

**SIR ANTONY
VAN DYCK**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649457205

Sir Antony Van Dyck by Anonymous

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANONYMOUS

**SIR ANTONY
VAN DYCK**

*ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHIES OF
THE GREAT ARTISTS.*

SIR ANTONY VAN DYCK.



BIBLIOGRAPHY—VAN DYCK.

CARPENTER, WILLIAM HOOKHAM. Pictorial Notices, consisting of a Memoir of Sir A. Van Dyck, with a Descriptive Catalogue of the Etchings executed by him, &c. London, 1844, 4to.

MICHIELS, JOSEPH XAVIER ALFRED. Rubens et l'école d'Anvers. Paris, 1854, 8vo. [The above is a reprint, with slight additions, of part of the same author's "Histoire de la Peinture Flamande et Hollandaise."]

LEMCKE, CARL. Kunst und Künstler, des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit. Herausgegeben von Dr. Robert Dohme. "Anton Van Dyck," von C. Lemcke. Leipzig, 1875.

WIBIRAL, Dr. F. L'Iconographie d'Antoine Van Dyck, d'après les recherches de H. Weber. Leipzig, 1877, 8vo.

ANTOINE VAN DYCK. Etchings reproduced and edited by Amand Durand, text by Georges Duplessis. Paris.





VAN DYCK.

CHAPTER I.

ANTWERP AT THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY—VAN
DYCK'S PARENTAGE, BIRTH, AND STUDENT DAYS—FIRST VISIT
TO ENGLAND.

1599-1622.

ANTOON VAN DIJCK or DYCK, the son of a merchant of Antwerp, was born in that city on the 22nd of March, 1599. He came into the world under favourable auspices for the career that lay before him. To be born into the family of a well-to-do burgher of the great Flemish city at that epoch, was to enter upon life in the midst of surroundings eminently propitious to the development of a genius whose natural bent was towards the fine arts; it was to have the full assurance of the careful and reverent cultivation of such an instinct as a priceless gift of nature. There is nothing to tell here of the familiar story of youthful genius weighed down by the contempt of unsympathising guardians, or struggling into light through a long and painful combat with adverse circumstances, such as has often cast its shadow of bitterness over the

whole course of an intellectual life. The young Antony could meet with nothing but encouragement within the circle of his home. A citizen of Antwerp, wealthy and respected, as was the elder Van Dyck, was sure to be a man of refined tastes and keen appreciation, with knowledge of and feeling for art, if not himself a practical artist.

Antwerp, though the material supremacy of the city had departed, was still the chosen home of that culture, once the spontaneous outcome of national vitality, which adorned it in the time of its utmost prosperity and renown. From the day when the terrible siege of Antwerp terminated with its submission (1585), when the gates were opened to the Duke of Parma, and the city given over to pillage, its political and commercial greatness was no more; but in the lighter graces which make life beautiful it maintained and increased its distance beyond all rivals. A glance at the history of an institution which cannot be left out of sight in narrating the life of an Antwerp painter will illustrate how closely the popular love and reverence for art was bound up with the municipal life of the town.

As early as 1414 we find mention of the existence of a privileged confraternity of artists, enrolled under the protection of the Artist-Evangelist, Saint Luke. In 1434 an ordinance of the magistrates granted certain privileges to the society, and imposed certain regulations on its members. On the 22nd of July, 1442, a decree was issued by the first magistrate of Antwerp, formally incorporating it as the Guild of Saint Luke, naming the various kinds of craftsmen included in it, and fixing its statutes in detail. The preamble of this document recites, that the church-

wardens of Notre Dame had granted a chapel in that church for the use of the members of the guild, who had begun to decorate it richly "in honour of God and of Saint Luke;" but the work had been stopped before completion, as the guild was unwilling to incur great expenses while its legal position was undefined and insecure. The list of the four-and-twenty trades the pursuit of which entitles to membership, has the appearance of a very heterogeneous mixture; but all the occupations enumerated, from that of the painter or sculptor down to the humble labour of typefounders and carpenters, are more or less connected with the decorative arts.

After being established by law on a firm basis, the guild increased rapidly in numbers and importance. It received additional privileges, and was endowed from the revenues of the State. It incorporated some minor societies of a similar character, having for their object the cultivation of rhetoric and the drama. In the contests, dramatic, artistic, and literary, between such associations in different towns, which were a favourite amusement of the Flemings of those days, the Antwerp brotherhood were very frequently the victors. On occasions of public rejoicing in Antwerp, the guild was the life and soul of the festivities: its carpenters and joiners erected the triumphal arches; its carvers and painters adorned them: if the city entertained distinguished guests, its rhetoricians composed and declaimed panegyrics, which, we are informed, were often anything but admirable. The archives of the guild contain accounts of many of these fêtes. The presiding officers of the guild were two, styled Chief and Dean, and chosen annually. The title of Prince was an honorary dignity, sometimes conferred on persons of noble birth

who took an interest in art, and whose countenance might be valuable to the fraternity. The complete list of Chiefs, Deans, and Princes, from 1454 to 1778, is extant, and now preserved at the Antwerp Museum. The registers of the guild, which record the names of all its members, whether masters or students, and which also contain an account of all receipts and expenses, date from 1453, and go down without interruption to the time of the French invasion in 1794. These registers embody a mass of valuable biographical information, and throw light on the career of nearly every artist of any note in Antwerp during the period over which they extend, including the subject of the present memoir. That such an institution was capable of affording the most precious encouragement and guidance to young artists, is manifest. In its widely spread influence upon society, it performed a work of not less value and importance. Embracing within the scope of its association so many classes, with such varied interests, it fostered and instructed the popular interest in the things of art to which its own existence was due, and leavened the whole mass with some measure of taste, refinement, and cultivation. The result of this influence in society is, until the appearance of genius, only to produce an uninteresting level of cultured mediocrity; but when genius appears, it finds the way has been made smooth for it, and a fairer start secured than it generally gets in the vulgar world. Van Dyck's case is in this respect a typical one.

Frans van Dyck, the father of the painter, carried on a profitable business in Antwerp as a manufacturer of silk and woollen stuffs. The business had been well established by the industry of his ancestors, had passed into his hands in a flourishing condition, and gave him the enjoyment of

a secure and sufficient fortune. He was twice married—first to Cornelia Kersboom, and again, in 1590, to Maria Cuyppers. The first marriage appears to have been without issue; the second wife bore him twelve children during their sixteen years of wedded life. Antony was the seventh child, born on the date mentioned above, and baptized on the following day in the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame. It is hardly necessary to seek a particular reason for the promptitude with which the new-born infant was made secure within the pale of the Church; but it may be remarked, in passing, that the Van Dyck family was distinguished by peculiar piety, and devotion to the observances of the Catholic religion—characteristics which were not so strikingly apparent in the after life of its most famous scion. One of the brothers of Antony, named Theodore, took holy orders, and became a Canon of the Abbey of Saint Michael, and Pastor of Minderhout. Four of the sisters, Cornelia, Susannah, Elizabeth, and Anne, also embraced a spiritual career; Anne became a Facontine nun, and the other three took the veil in the Convent of the Béguinage.

A story, generally repeated by the elder biographers on the slender authority of an old guide-book, claims a Dutch origin for both parents of the painter,—asserting that they belonged originally to the town of Bois-le-Duc in North Brabant; that Frans van Dyck there practised the art of glass-painting with more reputation than profit; and that, finding his means still further reduced as his art became unfashionable, he changed his residence to Antwerp, for the sake of embarking in a more lucrative enterprise. This account, long accepted as resting on grounds plausible enough, has now been finally