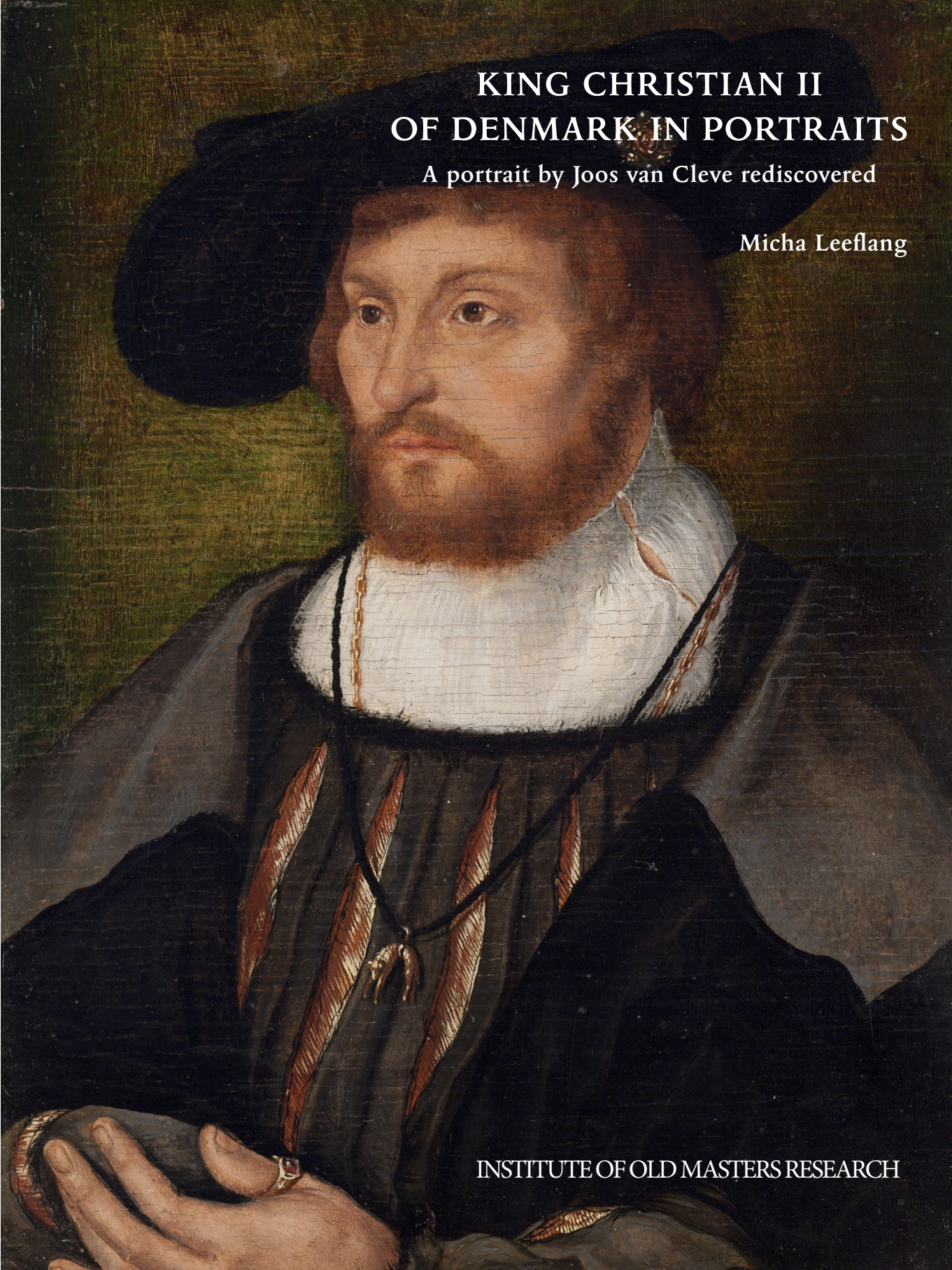

KING CHRISTIAN II OF DENMARK IN PORTRAITS

A portrait by Joos van Cleve rediscovered

Micha Leeflang

INSTITUTE OF OLD MASTERS RESEARCH

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This book has been published on the occasion of the presentation of the newly discovered portrait of King Christian II by Joos van Cleve in the exhibition on this King which the National Gallery of Denmark is organizing from the 15th June to the 10th September 2017 within the framework of the Vth centenary of the Reformation.

We are particulary grateful to ***Hanne Kolind Poulsen****, curator of this exhibition, for her distinguished collaboration with this book and the unique opportunity of comparing firsthand the portraits of the King by Albrecht Dürer, Joos van Cleve, Quinten Massijs and Lucas Cranach.*

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FOREWORD

A Quest of Old Masterpieces

Joos van Cleve, Portrait of Christian II of Denmark, c. 1521. Oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. Private collection.

Anthony van Dyck, Portrait of Marchesa Balbi. Private Collection.

For the Institute of Old Masters Research the publication of this book written by Micha Leeflang on King Christian II of Denmark and his journey to the Low Countries in 1521 signifies in a way the climax of the story of one of our first and most important discoveries: the portrait of King Christian II painted by Joos Van Cleve in 1521 on the occasion of his stay in Antwerp.

The search for lost old masterpieces amongst works misattributed, unrecognized or simply left as anonymous and the restoration of their former splendour is, as well as seeking their links with modern art, the principal objective of the Institute of Old Masters Research and indeed, since my youth, mine also as a private collector. In 1997, with my father, also a fine arts-collector, we acquired in the auction of the Marquis of Bristol's mansion at Ickworth the remarkable portrait of the Marchesa Balbi by Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), in this case advised by Susan Barnes, and after a stiff fight with the Getty Museum, at that time under the directorship of David Jaffe. In 2010, on the occasion of a visit to an antique dealer's firm in Toledo, I found what after profound study turned out to be the last portrait of Louis XIII painted by Frans Pourbus. The attribution of this painting was confirmed effectively by its greatest authority, Blaise Ducos of the Louvre, when he includes this work in his "catalogue raisonné" of Frans Pourbus published in 2011.As Director and Founding Partner of the Institute of Old Masters Research, we acquired one of the delicate small-size copper-plates representing an "Immaculate Conception" by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), mentioned in old sources, but up

Frans Pourbus, Portrait of Louis XIII.
Private Collection.

to the present unknown; and also what is certainly the most unique discovery made by the Institute, a pair of polychrome sculptures, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, by Alonso Berruguete (1480-1561), sculptor and painter trained under the mentorship of Michelangelo, who, together with Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino, is considered one of the first mannerists and indubitably the Spanish artist of greatest transcendency in the Spanish Renaissance.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Immaculate Conception.
Private Collection.

Alonso Berruguete, Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Private Collection.

Portrait of King Christian II of Denmark by Joos van Cleve, 1521. Private Collection.

Albrecht Dürer, Portrait of Christian II, 1521. London, The British Museum.

Portrait of Christian II by Bernard van Orley, 1521. Madrid, Museo Lázaro Galdiano.

Portrait of Christian II of Denmark by Quinten Massijs, 1521. Kromerïz, Olomouc Archbishopric - Archdiocesan Museum.

Portraits of King Christian II during his journey to the Low Countries in 1521

The possibility of comparing the portrait of Christian II by Joos Van Cleve with other existing portraits of the king by Michiel Sittow, Quinten Massijs, Bernard van Orley, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach, on the occasion of the exhibition which the National Gallery of Copenhagen is organizing on the relationship of this Danish king with the principal painters of his time, signifies a magnificent and unique opportunity permitting Micha Leeflang to study in this book the artistic interplay between the assuredly most important portrait painters of northern Europe who closely reflected the individualism so characteristic of the rich merchants and the first absolutist monarchs, two phenomena inherent in the Renaissance. Furthermore, it constitutes a great honour for our Institution and an inestimable contribution to this book to be able to count on the collaboration of Hanne Kolind Poulsen, curator of the above mentioned exhibition, who describes in such a masterly way in her article how King Christian II was one of the first kings who understood the political importance of the portrait and its use as an instrument of propaganda to instill in his subjects, whether followers or enemies, a sense of authority and power, essential characteristics of a modern king. The portraits of the king made by Joos van Cleve, Massijs, Van Orley and Dürer, have all of them in common to be painted during his trip to the Low Countries in 1521, a crucial year in the development of his kingdom which marks a change in the life of Christian II. On the one hand, he makes a journey receiving mass honours as the king who unified Denmark, Norway and Sweden and was painted by the most important Northern artists; on the other hand, marks the beginning of his decline which would end in his dethronement by the aristocrats and bishops opposed to reformist policies brought from the Low Countries and supported by the bourgeoisie and which coincide with his gradual conversion to the evangelical religion of Luther who lodged him in Wittenberg in 1523 as a king in exile.

