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A Suggested New Attribution of Seventeenth-Century Flemish Portrait of a Lady in York Art Gallery to Jan Cossiers

The subject of this article is a seventeenth-century *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery (YORAG 840, fig. 1), also called *Portrait of a Young Girl*, which was painted on an oak panel, measuring 74.9 by 55.8 cm.¹ It has been damaged, as the vertical line is still visible on its surface, going through the middle part of the sitter's face. The panel has been strengthened by a cradle on its *verso*, which was done prior to 1887, as there is a label from that year on the cradle (the label refers to the Royal Academy Exhibition in London). There are two more *verso* labels on this painting: one also on the cradle (of Agnew & Sons Ltd., London) and the other on a frame (again of Royal Academy Exhibition in London, 1962). In the nineteenth century the painting was in the collection of Robert Stayner Holford (1808-1892), who kept it in Dorchester House.² It passed by descent to Sir George Lindsay Holford, who died in 1926. Before Dorchester House was

¹ This article is a result of my research initiated between October 2014 and March 2015 at York Art Gallery for the National Inventory of Continental European Paintings (published by the Visual Arts Data Service <http://www.vads.ac.uk/collections/NIRP/index.php>) and further continued since November 2015 with the aid of a Research Bursary awarded by the Subject Specialist Network for European Paintings Pre-1900 (The National Gallery, London). I would like to thank Andrew Greg, Director of the National Inventory of Continental European Paintings project, Laura Turner and Jennifer Alexander, Curators at York Art Gallery, for their kind support of my work. For research advice I would like to thank Richard Green, Lieneke Nijkamp (Curator of research collections at Rubenianum), Martine Maris (Curator at Rubenshuis) and Dr Bendor Grosvenor. I also thank Robert Wenley for a lot of help in editing this article.

² Robert BENSON (ed.), *The Holford Collection, Dorchester House*, Oxford 1927, vol. 2, cat. no. 117, plate CV. The painting is not listed in the inventory of Dorchester House, leased by the 3rd Marquess of Hertford between 1829 and 1842, when he died (the inventory is kept in the Wallace Collection Archives. I would like to thank Carys Lewis, Archivist & Records Manager of the Wallace Collection for her help in my research). The painting is not listed either in the description of Holford Collection in *Treasures of art in Great Britain: being an account of the chief collections of paintings, drawings, sculptures, illuminated mss., &c. &c.* by Gustav Friedrich WAAGEN, London 1854, vol. 2, pp. 193-222. The supplement for that publication, entitled *Galleries and cabinets of art in Great Britain: being an account of more than forty collections of paintings, drawings, sculptures, MSS., &c., visited in 1854 and 1856, and now for the first time described*, forming a supplemental volume to the *Treasures of art in Great Britain...*, published in London in 1857, mentions some new purchases of R. S. Holford (pp. 101-02, noting that he „has not continued to add to his treasures of art of late years in the same ratio as formerly”), but there is no painting by de Vos among them. That would mean the *Portrait of a Lady* was acquired by R.S. Holford probably not earlier than in the second half of the 1850s – sadly, so far I did not manage to spot any auction that could refer to this painting's purchase (even assuming if it may have been bought for R.S. Holford by someone else, e.g. by his favourite art dealer, William Buchanan). See also note 13 below.



*1. Portrait of a Lady in York Art Gallery (YORAG 840).
Fot. Wikimedia Commons*

sold in 1929 (and subsequently demolished), the painting was purchased by the dealer David Croal Thomson at Christie's in London, on 17th May 1928 (lot 72). In 1953 the portrait was purchased by F.D. Lycett Green at Agnew's in London; in 1955 Lycett Green gave it through the National Art Collections Fund to the then City Art Gallery in York.³ The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1887,⁴ 1953⁵ and 1962,⁶ each time as by Cornelis de Vos.

YORAG 840 depicts a woman, probably in her early twenties, in an extended half-length composition (rather close to three-quarter length). She is slightly turned to the right, but

³ Francis Dennis Lycett Green (1893–1959) was a scion of the wealthy Green family, industrialists and benefactors originally from Wakefield (his uncle, Frank Green, presented the Treasurer's House, York, to the National Trust in 1930). He began buying pictures during the 1920s, advised by some of the leading dealers of the day. By the 1940s he owned examples from almost every school and period of European art – a comprehensive collection of over 130 paintings dating from the early fourteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. In 1952 he offered this to the National Gallery of South Africa, having moved to Cape Town in the hope that the climate would improve his health (impaired by serious injury in the First World War). However, when a dispute arose with the Cape Town Gallery, Lycett Green withdrew his pictures in protest and shipped them back to England. The entire collection of 137 pictures was first on loan to the York Art Gallery and in the spring of 1955 he decided to give it to the Gallery. His gift was made through the then National Art-Collections Fund, now the Art Fund. This note on F.D. Lycett Green is based on the information from York Art Gallery files.

⁴ *The Old Masters and the Deceased Masters of British School*, Royal Academy exhib. cat., London 1887, no. 74.

⁵ *Flemish art, 1300-1700. Winter exhibition 1953-4*, Royal Academy exhib. cat., London 1953, no. 251.

⁶ *Primitives to Picasso*, Royal Academy exhib. cat., London 1962, no. 126.



2. *Paulus Pontius, Portrait of Balthazar Gerbier (1634), after Anthony van Dyck. Fot. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*

faces the spectator. Her head is uncovered, so she seems to be unmarried; her blonde hair is arranged in a way typical for the best part of the seventeenth century: flattened at the top, and curled on each side of the face. She is wearing a wide, dark blue dress with long puffy sleeves. Her collar and sleeve linings are white and decorated with lace trim. The collar is especially interesting, as it is made of several semi-transparent layers, covering the lady's arms and chest. This kind of dress was especially popular around the late 1630s and early 1640s – for example, it was depicted repeatedly in paintings by Frans Hals (e.g., *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan*, c. 1640 in the National Gallery, London⁷; *Maria Pietersdochter Olycan*, dated 1638, in the Museu de Arte de São Paulo⁸; and *A Dutch Lady*, c. 1643-45, in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh⁹), as well as by the other artists (e.g., *Portrait of a Woman*, dated 1640, by Johannes Cornelisz. Verspronck, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede;¹⁰ or *Portrait of a Lady in Black Satin with a Fan* by Bartholomeus van der Helst, dated 1644, National Gallery, London¹¹). Most of the examples of such dresses are

⁷ Oil on canvas, 79.8 by 59 cm, inv. NG2529. See: Seymour SLIVE, *Frans Hals, Volume Three: the catalogue*, New York & London 1974, p. 74, no. 141.

⁸ Oil on canvas, 86 by 67 cm, inv. 186 P. See: SLIVE, op. cit., p. 62, no. 118.

⁹ Oil on canvas, 115 by 85.8 cm, inv. NG 692. See: SLIVE, op. cit., p. 80, no. 157.

