

Brothers under the Skin. The *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and his Secretary* by Jacob van Oost

Hermanos bajo la piel. El *Retrato de Sir Arthur Hopton y su secretario* de Jacob van Oost

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Abstract: Amongst the most interesting and controversial paintings of American Museums, the impressive *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary* (Dallas, Meadows Museum) remains labelled as 'Anonymous' despite several attempts to identify its author. The work indeed has a long history of attributions, mostly to painters from the 17th century Spanish School, none of which proved convincing enough. When Matías Díaz Padrón proposed the Flemish painter Jacob van Oost the Elder as the possible author of the portrait, although solidly based on compelling stylistic considerations, scholars remained sceptical due to the lack of evidence of the possible contact between the sitter and the painter. The present article provides substantial new arguments to link Sir Arthur Hopton to Flanders, and more particularly to Bruges, Van Oost's native city. Moreover, a closer look at the painting allows for an opportunity to question the assumed date of the portrait, 1641, considering 1649 instead. In this scenario, the sitter's nephew, Sir Ralph Hopton is revealed as a key figure: his potential involvement in the commission and conception of the work providing answers to several questions that remained unexplained. Finally, an unnoticed inscription in the canvas possibly reveals much more.

Keywords: Baroque Portrait; Hopton; Huygens; Van Oost; Murillo; Ricci; Maino; Cano; Maratta; Keyser; Reitlinger; Meadows.

Resumen: Entre las pinturas más controvertidas de los museos norteamericanos, el imponente *Retrato de Sir Arthur Hopton y su secretario* (Dallas, Meadows Museum), continúa como "Anónimo" a pesar de las múltiples tentativas de encontrarle autor. Cuenta, en efecto, con un largo historial de atribuciones, mayoritariamente a la escuela española del siglo XVII, ninguna lo suficientemente convincente. Cuando Matías Díaz Padrón propuso al flamenco Jacob van Oost el Viejo como posible autor del retrato, a pesar de sus sólidas y convincentes consideraciones estilísticas, los estudiosos se mostraron escépticos, a falta de pruebas de un posible contacto entre

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el retratado y el pintor. El presente artículo aporta nuevos elementos que vinculan a Sir Arthur Hopton con Flandes de manera significativa y, más precisamente, con Brujas, la ciudad natal de Van Oost. De otra parte, una observación más detenida de la pintura conduce a cuestionar la fecha de 1641 hasta ahora asumida para el retrato, optando en su lugar por 1649. En este cruce de circunstancias, el sobrino del retratado, Sir Ralph Hopton, emerge como figura clave; su vinculación potencial con el encargo y la concepción de la pintura daría respuesta a varios interrogantes. Por último, una inscripción inadvertida podría desvelar algo más.

Palabras clave: Retrato barroco; Hopton; Huygens; Meadows; Van Oost; Murillo; Ricci; Maíno; Cano; Maratta; Keyser; Reitlinger.

1. Spanish or Flemish? One of the Most Controversial Paintings of American Museums



In 2002 the Spanish press appeared agitated regarding a new attribution by Matías Díaz Padrón, specifically a *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton* (1588? -1650) and a secretary (Fig. 1)² that at the time was being shown at Madrid's Prado Museum as an anonymous work. The painting was part of "*La Almoneda del Siglo*" (*The Sale of the Century*), an exhibition devoted to the sale of Charles I of England's collection as a consequence of his execution in 1649³. Hopton's portrait was included because of his significant role whilst ambassador in Madrid (1638-1645), in providing works of art for the English monarch and other noblemen⁴. Belonging to the Meadows Museum in Dallas, the portrait had been in Madrid and Barcelona shortly before that, together with a selection of works from the North American museum, whose collection focuses entirely on Spanish art, reflecting Algur Hurtle Meadows' (1899-1978)⁵ personal fascination.

Both exhibitions were Díaz Padrón's opportunity to see and study the portrait more closely, as he would later remark "one of the most controversial paintings in an American museum", the authorship of which had yet to be resolved. Indeed, the portrait had a long history of attributions to painters from the Spanish school: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), Fray Juan Ricci (1600-1681), Juan Bautista Maíno (1581-1649) and Alonso Cano (1601-1667), among others. None of whom proved convincing enough, and there-

² (Oil on canvas, 187,3 x 116,8 cm.) Dallas, Meadows Museum, SMU, Algur H. Meadows Collection, (inv. MM.74.02).

³ A. Malcolm and M. Burke, in *La Almoneda del siglo. Relaciones artísticas entre España y Gran Bretaña, 1604-1655*, dir. J. Brown and J. Elliot, (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2002), p. 206-209, cat. 29; *The Sale of the Century: Artistic Relations between Spain and Great Britain, 1604-1655*, (New Haven and London, 2002), cat. 29.

⁴ E. Gué Trapier, "Sir Arthur Hopton and the interchange of paintings between Spain and England in the Seventeenth Century", *The Connoisseur*, no. 164, (1967), p. 239-243; no. 165, p. 60-63.

⁵ J. Lunsford and J. M. Pita Andrade dir., *Pintura española de la Colección Meadows*, (Madrid-Barcelona: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Museo Nacional de Arte de Cataluña, 2000), p. 52-53, cat. 7.



Fig. 1. Jacob van Oost, *Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary*. Dallas, Meadows Museum (inv. MM.74.02) © Meadows Museum, SMU, Algur H. Meadows Collection.

fore the painting remained anonymous. The vacuum proved compelling for Díaz Padrón, who saw how “the execution and treatment of the materials show the approach of a personality outside of the Spanish sphere”⁶. His considering the work being Flemish rather than Spanish, and his recognising Bruges’ leading painter Jacob van Oost the Elder (1603-1671) as the painting’s most likely author; stirred the press and scholars alike.

With the exhibition open, the national daily newspaper *ABC* went on to publish as its headline: “Díaz Padrón discovers the authorship of an anonymous canvas from 'La Almoneda del Siglo'”⁷. The following day, the exhibition’s two curators, Jonathan Brown and John Elliot were invited to give their opinion, saying: “Nothing proves that the painting is by Van Oost”⁸. Describing Díaz Padrón's argument as “interesting”, and without going as far as to commit themselves to any painter of the age, the curators raised their own concerns of the naming of Van Oost as the author of the work: “Where could Van Oost and Hopton have met? Because it seems that the latter was never in Flanders” –argued Elliot. For his part, Brown stated that “the painting is dated 1641 and at that moment Sir Arthur Hopton was in Madrid where he was ambassador from 1638 to 1645”⁹.

Díaz Padrón published a comprehensive article on the portrait in *Archivo Español de Arte*, to which the reader is able to refer to a complete account of the critical history and literature of the painting¹⁰. Since then, except for Ismael Gutiérrez Pastor who rejects the attribution to Maíno and considers Van Oost as “probable”¹¹, no other scholar makes a case for or against. William B. Jordan reiterates his attribution to Alonso Cano in 2015¹². More recently Todd Longstaffe-Gowan in his detailed study of the image of Sir Arthur, is aware of Díaz Padrón's publication but notably continues to preserve the anonymity of the painting¹³; as is the case with the recent *Handbook* from the Meadows collection¹⁴. Interestingly, in an unpublished document by Marcus Burke (1989), he attempts to connect the portrait with

⁶ “... la ejecución y el tratamiento de la materia indican maneras propias de una personalidad fuera del ámbito español”. M. Díaz Padrón, “El Retrato de Sir Arthur Hopton y secretario del Meadows Museum restituido a Jacob van Oost”, *Archivo Español de Arte*, 82/326, (2009), p. 204.

