $57.00 (cloth).

It is rare to read a book that successfully connects and illuminates movements as seemingly diverse as the Nazarene Brotherhood and Russian Constructivism. But Rose has accomplished just this through her revisionary interpretation of a thread that joins these art historical moments: their connections with Karl Marx. She focuses on Marx's *historical* involvement with the visual arts in order to reassess the use of his authority to support the Socialist Realism which, under Stalin, overthrew the avant-garde experiments of Lissitzky and Tatlin. *Marx's Lost Aesthetic* is not an exercise in contemporary Marxist criticism, but rather an attempt to reclaim Marx's own ideas on art – his 'lost aesthetic' – from the sometimes ahistorical uses to which they have been put.

The Nazarenes dominated the art world of Marx's youth, and his early reactions against their mediaevalizing and Christianizing style were, Rose argues, fundamental to his later aesthetic theories. Influenced by the poet Heinrich Heine, Marx criticized what