A Joos Van Cleve's portrait of the King rediscovered

The portrait of King Christian II by Joos Van Cleve can be dated in 1521 notably due to historical reasons mainly based on the fact that King Christian II appears in this portrait with the Golden Fleece granted by Charles V in 1519 thanks to marrying his sister, Isabel, but also because it has been confirmed by the dedonchronological analysis of the panel which establishes 1504 as the date after which the painting could have been done and acting as terminus post quem. (As a matter of fact we cannot discard the possibility that it could have been painted in 1523 when the king was received as a guest in Malines by Margarita, sister of Carlos V and governor of the Low Countries). Finally, as Micha Leeflang goes deeper in this book into the stylistic reasons and the autograph quality which support the importance of this newly discovered portrait, I would just like to describe which were the impressions I had as a connoisseur when I first saw the painting.

There is something in this portrait which is in some measure the quintessence of the Flemish portrait of this period: its capacity for transmitting the personality or even more the mood of the person portrayed, situating him in a confined space where the hands scarcely appear. This allows the painter to concentrate all his strength in the expression of the personage attaining great psychological depth. In this portrait of Christian II, Joos

Van Cleve shows us a man sunk in a profound melancholy, a state so characteristic of the Renaissance, a self absorption which prevents action and leads men to paralysis and frustration. Christian II does not appear a tyrannical and cruel king as painted by Sittow on the occasion of his marriage to Isabel in 1514, capable of ordering the murder of 80 aristocrats in Stockholm one day after his crowning in 1520 , nor an astute personage as drawn by Albert Dürer during his stay in Antwerp, nor the determined king as shown by Cranach when he was obsessed to reconquer his kingdom in 1523, but just the contrary, a hesitant person, hostage of his own doubts due to his contradictions: a dictator though lover of the common people, a man of action but paralyzed by his own transcendental reflections and personal fears. In short, a man who feels the weakness of his human nature, who lives in a permanent contradiction to his religious convictions which make him aware of the enormity of his actions and his fear of God 's reaction. A man who always believed that both his origin and his cruel destiny, which appear foreshadowed in this portrait, were the consequence of a divine order. For this reason his changeable, schizophrenic character, comparable to Nero's almost mythical legend, has been so closely studied and probably could have even inspired several generations later, Hamlet, the Shakespearean hero, prince of Denmark, possessed by an obsessive existential doubt and a sense of tragic destiny. Anyhow Joos Van Cleve, in my opinion, more than any other painter was able to capture this extremely contradictory and fascinating psyche of the king in this intriguing picture.

Lastly, I cannot fail to transmit my most sincere congratulations to Michael Hoyle for his magnificent translation from Dutch into English of the text written by Micha Leeflang and thank Paula Pumplin for her stylistic revision of the text composed directly in English by Hanne Kolind Poulsen, as well as the special interest shown by Antonio Pareja and by my assistant Enrique Gargallo in making it possible to publish the book in time for its public presentation on the occasion of the Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Copenhagen in June 2017.

Carlos Herrero Starkie
Director
Institute of Old Masters Research

Joos van Cleve's portrait of King Christian II in the exhibition *Joos van Cleve and his World: Early Sixtenth-Century Painting in Antwerp* (Museum Catharijnecovent, Utrecht, 2015). >

Chapter 1.

King Christian II of Denmark – the exhibition, the historical context and the portraits

Hanne Kolind Poulsen

On 15 June 2017 the exhibition *Pictures and Power. The visual politics of Christian II* will open at the Statens Museum for Kunst (the National Gallery of Denmark). The overall intention of the show is to present King Christian II's visual strategies within an international context and demonstrate *how* he used images to promote his cause. All previous exhibitions dealing with Christian II have taken place in historic museums and the artworks related to him and his rule have functioned merely as illustrations to his history. This exhibition, on the contrary, will focus primarily on the artworks. By providing a historical context for them the exhibition aims to give a new understanding of the meaning of each individual work as well as the relationship between them. The exhibition and the research conducted in connection with it will make an important contribution to the field.

Christian II (1481-1559) is one of the most fascinating kings of Denmark. The course of his life, which saw him go from being one of the most important princes on the political scene of Europe to ending up in exile, poverty and eventually in prison, has held historians, art historians and artists in thrall from his own time up to ours – reflecting an eagerness to understand how things could turn out so disastrously.

The perception of his history has varied in the course of time, from his own days to the present.[1] In the attempts to understand Christian II's unconventional, to put it mildly, actions, scholars frequently have focused on his psychological makeup in the search for explanations.[2] The same scholars have often used the many contemporary portraits of the King as a kind of source material. He is without doubt the most portrayed Danish King of the 16th century. This fact has also made Christian II an interesting figure in art history – and his image politics an obvious subject for an exhibition. Not least because he chose the best (and most expensive) artists of the day to realise his visual projects, including Albrecht Dürer, Jan Gossart, Michiel Sittow, Bernard van Orley, Quintin Metsys, Joos van Cleve and, very importantly, Lucas Cranach the Elder. All of them made portraits of him and many of these works have survived to the present day – a highly unusual stroke of luck.

The idea of Christian II as a mentally unstable and therefore unpredictable King – as the portraits of him have seemed to confirm – has persisted even into modern times. It is this interpretation of the King and of the portraits of him that the exhibition will challenge. Christian II is best known through Michiel Sittow's brilliant and intriguing painting (fig. 1.1). This work can be, and has been, interpreted in many ways. One thing

< Detail of: Michiel Sittow, Portrait of Christian II of Denmark, 1514/1515. Oil on panel, 31 x 22 cm. Copenhagen, SMK - National Gallery of Denmark, inv./cat.no. KMSsp789.

is certain, though, for a modern spectator it appears very open for psychologizing. For people today it is quite easy to read a psychological diagnosis into the work: suspiciousness, cunning, unpredictability, insensitivity, brutality, etc. Therefore the portrait has been well-suited for supporting and complementing the traditional assessment of the King – the verdict of posterity – that exactly includes these unpleasant qualities.

However, you can in fact also understand Sittow's portrait in another way, which is more in accordance with how it may have been understood in the 16th century. For that reason, the core of the exhibition is to discuss whether the traditional understanding of Christian II and the portraits of him is actually valid. Because, when we consider the way in which he used pictures in his political strategies, he seems to have been absolutely predictable, extremely conscious, advanced and, not least, internationally orientated. He constructed himself by means of his visual politics in a very modern way for the time.

With his visual political endeavors, Christian II held a prominent position within the revolutionary new European image culture; a culture that the Renaissance had helped establish and upgrade with its newfound sense – and mastery – of reality effects. A culture in which he, demonstrating keen foresight, saw great potential, prompting him to invest in the field. By seeing Christian II in such a light the exhibition provides a more precise understanding of his visual ventures that will place him in both history and art history as well as the works of art he commissioned alongside similar European initiatives in the period.

A History of Christian II

The King's history is long and very complicated. In this present context I shall only mention a few important landmarks. His father was King John of Denmark (1455-1513), and his mother Queen Christine (1461-1521). She was a sister of the renowned Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony (1463-1525). Both Christine and Frederick are important figures in European art history, as they each were responsible for large commissions of art and decoration projects. Already before King John died in 1513, the aristocracy of Denmark, Norway and Sweden swore allegiance to Christian as their future king. Just after John's death he was crowned as King of Denmark and Norway – but not of Sweden. That turned out to be a more complex challenge than expected. It did not happen until 1520.

It was important for a king to have legitimate heirs. A son that could succeed to the throne and daughters that could marry into other princely or royal houses securing political alliances. Preferably a surplus of each sex as children often died before they reached adulthood. Christian was not yet married when he became King, although his parents had carried out marriage negotiations several times with various princes. However, none of these efforts led to marriage. From around 1507 Christian had had a mistress, the legendary Dyveke, who is said to have been the great love of his life. She was daughter of the notorious Sigbrit Willoms – I shall return to her in a while. But in fact almost nothing is known about Dyveke herself or about the relationship between her and Christian.[3] Nevertheless, she is generally seen as the reason why Christian was in no hurry to get married.

When Christian became King after John died, marriage became a necessity. In 1514 he succeeded in setting up a very attractive alliance – to a great extent assisted by his uncle,

< Fig. 1.1. Michiel Sittow, Portrait of Christian II of Denmark, 1514/1515. Oil on panel, 31 x 22 cm. Copenhagen, SMK - National Gallery of Denmark, inv./cat.no. KMSsp789.

Fig. 1.2. Workshop of Bernard van Orley, *Portrait of Queen Elisabeth of Denmark (Isabella of Austria),* c. 1515. Oil on panel, 37.5 x 27.1 cm. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Royal Collection, Hampton Court, RCIN 403468.

Frederick the Wise of Saxony. He was to marry Isabella of Austria (1501-26) who in Denmark became known as Queen Elisabeth (fig. 1.2). It was a real triumph! Elisabeth was of highly noble descent, a member of the powerful Habsburg family, grandchild of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519, fig. 3.3), and sister of the next emperor (from 1519), Charles V (1500-1558), who in this way became Christian II's brother-in-law.[4] As a result Christian, on the one hand, became a part of the European power elite. On the other hand, the Habsburg family won an important ally as Christian II was the ruler of large Northern territories and controlled navigation through the Danish waters crucial to the Baltic trade. This prominent marriage was the occasion of the most illustrious portrait of King Christian II (fig. 1.1).