⁷ R. Valdelomar, “Díaz Padrón descubre la autoría de un lienzo anónimo de ‘La Almoneda del Siglo’”, *ABC Cultura*, 24 March 2002.

⁸ R. Valdelomar, “Nada prueba que el cuadro sea de Van Oost’, según Elliot y Brown”, *ABC Cultura*, 25 March 2002.

⁹ “¿Dónde podrían haberse encontrado Van Oost y Hopton? Porque parece ser que este último nunca estuvo en Flandes” (...) “el cuadro está fechado en 1641 y en esa época Sir Arthur Hopton estuvo en Madrid donde fue embajador de 1638 a 1645”. Elliot and Brown, in Valdelomar, “Nada prueba”.

¹⁰ Díaz Padrón, “El retrato de Sir Arthur”, p. 202-212.

¹¹ I. Gutiérrez Pastor, “Nuevas pinturas de Fray Juan Ricci (Madrid, 1600-Montecassino, 1681)”, *Berceo*, 163, (2011), p. 211.

¹² W. B. Jordan, “La peinture à la cour du roi d'Espagne, 1620-1670”, in G. Velázquez, ed. G. Kientz, (Paris : Grand Palais, 2015), p. 66, fig. III.66.

¹³ T. Longstaffe-Gowan, “Fashioning’ Sir Arthur”, in *Ambassadors in Golden-Age Madrid: The Court of Philip IV through Foreign Eyes*, ed. J. Fernández Santos y J.L. Colomer, (Madrid: Madrid, 2020), p. 304-325.

¹⁴ “Unknown Artist. Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton, 1641”. W. Sepponen, in M. A. Roglán (ed.), *Meadows Museum. A Handbook of the Collection*, (Dallas, 2021), p. 61.

Northern painters active in Madrid at the time, without finding any talented enough for such a painting¹⁵.

There is nothing to add to Díaz Padrón's stylistic and comparative observations. He demonstrates very effectively the authorship of Van Oost, giving his reasons to discard Ricci, Maíno and others. Indeed, to think of the Flemish school it is enough to sense "the impact of the chromatic beauty of the objects and details, clearly designed. Everything is captured with individual precision: the tablecloth, the rivets and trimmings on the chair, books and ornaments... the realism and material treatment of the book..." etc. Díaz Padrón points out that "the confusion lies in paying more attention to the design than to the plastic substance and the brushwork"; and he speaks of an obvious "thingness" (*cosidad*), of the individual presence of the objects and their tactile qualities which is typically Flemish¹⁶. "No one like the Flemish indulges as much in painting the objects, they treat a thing with the same care that the face of a sitter"¹⁷. Cautioning against the Spanish furniture in the painting being misleading, when it was decorating the houses in Bruges¹⁸, Díaz Padrón sees a portrait that "assumes a stylistic approach close to Caravaggio and the Bolognese, without forgetting Rubens and Van Dyck", which is what "builds the style of Jacob van Oost"¹⁹.

The comparison with a painting by Van Oost representing a *Theologian with a secretary*²⁰ (Fig. 2) proves compelling and decisive for the proposed attribution, both from a plastic and compositional point of view; as is the *Calling of St. Matthew*, dated 1641²¹ (Fig. 3) and the *Philosopher meditating*²² (Fig. 4), which is dated "1647" on the open letter falling from the desk (Fig. 5). Díaz Padrón notes other parallels with a *Portrait of an Unknown Man* signed by Van Oost in 1638²³, and with the gentlemen of the *Musical Company*

¹⁵ M. Burke, *Research Report on inv. MM.74.02*, unpublished, (Dallas: Meadows Museum, 1989), p. 11. My thanks to Anne Lenhart for providing this material. Burke points to Maíno as the author of the painting. Having published it as 'anonymous Spanish, 1641'. M. Burke, *A Selection of Spanish Masterworks from the Meadows Museum*, (Dallas 1986), p. 7, fig. 9; he confirms Maíno in 2002. *La Almoneda*, p. 209, cat. 29.

¹⁶ "impacta la belleza cromática de los objetos y pormenores, diseñados con nitidez. Todo está captado con precisión individual: el mantel, los remaches y pasamanerías de la silla, libros y adornos ... el realismo y tratamiento material del libro..."; "...la confusión está en prestar más atención al diseño que a la sustancia plástica y factura" (Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 211).

¹⁷ "No hay nadie que se complazca tanto en los objetos como los flamencos, que tratan las cosas con la misma delicadeza que los rostros de los retratados", Valdelomar, "Díaz Padrón descubre", ABC, 24 March 2002.

¹⁸ Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 208.

¹⁹ "el retrato asume modos estilísticos próximos a Caravaggio y los boloñeses, sin descartar a Rubens y a Van Dyck. Esto es lo que forja el estilo de Jacob van Oost". Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 206.

²⁰ (Oil on canvas, 116 x 222 cm.) Bruges, Groeningemuseum, (inv. 0.184.I). Inscribed, the sitter's age: "AETATIS 47" and the date: "ANNO 1668" (top left). J. L. de Meulemeester, *Jacob van Oost de Oudere en het zeventiende-eeuwse Brugge*, (Brugge, 1984), p. 305, cat. B11; H. Vlieghe, *Catalogus schilderijen 17de en 18de eeuw. Stedelijk Musea Brugge*, (Brugge, 1994), p. 198, cat. 0.184.I; *Cit.* Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 207, fig. 2 and 4, p. 208, note 21.

²¹ (Oil on canvas, 156 x 237 cm.) Bruges, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk. Meulemeester, *Jacob van Oost*, p. 314-316, cat. B23.

²² (Oil on panel, 110 x 149 cm.) Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal, Meulemeester, *Jacob van Oost*, p. 332, cat. B39.

²³ (Oil on panel, 61 x 45 cm.) Berlin, Bodemuseum, inv. 1469. Signed and dated "JACOMO VAN OOST F. 1638", Meulemeester, *Jacob van Oost*, p. 134, cat. A113; *cit.* Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 208, note 22.



Fig. 2. Jacob van Oost, *A Theologian with a Secretary*, 1668. Bruges, Groeningemuseum (inv. 0.184.I) © Public domain.

at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels²⁴.

Offering convincing visual evidence to support his belief of Van Oost as the author of the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary*, Díaz Padrón's proposal is by far the most plausible among those that have been considered, and since discarded. However, it is true that in order to convince doubters it is necessary to find evidence of possible contact between the painter and the sitter. A complicated task, considering how little is known about Van Oost's life and the gaps in Sir Arthur's.

2. Sir Arthur Hopton and Flanders

It cannot be assumed that Sir Arthur Hopton was never in Flanders as Elliot argues²⁵. In the search for evidence of this, there are enough reasons to believe his visiting the Spanish Netherlands on more than one occasion. In fact, when planning his trip from Madrid to England in 1636, he asks the king for funds to guarantee his passage through Flanders²⁶; and even if he also considers to take the sea route²⁷, that detail indicates that he could well have

²⁴ Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", fig. 7.

²⁵ Elliot, in Valdelomar, "Nada prueba".

²⁶ *Wa. Aston to Charles I*, Madrid, June 30th, 1639: "Some months after my arrival to this Court Mr. Hopton acquainted me, that he intended to become an humble suiter to your Majesty, both for a ship to return him home, and for liberty top ut aboard her such sums of money to pass for Flanders", E. Hyde, Earl de Clarendon, *State papers collected by Edward Earl of Clarendon...*; v. 1, (Oxford, 1767), p. 571.