¹⁰ Oil on panel, 82 by 66.5 cm, inv. 193. See: Rudolf E.O. EKKART, *Johannes Cornelisz. Verspronck. Leven en werken van een Haarlems portretschilder uit de 17de eeuw*, Haarlem 1979, no. 23.

¹¹ Oil on oak panel, 104.6 by 76 cm, inv. NG1937. See Neil MacLAREN, Christopher BROWN, eds., *The Dutch School 1600-1900* (National Gallery catalogues), London 1991, vol. 1, p. 166; vol. 2, plate 148.



3. *Cornelis de Vos, Portrait of a Lady in Elegant Dress, 1620's, private collection.*
Fot. Wikimedia Commons

Dutch – it was a dress worn by the women of the bourgeoisie and usually Protestant, while noble or Catholic ladies of that time preferred less modest gowns, usually with a much lower neckline. As a result it may be concluded that the lady in the portrait in York is a young, still unmarried bourgeois woman, depicted around 1635-45. It is, however, very likely that she is engaged: her hands are elegantly folded, she holds a fan in the right, while the left is decorated with a ring that seems to be presented to the spectator. As suggested by Richard Green, it may actually have been an engagement portrait, and very likely a part of pair, with a now missing pendant depicting her fiancée. He was probably portrayed in a similar manner, half-figure but turned slightly left, with a red curtain in the background. The composition of the missing male portrait would probably be close to the lost portrait of Balthazar Gerbier by Anthony van Dyck (1634), which we know today from prints, for example by Paulus Pontius (fig. 2).¹²

The portrait in York has been traditionally attributed to Cornelis de Vos,¹³ and it was exhibited as by this artist in the Royal Academy as early as 1887. The article in „The Academy and Literature” periodical of that year reads: „There is no reason to doubt the justice of the attribution of Mr. Holford’s most interesting «Portrait of a Lady» (74) to that scarce master, Cornelis de Vos, a portrait painter of the first class, who, if he was not uninfluenced by the technique of Rubens, preserved an entire originality, a truthful objectivity of conception, such as his greater contemporary scarcely attained in that branch”.¹⁴

¹² *The New Hollstein: Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts 1450-1700*, Amsterdam 1993, no. 435.

¹³ The earliest reference I have found is in Karl BAEDEKER, *London and its environs, including excursions to Brighton, the Isle of Wight, etc.: handbook for travellers*, Leipzig 1879, p. 251 (as „Portrait of a Lady” by Cornelis de Vos, in Dorchester House) – it is the second edition of this guide-book; in the first edition of 1878 Dorchester House was not included at all.

¹⁴ *The Academy and Literature*, vol. 31, no. 769, January 29, 1887, p. 80.



4. *Cornelis de Vos, Portrait of a Young Woman, c. 1635, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, inv. 71.46. Fot. Wikimedia Commons*

It seems, however, that this attribution was questioned in 1928, when the painting was purchased by Croal Thomson: in his catalogue the painting was described as „*Portrait of a Dutch Lady* by School of Van Dyck”.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the previous de Vos attribution was subsequently re-accepted and so far not questioned in any publication or exhibition since.¹⁶ However, Katlijne Van der Stighelen implicitly rejected the attribution by not including the York portrait in her catalogue of the portraits by Cornelis de Vos.¹⁷

Cornelis de Vos (1584-1651) was undoubtedly one of the leading portraitists in Antwerp in the first half of the seventeenth century. He had remarkable skills in imitating the material world; his technique was fluid and transparent, his brushstrokes were refined. He depicted his sitters with elegant and shiny complexions, using soft chiaroscuro effects; he was especially skilled in painting rich fabrics and gleaming jewellery with astonishing precision of details.¹⁸ The difference between the precision of de Vos’s technique and the much looser

¹⁵ *Barbizon House: an illustrated record*, London 1928, cat. no. 9.

¹⁶ See *York Art Gallery Catalogue - Catalogue of Paintings*, vol. 1: *Foreign Schools 1350-1800*, City of York Art Gallery, York 1961, p. 82, plate 71; *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership. North Yorkshire*, London 2006, p. 354.

¹⁷ Katlijne VAN DER STIGHELEN, *De portretten van Cornelis de Vos (1584/5-1651): Een Kritische Catalogus*, Brussels 1990. Professor Van der Stighelen informed me that she decided that the York portrait was not by Cornelis de Vos in 1984, when she was completing her research on the subject. As a result, she did not include YORAG 840 in her catalogue. She also informed me that she couldn’t suggest any other attribution for it (personal letter of 17.08.2015). I would like to thank Professor Van der Stighelen for this information.

¹⁸ Marjorie E. WIESEMAN, „Cornelis de Vos”, [in:] Peter C. SUTTON (ed.), *The Age of Rubens*, exhib. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1993, p. 374. See also: Vivien GASTON, „A powerful appearance of life: Cornelis de Vos’s Mother and child”, *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 49 (2009), pp. 23-33.

style of the portrait in York may be well demonstrated by juxtaposing the latter with the *Portrait of a Lady in Elegant Dress* by de Vos (1620s, private collection; fig. 3).¹⁹ Even though it seems that in the 1630s Cornelis de Vos became more sketchy in his brushwork and less precise in depicting details (compared to most of his portraits from the 1620s), his technique was still very soft and gentle. A very good example of de Vos's portraiture of the mid 1630s is his *Portrait of a Young Woman* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 4).²⁰ However, while the hair of that sitter and the lace decorating her dress seem to be painted a bit more freely, the execution of all the elements is still soft and fluid, the fabrics are shiny and her complexion is warm in tone. It is clearly painted in a different manner from that of the *Portrait of a Lady* in York.

Rejecting the traditional attribution of the painting in York to Cornelis de Vos should not in any case be understood as casting doubt on its artistic quality. In fact, the York *Portrait of a Lady* is rather an exceptional piece of portraiture. The sitter is depicted in a very engaging way, the psychological expression of the image is quite powerful. Hair, fabrics and background are painted loosely but skillfully; the face and the hands, executed more precisely, catch the viewer's attention. Her complexion is elegantly pale, enriched with pink and blue touches; it is carefully painted, although the brushstrokes are visible and the surface is not completely smooth, which only makes the image more expressive. The colouring of the sitters' skin resembles female complexions in the paintings by Rubens, while the juxtaposition of precisely painted skin and sketchy hair and clothes seem to be close to the portraiture technique of van Dyck. As a result, the portrait in York should be attributed to an Antwerp painter, preferably one with connections to Rubens's workshop and able to show a sensitivity to his sitter's features comparable to that of van Dyck. However, although many Flemish painters were influenced by either Rubens or van Dyck (or both), it is difficult to find one whose surviving work matches the York portrait stylistically. Jan Boeckhorst's and Jacob van Oost's portraits were executed in a much softer manner, using a blurry chiaroscuro; Erasmus Quellinus the Younger's approach is smoother and more precise in depicting details; while the style of Gonzales Coques is sketchier. Further comparison of the York portrait with works by various other Antwerp artists of the period century (including the anonymous works) leads me to the conclusion that the qualities we are looking for are only traceable in the portraits by Jan Cossiers – who, it should be noted, was also a pupil of Cornelis de Vos.