However, in spite of the marriage Christian would not give up Dyveke, which produced a conflict with Elisabeth's Habsburg family. They had agreed to a very large dowry and in return they expected, among other things, a flock of little, new Habsburgs to be born in the following years. But it did not happen. Whether it was because of Dyveke, or due to Elisabeth not yet being sexually mature – she was barely 14 years old when she came to Denmark – is not known. The problem solved itself, though, when Dyveke suddenly died in September 1517. Rumors said that she was murdered.[5] After this drama Christian stuck to Elisabeth, at least as far as we know, who in the coming ten years gave birth to six children. Three of them died just after being born, the other three survived childhood (fig. 1.3).[6]

Fig. 1.3. Jan Gossart, *Portraits of the Children of King Christian II of Denmark: Dorothy, John, and Christina*, c. 1526. Oil on panel, 34,2 x 46 cm. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, RCIN 405782.

After the marriage was in place and the heirs were on their way, Sweden was to be conquered. Christian wanted also to be King of Sweden so he could re-establish the old Kalmar Union of the late 14th century.[7] This was the primary ambition of his politics and the vision on which he spent most of his energy and resources. After two costly and not very successful military campaigns in 1517 and 1518, it was only in 1520 that he reached his goal by an enormous military effort. He conquered Stockholm and was crowned King of Sweden.[8] Immediately after the coronation ceremony Christian II was presented with the order of the Golden Fleece by the attending representatives of his Habsburg family. He had, however, already been admitted to the extremely distinguished Habsburg knighthood in March 1519, but there had been no appropriate occasion to present him with the precious collar of the order.[9] In all portraits of Christian II after this date he is wearing the order. Mostly, though, the badge is hanging on a simple black ribbon around his neck and not on the precious order chain.

A few days after the coronation festivities in Stockholm Castle, the King had about 80 persons publicly executed in the central square of the city. They were members of the Swedish aristocracy, the clergy and the high-ranking bourgeoisie who had played a leading role in the Swedish resistance to Christian II. This Stockholm Bloodbath, as it was called, made the King notorious in all of Europe, both in his own time as well as in posterity – for the most part, probably, because the victims for a change came from the powerful elite. The event frightened the Danish nobility to such a degree that it began to consider a revolt. Already during the autumn of the same year a new Swedish resistance built up that resulted in the coronation of Gustav Vasa as King of Sweden in 1523. The Kalmar Union that Christian II had re-established for a brief while dissolved, and this time for good.

However, in the years 1520 to 1523 Christian II ruled three kingdoms and was at the height of his career and his power. During this period, about half a year after his coronation in Sweden and the bloodbath, he made a journey to the Netherlands, where he stayed for about three months.[10] After spending a few days in Amsterdam, the King arrived on 1 July in Antwerp, which at that time was one of the foremost cultural and economic capitals of Northern Europe. The Netherlands, governed by the Holy Roman Emperor (from 1519 Charles V), were extremely wealthy and prosperous as a result of their international trade. Christian's official purpose with the journey was to negotiate some political issues with the new Emperor, Charles V, but it was also and, maybe to an even higher degree, to study the successful Netherlandish society, the trade, the arts, and the culture with the aim of reforming his own kingdoms along the same lines.

Besides Antwerp and Amsterdam he stayed in important cities as for example Brussels, Ghent, Bruges and Leiden. Here he not only met with his political network, but also frequently with the widely famous artists that lived in these towns. He commissioned works from them as well. He also met Albrecht Dürer who was visiting in Antwerp. We know from Dürer's diary that Christian II was portrayed by him there, both in a charcoal drawing (fig. 2.12) as well as in an oil painting. Only the drawing has survived.[11] The King was back in Denmark by the middle of September 1521. Substantial political challenges awaited him and kept him occupied the following years: the Swedish revolt was well under way due to the bloodbath in Stockholm, and in Denmark-Norway a growing discontent with the endless war taxes prevailed.

The inspiration that Christian II found in the Netherlands was manifested in many different ways in his political and cultural activities. However, the inspiration did not only come from his journey, but also – and during a longer period – from the above-mentioned Sigbrit Willoms, the mother of Dyveke. She was Netherlandish and had become one of the King's most influential counsellors in spite of being a woman and in spite of not being noble, but descended from a Netherlandish merchant family. Both factors made her disliked, to say the least, by the Danish nobility. Christian II had met her and Dyveke in Bergen in 1507, when he was viceroy in Norway. He installed them both in Copenhagen in 1513 when he moved to the city as king. After the death of Dyveke in 1517, Sigbrit began to play an even bigger role among the most entrusted of the King's entourage and ended up being the de facto head of government finance. She became something highly unusual at the time: a female statesman.[12] Sigbrit has been seen as the one who most powerfully directed the King's attention towards the Netherlands. She was the one who convinced him of the advantages of giving priority to the trading bourgeoisie at the expense of the nobility so that the country could prosper and the King, through taxes, could get more gold in his treasury, which was necessary for financing his warfare and other projects. In particular, the new Netherlandish-inspired legal corpus that took effect in January 1522 made clear what was happening.[13] This corpus of legislation challenged the nobility's privileged position in society and the changes favored the rich merchants in the cities rather than nobility. That the King in this way allied himself with the bourgeoisie – to become richer himself, indeed – was a radical new strategy to which a large part of the political elite of the country was opposed. With good reason this elite felt that their privileges were under threat.

In the end everybody was dissatisfied with Christian II: the nobility with the legal reforms and everyone else with the heavy tax burden necessary to finance the King's warfare. Actually, only the prosperous bourgeoisie in Copenhagen and Malmo were pleased with Christian II's rule.[14] The result was that the nobility – first in Jutland, but later in almost all of the country – denounced their oath of allegiance to the King, joined forces with Duke Frederick of Gottorf, Christian's uncle, incited rebellion, and made Frederick king naming him Frederick I.

Christian chose to go into exile in the Netherlands with the intention of raising money for an army to regain his three kingdoms. In April 1523 he left Copenhagen by boat together with the Queen, Sigbrit Willoms, and the three children. Twice, in 1523 and in 1531, he attempted a recapture with military campaigns, but did not succeed. In 1523 he needed more money than he was able to raise. He could not pay his army which consequently broke up before the actual campaign. In the autumn of 1531 he succeeded with great difficulties in setting up a strong naval power that was able to try a realistic re-conquest of the lost kingdoms. However, it ended with King Frederick I's capture of Christian II, who was to spend the rest of his long life in prison – first at Sønderborg Castle in Southern Jutland, later at Kalundborg Castle on Zealand where he died in 1559.

The portraits of Christian II

Christian II's purpose with the many portraits he commissioned, or was involved in, changed during the three periods in which the works were made: 1) the years around the marriage with Elisabeth, 2) the years around the visit to the Netherlands, and 3) the years in exile 1523-31. There are approximately 40 works in total.[15]

As far as we know, the first contact King Christian had in his adult life with an artist of international importance, was with Michiel Sittow. However, the initiative for the portrait commission (fig. 1.1) was probably not entirely his own, but also (and maybe even mostly) due to Margaret of Austria, who governed the Netherlands on behalf of the Holy Roman Emperor (at the time Maximilian I), and at whose court in Mechelen Queen Elisabeth, her niece, grew up. Sittow had worked for Margaret previously, and she was the owner of a renowned portrait collection, kept in her residential palace.[16] In any case, both the King and Regent Margaret benefitted from Sittow's work. With the portrait Christian II, on his part, had his iconography established – for the first time he was constructed as the king he wanted to embody. Sittow borrowed the authority from the Habsburg male portrait tradition,

which he knew very well (fig. 1.4). The design Sittow invented, and Christian II sanctioned, became the point of departure for all the following portraits. Margaret, on her part, had Christian II inserted in the Habsburg family line in a proper manner, a manner that the royal court would appreciate. After the marriage with Elisabeth, the King had become an important member of the Habsburg clan and was to be represented as competent and powerful as they themselves appeared in portraits.

After the Sittow portrait's successful introduction of the new king on the international scene, Christian II probably realized how effective a 'modern' portrait (in 16th century sense) could be, which might have contributed to his understanding of what images as such were able to do. During the journey to the Netherlands in 1521 he saw for himself the potential unfolded and displayed, and he entered the Netherlandish art market, commissioning the most famous artists to paint portraits of him. For Christian II it was first and foremost a prestige project that aimed at making him famous and respected among peers and presenting him as one of the leading princes of the time.

During his exile the situation had changed. Whereas in 1521 the aim had been to strengthen his international prestige by means of images, in the exile period all efforts were focused on recapturing the throne. Propaganda was necessary, meaning marketing that provided the King with political sympathy in wider circles which would hopefully result in financial support. In this regard graphic art was crucial as medium for the 'mass communication' (again in 16th century context) that Christian II was in need of. He consulted a true expert in the field, namely Lucas Cranach the Elder in Wittenberg, who made many portraits and portrait designs of the King (fig. 1.5). Cranach had considerable experience in strategies of promotion working for Luther during the reformation controversies.