²⁷ Leaving Madrid on April the 2nd 1636, Sir Arthur writes to Secretary Francis Windebank from San Sebastián: "I have, with all the expedition possible, gotten from Madrid, and am ready to go aboard a ship of London, called the Elizabeth and Francis, in company of three other very good ships. The commodity is so good, and the weather so fair, as I think of no other way tan by sea; but, if the weather shall happen to change, so as there should be any likelihood of delay, I would likewise change my purpose, and dispose of myself so as his Majesty orders may be observed: howsoever, I know my passage through France can neither be very safe at this time that the frontiers are full of disorders, nor of great expedition, my body



Fig. 3. Jacob van Oost. *The Calling of St. Matthew*, 1641. Bruges, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk Museum © Public domain.

set foot on Flemish lands on any of his journeys, not only whilst he was between London and Madrid, but also during his stays in Paris and Rouen.

Bruges was at the time, along with Ostend and Dunkirk, one of the routes to travel between England and the Continent. A boat with passengers (paquebouc=packet boat) was in service to cross to Dover from Nieuwpoort-Oostende, near Bruges²⁸. Since 1640 a Treaty was signed between the kings of Great Britain and Spain "to keep commerce and navigation open and free between the ports of England and those of Flanders"²⁹. Against a backdrop of Royalists and Revolution, Bruges (that Charles II himself would later choose as a place of exile in 1656), had been a favoured destination for British fleeing England since 1640³⁰.

But above all, Sir Arthur's most compelling motivation for going to Bruges was his much-loved nephew, Sir Ralph³¹ (Fig. 6), 1st Baron Hopton of Stratton (1596-1652), who was exiled from 1647 until his death in 1652³². Sir Ralph was a very revered military officer and politician, a great defender of the royalist cause. He had been in Flanders as a soldier³³, decorated a

being not for great labour at this time", *Mr. Hopton to Mr. Secretary Windebank*, San Sebastian, April 13th, 1636; in Clarendon, *State Papers*, vol. 1, p. 504.

²⁸ J. De Smet, "Tables du Commerce et de la Navigation du port de Bruges 1675-1698 avec en annexe les Tables de la Navigation du port d'Ostende 1640-1655", *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, vol. 94, (1930), p. 143.

²⁹ Clarendon, *State Paper*, vol. 2, p. 84.

³⁰ P. Major, *Writings of Exile in the English Revolution and Restoration*, (London & New York, 2016), p. 89.

³¹ (Oil on canvas, 127 x 102,9 cm.), London, National Portrait Gallery (inv. 494), as Anonymous, acquired in 1877.

³² "Hopton, Ralph", in Ch. H. Firth, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, p. 347-350; J. Barratt, *Cavalier Generals, King Charles I and his Commanders in the English Civil War, 1642-46*, (Barnsley, 2004), p. 77-93.

³³ J. Heath, *A Brief Chronicle of the Late Intestine Warr in the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland ...*, (Whitehall, 1663), p. 73.



Fig. 4. Jacob van Oost, *Philosopher meditating*, 1647. Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal, © Public domain.

Knight during the coronation of Charles I, and later titled Baron Hopton in 1643. Winner of battles, he was considered a great hero deserving of poems³⁴. Given Sir Ralph's exile in Bruges, an encounter between Sir Arthur and the painter Van Oost through him would make incredible sense; but the dates do not match '1641', as the supposed year of the portrait, when Sir Arthur, as far as is known, was in Madrid.

2.1. A date taken for granted

When attempting to verify the veracity of the date of the portrait (with the use of high-resolution photographs, that are available today), it is striking how difficult it is to read³⁵. Until now the argument of the painting being created in Spain hinges on the date, 1641, printed in Roman numerals at the top of the spine of the red book that stands vertically on the table, where the coat of arms of the sitter also appears. But crucially, what if the date was not 1641 as has always been believed?.

³⁴ *To the Lord Hopton, of his fight in Cornwall*, part of the *Hesperides* by Robert Herrick, *The complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. A. B. Grosart, vol. 3, (London, 1876), p. 47.

³⁵ Burke also remarks the date as 'Partially illegible', Burke, *Research Report*, p. 1.



Fig. 5. Jacob van Oost, *Philosopher meditating*, detail, 1647. Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal, © Public domain.

To our knowledge, José López Rey was the first to mention the presence of these Roman numerals. He tells us verbatim that “though partly abraded, [they] are easily readable: [M] DCXLI”³⁶; that is, 1641; the same information having been reiterated since then. Only recently, Longstaffe-Gowan notes “[M]DCXL”, that is, 1640³⁷, which is indicative of a discrepancy, and of the lack of clarity of a date that has been transmitted for decades without being questioned.

These numerals that López Rey can “easily” read, are not as visible in the high-resolution photograph of the painting. Only “CX” appear clearly; before that, the remains of another letter that could well be a “D” (since its rounded shape can be seen). Behind “CX”, there is little else visible. Given this situation, it proved necessary to contact the conservation team at the Meadows Museum, seeking their assistance. Anne Lenhart, Director of Collections and Exhibitions was able to send a number of photographs of details from the painting³⁸. Only then did it become possible to confirm the

³⁶ “Indeed, the tome with Sir Arthur Hopton’s coat of arms also has some Roman numerals at the top of the spine which, though partly abraded, are easily readable: MDCXLI”, J. López Rey, “Juan Ricci’s portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton”, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 118, no. 1284, (1976), p. 29.

³⁷ Longstaffe-Gowan, “Fashioning’ Sir Arthur Hopton”, p. 319.

³⁸ Written communication, 13 and 21 April 2023. My thanks to Anne Lenhart for her precious help, and to Olivia Turner for her assistance.



Fig. 6. Anonymous, *Sir Ralph Hopton*. London, National Portrait Gallery (inv. NPG 494) © National Portrait Gallery.

presence of "DCXL", behind which an "I" can hardly be perceived. But crucially the inscription does not end there, with enough space, until the end of the book for something else to be added. Indeed, another numeral appears whilst modifying the settings of the different photographs: it is shaped with diagonal lines, which could well be an "X" (Fig. 7); beyond that nothing is visible. It seems that an "X" was missing from the Roman numeral pointed out by López Rey: "[M]DCXLI" (1641); the date of the portrait could more likely be "[M]DCXLIX" (1649).

2.2. Sir Ralph Hopton between Bruges and The Hague: the missing connection

1649 brings us back to Sir Ralph Hopton, a significant connection unnoticed until now that could well explain certain aspects of the genesis and authorship of the portrait. During his exile (1647-1652), Ralph having Bruges as his residence it is more than likely that he knew of Jacob van Oost, the most celebrated painter in the city at the time. It is also likely that Ralph received more than one visit from his uncle Arthur.