Jan Cossiers was baptised in Antwerp on 15th July 1600. He was trained as a painter by his father Anton and subsequently by Cornelis de Vos. In his early twenties Jan Cossiers visited Aix-en-Provence, then travelled to Rome in 1624. In 1626, back in Aix, he met Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, who recommended young Cossiers to Rubens.²¹ Eventually Cossiers returned to Antwerp and joined the local guild of St Luke in 1628 (in 1640 he became its dean). It is not entirely certain how exactly Cossiers was involved in Rubens's workshop. Rubens employed many assistants or pupils, many known by name, although it is difficult to define precisely their various kinds of collaboration. For major commissions with a short deadline Rubens created preparatory sketches, but the

¹⁹ Oil on panel, 106 by 73 cm, signed «DV». Private collection; sold at Sotheby's in New York, 31st January-1st February 2013, lot 32. See Mary L. BOYLE, *Biographical catalogue of the portraits at Panshanger the seat of Earl Cowper*, London 1885, p. 373.

²⁰ VAN DER STIGHELEN, op.cit., pp. 187-189, no. 77 described this portrait as typical of Cornelis de Vos's work of the mid-1630s. Oil on canvas, 118.1 by 94.6 cm, no. 71.46.

²¹ Max ROOSES, Charles RUELENS (eds.), *Correspondance de Rubens: et documents épistolaires concernant sa vie et ses oeuvres...*, vol. 3, Antwerp 1900, pp. 477-479.

final works after them may have been executed by other artists, sometimes from other workshops.²² Cossiers is known to have participated in the execution of decorations designed by Rubens for the «Joyous Entry» (*Pompa Introitus*) into Antwerp in 1635 of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, brother of Philip IV of Spain.²³ Later Cossiers was engaged in the decoration of Torre de la Parada (near Madrid), commissioned by Philip IV himself (1636-38),²⁴ and again designed by Rubens and completed by his collaborators. An interesting case is a painting depicting *Prometheus* from this particular project – both preparatory sketch and the final picture are in the Prado Museum, Madrid. The sketch was created by Rubens,²⁵ and the painting after it was completed by Jan Cossiers who, significantly, signed it with his own name.²⁶ The signature, placed in the middle of the painting (on Prometheus's torch), was only recently discovered, ending the debate on this painting's authorship.²⁷ After Rubens's death Cossiers is known to have executed numerous history pieces both for local churches and for the Antwerp art market. Cossiers died in Antwerp on 4th July 1671.²⁸

Jan Cossiers painted both religious and mythological subjects. He was a painter of various styles as his signed paintings show a wide spectrum of influences and follow different stylistic patterns, for example either Rubens-like or Caravaggesque. In fact, his portraits are in many ways different from his mythological or religious paintings, as in the latter he depicted quite standardised, unindividualised figures, while in his portraiture he managed to capture the psychological nuances of the sitters' faces. De Peiresc, for whom Cossiers painted a number of portraits, described him as a very talented portraitist.²⁹ It seems justifiable, however, to consider a potential Cossiers attribution for the York portrait by comparing it only with his other portraits, and not with his paintings in other genres. In fact, even his group portrait of the Flamen Family in Herentals (signed and dated 1637)³⁰ seem to lack the expressiveness and sensitivity in depicting the sitters' individual characters which can be traced in Cossiers's drawings and individual portraits.

²² See Arnout BALIS, „Rubens and His Studio: Defining the Problem”, [in:] Joost VANDER AUWERA (ed.), *Rubens: l'atelier du génie: autour des œuvres du maître aux Musées Royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique*, exhib. cat., Tiel 2007, pp. 30-51.

²³ John R. MARTIN, *The Decorations for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, London & New York 1972 (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XVI), pp. 41, 50, 166-167. See also Anna C. KNAAP and Michael C. J. PUTNAM (eds.), *Art, Music and Spectacle in the Age of Rubens: The Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, London 2013.

²⁴ Svetlana ALPERS, *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada* (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard IX), Brussels 1971, p. 34.

²⁵ Oil on panel, 25.7 by 16.6 cm. See e.g. Matías D. PADRÓN, *Museo del Prado, catálogo de pinturas: escuela flamenca*, Madrid 1975, p. 302; Julius S. HELD, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue* (Kress Foundation Studies in the History of European Art, VII), Princeton 1980, vol. 1, p. 294 and recently Aneta GEORGIEVSKA-SHINE, Larry SILVER, *Rubens, Velázquez, and the King of Spain*, Surrey Ashgate 2014, p. 28, fig.2.2.

²⁶ Oil on canvas, 182 by 113 cm. Matías D. PADRÓN, *El siglo de Rubens en el Museo del Prado: catálogo razonado*, Madrid 1995, p. 376.

²⁷ The discovery was made by Ana Alicia Suarez, a Meadows Fellow at the Prado. (From Codart News, September 15, 2015).

²⁸ Biographical information about Jan Cossiers was collected by Marie-Louise HAIRS, *Dans le sillage de Rubens. Les peintres d'histoire anversoise au XVIIe siècle*, Liège 1977, pp. 31-32. See also two unpublished master theses on Jan Cossiers: by Jef STOFFELS (*Jan Cossiers 1600-1671: een monografische benadering*, Ghent 1986) and by Nils DE WINTER (*Jan Cossiers (1600-1671) en zijn tekeningen een biografisch-stilistische studie*, Leuven 2012).

²⁹ „[...] in presente occasione, mi son trovato obligato a raccomandar questo giovane, il quale e assai felice a far somigliare ritratti del naturale et e per riuscir galant'huomo.” (letter to Jerome Aleandre, 22.08.1624: Charles RUELENS, „Notes et documents: Jean Cossiers”, *Bulletin Rubens* I (1882), p. 264). In 1628-29 Cossiers completed for de Peiresc the portraits of Caspar Gevartius and Erycius Puteanus.

³⁰ Oil on canvas, 200 by 307 cm, Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn in Herentals. <http://balat.kikirpa.be/object/110440> [10.06.2016]



5. Dutch or Flemish School,
Self-portrait?, Dulwich Picture
Gallery in London, DPG605.
Fot. Wikimedia Commons

The *oeuvre* of individual portraits by Cossiers is not very extensive: it consists of some drawings (including five depictions of his sons), a signed oil portrait in Detroit Institute of Arts, and a few attributed works. It seems worth mentioning that some attributions to Jan Cossiers need to be revised and perhaps should be rejected. There is an unfinished portrait of a young man at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London,³¹ which was attributed to Cossiers,³² although recently this has been questioned (fig. 5). The new catalogue of Dutch and Flemish art in Dulwich revised the attribution; for now the Dulwich portrait is described as non-attributed, Dutch or Flemish School.³³

In my opinion the other problematic attribution is that of the *Portrait of a Man* in Worcester Art Museum (fig. 6).³⁴ This painting came from the Devonshire collection where it was attributed to Jacob Jordaens, being sold as such in 1975.³⁵ When with Hoog-

³¹ Possibly *Self-portrait*, oak panel, 62.2 by 48.9 cm, inv. no DPG605. The painting seems to be related to the portrait sold at Sotheby's, 23rd Nov. 2006, lot 20 and two following in the collections of Dr Franz Oppenheimer and Graf von Schönborn.