All in all, Christian II's use of images bears witness to an exceptional consciousness of the potential of images for a Danish king of this period. In the first two periods mentioned (around 1514 and in 1521) his visual ventures were experimental and explored various possibilities, whereas in the exile period his commissions became much more precise and focused. You really get the feeling that Christian II actually had a consistent visual strategy. Thus, the many portraits of him are not, as is often maintained in the literature, a result of the King's vanity or psychological makeup.[17] They were the result of his visual strategy that places him, as well as the works of art he commissioned, alongside similar European initiatives in the period.

< Fig. 1.4. Bernard van Orley (before 1490-1541), *Archduke Charles of Austria – the later Holy Roman Emperor Charles V*, 1516. Oil on panel, 37 x 26,6 cm. Musée de l'Ain (deposit from Musée du Louvre), Bourg-en-Bresse, 980.15 E.

Notes

1.- Lars Bisgaard, "Historikernes portræt af Christian II / The historians' portrait of Christian II ", in Magt og afmagt. Christian II's billedpolitik /Pictures and Power – The Visual Politics of Christian II, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 2017.

2.- See for example Reiter 1942. Johannes V. Jensen's *Kongens fald* (1900-1901) is probably the best known example of fictional literature (Johannes V. Jensen, translated by Alan G. Bower, *The fall of the King*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

3.- Venge 1981, p. 43.

4.- As to how distinguished Elisabeth was, and what it was necessary to provide for her royal household, see Bisgaard, Lars, "I skyggen af Sigbrit. Elisabeth, Christian 2.s dronning", in Jeppe Büchert Netterstrøm (ed.), Dronningemagt i middelalderen. Festskrift til Anders Bøgh, Aarhus 2017.

5.- Such a suspicion has circulated ever since 1517, but has never been substantiated. See Bagge 1940, pp. 33-47.

6.- The only surviving son, John, died already at the age of fourteen in 1532. The two girls, Dorothy and Christina reached old age.

7.- The Kalmar Union was a personal union that from 1397 to 1523 joined under a single monarch the three kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden (then including Finland), and Norway. Its definitive breakup came in 1523 when Gustav Vasa became King of Sweden.

8.- Venge 1981, p. 41.

9.- Bartholdy 1994, p. 400.

10.- See Allen 1864-72, bd.3, II, pp. 95-117.

11.- Rupprich, I, 1956, 176-77. Today the sketch is in The British Museum, London, inv.no. SL,5218.48.

12.- Venge 1981, 33.

13.- Lysbjerg Mogensen 2014, pp. 5-22.

14.- Venge 1977, p. 124.

15.- A detailed analysis of the portraits of King Christian II will be published in the forthcoming catalogue of the exhibition mentioned above in Statens Museum for Kunst: *Pictures and Power. The visual politics of Christian II*.

16.- See for example Eichberger 2002.

17.- See for example Reiter 1942, p. 24.

< Fig. 1.5. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of King Christian II of Denmark*, 1523. Woodcut, 252 x 172 mm. The British Museum, London, 1854,0708.10.

Chapter 2.
Christian II - in portraits

The relationship between king and painters

Micha Leeflang

King Christian II of Denmark gazes out at us with a rather grumpy look on his face, a remarkably bushy head of hair and a forked beard (fig. 1.1), and is wearing a sumptuous gold brocade cloak with a wide fur collar. He was 35 years old when this portrait was painted at the Danish court in 1514 by Michiel Sittow (c. 1469-1525), an artist who had trained in Bruges.[1] Despite being born in Estonia, Sittow is considered to be a member of the Early Netherlandish school. His career as an artist is quite well documented, although only a few works survive that can be attributed to him on documentary evidence, most of them portraits and small devotional panels. From 1484 he was living in Bruges, where he was probably an apprentice in the workshop of Hans Memling (c. 1433-1494) and possibly of Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399/1400-1464) as well. From 1492 to 1502 he was active in Spain as court painter to Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504).[2]

Sittow's portrait of Christian II was made as a present for the king's betrothed, Isabella of Habsburg, who is known as Elizabeth in Denmark. On 11 July 1514 her grandfather, Maximilian of Austria (1459-1519, fig. 3.3), Holy Roman Emperor since 1493, arranged her marriage to Christian. The couple did not meet until a year later, at the wedding ceremony on 2 August 1515. Isabella was only 14 at the time.

Michiel Sittow may have brought Christian's portrait from Denmark to Mechelen in the Burgundian Netherlands, where Isabella was staying at the court of her aunt, Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), regent of the Netherlands. Although Sittow's original portrait is lost, we do have an autograph copy made a year later (fig. 1.1), which is dated 1515 and was plausibly commissioned by Margaret.[3] Interestingly, it was painted over an existing royal portrait, possibly a likeness of Maximilian's young grandson, the future Emperor Charles V.[4] Sittow may have made use of material that was already to hand at court, in which case the earlier portrait could have been by some other artist.

Isabella agreed to the arranged marriage in view of the political interests involved, but she demanded that Christian end the relationship with his mistress, the Dutch Dyveke Sigbritsdochter, and that he shave off his beard, which did not meet the latest dictates of fashion in the Low Countries. Unfortunately for her, Christian ignored both demands.

It is known from inventories that Sittow's portrait of Christian was in Margaret of Austria's library in 1514.[5] The library, to which important guests like diplomats and artists were admitted, housed works of art by the leading painters of the day from both home

< Workshop of Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1523-1530. Pen in brown ink on paper, approx. 145 x 104 mm. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), inv./cat. no. 79 C 2a, fol. 8r.

Fig. 2.1. Master of the Utrecht Stone Head of Woman, *Leka Altarpiece,* c. 1520-1530. Oak with original polychromy and later overpainting; 114.5 x 121 x 18 cm (closed); 61.5 x 22 x 15 cm (Virgin and Child); 62 x 21 x 13 cm (St Olaf); 61.5 x 27,5 x 13 cm (the Archangel Michael). Leka (Norway), Leka Church

and abroad (see below). Isabella very probably took the autograph copy of 1514/1515 with her to Denmark, where it eventually entered the collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark's National Gallery.

Netherlandish altarpieces in Norway

In 1515 Isabella, accompanied by Archbishop Erik Valkendorf of Nidaros (modern Trondheim), set sail from the Low Countries to Copenhagen.[6] The ship got caught in a storm on the North Sea, and it is said that Isabella promised that she would donate five altarpieces to her new fatherland if she reached land safely. Archbishop Valkendorf supposedly received her gift and ensured that the altarpieces were installed in five churches in his archdiocese. Although there are no reliable sources to substantiate this legend there are still five Netherlandish altarpieces, possibly from Utrecht, in the churches of Leka (fig. 2.1), Røst, Grip, Hadsel and Kinn. Apart for the one in Kinn, all they consist of a central case with wooden sculptures of saints and painted wings to close the ensemble. Only the carved wooden figures survive in Kinn. The carvings are associated with the Utrecht sculptor known under his ad hoc name of the Master of the Utrecht Stone Head of a Woman, who was the leading sculptor in Utrecht in the period c. 1490 to 1525.

There are now more than 80 late medieval altarpieces or fragments in Norway,[7] of which 30 of which are still in churches. All of them had to be imported, since there were no suitable local craftsmen in Norway in the late Middle Ages. Foreign trade was strictly regulated. Imports of art were dominated for most of the fifteenth century by the Hanseatic trade between Lübeck and Norway's main international port at Bergen, which is why most altarpieces in the country are German in origin.[8] In the final decades of the fifteenth century the regulations governing Netherlandish trade with Norway were loosened, which boosted art imports from the Low Countries.[9] A number of these retables carved in the Northern Netherlands have painted wings that are closely related to the work of the Amsterdam painter Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen (c. 1460/1465-1533), an artist who had a business relationship with the Danish king (see below). One example of this is the altarpiece from Austevoll in the University Museum in Bergen (fig. 2.2).[10]

There was also a Northern Netherlandish altarpiece in the church of the Carmelite convent dedicated to Our Lady (Mariæ Kirke), in the port city of Helsingør (Elsinore) (fig. 2.3). It was a painted retable with *The Last Judgement*, and is now in the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen. It may have been made in the workshop of the Haarlem artist Jan Mostaert (c. 1474-1552/53), although it has also been attributed to Jacob Cornelisz.[11] It is not dated but may have been made in 1515, just after the marriage of Christian and Isabella. The royal couple are seen in prayer behind prie-dieux in the foreground. Not only is Christian II immediately recognisable from his beard and striking similarity to Sittow's portrait, but the sitters' identities are confirmed by their coats of arms.

Fig. 2.2. *The Austevoll Altarpiece*, c. 1520-30. Central section: probably Utrecht, circle of the Master of the Utrecht Stone Head of a Woman, Sts Peter, Sunniva and Mary Magdalen. Oak with original polychromy and later overpainting. Wings: circle of Jacob Cornelisz, The *Nativity* and *The Adoration of the Magi*. Bergen (Norway), University Museum (photo: Justin Kroesen).