The relationship between Sir Arthur and his nephew Sir Ralph was not any kind of family relationship³⁹. Related on the fathers' side, barely eight years

³⁹ Sir Arthur keeps in regular contact with his nephew from Madrid, writes to "Mr. Erles" (1939, 20/19 May, from Madrid), asking him about his affairs whilst his nephew Ralph is away in the North. Historical

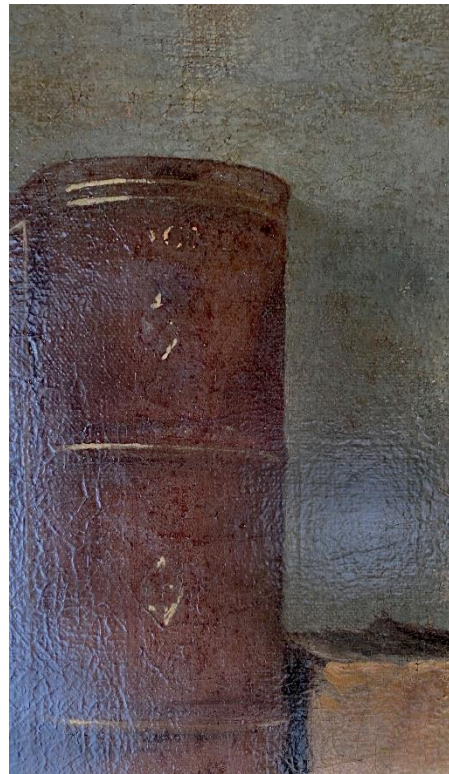


Fig. 7. Jacob van Oost, Detail of roman numerals on the spine of the book, *Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary*. Dallas, Meadows Museum (inv. MM.74.02) © Meadows Museum, SMU, Algur H. Meadows Collection.

apart, more than uncle and nephew they were like brothers under the skin. They were so close that whilst Ralph is in Jersey defending the royalist cause, Arthur –who had already left Madrid– goes to Normandy to try to see him, and there they meet in Coutainville for three days. It is known that it was the only time Ralph was absent from Jersey in the eleven months he served there⁴⁰. Arthur tries to convince him to join him in France, which Ralph decides to do only after receiving the news of the death of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Hopton (born Capel, 1596-1646). On February 26, 1647, Ralph moves with his uncle to Rouen⁴¹, who lives there from the beginning of the year⁴². Since neither of them had issue, both had named each other heir⁴³.

The bond between uncle and nephew was such that whilst living in Rouen,

Manuscript commission, *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Westmorland, Captain Stewart, Lord Stafford, Lord Muncaster, and others ...* (London, 1885), p. 220, n° 25.

⁴⁰ "... pendant le temps qu'il [Sir Ralph Hopton] resta à Jersey; qu'il fut onze mois qu'il y resta sans sortir, excepté les trois jours qu'il fut voir son oncle en Normandie", S. E. Hoskins, *Charles the Second in the Channel Islands. A Contribution to his biography, and to the history of his age*, vol 2, (London, 1854), p. 100, 102.

⁴¹ "Quand le lord Capel eut ainsi quitté Jersey, le lord Hopton et le chancelier y restèrent dans la même union; quelques mois après, le-lord Hopton y apprit la mort de sa femme et l'arrivée en France de son oncle sir Arthur Hopton. Celui-ci ambassadeur du Roi en Espagne, venait de quitter cette cour et de se rendre à Paris de là, il se retira bientôt après à Rouen, dans l'intention, dès qu'il se serait concerté bien à fond 'avec son neveu de rentrer en Angleterre pour la conservation et l'arrangement de leur fortune à tous deux. Cette circonstance déterminna le lord Hopton à quitter aussi Jersey mais ce ne fut pas sans faire", Clarendon, *Mémoires de Lord Clarendon*, vol. 1, (Paris, 1823), p. 289.

⁴² Ralph Hopton's presence in Rouen is confirmed in March 1647. F. T. R. Edgar, *Sir Ralph Hopton. The King's Man in the West (1642-1652). A Study in Character and Command*, (Oxford, 1968), p. 189.

⁴³ *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. J. Evelyn, W. Bray, (London, 1879), vol. 4, p. 93; Hoskins, *Charles the Second in the Channel Islands*, vol. 2, p. 100.



Fig. 8. Anton van Dyck, *Sir Arthur Hopton*, ca. 1636-1638. Private collection. © Sotheby's.

and in order to assist Ralph, Arthur does not hesitate to sell a large part of his valuable belongings⁴⁴. Indeed, Arthur comments that he is "raking all his corners for money" to cover his nephew's expenses and debts⁴⁵. With this intention, he decides to entrust some of his paintings to a certain "Mr. Crosse" for him to sell in Paris⁴⁶. From what we know, pieces as significant as his own oval portrait by Anthony van Dyck⁴⁷ (Fig. 8) reappear in the collection of the painter Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), catalogued in his 1682 sale⁴⁸, preceding

⁴⁴ Probably, among them, the 'eight cases with different paintings' that he brought from Madrid in 1645: "20 November 1645, *cédula de passo* to the General of Guipúzcoa: Hopton took with him "200 marcos de plata labrada de servicio, ocho cajas con diferentes pinturas, una caja con cosas de olor, otras dos cajas con libros, otras dos con ropa usada, y 2000 ducados con moneda de oro y plata" Archivo General de Simancas, Cámara de Castilla, Iibro 369, fol. 102r-v; *Cit.* Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur Hopton", p. 323, note 96.

⁴⁵ "the painte of his debtes in ye Island, and his expence here hath and cloth lye somew[ha]t heauy vppon mee w[hi]ch makes mee rake all my corners for money [...]", *Cit.* Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur Hopton", p. 323.

⁴⁶ British Library, Add. Ms. 78191, fol. 108. *Cit.* Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur Hopton", p. 323, note 97. 'Mr. Cross' must refer to the English painter Michael Cross (also called Miguel de la Cruz, Michael de la Croy and Michael La Croix, Cross), an accomplished copyist in Madrid and England who seems to have been working for Sir Arthur for several years. S. Bracken, "Cross, Michael (fl. 1633-1660)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 14, (Oxford, 2004), pp. 429-30; *Cit.* Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur", p. 315.

⁴⁷ (Oil on canvas, 59 x 47,5 cm.) Private collection. M. Rogers, "Two portraits by Van Dyck identified", *The Burlington Magazine* 124, (April, 1982), p. 235-236; S. Barnes, N. de Poorter, O. Millar y H. Vey, *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings*, (London, 2004), IV.137; Díaz Padrón, "El Retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 202, fig. 5.

⁴⁸ "Sir Arthur Hopkins in an Oval". *A List of Sir Peter Lely's Great Collection of Pictures, and other Rarities, ... to be Sold by way of Outcry, upon the Eighteenth day of April 1682. Old Stile.* Vid. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Duke of Sommerset, the Marquis of Ailesbury, and the Rev. Sir T. H. G. Puleston, Bart*, Fifteenth Report, App, Part VII, (London, 1898), p. 183; "Sir Peter Lely's Collection", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, vol. 83, No. 485, (Aug. 1943), p. 187.

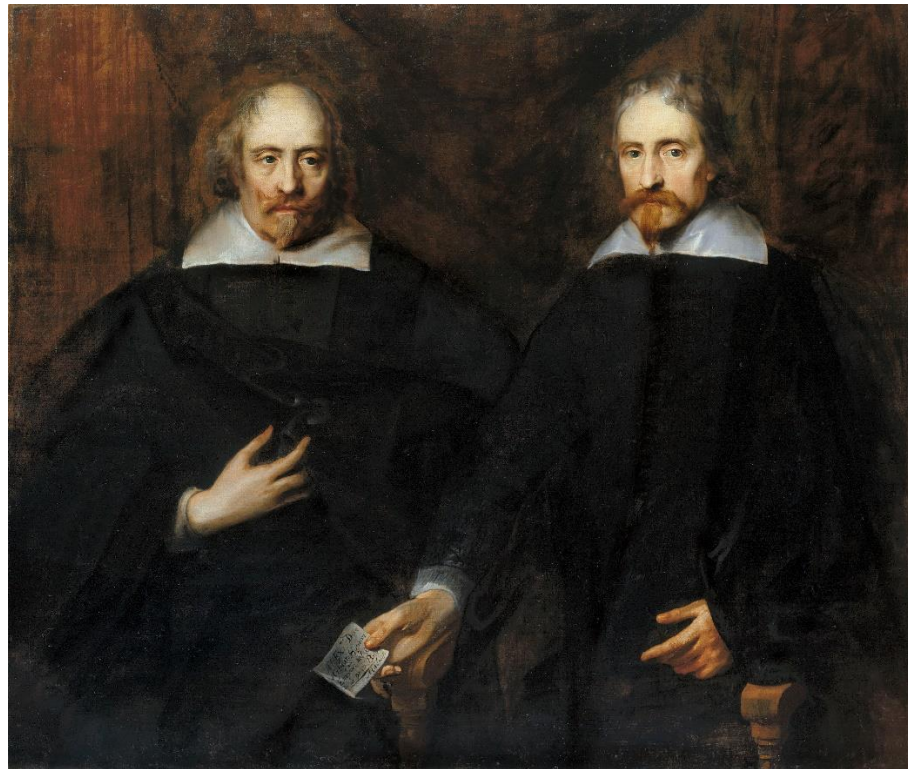


Fig. 9. Attributed to Michael Cross, *Sir Arthur Hopton and his brother Thomas Hopton*, ca. 1638. United Kingdom, private collection © Private collection.