³² The painting has been published several times as *Self-portrait* (?) attributed to Jan Lievens (Hans SCHNEIDER, *Jan Lievens: Sein Leben und seine Werke*, Haarlem 1932, pp. 68, 148, no. 247; Hermine VAN HALL, *Portretten van nederlandse beëidende kunstenaars*, Amsterdam 1963, p. 187, 1271.5; Hans SCHNEIDER, *Jan Lievens. Sein Leben und seine Werke*, revised and supplemented by Rudolf E.O. EKKART, Amsterdam 1973, pp. 68, 148, 334, no. 247; Peter MURRAY, *The Dulwich Picture Gallery: A Catalogue*, London 1980, p. 304; W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. III, Landau 1986, pp. 1808, 1926, no. 1287), and more recently as attributed to Jan Cossiers (Richard BERESFORD, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue*, London 1998, p. 77).

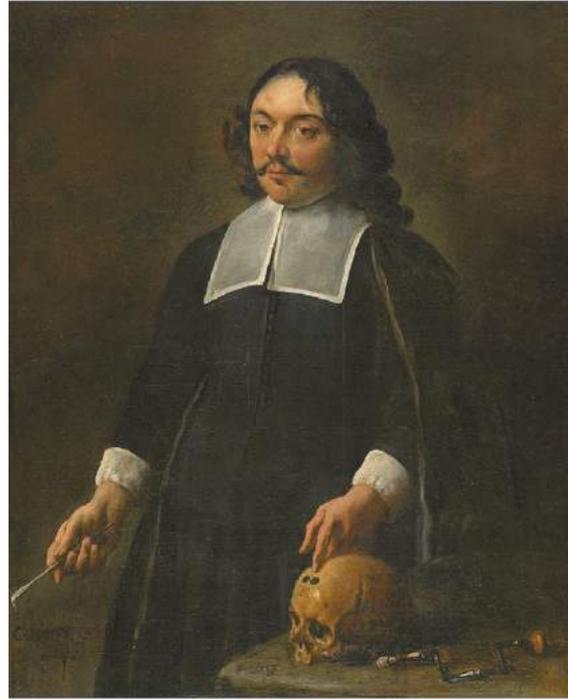
³³ Michiel JONKER, Ellinoor BERGVELT, *Dutch and Flemish Paintings: Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2016, pp. 317-318. I would like to thank Helen Hillyard, Assistant Curator in the Dulwich Picture Gallery, for sharing new catalogue entry on this painting for the purpose of my research even before it was published.

³⁴ Oil on panel, 62.2 by 48.3 cm, no. 1983.37

³⁵ Sale at Christie's in London, 31 October 1975, lot 74.



6. Portrait of a Man attributed to Jan Cossiers, Worcester Art Museum, no. 1983.37. Fot. Wikimedia Commons



7. Portrait of a Surgeon, Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, inv. No. 39. Fot. Wikimedia Commons

steder-Naumann in 1983, it was attributed to Jan Cossiers;³⁶ the re-attribution was based on a study of other works by the artist known at the time and not explained in detail in a scholarly publication. The painting was subsequently donated to the Worcester Art Gallery as by Jan Cossiers and the attribution was not further examined.³⁷ It is striking that the Worcester portrait is not only very sketchy (in the face and around the hands), but most of all it has significant chiaroscuro contrasts – the face is modelled with vivid colours, the brushstrokes are distinctive and there is a very intense shadow juxtaposed with areas of light. Such a chiaroscuro contrast is not present even in those paintings by Cossiers which follow the Caravaggesque manner; as a result it seems that the attribution of the *Portrait of*



8. Comparison of the signature from the Portrait of a Surgeon (at the top) with the signatures of Jan Cossiers from his other paintings

³⁶ A selection of Dutch and Flemish seventeenth-century paintings' by Hoogsteder-Naumann, Ltd. (1983); James A. WELU, *The Collector's Cabinet: Flemish Paintings from New England Private Collections*, Worcester MA 1983, p. 44, no. 10.

³⁷ I would like to thank Dr James Welu for providing information about the Worcester portrait.



9 Jan Cossiers, *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1650, *Detroit Institute of Arts*, no. 79.14. Fot. *Detroit Institute of Arts*, after: Julius S. Held, *Flemish and German Paintings of the 17th Century: The Collections of The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit 1982, plate II, p. 18*

a Man in Worcester Art Gallery may need to be reconsidered – it surely requires some new research that could lead to a more definitive conclusion about its possible authorship.

And finally one more example: a *Portrait of a Surgeon* in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (fig.7).³⁸ This is signed («COSSIERS F T:»), but the signature seems to be fake (fig.8).³⁹ The portrait itself is not good enough to be by Jan Cossiers either – the figure of the sitter is awkward, the hands are clumsily formed as well as painted too sketchily, and the face is modelled less skillfully compared with other portraits by Cossiers. Nevertheless, *Portrait of a Surgeon* is worth mentioning here – if his signature had been forged, this suggests that Jan Cossiers was once quite a famous portraitist, and appreciated in this genre of painting.

That Cossiers could be a skilled portraitist is demonstrated by the signed *Portrait of a Young Man* in the Detroit Institute of Arts (inv. no. 79.14, fig. 9).⁴⁰ It is a three-quarter length portrait of a man, turned to the left but looking at the spectator; painted on canvas

³⁸ Oil on panel, 110 by 86 cm, inv. no. 39. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, as by Jan Cossiers, undated. See Jos VAN ELEWYCK (ed.), *Leven langs de Schelde. Antwerpen in de 16e en 17e eeuw*, exhib. cat., Antwerp 1976, no. 447; *Geneeskunde bij ons van de Middeleeuwen tot de 19de eeuw*, exhib. cat., Brussels 1984, no. 118.

³⁹ Jan Cossiers signed several religious and mythological paintings, as well as a portrait now in Detroit Institute of Arts and the portrait of the Flamen Family in Herentals. He used either majuscule or minuscule letters, but every time his signatures looked similar: with a distinctively larger capital C at the beginning and with letters „s” leaning slightly right; the last „s” in his name ending with the flourish pointing up above the letter. In case of a majuscule signature he used serif-font letters. Cossiers’s signatures are elegant, forming steady row, and they are rather indistinctive: small and often almost hidden in the painting. The signature in the *Portrait of a Surgeon* on the other hand is large, completed in the capital sans-serif rounded letters that were supposed to be almost of the same size, but awkwardly got bigger towards the end of the word.