The first of Christian and Isabella's six children was born in 1516. The lack of any allusions to offspring in the Helsingør painting places it before 1516. If the attribution to the Mostaert workshop is correct it is worth mentioning that he, like Jacob Cornelisz, had a business relationship with Margaret of Austria, Isabella's aunt. In March 1518 Jan Mostaert was appointed a 'painctre aux honneurs' by Margaret, and in January 1521 he presented her with a painting of her deceased husband, Philibert II, Duke of Savoy (1480-1504).[12] Mostaert was a celebrated portraitist. Karel van Mander (1584-1606), the biographer of artists, even wrote in his *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604 that Mostaert was Margaret's court painter in Mechelen for no fewer than 18 years,[13] although doubts are sometimes cast on the accuracy of that report.[14]

Portraits of Christian II by Netherlandish artists

One artist who was definitely attached to Margaret's Mechelen court as official painter was Bernard van Orley of Brussels (c. 1491/92-1542). In 1515 he started receiving regular commissions for portraits, often of the regent and members of her Habsburg entourage, as well as of senior court officials. Van Orley was officially appointed court painter on 23 May 1518, and he, his family and workshop assistants lived there for nine years, until 1527.[15]

As early as 1516 he painted a series of six royal portraits that were presents for Christian and Isabella. They were of Charles V (1500-1558, fig. 1.4), who had just become King of Spain, his brother Ferdinand (1503-1564), later King of Hungary and Bohemia, and his four sisters.[16] It is known from the archives that Van Orley also painted a diptych of Christian and his wife that same year. Although the originals have been lost it is suspected that the painting of Isabella in The Royal Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Hampton Court (fig. 1.2) and the portrait of Christian in the Museo Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid are copies after the original diptych (fig. 2.4).[17] The king is shown half-length against a green background and turned to the right, with his hands resting on the lower edge of the picture. He is wearing a shirt fastened at the neck with a high collar, over which he has a doublet decorated with a yellow and black lozenge pattern under a dark cloak with a wide fur collar. On his head is a broad, stiff bonnet adorned with an oval medallion.

In addition to copies after Van Orley's original painting, there are portraits of Isabella by other artists. The Museo Thyssen Bornemisza in Madrid has one from the workshop of the Amsterdam artist Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen (fig. 2.5).[18] She is shown in three-quarter profile, facing left and is depicted down to her waist. Her right hand rests on a table, on which there is a knotted rug comparable to the one in the portrait of Christian from the Joos van Cleve workshop (see below). She wears a French cap with a veil, and is seated in an interior with Renaissance-style pilaster on the left and a view through to a landscape on the right.

There is another portrait of Isabella, this one a drawing, on folio 26 recto of the so-called Berlin Sketchbook that also comes from the Jacob Cornelisz workshop (fig. 2.7). It may be a copy after the Madrid picture or after another painted portrait that is now lost, for the draughtsman indicated a picture frame on the left with a vertical line. It is believed that neither the drawing nor the Madrid painting were done from life but that they were made after a painted portrait that is now lost.

< Fig. 2.3. Detail of: Northern Netherlandish, *The Helsingør Altarpiece, The Last Judgement with Christian II and Isabella of Austria as Donors, c.* 1514-1516. Oil on panel, 233.5 x 155 x 10 cm. Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. no. 7278.

Fig. 2.4. After Bernard van Orley, *Portrait of Christian II*, first half of the sixteenth century. Oil on panel, 37 x 26.5 cm. Madrid, Museo Lázaro Galdiano, inv./cat. no. 2710.

Fig. 2.5. Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, *Portrait of Isabella of Denmark*, c. 1524. Oil on panel, 33 x 23 cm. Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, accession no. 1930.16.

Fig. 2.6. Workshop of Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1523-1530. Pen in brown ink on paper, approx. 145 x 104 mm. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), inv./cat. no. 79 C 2a, fol. 8r.

On folio 8 recto in the same sketchbook there is also a portrait of Christian II (fig. 2.6).[19] The identification of the portrait of the Danish king in profile facing right is borne out by the inscription at the head of the page: 'LE ROEI D DENEMAERKIES'. He is wearing a shirt with a high collar beneath a slashed doublet and a fur-trimmed cloak. On his head he has a broad, stiff bonnet with threaded ribbons. Hanging on a cord around his neck is the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece, an exclusive Burgundian order of chivalry to which he was admitted in 1519. This detail of the cord with the small gold fleece with dangling head and feet provides a good *terminus post quem* for this drawing, for all the portraits of Christian wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece can be dated 1519 or later.

Although Christian and Isabella remained in the Low Countries for three months, it is suspected that Jacob Cornelisz (or a workshop assistant) also did not do the drawing from life but after a painted portrait that has not survived. The comparable woodcut portrait that Jan Gossart (1478-1532) made in 1525, in which Christian is in the same pose but with different headgear and a fuller beard, may also be based on that original.

Fig. 2.7. Workshop of Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, *Portrait of Isabella*, c. 1523-1530. Pen in brown ink on paper, approx. 145 x 104 mm. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), inv./cat. no. 79 C 2a, fol. 26r.

Fig. 2.8. Dirck Jacobsz (c. 1497-1567), *Portrait of Pompejus Occo*, c. 1531. Oil on panel, 66.5 x 55.1 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-3924

All the same, it is certainly likely that Jacob Cornelisz and the king were in touch concerning business matters, for they had an important contact in common: the Amsterdam banker Pompejus Occo (c. 1483-1537, fig. 2.8). Occo came from an east Frisian family, grew up in Augsburg, and settled in Amsterdam in 1511 as the representative of the Augsburg mercantile and banking house of Fugger.[20] As a merchant and banker he made loans to Margaret of Austria and to Amsterdam. He was one of the richest residents of the city,

and lived in a house called 'Het Paradijs' (Paradise) on the Kalverstraat, which housed the library of the humanist Rudolph Agricola (1443-1485). Pompejus Occo played an important part in the religious, humanist and cultural life of Amsterdam, and was the principal patron of Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, who lived across the street from him.

Other artists who can be linked with both Pompejus Occo and Christian II are the painters Quinten Massijs (c. 1465/66-1530) and Joos van Cleve (c. 1485/90-1540/41), who worked in Antwerp. It is known from documents that Occo ordered a portrait of Christian worth 20 guilders from Massijs in 1521 (fig. 2.9). Although it is not certain, this may be the painting that is now in the Archdiocesan Museum in Kromeríž (Czech Republic). The king, half-length and in three-quarter profile facing left, is set against a plain dark background. He is wearing a high-fastened white shirt beneath a dark doublet with orange slashes, and around his neck he has a cord with the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece. He is holding a red carnation in his left hand. The artist may have borrowed this detail from the portraits that Joos van Cleve (and his workshop assistants) painted of Maximilian of Austria (fig. 3.3), who had died two years previously.[21] At this time the carnation was a symbol of humility and the hope of heavenly rewards.[22] With the flower, the cord with the insignia of the Golden Fleece, the pose and the superb execution of the painting, Christian II was aligning himself with the long tradition of Southern Netherlandish royal portraits.

Joos van Cleve may have made his version of the portrait of Christian II shortly after 1521 (fig. 2.11, 3.1). The king is a friendlier presence than he is in Massijs's portrait because of the 'softer' manner of painting, with hardly any contours, and the light and dark passages subtly melting into each other, which are typical of Van Cleve's style. Christian is not holding a carnation but seems to be using his left hand to hold his right, which is either in a glove or is wrapped in the cloth of his sleeve. A glove is an element found in many portraits, both royal and otherwise. Emperor Charles V, for instance, was often depicted wearing a glove or holding a pair of gloves. In his portrait of Joris Vezeleer (c. 1493-1570), Joos van Cleve has the sitter pull on a glove in a gesture that was still being imitated in the seventeenth century by Rembrandt (1606-1669) in his portrait of Jan Six (1618-1700).

Fig. 2.9. Quinten Massijs, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1521. Oil, paper glued on oak, 38.5 x 32 cm. Olomouc Archbishopric, Kromeríž, inv. no. KE 3165, O 91. >

German portraits of Christian II

Christian also had himself immortalised by a number of German artists. On his visit to Antwerp in 1521 he asked the Nuremberg artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) to come and portray him.[23] Dürer drew his portrait and that of his servant Anthony with charcoal, and then dined with Christian. The next day he accompanied the royal entourage to Brussels, where he also painted a portrait of Christian, which unfortunately has not survived. A painting that did survived from 1521 is Dürer's portrait of Bernhard von Reesen (fig. 2.10), that was made in the Low Countries as well. The man, half-length and in three-quarter profile facing left, is set against a reddish background. He wears a white shirt beneath a dark jacket, and his hands, which, according to the Flemish tradition, are lying on the lower border, hold a cartouche. The painting is close in style to the portraits of Christian II by for example of Massijs and Van Cleve.

Fig. 2.10. Albrecht Dürer, Portrait of Bernhard von Reesen, 1521. Oil on panel, 46 cm × 32 cm. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.

< Fig. 2.11. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II of Denma*rk, c. 1521. Oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. (Original size). Private collection.