a "Portrait of Lady Hopton"⁴⁹ who is very likely Ralph's deceased wife. Sir Arthur also renounces ownership of another portrait with sentimental value, in which he himself appears, together with his deceased brother Sir Thomas Hopton (c.1585-1638)⁵⁰ (Fig. 9). This double portrait was added to the collection of the Count of Molina, Don Antonio Mesía de Tovar (c.1620-1674), as it is described in the inventory drawn up after his death in 1674⁵¹.

Quite astonishing that Sir Arthur let such personal pieces go. Perhaps, as Longstaffe-Gowan argues, it is an indicator that these portraits were an investment that went beyond the importance of the sitter⁵². However, it could be seen that Arthur is still giving everything of himself away for Ralph. Arthur intended to return to England in the autumn, "earlier than expected", as he comments in a letter to Sir Richard Browne, from Rouen, on March 27, 1647⁵³. On his way to England, Sir Arthur could easily have passed through Bruges;

⁴⁹ "A portrait of Lady Hopton", *Burlington Magazine*, p. 187. See Lady Hopton's face in the *Portrait of Sir Ralph Hopton and his Wife Elizabeth*, dated 1637 (Oil on canvas, 132.08 cm x 154.94 cm) London, Sotheby's, (7 Sept 1997, lot 12), as Follower of Van Dyck.

⁵⁰ (Oil on canvas, 115 x 134 cm.), United Kingdom, private collection. London, Bonhams, (22 Mar 2004, lot 352), as 'English Follower of Anthony van Dyck', with literature and provenance. Several attributions, from Velazquez to Van Dyck, have been proposed and discarded. Lately Longstaffe-Gowan proposes Michael Cross, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur", fig. 8, p. 314-315, notes 46, 57, 59.

⁵¹ "197 Un lienzo de bara y media de Alto y dos de ancho en que estan Retratarados dos Cavalleros yngleses que El uno esta Suspensso y el otro con Un papel en la mano tassado en cinquenta ducados 550". Madrid, Archivo Histórico de Protocolos, Prot. 12.006, f. 437; in M. Burke and P. Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid 1601-1755*, (Los Angeles, 1997), vol. 1, p. 670. The inventory was drawn up in December 1674, and the sale took place on January the 2nd 1675.

⁵² Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur", p. 323.

⁵³ "Sooner than I would", *Arthur Hopton to Sir Richard Browne*, Rouen, 27 March 1647, London, British Library, Add. Ms. 78191, fol. 108, Cit. Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning Sir Arthur Hopton", p. 322, note 94.

and until his death near Bapton, Oxfordshire, in March 1650, he likely sought for other opportunities to see his nephew. During which time Ralph lives in Bruges and makes pilgrimages to The Hague and Utrecht⁵⁴.

That Sir Ralph stays in Bruges is further confirmed by the testimony of the Dutch historian and diplomat Lieuwe van Aitzema (1600-1669), who sees him there and claims to have previously met him in The Hague⁵⁵. Indeed, Ralph sends and receives letters from the Dutch city from January to July 1649⁵⁶. As an Advisor he is part of the entourage that accompanies Charles II of England⁵⁷, in refuge with his sister the Princess of Orange in The Hague, when in February news was received of the execution of their father⁵⁸. Whilst in The Hague in June, Ralph receives a package from Jonas Porrée (1619-1685), a Rouen physician. It contains a book translated by him into French; he asks Ralph to give it to Charles II⁵⁹. It is undoubtedly the *Eikôn basilike*, the famous compendium of meditations published after the death of Charles I⁶⁰, supposedly written by the monarch himself before his execution, a matter that is still speculated to this day⁶¹. The work, of which more than thirty editions were published, builds the image of Charles I as a martyr⁶², and provokes a response from the English Parliament, with John Milton's (1608-1684) *Eikonoklastes* published in October, who attacks the beheaded monarch, presenting him as a tyrant and hypocrite⁶³. Sir Ralph Hopton had since February expressed his condemnation of the murder of Charles I, publishing an eight-page *Declaration* in which he asserts his fidelity to Charles II, and requests help to recover the crown and sovereignty⁶⁴.

⁵⁴ Edgar, *Sir Ralph Hopton*, p. 198.

⁵⁵ "Daer was ook geinquarterte Lord Hopton; die ich in den Haag had gekent", L. van Aitzema, *Historie of verhael van saken van staet en oorlogh, in, ende ontrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden, Beginnende met den Jaer 1650 en eyndinge met het begin van't Jaer 1654*, vol. 7, ('sGraven-Hague, 1662), p. 699; *Ídem, Saken van staet en oorlogh, in, ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden, Beginnende met het Jaer 1645, ende Eyndigende met het Jaer 1656*, vol. 3, ('sGraven-Hague, 1669), p. 733.

⁵⁶ Sir Ralph sends a letter to Prince Rupert from The Hague on January 21, 1649. E. Warburton, *Memoirs of Prince Rupert, and the Cavaliers: including their private correspondence*, (London, 1849), vol. 1, p. 488, 535. Coronel Andrew mentions letters from Lord Hopton from The Hague in June 18 and 23: "My last letter, received from Lord Hopton, bears date at The Hague, 18th or 23rd of June, and it was received in two days into Sussex", Howell, *A complete collection of State Trials...*, vol. 5, p. 34. The Pepys Library preserves letters sent to Sir Ralph in The Hague, one from Jasper Cornelius (July 1649), another from Captain Green (July 24, 1649). See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Pepys manuscripts preserved at Magdalene College*, (Cambridge-London, 1911), p. 303, 306.

⁵⁷ "The King [Charles II] was here [The Hague] attended by the Lord Marquis of Montrofs, the Lords Hopton, Wilmot ... and other great Personages". Heath, *A Brief Chronicle*, p. 420.

⁵⁸ Charles II leaves The Hague in August 1649 for Paris; he would be in Jersey in September, T. Longmore, *Richard Wiseman, Surgeon and Sergeant-surgeon to Charles II: A Biographical Study*, (London, 1891), p. 55; *Letters and Papers Illustrating the Relations Between Charles the Second and Scotland in 1650*, ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, vol. 17, (Edinburgh, 1894), p. xv.

⁵⁹ Cambridge, Pepys Library the Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Pepys manuscripts*, p. 258.

⁶⁰ *Le Portrait du roy de la Grand'Bretagne fait de sa propre main durant sa solitude et ses souffrances*, trad. Porrée, (Rouen, 1649).