⁴⁰ See Susan J. BANDES, *Pursuits and Pleasures, Baroque Paintings from the Detroit Institute of Arts*, exhib. cat., East Lansing, Mich. 2003, pp. 9, 18-19. I would like to thank Ms. Iva Lisikewycz of Detroit Institute of Arts for her support of my research.



10. Comparison of the details of *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery and Jan Cossiers' *Portrait of a Young Man* in Detroit Institute of Arts



11 Comparison of the details of *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery and Jan Cossiers' *Portrait of a Young Man* in Detroit Institute of Arts

measuring 97.0 by 75.8 cm. The portrait is signed «Cossiers F.» at the base of a column to the left of the figure. The signature was discovered when the painting was cleaned in 1979⁴¹ – before that it was attributed to Anthony van Dyck.⁴² In fact, the attribution to van Dyck was not just traditional, but supported by experts in the early twentieth century.⁴³ This is understandable as the artistic quality of this painting is very high indeed, and the composition is consistent with van Dyck's portraiture as well. Nevertheless, the painting differs in some aspects from van Dyck's autograph work: dark in palette, with lively brushwork, it seems more sketchily painted overall. The undoubtedly elegant hands of the sitter

⁴¹ By the Conservation Services Laboratory; see Julius S. HELD, *Flemish and German Paintings of the 17th Century: The Collections of The Detroit Institute of Arts*, Detroit 1982, pp. 25-26.

⁴² Vincenzo FANTI, *Descrizione Completa di Lichtenstein*, Vienna 1767, p. 75, no. 373; *Description des Tableaux et Des Pieces de Sculpture de la Maison de Liechtenstein*, Vienna 1780, p. 217, no. 660; *Katalog der Furstlich Liechtensteinischen Bildergalerie*, Vienna 1873, p. 16, no. 123; *The Art News*, vol. 28, no. 30, April 26, 1930, (in an advertisement, New York, Howard Young Galleries); Alfred FRANKFURTER, *Portrait of a Young Man by Anthony Van Dyck*, New York n.d. \1934.

⁴³ HELD, *Flemish and German Paintings...*, p. 25 refers to the certificates and letters in the museum files.



12 Jan Cossiers, Portrait of Jan Frans Cossiers, drawing, 1658, Paris, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, inv. 1367.
Fot. Wikimedia Commons

would probably be slimmer and with longer fingers if they had been painted by van Dyck. It seems that Cossiers accentuated the expression of the sitter's face by executing the features more carefully and framing it with more freely painted areas, such as the background, hair and clothes. The sitter's pale complexion is modelled by bluish shadows (especially around the chin) as well as by pinkish blushes and spots in the inner corners of the eyes – it seems in many ways close to the *Portrait of a Lady* in York (fig. 10). There are some differences between the two portraits – the paint layers in the portrait in York seem a bit thicker and brush strokes perhaps more visible – but they may still have been created by the same artist. They most likely come from different times of his life (the Detroit painting has been dated to c. 1650), which may be reflected in the change of palette. Also, the York painting is on panel, while the Detroit one is on canvas. Nevertheless, both portraits contain very similar elements, e.g. the execution of the sitters' hands (fig.11), and most of all it should be stressed that both portraits are highly expressive and psychological, managing to capture the sitters' individual character.

Jan Cossiers's ability to create such appealing portraits is very well demonstrated by the drawings of his sons, signed and dated 1658. In 1640 Cossiers married his second wife Maria van der Willigen, with whom he had six sons (he also had five daughters). The portraits of five of his sons are now split between various collections; they are all inscribed with seemingly random numbers (21, 25, 27, 31, 32), which may indicate that the drawings used to be kept as a part of a larger set of sketch files. The drawings depict: Jan Frans Cossiers (Paris, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, inv. 1367, fig.12),⁴⁴ Jacobus Cossiers (London, The British Museum, inv. Oo.10.179, fig.13),⁴⁵ Cornelis Cossiers (Amsterdam,

⁴⁴ *Flemish Drawings of the Seventeenth Century from the Collection of Frits Lugt*, exhib. cat., Paris 1972, pp. 26-28, no. 20. Another version of this drawing (a replica or possibly a copy?) is kept in the Louvre in Paris (Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 21918).

⁴⁵ Arthur M. HIND, *Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artists Preserved in the Department of Prints and*



13 Jan Cossiers, Portrait of Jacobus Cossiers, drawing, 1658, London, The British Museum, inv. Oo.10.179.
Fot. Wikimedia Commons



14 Jan Cossiers, Portrait of Cornelis Cossiers, drawing, 1658, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-T-2008-103.
Fot. Wikimedia Commons



15 Jan Cossiers, Portrait of Wilhelmus (Guilliellemus) Cossiers, drawing, 1658, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, inv. I 248.



16 Possibly Jan Cossiers, Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat, early 1630s, National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., no. 1969.2.1. Fot. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-T-2008-103, fig.14),⁴⁶ Gerard Cossiers (private collection)⁴⁷ and Wilhelmus (Guilliellemus) Cossiers (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, inv. I 248, fig.15).⁴⁸ However, while it may be problematic to compare oil paintings with drawings, the latter show some interesting qualities that may be described as consistent with general elements of Cossiers's style in portraiture. The portraits are lively and even psychological. In the case of the older boys, the sitters are looking at the spectator. The faces are executed in a much more precise way than the hair, while arms and clothes are barely drawn, just sketched. The features are modelled with red and black chalk, combining blush on the cheeks with cold shadows around eyes and chin. Those elements seem to fit the *Portrait of a Lady* in York, and they are traceable in other oil portraits, which – although unsigned – are today attributed to Cossiers.

Drawings in the British Museum, Vol. 11: Drawings by Rubens, Van Dyck and other Artists of the Flemish School of the XVII Century, London 1923, p. 98, no. 1.

⁴⁶ Marijn SCHAPELHOUMAN and Fritz SCHOLTEN, „Acquisitions: Eleven Drawings and a Statue. A Selection from the Van Regteren Altena Donation”, *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2009), p.106-109, no. 11. It is likely that the same boy is portrayed in another drawing by Cossiers, much more sketchy, not signed nor dated, but numbered 36, kept in the J.P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles. It may be worth mentioning that the Los Angeles drawing was in the past attributed either to A. van Dyck or to P.P. Rubens (see Nicholas TURNER, *European Drawings 4: Catalogue of the Collections, The J. P. Getty Museum*, Los Angeles 2001, p. 123-125, no. 43).

⁴⁷ In 1987 on London art market, exhibited at An Exhibition of Old Master Drawings, Richard Day Ltd, New York & London 1987, no. 35.

⁴⁸ Felice STAMPFLE, with the assistance of Ruth S. KRAEMER and Jane S. TURNER, *Netherlandish Drawings of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries and Flemish Drawings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, New York & Princeton 1991, p. 118, no 264.