Fig. 2.12. Albrecht Dürer, *Portrait of Christian II*, 1521. Charcoal on paper, 399 x 287 mm. London, The British Museum.

Portrait prints

Prints were easy to reproduce, and those of royal figures served as propaganda instruments. As with his painted portraits, Christian ensured that prints of him fitted in with the prevailing traditions as regards style and appeal, since these sorts of depictions had proved to be very effective. For example, Emperor Maximilian I had himself portrayed in a woodcut of c. 1517-1521 by Albrecht Dürer in a classic setting in order to accentuate his position of supreme power (fig. 2.13). That may have been what prompted Christian II to have himself immortalised in a similar setting by, among others, Jan Gossart (1478-1532, figs. 2.14-15) and Lucas Cranach (c. 1472-1553, fig. 1.5), who was born in Kronach in Upper Franconia. Gossart's print shows Christian seated at half length behind a balustrade. He is gazing out at the viewer and is framed by a round classical arch hung with coats of arms. At the bottom is the inscription 'CHRISTIERVS.Z. DANORVM./. REX. SVETIE. NOR/ VEGIE.ZC.' As Hendrikman rightly remarked, this print was 'not intended for a small courtly circle that knew and recognized the power of Christian II, but rather loudly declares his geopolitical ambition to regain power.'[24] The design drawn for this print has also survived, and is now in the Frits Lugt Collection in Paris (fig. 2.14).[25] Strangely enough it is the only surviving portrait drawing in Gossart's oeuvre. He would have made drawings in preparation for all his portraits but perhaps they were sketchier and less detailed than this one of Christian II, in which he took great pains with the positioning of the hatchings. The space for the inscription at the bottom was left blank, and the coats of arms are in mirror image, anticipating their reversal in the printing process.

The setting in Cranach's woodcut (fig. 1.5) displays striking parallels with Gossart's print.[26] The king is shown half-length in three-quarter profile facing right. He is seated beneath a canopy shaped as an arch which is supported by four columns with antique decoration in reference to a classical arch. The heraldry is not distributed around the arch, as in Gossart's drawing, but combined in a single crowned escutcheon flanked by two savages at the bottom of the composition. At the top, two more savages hold up a cartouche inscribed with the king's titles and territories. One eye-catching detail is the collar with its heavy links around the king's neck instead of the silk cord with the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece that he usually wears in his portraits. Until the first quarter of the sixteenth century the knights of the order wore the pendant fleece on a heavy gold chain, the 52 links of which bore the Burgundian flint and steel device. The knights were expected to wear their collars at all times, but since that was rather impractical, Charles V decreed in 1516 that they could wear a lighter chain or a silk ribbon. With the exception of Cranach's print of 1523, Christian II is always shown with the pendant on a silk cord. The heavy collar combined with the classical architecture surround could also be an allusion to Christian's predecessors such as Maximilian, who was always depicted with the heavy gold collar (fig. 3.3)?

There are two other woodcuts by Cranach in addition to this one. All three were made when Christian was in Germany in 1523, where he spent some time 'at home with Lucas Cranach'.[27] Cranach and his assistants also painted portraits of Christian II. In the signed one of c. 1523-1530 in Leipzig the king is in three-quarter profile facing right against a bright blue background (fig. 2.16),[28] and is fuller in the face than in the prints.

Fig. 2.13. Albrecht Dürer, Portrait of the Emperor Maximilian I, c. 1517-1521. Woodcut on paper, 58.4 x 38.1 cm. Portland Art Museum, gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Binney, inv. no. 61.25.

Fig. 2.14. Jan Gossart, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1526. Brown ink over black chalk on paper, 216 x 269 mm. Paris, Fondation Custodia, Frits Lugt Collection, inv./cat. no. 5141.

Fig. 2.15. Jacob Binck after Jan Gossart, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark, c. 1526.*
Engraving, 270 x 215 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-10.951.

There is also an unfinished miniature painting on vellum that is generally attributed to the circle of Cranach (now in Washington, The National Gallery of Art, fig. 2.17). The face, black bonnet and top of the white shirt are worked up in great detail, and a start was made on a light blue background, which may have prompted the attribution to Cranach. However, this highly detailed scene has many similarities to the painted portraits by Quinten Massijs and Joos van Cleve. The main parallel with the Massijs (fig. 2.9) is the pose of the hands with the index finger and thumb of the left hand pressed together as if holding a flower. The similarity to the portrait by Van Cleve (figs. 2.11 and 3.1) lies in the split in the side of the high white collar. In my view, therefore, it is more likely that the miniature was painted in Antwerp by a painter from the circle of Massijs or Van Cleve, or both.

Fig. 2.16. Lucas Cranach, *Portrait of Christian II*, c. 1523-1530. Oil on panel (limewood), 54.6 x 41.5 cm.
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 44.

Fig. 2.17. Antwerp? (generally regarded as circle of Lucas Cranach), *Portrait of Christian II*, c. 1523. Pen and brown ink with gouache on vellum, 120 x 95 mm. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Christian II and Jan Gossart

Another major artist who worked for Christian II was Jan Gossart, who was active in the Low Countries. It is not known exactly when they met. It could have been in Zeeland and Mechelen in 1523, but it was more probably during the king's stay in the Netherlands in 1521. There are several documents from the period 1526-1529 that provide an insight into the exceptional and intensive working relationship between the king and the artist.

Jan Gossart served as court artist successively to Philip of Burgundy (until 1524), Adolf of Burgundy (1524-1532) and Mencia de Mendoza (1530-1532).(29) In 1523 he also worked in Mechelen for a while on commissions from Margaret of Austria, and he stayed on there for some time after that.[30]

On 19 January 1526 Christian's wife Isabella died after a long illness. On 9 February Christian gave Gossart the prestigious commission to design a tomb and epitaph for her in St Peter's Abbey in Ghent. Christian left the Netherlands in March, but his three surviving children (the other three had died young) remained behind with Margaret of Austria, who took them under her wing after her niece's death. She may also have been the one who asked Gossart to paint the group portrait of John, Prince of Denmark, age 7 (1518-1532) and his sisters Dorothea, aged 5 (1520-1562) and Christina, aged 3 (1522-1590) (now in Hampton Court Palace, Royal Collection, fig. 1.3).[31] This remarkable painting shows the three children wearing the sombre clothes of mourning, and the bloodless pallor of their faces may be an intentional device to indicate their sorrow.

The composition is an illusionistic trick. Just inside the frame across the top and along two sides of the painting is an inner fictive frame painted to look like a continuation of the real one, creating the illusion that the children project out of the frame and into our space. As a favoured artist of Philip of Burgundy, Gossart was well versed in courtly conceits. It was common to portray important children as though they were already adults. Here the crown prince seems to be taking on the role of king, with Dorothea as his queen and Christina as their child, thereby demonstrating the children's status.

On 18 August 1528 Christian wrote a letter in which he asked to meet Gossart and the sculptor of the tomb for his deceased wife. A few years later Gossart painted another portrait of Christian's eldest daughter (London, The National Gallery, fig. 2.18). On the basis of similarities between her facial features and those of one of the girls the painting of the couple's three children, and her sumptuous attire, including her gown decorated with hundreds of pearls, the National Gallery picture is regarded as a portrait of Dorothea of Denmark.[32] It may have been made around 1530, when the young princess was ten years old.

In conclusion

There are many surviving portraits of Christian II, both painted and printed. He commissioned portraits himself, but other people also bought his likeness. He was immortalised by such highly regarded artists as Michiel Sittow, Jan Gossart, Bernard van Orley, Quinten Massijs, Joos van Cleve, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach. The portraits show how the artists were both innovative in their approach as well as traditional in their re-

Fig. 2.18. Jan Gossart, *A Young Princess* (*Portrait of Dorothea of Denmark?*), about 1530. Oil on panel, 38.2 x 29.1 cm. London, The National Gallery, NG 2211

spect for past conventions. Christian II regarded the portraits as propaganda tools, but today they are above all extraordinarily beautiful examples of early sixteenth-century portraiture, with a remarkable historical figure as the principal character.