⁶¹ R. Wilcher, "What Was the King's Book for? The Evolution of 'Eikon Basilike'", *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21, (1991), p. 218-228; M. J. M. Ezell, "The King's Body: Eikon Basilike and the Royalist in Exile at Home and Aboard", in *The Later Seventeenth Century*, vol. 5, 1645-1714, (Oxford, 2017), s. p.

⁶² See the chapter "Eikon Basilike translated: The cult of the martyr king in the Dutch Republic", by H. Helmers, in *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639-1660*, (Cambridge, 2015), p. 115-148.

⁶³ E. Sirluck, "Eikon Basilike, Eikon Alethine, and Eikonoklastes" *Modern Language Notes* 69, no. 7, (1954), p. 497-502.

⁶⁴ *A declaration sent from the Right Honorable Ralph Lord Hopton. To the gentlemen and inhabitants of Cornwall, and the counties adjacent. Concerning his ingagemet for and in behalf of Prince Charles, who*



Fig. 10. Thomas de Keyser, *Constantijn Huygens and his Clerk*, 1627. London, National Gallery (inv. 212) © National Gallery.

now is King Charles the Second, King of Great Brittain, &c. And desiring their joynt assistance to settle him in his crowne and dignitie, as he is their lawfull soveraigne, (London, Printed in the year 1649). (online <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A86554.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> consulted: 19.04.2023).

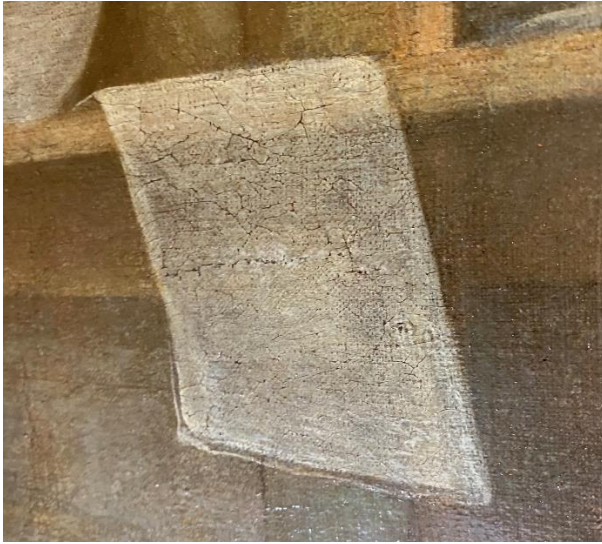


Fig. 11. Jacob van Oost, Detail of the inscription on the sheet of paper, upside down, *Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary*. Dallas, Meadows Museum (inv. MM.74.02) © Meadows Museum, SMU, Algur H. Meadows Collection.

More significantly, we can confirm Ralph Hopton's presence at the conference with the Dutch Commission, headed by the secretary of the Princes of Orange, Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), on March 1, 1649⁶⁵. Huygens actively participates in the festivities when Charles II arrives at The Hague with his entourage and composes a verse to the king's image⁶⁶. Huygens and Ralph certainly know of each other from before, as Huygens mentions Ralph in his correspondence⁶⁷; but the evidence that they actually meet in The Hague for this occasion proves very meaningful, as it could explain the obvious parallels with the *Portrait of Constantijn Huygens and his Clerk* (1627) by Thomas de Keyser (1596-1667)⁶⁸ (Fig. 10), to which the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary* (Fig. 1) has been associated with good reason⁶⁹ without plausible explanation. The resemblance between the two portraits is compelling. Although it cannot be excluded that Sir Arthur was in The Hague and saw Huygens' portrait⁷⁰, in Sir Ralph's case it is very likely, given the proof of his meeting there with Huygens. One can assume that Ralph will have felt a resounding impression of the portrait as well as of

⁶⁵ "De Koning liet in 't laeste van Maert door eenighe sijne Raden/Lane, Gottington, Heyd, Hopton, en Colpeper, conferentie houden met Gecommitteerde van haer. Ho. Mo. de Heeren Huygens, Wimmenum, Vobergen, etc...", Aitzema, *Historie of verhael*, vol. 3, (1669), p. 365; Heath, *A Brief Chronicle*, pp. 319, 420.

⁶⁶ J. A. Worp, *De Gedichten van Constantijn Huygens*, vol. 6, (Gröningen, 1896), p. 274; *Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens 1607-1687*, ed. J. A. Worp, vol. 5 (1649-1633), p. 27. Regarding Huygens's reaction to Charles the I execution, see Helmers, *The Royalist Republic*, p. 151.

⁶⁷ C. Huygens, *Mémoires de Constantin Huygens*, (La Haye, 1873), p. XLI; Worp, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 3, (1640-1644), p. 425, 510; vol. 4, (1644-1649), p. 23, 135, 139.

⁶⁸ (Oil on panel, 92,4 x 69,3 cm.), Monogrammed and dated: '1627'. London, National Gallery, inv. 212. R. Oldenbourg, *Thomas de Keyzers Tiitigheid als Maler*, (Leipzig, 1911), p. 31-32; F. Schmidt-Degener, "Een onbekend portret van Constantijn Huygens in de National Gallery", *Onze Kunst* 27, (1915), p. 113-129; E. de Jongh, "Van Campen's 'White' versus Lievens 'Black'", in, *Aemulatio. Imitation, emulation and invention in Netherlandish art from 1500 to 1800*, ed. A.W.A. Boschloo et al., (Zwolle, 2011), pp. 153-165.

⁶⁹ Burke, *Research Report*, p. 9; Longstaffe-Gowan, "'Fashioning' Sir Arthur", p. 320, fig. 15.

⁷⁰ As Burke speculated: "The two men [Sir Arthur and Huygens] shared an interest in the fine arts as well as careers in diplomacy and public service, and it would have been relatively easy for the two to remain in contact after Huygens left London", Burke, *Research Report*, p. 9.



Fig. 12. Attributed to Michael Cross, Detail of *Sir Arthur Hopton and his brother Thomas Hopton*, ca. 1638. United Kingdom, private collection © Private collection.

the personality of Huygens: an exceptional scholar, diplomat, patron and collector, not to dissimilar to his uncle Arthur. Ralph would have seen an image worthy of a model, a prototype for his uncle's portrait. Such circumstances could explain the influence of Huygens portrait and open the possibility of Van Oost's commissioned by Ralph, who could have had his uncle sit for the painter in Bruges.

Sir Arthur's trail in 1649 is difficult to follow. We can only confirm his presence in England on June 7, the day he receives the visit of Sir John Evelyn (1620-1706), who notes it in his *Diary*⁷¹. By this time Charles II is leaving The Hague for Paris, to meet his mother, Henrietta Maria. On his journey the king is received with great honours in Antwerp and Brussels, where he spends sometime in July 1649. Ralph avoided Paris⁷²; he remained in the Low Countries and would only meet Charles II in March 1650 in Beauvais⁷³. This provides a possible space for Ralph to have received his uncle, and for the portrait to have been executed under his initiative in Bruges. We can only surmise if Ralph felt obliged, compelled even to do something and intended the work as gratitude for Sir Arthur's consideration of his circumstances a short time before; as a way of compensating Arthur for the valuable paintings with his own image, that he had parted with for him; a sensitive gesture from Ralph, who was sincerely religious and extremely loyal; a man who is described as having "great honour, integrity and piety"⁷⁴.

⁷¹ "7th June, 1649. I visited Sir Arthur Hopton (brother to Sir Ralph, Lord Hopton, that noble hero), who having been Ambassador extraordinary in Spain, sojourned some time with my father-in-law at Paris, a most excellent person", J. Evelyn, *Diary and Correspondence*, (London, 1850), vol. 1, p. 251.