17. Comparison of the details of *Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat* in National Gallery of Art in Washington and *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery



18. Comparison of the details of *Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat* in National Gallery of Art in Washington and *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery

A *Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat*, painted on panel (fig.16), is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.⁴⁹ A rather young man is depicted in a three-quarter length composition, turned right but looking at the spectator, with a blue curtain in the background and a glimpse of landscape behind it. The painting was traditionally attributed at first to Velázquez,⁵⁰ and subsequently to Rubens.⁵¹ In 1968 the attribution was changed

⁴⁹ 105.5 by 73.5 cm, inv. 1969.2.1.

⁵⁰ The painting was in the collection of Charles Kinnaird, 8th Baron Kinnaird (1780-1826) in Rossie Priory by 1809, and was sold at his sale in 1813 as *Portrait of a Spanish Nobleman* by Velázquez (Phillips, London, February-March 1813, no. 85).

⁵¹ It was engraved in 1813 by James Fittler as after P.P. Rubens, and as a result such an attribution had been accepted in for the painting in the nineteenth century publications: John SMITH, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters...*, vol. 2, London 1830, p. 223, no. 793; WAAGEN, op. cit., p. 447; Charles B. CURTIS, *Velazquez and Murillo*, New York & London 1883, p. 84, under no. 206; Max ROOSES, *L'oeuvre de P.P. Rubens: histoire et description de ses tableaux et dessins*, vol. 4, Antwerp 1890, pp. 315-316, no. 1143, and p. 322. See



19. Attributed to Jan Cossiers, *A Man Holding a Tankard*, private collection. Fot. Wikimedia Commons

to Jacob Jordaens,⁵² which was repeated in the later twentieth-century publications, although this was questioned by some experts on the basis of stylistic analysis.⁵³ Recently the painting was tentatively attributed to Cossiers („possibly Jan Cossiers”),⁵⁴ which seems to be convincing. It should be noted though that Cossiers was proposed as a possi-

also Carel G. VOORHELM SCHNEEVOOGT, *Catalogue des estampes gravées d'après P.P. Rubens...*, Haarlem 1873, p. 190, no. 303.

⁵² Exhibited with the new attribution at *Jacob Jordaens 1593-1678*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa 1968-69, no. 36, and subsequently published as by Jordaens: Michael JAFFÉ, „Some Recent Acquisitions of Seventeenth-Century Flemish Painting”, *Studies in the History of Art* 1969 (1970), pp. 23-26, 33 note 52; *European Paintings: An Illustrated Summary Catalogue*, National Gallery of Art, Washington 1975, p. 182; John WALKER, *National Gallery of Art, Washington*, New York 1984, p. 259, no. 330; *European Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue*, National Gallery of Art, Washington 1985, p. 211; Guy C. BAUMAN and Walter A. LIEDTKE, *Flemish Paintings in America: A Survey of Early Netherlandish and Fleming Paintings in the Public Collections of America*, Antwerp 1992, p. 345, no. 301; SUTTON, op. cit., p. 348.

⁵³ Roger-A. D'HULST, „Jordaens” (exhibition review), *The Art Bulletin* 51 (1969), p. 382; additionally rejection in scholars' letters kept in NGA curatorial files, as noted by Arthur K. WHEELOCK Jr., *Flemish Paintings of the Seventeenth Century. The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, Washington, D.C. 2005, p. 106 and 107 note 12. Erik LARSEN, „New Suggestions Concerning George Jamesone”, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 94 (July-August 1979), pp. 9-18, proposed an attribution to the Scottish artist George Jamesone, which did not find wider support.

⁵⁴ WHEELOCK, op. cit., pp. 103-107. I would like to thank Professor Arthur Wheelock and Alexandra Libby (Assistant Curator of Northern Baroque Paintings in the National Gallery of Art) for their kind support of my research.



20. *Attributed to Jan Cossiers, Portrait of a Young Man, private collection.*
 Fot. Wikimedia Commons



21. *Attributed to A. van Dyck (?), Portrait of Young Van Dyck, ca. 1617, Rubens House (Rubenshuis) in Antwerp.*
 Fot. Wikimedia Commons

ble author of this portrait as early as 1938; back then August L. Mayer wrote in the exhibition review: „The portrait of a man, lent to the Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe at Burlington House by Lord Kinnaid, and ascribed in the Catalogue (No. 92) to Rubens, is certainly not by this master. It was formerly attributed to Velazquez and Waagen was the first to recognize its Flemish origin. It is in my opinion by one of the most skillful and interesting «Pseudo Spaniards», Jan Cossiers of Valenciennes, and I am glad to say that Dr Ludwig Burchard shares my view. No doubt it was the broad handling with the dark shadows which gave rise to the idea that it might be a Spanish picture. But it is obviously Flemish and betrays the characteristic merits and defects of Cossiers’s art, notably a certain anatomic carelessness.”⁵⁵ Unfortunately this attribution proposal was not picked up thereafter.

The Washington portrait is now dated to the early 1630s, and seems to be closer to the manner of Rubens than that of van Dyck. This is not surprising as we know that in the 1630s Jan Cossiers was listed among Rubens’s collaborators. Arthur Wheelock concluded that Cossiers’ portrait of his son Jacobus offers a striking visual comparison to the head in the Washington painting; he pointed to the angle of the pose, the structure of the face and the careful delineation of the features in both portraits, including such details as the shape of the eyes and the small dots along the lower eyelid.⁵⁶ The case for an attribution of the *Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat* to Jan Cossiers may also be strengthened by comparison of the sitter’s head to the head of a man in the signed Detroit portrait. In both

⁵⁵ August L. MAYER, „Some Notes on Recent Exhibitions”, *The Burlington Magazine* 72 (April 1938), p. 190.

⁵⁶ WHEELLOCK, op. cit., p. 106.

cases the faces are modelled in a similar way, especially in the areas of the eyes (eyebrows, eyelids, inner eye corners and irises), and the hair (depicted in both paintings in a blurry, softly-sketchy manner). Surely the Washington portrait seems to have been completed by the artist working within Ruben's orbit and indeed Jan Cossiers is the most likely candidate in this case.

It should be stressed that the portrait in Washington is also in many aspects very similar to the York portrait. A closer look at both sitters' faces reveal almost the same modelling (fig. 17): visible brushstrokes through the whole surface of the face, softly painted eyebrows, a dark line marking the upper eyelids and reddish inner corners of the eyes. In both cases the complexion is enriched by bluish shadows (especially around the corners of the lips) and pink blushes on the cheeks. The skin of the lady in the York portrait is much paler, however, which also may reflect the influence of Rubens. In both portraits, the hair and clothes of the sitters are depicted in quite a free, sketchy manner. Finally, the curtains in both paintings are similar in their forms as well (fig. 18). Accepting the current attribution to Cossiers in case of the *Portrait of a Man in a Wide-Brimmed Hat* would as a result support attributing the portrait in York to the same artist.