Notes

1. Weniger 2011, p. 44, 82; Hendrikman 2005, p. 190.
2. Weniger 2011, pp. 40-42.
3. The date 1515 was painted on at in a later stage, so it could be a considerably later addition. Nevertheless, it does conform with other historical information about the portrait.
4. Weniger 2011, p. 80.
5. Eichberger 1995, p. 238.
6. Olstad 2012, pp. 78-81.
7. Olstad 2012, p. 78.
8. Aachen 1982, pp. 27-28.
9. Engelstad 1936.
10. This altarpiece will feature in an exhibition and research project on relations between Norway, the Netherlands and Spain. The exhibition will take place at Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, in 2019. With thanks to Justin Kroesen of the University Museum of Bergen, who drw my attention to the existence of the altarpiece.
11. For Mostaert see 'Jan Jansz Mostaert', in J.P. Filedt Kok (ed.), *Early Netherlandish Paintings*, online coll. cat. Amsterdam 2010: hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.431086 (consulted 28 November 2016). For the discussion about the attribution see Hendrikman 2005, p. 192: It is attributed to Mostaert by Boon 1966, pp. 61-72, among others, whereas Harbison 1977, p. 277, adheres to the old attribution to Jacob Cornelisz. The museum lists it as 'Anonymous, Netherlandish'.
12. A copy is now in Toledo on loan from the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, and there is another copy after Mostaert in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, inv. no. 1857.
13. Van Mander 1604, fols. 229r/v and 261r.
14. See J.P. Filedt Kok 2010.
15. Pearson 2001.
16. Hendrikman 2005, pp. 204-207.
17. This assumption seems to be borne out by the fact that Christian is not wearing the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece. After becoming a member of the order in 1519 he was always portrayed with the Golden Fleece pendant on a cord around his neck, which means that the original on which this painting is based must date from before then.
18. Madrid 1989, cat. no. 33, pp. 224-225.
19. Van Tuinen 2014, pp. 60-61.
20. 'Dirck Jacobsz, *Portrait of Pompejus Occo (1483-1537)*, Amsterdam, c. 1531', in Filedt Kok 2010: hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.8833 (consulted 21 November 2016).
21. Hendrikman 2005, p. 197. Joos van Cleve painted the portrait of Emperor Maximilian I in 1510 (Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, inv. no. 2234). Several copies of this portrait were produced by his workshop (see Leeflang 2015, fig. 1.13., p. 17).
22. Falkenburg 1994, pp. 22-37.
23. Dürer, pp. 96-97.
24. Hendrikman 2005, p. 200.
25. Stijn Alsteens in Ainsworth 2010, p. 401.
26. Although Gossart's print is usually dated around 526, a little later than Cranach's (1523), Alsteens rightly says that it is impossible to say which composition predates the other (Stijn Alsteens in Ainsworth 2010, p. 402).
27. Stijn Alsteens in Ainsworth 2010, p. 402.
28. The artist's insignia of a winged serpent facing right is above the shoulder on the left.
29. Ainsworth 2010, pp. 3, 11-12, 16, 19-20.
30. Ainsworth 2010, pp. 16, 20.
31. D. Shawe-Taylor and J. Scott, *Bruegel to Rubens: Masters of Flemish Painting*, London 2007 and K. Heard, L. Whitacre *et al.*, *The Northern Renaissance: Durer to Holbein*, London 2011.
32. Ainsworth 2010, p. 288.

Chapter 3.

A recentenly discovered portrait of King Christian II of Denmark by Joos van Cleve

Micha Leeflang

In 2015 an art dealer put this painting on the market as a sixteenth-century portrait of an unidentified man by an equally anonymous German artist (fig. 3.1). It aroused the curiosity of a Spanish collector, who immediately recognised its quality and got in touch with me, the author of a 2007 doctoral dissertation on Joos van Cleve and asked whether I thought he could be the artist. He bought the painting, and a few days later he brought it to Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, where I work as a curator. The portrait remained in the museum for the next few months, and since its style and technical features showed that it could be added to Van Cleve's autograph oeuvre it was included in a focus exhibition titled *Joos van Cleve and his World: Early Sixteenth-Century Painting in Antwerp*, and it was published for the firts time as by Joos van Cleve in my book *Joos van Cleve, a Sixteenth Century Antwerp Artist and his Workshop* (Brepols, Turnhout/ New York 2015). The evidence for the attribution is presented in this chapter.

The young artist

The real name of the artist, known to us and his contemporaries as Joos van Cleve, was Joos van der Beke (fig. 3.2).[1] In several legal documents in his adopted city of Antwerp he is referred to as 'Joos van der Beke, alias van Cleve' or 'Joos van der Beke die men hiet van Cleve' ('Joos van der Beke, whom they call Van Cleve').[2] An artist often acquired his cognomen from his home town, but in Joos's case 'van [of] Cleve' can refer either to the city or duchy of Kleve (English Cleves) on the Lower Rhine.[3] Neither the exact date nor place of his birth are known, but since his earliest documented activity as an artist took place in 1505/06, he was probably born around 1485/90.

The hand of Joos van Cleve is first recognised in his work as an assistant to Jan Joest (c. 1455-1517/18) on the wings of a compound altarpiece for the high altar of the Sankt Nicolaikirche in Kalkar.[4] In the panel with *The Raising of Lazarus*, one of the 20 painted scenes on the wings of the altarpiece, Joos included his self-portrait standing at the far left among a group of onlookers. It was the first, but certainly not the last time, that he inserted himself into one of his compositions. Work on the wings was completed in 1508-09, at which time the altarpiece was installed in the church.

Van Cleve's whereabouts between 1508-09 and 1511, when he appears in Antwerp, are unknown. He could have spent some time in Bruges,[5] which had been at the height of its prosperity in the fifteenth century as a centre for art, luxury goods and commercial activity, especially banking. Even though it fell into a gradual decline in the course of the

< Fig. 3.1. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1521.
Oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. (Originalsize). Private collection.

Fig. 3.2. Joos van Cleve, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1519, oil on panel, 38 x 27 cm. Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, inv. no. 1930.128.

sixteenth century, Bruges would still have exerted a powerful attraction on a young artist. However, leaving aside the similarities in style to works by Bruges masters, no documents record his presence there. However, even though there are similarities in his style to the work of Bruges masters, there are no documents recording his presence there.

Maximilian: Joos van Cleve's first royal portrait

Joos van Cleve painted Maximilian I's portrait at some stage between 1508/09 and 1511. The emperor is shown in three-quarter profile facing left and is wearing a heavy gold chain around his neck with the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece. He is holding a carnation in his right hand.[6] More than ten workshop versions of the portrait have survived. The one in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris is dated 1510 on the original frame (fig. 3.3). The original, though, which is in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, was probably made around 1508/09.[7] Maximilian was in the Low Countries at the time, and visited Antwerp several times, in addition to travelling to Leiden, The Hague, 's-Hertogenbosch and Bergen op Zoom. It is highly likely, but not certain, that Van Cleve met the emperor. It is also not known whether the portraits were commissioned by the emperor himself. Two portraits of Maximilian are listed in the inventory of Margaret of Austria, the aunt of Isabella, the wife of Christian II,[8] but it is impossible to say whether they were by Van Cleve. He and his workshop could have made the portraits for other individuals or bodies who wanted to have a picture of their ruler.

As it happens, Joos van Cleve was also linked to Maximilian through Nicasius and Georg Hackeney of Cologne, for whom he painted two triptychs in and shortly after 1515.[9] The brothers were from a highly respected local patrician family.[10] They were very important benefactors of many institutions in the city, and their donations contributed greatly to the rise of the Carthusian order there.[11] Nicasius, the eldest, was a close confidant of Maximilian.[12] He looked after the emperor's financial affairs, was appointed Royal Treasurer in 1499, and was also ennobled. In 1504 Maximilian told him that he was planning to move the court to the Neumarkt in Cologne.[13] In 1507 and 1508 Nicasius acquired two old buildings on the north side of this market square. He rebuilt them and, in 1508 the private chapel in the east wing of his house was finished. It was there that Van Cleve's *Death of the Virgin* triptych, also known as *The Small Death of the Virgin*, was installed in 1515. Nicasius was also tutor to Maximilian's son Philip the Handsome, and became his financial comptroller when he was crowned King of Castile in 1506.[14]

Fig. 3.3. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Emperor Maximilian I*, 1510, oil on panel, 19 x 13 cm. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, inv. no. 2234.

Joos van Cleve, painter of Antwerp

Van Cleve is first documented in Antwerp in 1511, when 'Joos van Cleve, scildere' (painter) was received into the Guild of St Luke as a free master. There is no mention of a teacher, whether he had been introduced by another artist, or how long he had been living in the city. However, there are archival documents that provide an insight into the way he set up his workshop and the positions he occupied in the guild. In 1516 Claes van Brugghe (Nicholas of Bruges) was accepted into the guild as an apprentice of Joos's,[15] and four more pupils were registered in the ledgers for 1523, 1535 and 1536.

Although the length of apprenticeships varied, four years was the norm in Antwerp.[16] In 1522, Claes van Brugghe entered the workshop of a second master, a miniaturist called Adriaen Tack, again as an apprentice, six years after he had started his training with Joos van Cleve. It is not known whether he was Joos van Cleve's apprentice for the full six years or whether, after a training period of four years, he worked as a fully qualified painter, in other words as a journeyman (*gezel*).[17] It is remarkable, though, that Van Cleve did not take on a new pupil until a year after his first apprentice had entered Tack's studio. Although there are no references in the ledgers to Joos van Cleve's other four apprentices becoming master painters, they could have set up workshops in another town. Other possibilities are that the year when they were admitted as free masters is missing from the guild ledgers, that they had abandoned painting or had died. Most pupils probably remained active as journeymen following their training. Lack of money probably prevented them from starting their own workshops, as that required capital for renting or buying premises, laying in acquiring materials, paying assistants or journeymen, and so on.