⁷² Already in 1646 Ralph refused to accompany Charles II to Paris, L. Sealy, *The Champions and the Crown*, (London, 1911), p. 239. See his letters from The Hague after the departure of Charles II (note 56 supra).

⁷³ As confirmed by a letter sent by Ralph from Beauvais on March 5: "The King's day to move hence is tomorrow, unless horses and coaches that he expects from Rouen this day retard him", *Lord Hopton to Ormond, Beavays, Mar. 5, 1650*, in Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, vol. 17, letter 22, p. 23-24.

⁷⁴ In his stated account of the war, Clarendon described him as, "a man of great honour, integrity, and piety, of great courage and industry, and an excellent officer for any command but the supreme, to which he was not equal", Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ...*, vol. IV, (Oxford,



Fig. 13. Anonymous (Michael Cross?), *Sir Ralph Hopton and his father Robert Hopton*, ca. 1638. © Norfolk Museums Service, Ancient House, Thetford.

Something more could be revealed by a detail that has gone unnoticed until now: in the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton* is a sheet of paper seen in a central position in the background, falling from the bookshelf upside-down. With it turned over and magnified, one can speculate at an inscription (Fig. 11). It is a long line that is difficult to read, beginning with an "I" or "J" (Jacomo?); further on, a "B" is discernible, followed by something unreadable where we can deduce "...opt..." at the end of the line, below which, an "F" (fecit?) is distinguishable. This is best appreciated by changing the image parameters and comparing the various detail photographs available. Although there are few legible letters, they feed the suspicion that a signature or dedication could be hidden (one may speculate, "I[acomo van oost?] B[aron?] sic [H]opt[on] / F."?). Whatever the case may be, that points out the presence of an inscription hitherto undetected that deserves further examination to determine its content.

Of interest, in the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and his Brother Thomas Hopton* (Fig. 9), another piece of paper is seen in Sir Arthur's hand. It contains an inscription in Spanish (Fig. 12): "Al.Ex: ^{mo} Don/Arthur Hopton/Embax:^{dor} del R/De La gran. Breta/Madrid" (To His Excellency Don/Arthur Hopton/Ambassador of the K[ing] of Great Brita[in]/Madrid). The use of 'Al' (=To the) could indicate a letter he received but also a dedication or a present. This could imply that Sir Arthur did not order the work; therefore,

1827), Book VII, p. 1681. Concerning Ralph's religious engagements and integrity, see Sealy, *The Champions*, p. 91-92, 120, with a chapter devoted to Sir Ralph Hopton, p. 84-123.

was it of Ralph's doing? Concerning the authorship, Michael Cross (1633-1660)—as Longstaffe-Gowan recently suggested— makes sense: Cross was in the service of Sir Arthur for many years, and he departed with him to England in 1636⁷⁵. The same type of double portrait was since used by the Hoptons on two other occasions: the *Portrait of Sir Ralph Hopton and his wife Elizabeth*, dated 1637⁷⁶ and the *Portrait of Sir Ralph Hopton and his father Robert Hopton* at the Museum of Thetford Life, Norfolk, (Fig. 13)⁷⁷. The relationship between these three works deserves further study. Emulating Van Dyck's style, one can only wonder if they are not all by the same Cross, who was known as a copyist, whilst in England, before Sir Arthur's departure for Madrid in April 1638.

Another factor that supports Ralph's involvement in the commissioning of the portrait of his uncle to Van Oost, could be the influence of a work by Anthony van Dyck: the *Portrait of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (1593-1641) together with Philip Mainwaring (1589-1661)*⁷⁸ (Fig. 14). Like Van Dyck, Van Oost responds to a depiction with a long tradition dating back to the Renaissance, with well-known examples where parallels can be drawn. But in these two works there is a very similar interaction between the two main characters that occurs, a nobleman and a clerk, in a moment of their working routine. The affiliation to Van Dyck's double portrait has us wondering; again, the connection is possibly Sir Ralph. Sir Arthur could not have seen Strafford's portrait being painted in London: even if he posed for Van Dyck at a similar moment (Fig. 8), with his being in England between 1636 and 1638 he left London before Strafford's portrait was likely painted (during his stay in London, between September 1639 and March 1640). It is still possible that Sir Arthur knew of Strafford's portrait later, directly or through its numerous copies⁷⁹. More likely Sir Ralph saw the original, for he and Strafford knew each other, being Members of Parliament. That Ralph could have kept in mind the portrait of Strafford is surprising from a modern perspective when learning that he voted against him during his trial for high treason in 1640⁸⁰, with Strafford being convicted and beheaded in 1641. In any case, somehow the memory of Van Dyck's work must have been present during the genesis of Van Oost's portrait of Sir Arthur. Of note, in his *Theologian with a Secretary*, dated 1668 (Fig. 2), Van Oost uses Van Dyck's

⁷⁵ Longstaffe-Gowan, "Fashioning' Sir Arthur", p. 315-316.

⁷⁶ See note 48.

⁷⁷ (Oil on canvas, 146 x 129,2 cm), Norfolk, Ancient House, Museum of Thetford Life inv. n^o THEHM: DS.96, (as Circle of Anthony van Dyck). My thanks to Oliver Bone, Curator, King's Lynn and Thetford Museums, for kindly providing a photograph of this painting.

⁷⁸ (Oil on canvas, 131,8 x 142,9 cm), Trustees of Rt. Hon. Olive, Countess Fitzwilliam and Lady Juliet Tagdell, See Barnes et al., *Van Dyck*, p. 600, cat. IV.218.

⁷⁹ "Possibly the most frequently copied of any of Van Dyck's English portraits". Barnes et al., *Van Dyck*, p. 600.

⁸⁰ *The Tryal of Thomas, Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, upon impeachment of high treason by the Commons in Parliament, in the name of themselves and of all the Commons in England, begun in Westminster-Hall the 22th of March 1640 ...*, (London, 1680); W. R. Stacy, "Matter of Fact, Matter of Law, and the Attainder of the Earl of Strafford", *The American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 29, n^o 4, (1985), p. 323-348.



Fig. 14. Anton van Dyck, *Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford together with Philip Mainwaring*, ca. 1639-1640. Trustees of Rt. Hon. Olive, Countess Fitzwilliam and Lady Juliet Tagdell © Photo: RKDimages ID: 49140.

formula again, literally borrowing the figure of the secretary, whose attitude is the same in both works.

3. The portrait's later provenance: a previous attribution to the Italian School

One wonders if the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton and a Secretary* reached England with the sitter, or if it remained in Bruges with Sir Ralph. As fate would have it, Sir Arthur dies a few months later in Oxfordshire, on March 6, 1650, at the age of 61, two years before his nephew. Ralph is currently with Charles II in Beauvais. Much of Sir Arthur's possessions were dispersed before his death, and the 1653 inventory of his estate records as unspecified "several paintings"⁸¹. Sir Ralph had the intention to go back to England, when he dies

⁸¹ "... several paintings", *Inventory of the personal estate of Sir Arthur Hopton, 16 August 1653*, The National Archives, UK (TNA), SP 19/102, fol 1.83. The Testament does not provide further information. *Will of Sir Arthur Hopton of Wissett, Suffolk, 10 March 1649*, TNA, PROB 11/211/747; Cit. Longstaffe-Gowan, "'Fashioning' Sir Arthur", p. 319, notes 81, 82.

in Bruges in 1652⁸². Lord Hatton receives news of his demise from the continent in October, a subsequent letter conveying the great sense of loss on the part of everyone, "but none so great as the King"⁸³. Of Ralph's estates it has been said that his house and lands in Witham were passed on to his nephew Hopton Wyndham in 1672⁸⁴, inherited by his brother, William Wyndham (†1683), and hence by descent to another William Wyndham, who inherited in 1695⁸⁵. Part of Ralph's collection reaches by lineage Henry Wyndham, III Lord Leconfield (1872-1952), who owned *A Portrait of Ralph Hopton*, as a young man, in full length, which is at Petworth House today⁸⁶.