In most of Cossiers's portraits the sitters are depicted looking towards the viewer; however, there is also a group of at least four paintings representing men in half length, smoking and drinking, and not necessarily having eye-contact with the viewer (in various private collections: *A Man Holding a Pewter Charger with a Chicken*, *A Man Smoking a Pipe*, *A Smoker with a Glass of Beer*, and *A Man Holding a Tankard*, fig. 19).⁵⁷ These may be portraits, or Caravaggesque genre depictions; they are also sometimes interpreted as the allegories of the senses. In all of those paintings we may find similar stylistic features as in the other portraits by Cossiers: in depicting complexion and hands, as well as in the sketchy execution of hair, clothes and backgrounds. As far as it is possible to judge from the available reproductions, they all seem to have these stylistic elements in common with the *Portrait of a Lady* in York.

Finally the portrait in York should be compared with one more painting assumed to be by Jan Cossiers, also in a private collection: a *Portrait of a Young Man*, which had been on

⁵⁷ The group consists of several similar paintings, painted on panels of approximately 64 by 49 cm. They are now in various private collections, but are widely accepted by scholars as attributed to Jan Cossiers. *A Man Holding a Tankard* (panel, 64,8 by 49,3 cm) has at *verso* marks of the city of Antwerp and the panelmaker François van Thienen, so it was surely created in the Antwerp period of Cossiers's career. The painting has been auctioned at Christie's in London (25 April 2008, lot 67) and at Koller auction in Zurich (17 September 2010, lot 3068), listed as unsold; recently sold from the private Bavarian collection at Dorotheum in Vienna (21 October 2014, lot 334). There was almost identical painting sold at Hampel in München (25 March 2011 lot 207), but probably a copy, as according to the auction's description the panel had a different size (69 by 55 cm). This painting has been described as possibly depicting Taste (one of the Five Senses), and also as a probable portrait of the painter Adriaen Brouwer; but in my opinion it may also be the allegory of Sight, as a man is depicted looking intensely into the tankard. Assuming that the set indeed consisted of the paintings listed in this paragraph, *A Man Holding a Pewter Charger with a Chicken* would better fit to represent Taste, while *A Man Smoking a Pipe* could be the depiction of Smell, which would leave *A Smoker with a Glass of Beer* as an allegory of Touch (?). Another panel has been identified as a likely portrait of Brouwer: *A Smoker with a Glass of Beer* (panel, 64,3 by 49 cm). In this case the support also has been stamped with the coat-of-arms of the City of Antwerp; the painting was sold at Bonhams in London (5 July 2006, lot 46) and is currently in the collection of art dealer Jack Kilgore & Co. in New York. It seems probable that a third picture of the same series may be *A Man Holding a Pewter Charger with a Chicken*, in a private collection (panel, 64,1 by 49,3 cm), sold at Christie's in London (3 December 2013, lot 436). And, finally, there is one more likely to be from the same set, *A Man Smoking a Pipe*, in a Swiss private collection (panel, 63 by 48,5 cm); sold at Fischer Auktionen in Lucerne (25 November 2015, lot 1034), as ascribed to Jan Cossiers.

extended loan to the Rubens House Museum (Rubenshuis) in Antwerp from 2007 to 2012 (fig. 20). The painting is on panel measuring 62.9 by 48.3 cm. In the early 1930s the painting is recorded in the private collection of Jacob Doppler in Munich – back then it was assumed to be by van Dyck. In the late-twentieth century the portrait was re-attributed to the «circle of Jan de Bray»,⁵⁸ and finally recently to Jan Cossiers,⁵⁹ which is the attribution currently accepted by scholars. The depiction of the sitter seems to be very close to the *Portrait of a Lady* in York, and again the similarities are most apparent in the execution of the faces and the hands (in brushwork, in modelling the features and the colours making up the sitters' complexions), as well as in more sketchy way of executing hair, clothes and background.⁶⁰

The issue of the degree of influence of Rubens's or Van Dyck's style present in the *Portrait of a Lady* in York may be further considered by comparing it with the *Portrait of Young Anthony van Dyck* in the Rubens House Museum (Rubenshuis) (fig.21).⁶¹ This was at first attributed to Rubens,⁶² then to the young van Dyck himself,⁶³ and subsequently to Rubens again.⁶⁴ Recent comprehensive analysis, including various high-end technological methods (e.g. X-ray radiography and mammography, X-ray tomography and MA-XRF imaging) proved that the portrait had been altered. For example, the original version did not include the hat or cape. The examination revealed several *pentimenti* that suggest a rather immature hand; as a result, the painting has been firmly re-attributed to van Dyck himself, and it has been proposed that it is a self-portrait, possibly executed around 1617 and clearly under the influence of Rubens.⁶⁵ In any case, the execution of the face of a young man in the Antwerp portrait seems to be surprisingly close to the relevant parts of the *Portrait of a Lady* in York. In both paintings the ovals of the faces and the contours of the eyelids are formed by rather blurry brown lines, and the eyelashes by sketchy dashes and dots. The remarkably elegant pale complexion of the sitters is modelled with blue shadows and pink blushes; the shadows below the noses and the execution of the hair also seem very similar in both portraits. While it is unlikely that the York portrait was painted

⁵⁸ Auction at Christie's in London (18 May 1990, lot 144).

⁵⁹ Auction at Christie's in New York (19 July 2007, lot 226).

⁶⁰ There are more portraits attributed to Jan Cossiers, however in some cases the attribution has been questioned or proposed rather tentatively. Those portraits should not be therefore in my opinion regarded as possible proofs of any other attribution, as the whole idea would be probably too speculative in that case. As a result I decided not to juxtapose *Portrait of a Lady* in York for example with *Portrait of a Young Man with a Feathered Beret* (now in the collection of art dealer Jack Kilgore & Co. in New York), *Self-Portrait as a Young Man* (now in the collection of art dealer Rob Smeets Old Master Paintings in Milan) and *Portrait of a Man* (sold as *Porträt eines Edelmannes in Halbrüstung* at the auction at Koller in Zurich on 17 September 2014, lot 6420).

⁶¹ Oil on panel, 36.5 by 25.8 cm.

⁶² Hans Vlieghe, *Rubens Portraits of Identified Sitters Painted in Antwerp*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XIX.2, London & New York 1987, pp. 77-78, cat. no. 89.

⁶³ Michael Jaffé, *Van Dyck's Antwerp Sketchbook*, 1966, pt. I, pp. 47-48, 105 no. 89, 106 no. 90, 115 fig. 1; Gregory Martin, *National Gallery Catalogues: The Flemish School*, London 1970, p. 33 no. 22; Götz Eckhardt, *Selbstbildnisse niederländischer Maler des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 1971, pp. 70, 180, ill. 62; Kimbell Art Museum. *Catalogue of the collection*, Ft. Worth 1972, pp. 64-65; Alan McNAIRN, *The Young van Dyck / Le jeune Van Dyck*, exh. cat. National Gallery of Canada, 1980, pp. 36-37, cat. no. 2 (*Self-Portrait about Age Fifteen*); Timothy Potts (ed.), *Kimbell Art Museum: Catalogue of the Collection*, Fort Worth 1972, No. 64-65; *Kimbell Art Museum: Handbook of the Collection*, Fort Worth 1981, p. 78.