We do not hear of the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton* until just before it reaches Algur Meadows. It is known that he acquired the painting at the Wildenstein & Co. Gallery in New York in 1974⁸⁷ and that it came from the "Reitlinger" collection in England⁸⁸. It must be the British historian and collector Henry Scipio Reitlinger (1882-1950), specialised in drawings, who sold more than one painting by the mid-20th century⁸⁹. A mining engineer, Reitlinger made his fortune in Nigeria, devoted himself since then exclusively to art history, spending most of his life in London, he is the author of several publications, including *Old Master Drawings, a handbook for amateurs and collectors* (London, 1922). After Reitlinger's death, his vast collection of drawings and fewer paintings was sold in seven parts, at Sotheby's, between 1953 and 1954.

Consulting the Reitlinger collection catalogues the portrait in question can be found, in the first part, attributed to the Italian Carlo Maratta (1625-1713), and without identifying the character: "9. C. Maratta. A nobleman and His Secretary, the former seated at a table on which a book rests, the latter addressing him from behind his chair. 72 in. by 43 ½ in."⁹⁰. We do not know

⁸² "The Lord Hopton is, I hear, in Bruges, and some say in a probable way to make his composition in England, *Letter to Sir Ed. Hyde, from The Hague, 8/18 Jan 1651*, in *The Nicholas Papers*, vol. 1, p. 284.

⁸³ "Gallant and virtuous Lord [Ralph] Hopton diez on Tuesday sennight at Bruges of an ague, in whom all honest and well affected men had a loss, but none so great as the King", *The Nicholas Papers*, vol. 2, p. 66; cit. Major, *Writings of Exile*, p. 70.

⁸⁴ C.R.B. Barret, *Somersetshire: Highways, Byways, and Waterways*, (London, 1894), p. 103.

⁸⁵ R. Wilson-North and S. Porter, "Witham, Somerset: From Carthusian Monastery to Country House to Gothic Folly", *Architectural History, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, vol. 40, (1997), p. 83).

⁸⁶ (Oil on canvas, 203 x 122 cm), attributed to Daniel Mytens. National Trust, Petworth House, nr. 486173.

⁸⁷ The portrait is listed in Wildenstein's catalogue *The Painter as Historian*, (New York, 1962), n° 33; Cit. Díaz Padrón, p. 212, note 32, some years before its sale to Meadows (the invoice dates 10 May 1974), see Burke, *Research Report*, p. 15, note 1. Because of the discovery of many fakes in his collection (1967), Meadows trusted Wildenstein almost exclusively, having him as his principal provider of works, W. A. McWhirter, "How art swindlers duped a virtuous millionaire", in *Life*, 7 July, (1967), p. 61; S. Marcus, *Minding the Store. A Memoir*, (Texas : Denton, 1974), pp. 291-293 ; J. Ferré, *Lettre ouverte à un amateur d'art pour lui vendre la mèche*, (Paris, 1975), pp. 38, 39, 41, 43, 156.

⁸⁸ W. B. Jordan, *The Meadows Museum. A visitor's Guide to the collection*, (Dallas, 1974), p. 96, cat. 5, fig. 9 (as Anonymous, Reitlinger Collection). Wildenstein's invoice specifies "England" (Burke, *Research Report*, p. 5, note 3).

⁸⁹ With the same provenance, see paintings by Jan de Bray, Peter Nason and Hendrick Glotzius at Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge (inv. PD.17-2005; PD.16-2005; PD.33-1991), which further preserves drawings and different objects from Reitlinger.

⁹⁰ *The H. S. Reitlinger Collection. Part I. Catalogue of Old Master Drawings of the Italian School and some Paintings by Old Masters*, London, Sotheby's, (9 Dec 1953, lot 9). Only 14 paintings were included in this sale, among others, *Joseph thrown into a pit by his brothers* by Claes Moyaert (signed, 1637), *Vertumnus and Pomona* by Hendrik Goltzius, the *Miracle of the loaves and fishes* by Lambert Lombart, and *Venus and Adonis* by Bartholomeus Spranger. Other paintings were included in Part II, (27 Jan 1954).

if Wildenstein was the purchaser at this auction, or if the painting would pass through other hands in the meantime. It is worth remembering that although the gallery owner had a drawing from Reitlinger, he bought it shortly after⁹¹. It was probably Wildenstein who requested the opinion of the Hispanist José Gudiol, of which a report is known (1959) where the portrait is recorded with the correct identification of the sitter and an attribution to Murillo⁹². It was published as such in Wildenstein's catalogue in 1962.

The location of the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton* in London from the mid-20th century, the identity of its previous owner and its former attribution to Italian Maratta are significant details that we can add to the provenance of the painting. The work had since been placed within the perimeter of the Spanish school, a geography that the supposed chronology seemed to confirm.

4. Conclusion

As Díaz Padrón points out, this portrait has been misplaced because of a persistent confusion between Flemish and Spanish painters. Such was the case of Gaspar de Crayer (1584-1669) and Frans Luyck (1604-1668): whose works were attributed in the past to Spanish painters, Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) among them, "because they absorb a modality of portrait that relates to the etiquette of the House of Habsburg", which is explained by "the hegemony of Spain in Europe, when Flanders was a core part of the empire"⁹³. In the attribution of the *Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton* to the Spanish school, "the ambassador's experiences had greater weight than the stylistic study of the painting"⁹⁴.

Today it is possible to draw Sir Arthur's link to Bruges through his much-loved nephew Ralph, who lived in the city and whose involvement in the genesis of the work is very likely, his having the *Portrait of Constantijn Huygens and his Clerk* in mind. The reading of the date of Sir Arthur's portrait continues to be misleading: 1641, a number that has been put forward repeatedly. Questioning what had been assumed, and reconsidering the transcription of the date, 1649 appears more likely the year of the work. Adding to the argument, the presence of another as yet unseen inscription, on the sheet of paper perched on the shelf, which could reveal something

⁹¹ J. Byam Shaw and G. Knox, *The Robert Lehman Collection: vol. VI, Italian Eighteenth-Century Drawings*, (New York-Princeton, 1987), p. 123.

⁹² José Gudiol, unpublished opinion. Barcelona, 10 April 1959, "Portrait of Sir Arthur Hopton," as by Murillo, 1643-45, Cit. Burke, *Research Report*, p. 3.

⁹³ "... asumen maneras de retrato afín a la etiqueta de los Austrias. Esto es fácil de entender, por la hegemonía de España en Europa, y cuando Flandes fue parte medular del Imperio". Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 206.

⁹⁴ "pesaron más las vivencias del embajador que el estudio estilístico", Díaz Padrón, "El retrato de Sir Arthur", p. 209.

more. Both inscriptions need further examination, an incentive for the Meadows Museum to study the portrait in detail, as several elements offer new evidence of Sir Arthur's Bruges' connection and may dispel the objections to the authorship of Jacob van Oost: the Flemish painter as originally and convincingly identified for his style; it being another case of Matías Díaz Padrón's infallible eye.

In pace gaudeat

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Received: 30/05/2023

Accepted: 07/11/2023