⁶⁴ A. Leysen, Hans Vlieghe, „Rubens' portret van de jonge Van Dyck”, *Sint-Paulus-Info* 61 (1995), pp. 1206-1210.

⁶⁵ Katlijne Van der Stighele, et al., „Young Anthony van Dyck revisited: A multidisciplinary approach to a portrait once attributed to Peter Paul Rubens”, *Art matters: international journal for technical art history* 6 (2014), pp. 21-35. Rubenshuis accepted the results of this research and has recently changed the attribution on their website.

by either Rubens or van Dyck, it still seems close to the puzzling painting in Antwerp. Perhaps this is just a reflection of the shared influence of Rubens, which of course was also present in the *oeuvre* of Jan Cossiers.

Portrait painters from the Low Countries enjoyed a high reputation with the greatest connoisseurs and were very much appreciated at courts across Europe. In the Low Countries portraiture was also very popular with both the higher and the lower bourgeoisie, who were keen to decorate their rooms with family portraits; the bourgeoisie gradually acquired more aristocratic pretensions, visible in the fashion, as well as in certain background elements (architecture, curtains).⁶⁶ It was fashionable to have a set of portraits of husband and wife, often as a pair of matching depictions, facing each other but on separate panels,⁶⁷ and it is likely that the *Portrait of a Lady* now in York used to be a part of such a set. Interestingly, even in the Low Countries portraiture in the seventeenth century was not considered a high-rank genre of painting, as it required only ability to imitate nature, and did not involve the invention required when creating a religious or mythological composition. As a result, portraits were generally not very expensive. Of course there were famous artists, like Rubens or Van Dyck, whose portraits cost a lot, but even those painters made their names with history pieces in the first place.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Jan Cossiers's portraits, at least to a viewer today, may in many cases seem even better than his mythological or religious paintings. Most of Cossiers's portraits were in the past attributed either to Rubens or van Dyck, which also in itself reflects the very high skills of this artist, who sadly seems to be a bit undervalued today. Hopefully further research will help take him out of the shadows, by defining his *oeuvre* which still raises many doubts and questions. Nevertheless, it seems that the *Portrait of a Lady* in York Art Gallery should now join that *oeuvre* as one of the works attributed to Jan Cossiers, datable to c. 1635-45.

⁶⁶ Hans Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture 1585-1700*, Singapore 1998, p. 8 and 127.

⁶⁷ On the Flemish portraits of the late 16th and the early 17th centuries see Katlijne Van der Stighele, „Das Porträt zwischen 1550 und 1650: Die Emanzipation eines Genres” in: Ekkehard Mai, Hans Vlieghe, (eds.), *Von Bruegel bis Rubens: Das goldene Jahrhundert der flämischen Malerei*, exhib. cat., Cologne & Vienna 1992/93, pp. 171-182. See also Katlijne Van der Stighele, „Burgers en hun portretten” in: Jan Van der Stock (ed.), *Stad in Vlaanderen, cultuur en maatschappij 1477-1787*. Brussels 1991, pp. 141-156.

⁶⁸ Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture...*, p. 8.

Propozycja atrybuowania XVII-wiecznego flamandzkiego Portretu kobiety (York Art Gallery) Janowi Cossiersowi

Portret kobiety przechowywany w York Art Gallery (YORAG 840) tradycyjnie przypisywany był Cornelisowi de Vos, jednakże tę atrybucję należy odrzucić, ponieważ obraz nie odpowiada stylistycznie twórczości tego malarza. Portret ten namalował zapewne artysta antwerpski, ponieważ widoczne są w nim wpływy twórczości Petera Paula Rubensa oraz Antona van Dycka. Badania portretu z Yorku, rozpoczęte w ramach projektu National Inventory of Continental European Paintings, a następnie kontynuowane z pomocą Research Bursary z Subject Specialist Network for European Paintings Pre-1900 (The National Gallery, Londyn) pozwoliły wysunąć nową atrybucję. Wydaje się, że obraz należy przypisać Janowi Cossiersowi (1600-1671), uczniowi Cornelisa de Vos oraz współpracownikowi P. P. Rubensa w latach 30. XVII w. Cossiers oprócz dzieł o tematyce mitologicznej i religijnej malował również portrety, które były wysoko cenione. Szczególnie starannie odwzorowywał twarze portretowanych osób, szkicowo natomiast traktował włosy, ubrania i tło. Karnacje modelował wykorzystując błękitne i różowe cienie. Potrafił także uchwycić psychologiczny wyraz przedstawianych postaci, które często ukazywał ze wzrokiem zwróconym w stronę widza. Cechy te zauważalne są w *Portrecie kobiety* w Yorku, ale także w sygnowanych portretach Jana Cossiersa: pięciu rysunkach przedstawiających synów malarza (*Jan Frans Cossiers* w Fondation Custodia w Paryżu, inv. 1367; *Jacobus Cossiers* w British Museum w Lon-

dynie, inv. Oo.10.179; *Cornelis Cossiers* w Rijksmuseum w Amsterdamie, inv. RP-T-2008-103; *Gerard Cossiers* w prywatnej kolekcji i *Wilhelmus Cossiers* w Pierpont Morgan Library w Nowym Jorku, inv. I 248), a przede wszystkim w *Portrecie Młodego Mężczyzny* w Detroit Institute of Arts (inv. no. 79.14). Obraz z Yorku można również zestawzić z portretami przypisywanymi Janowi Cossiersowi, na przykład *Mężczyzną w kapeluszu* w National Gallery of Art w Waszyngtonie lub z *Portretem młodego mężczyzny* znajdującym się w prywatnej kolekcji i eksponowanym w latach 2007-2012 w Rubenshuis w Antwerpii.

W wyniku badań podsumowanych w niniejszym artykule *Portret kobiety* z York Art Gallery, namalowany zapewne ok. 1635-1645, został przypisany Janowi Cossiersowi. Warto podkreślić, że *oeuvre* Jana Cossiersa wciąż podlega weryfikacji, przykładowo, *Autoportret(?)* z Dulwich Picture Gallery w Londynie (DPG605), niegdyś przypisywany temu artyście, dziś uznawany jest za dzieło anonimowe; również atrybucja Cossiersowi *Portretu mężczyzny* z Worcester Art Museum (no. 1983.37) budzi poważne wątpliwości. Nawet przechowywany w zbiorach Royal Museum of Fine Arts w Antwerpii (inv. No. 39) *Portret chirurga*, mimo że jest sygnowany, także nie wydaje się być dziełem Jana Cossiersa – wszystko wskazuje na to, że owa sygnatura została sfałszowana, zapewne przez malarza współczesnego Cossiersowi.