Joos also held official positions in the guild. In 1519 he served as joint dean with the glass painter Symon van Dale,[18] and the following year with the painter Jan Wellens de Cock (c. 1470-1521). He also occupied this post in 1525, together with the sculptor Willem de Moelenere, who was the older brother and teacher of the sculptor Jan de Molder (active 1494-1550), brother-in-law of the famous painter Jan Gossart (c. 1478-1532).[19] The deanship was a very important position for an artist since it made him the official representative of his craft,[20] so Van Cleve was clearly in good standing with his colleagues. Deans also had to be wealthy because the cost of gifts to be presented at births, marriages and funerals involving the members of the guild had to be paid from their own pockets.[21]

It was in his capacity as dean that Joos van Cleve also appears in the Extraordinary Rolls of the High Sheriff, which involved the settlement of disputes.[22] Internal conflicts between members of the Guild of St Luke were usually dealt with privately, which is why so few instances are documented.[23] Van Cleve was involved in two disputes as dean in 1519-20. He and Jan Wellens de Cock are mentioned by name in a document of 20 June 1520, but the other one simply refers to 'the deans of the painters', but in view of its date this would have been them as well.

As dean, Van Cleve would also have met Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) on his visit to the Low Countries. In 1518-19 Dürer made a print of Emperor Maximilian, and in 1521 he drew and painted Christian II in Antwerp and Brussels. In addition to the relationships between painters and their patrons, royalty or commoner, and the links between those patrons, there were often connections between the artists of royal portraits as well. For example, Joos van Cleve and Quinten Massijs (c. 1465/66-1530), who also painted a portrait of Christian II, were two of the leading (and perhaps best paid) artists in Antwerp in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, and they undoubtedly moved in the same circles.

Working on commission

Joos van Cleve's oeuvre currently consists of more than 300 works. He and his workshop assistants produced portraits, devotional panels and altarpieces. Contracts and identified patrons, or both, give us a good idea of the often influential clients who had themselves immortalised in portraits. They could be straightforward likenesses (as in fig. 3.3), but also altarpieces in which the donor or donors had themselves depicted as witnesses at a religious event (such as fig. 3.9).

As early as 1567, a little over a quarter of a century after Van Cleve's death, Lodovico Guicciardini praised his portraiture in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore*. 'Joos van Cleve, a citizen of Antwerp, was celebrated for his colouring, and still more for the likeness of his portraits, so that François I (1494-1547), having sent for an artist, Joos was chosen; and proceeding to the court of that monarch, he painted portraits of François, his queen, and other great persons, to his own great praise and emolument.'[24]

Joos van Cleve's portraits of François I, and his wife Eleanor (1498-1558) have survived. There are more than ten versions of Francis's portrait and nine of Eleanor's.[25] In addition to those works and the portrait of Maximilian, Van Cleve painted Henry VIII (1491-1547), King of England from 1509 to 1547, Lord of Ireland and later King of Ireland as well. The recently rediscovered likeness of Christian II fits in well with this group of royal portraits. But how did Van Cleve come into contact with all these rulers? If we are to believe Guicciardini, he was approached by delegates from the French royal house, just as Albrecht Dürer was asked by Christian II to call on the Danish king and make his portrait. But were there other people who could have played a part in obtaining royal commissions?

Joris Vezeleer, a key intermediary

Joris Vezeleer (c. 1493-1570) was an important contact for Joos van Cleve, who painted the double portrait of Vezeleer (fig. 3.4) and Margaretha Boghe for their marriage in 1518. Vezeleer was a successful businessman who left his native 's-Hertogenbosch at an early age and moved to Antwerp with his mother and stepfather. He was a goldsmith, mint master and art dealer, and in 1524 he is recorded as dean of the Antwerp goldsmiths' guild. He was later appointed General of the Mint in the service of the ruler of the Low Countries, Emperor Charles V. In 1530-31 the city authorities of 's-Hertogenbosch commissioned him to make a gold beaker for Floris van Egmont, Count of Buren and Leerdam. Vezeleer was then asked to supply the gold and silver cutlery for the ceremonial signing of the Treaty of Calais by François I and Henry VIII in 1532.[26] Joos van Cleve's painting of Henry that is now at Hampton Court may have been painted on that occasion as the

Fig. 3.4. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Joris Vezeleer*, 1518, oil on panel, 58 x 40 cm. Washington, The National Gallery of Art, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, inv. no. 1962.9.1.

pendant to the picture of François that is now in Philadelphia (fig. 3.5).[27] The dimensions of the two panels are almost the same. In addition, Henry is facing right in three-quarter profile and François in three-quarter profile to the left, and the two men are depicted in very similar spaces. Finally, the background colours, the use of light, and the table in the foreground all complement each other. Could it have been Vezeleer who recommended Joos van Cleve to the two kings?

This is supported by a French document dated 17 February 1533 in which Vezeleer is named as the person whom Joos van Cleve authorised to receive money on his behalf from François I for the delivery of three paintings: a Lucretia, a portrait of the French king and a picture with Joseph.[28] So there was certainly an important connection between Vezeleer, François I and Joos van Cleve. In addition, the document shows that the French king also bought paintings other than portraits from the artist. In other words, he seems to have taken a great interest in his work.

Fig. 3.5. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of François I*, c. 1530, oil on panel, 72 x 59.7 cm. Philadelphia, Museum of Art, The John G. Johnson Collection, inv. no. 769.

The Amsterdam banker Pompejus Occo, Margaret of Austria and Joos van Cleve

Another successful businessman with useful connections for Joos van Cleve was the Amsterdam banker Pompejus Occo (c. 1483-1537, fig. 2.8), who owned a version of th artist's *Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing* (fig. 3.6). The composition of this painting derives from an Italian model, and there is a picture in the British Royal Collection in Kensington Palace which is believed to have been Van Cleve's immediate source of inspiration. It is attributed to Marco d'Oggiono (c. 1475/77-1530), one of Leonardo's pupils, and belonged to Margaret of Austria, the aunt of Isabella, wife of Christian II, who hung it first in her library in Mechelen before moving it to her sleeping quarters.[29] Van Cleve was a visitor to the court in Mechelen, probably on Margaret's express invitation, for he was a highly respected artist in Antwerp, and it is likely that he also painted the portrait of Margaret's father Maximilian in her collection that she owned. Joos van Cleve

Fig. 3.6. Joos van Cleve, *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing*, c. 1515-20, oil on panel, 74.5 x 57.6 cm. Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, inv. no. 1975.136.

not only saw Marco d'Oggiono's panel at the Mechelen court, but also copied it using a sheet of paper or parchment oiled to make it transparent.[30] He then used that drawing as a cartoon in his workshop in order to reproduce series of *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing*.[31] There are still ten known versions that were produced in the shop.

In the version made for Pompejus Occo (fig. 3.6), the Italian landscape has been replaced by one inspired by Joachim Patinir (c. 1475/80-1524), who also worked in Antwerp. The coats of arms in the picture identify the original owners as Occo and his wife Gerbrich Claes.[32] Occo was an Amsterdam banker who was employed as an agent by the German Fugger family from 1511 to 1537, and they in their turn were in close touch with the Hackeney brothers of Cologne. On several occasions, moreover, Occo had served as an advisor and negotiator for Margaret of Austria,[33] so he might have seen the D'Oggiono while at her court, prompting him to acquire a copy from Van Cleve. However, it is also possible that Margaret bought the work from Van Cleve as a gift for Occo, for both of them were great lovers of art.

The popularity of *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing* among the rich and the famous is also apparent from a document of 2 December 1629 that mentions a painting of the same subject,[34] which the Antwerp art dealer Jehan Dubois sold to François I for the hefty sum of 67 livres and 8 sols.[35] Although the document does not give the name of the artist (which was not unusual in those days), it can be assumed that it was very probably the work of an Antwerp artist since it was sold by a prominent local dealer, and since Van Cleve specialised in this particular composition, it is likely to have been a version from his shop. Moreover, François I was an admirer of Joos van Cleve's work, as demonstrated by the document of 1533. It is clear, then, that there were various lines linking François I, Margaret of Austria, Pompejus Occo and Joos van Cleve, but it is difficult to make out to what extent the latter was in direct contact with François and Margaret, and whether he portrayed them from life. The same is true of Christian II.

The newly discovered portrait of Christian II by Van Cleve

Joos van Cleve may have painted Christian II's portrait shortly after 1521 (fig. 3.1). The Danish king is seen half-length, in three-quarter profile facing left. He is wearing a black bonnet with a round pin studded with small stones. He has a white shirt with a split standing collar that is fastened high up with small buttons. Over that he has a vertically slashed doublet and a dark cloak with a broad grey fur collar. His left hand is clasping his right hand, which is either gloved or wrapped in the cloth of his sleeve. On his left thumb he has a ring set with a stone, and around his neck is the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece on a simple black silk cord.

The painting technique is closely related to that of Van Cleve's known and autograph works. The face was built up with thin, transparent layers of paint that give the likeness a soft, velvety look, and is devoid of contour lines. The way in which the king's reddish brown hair and beard are rendered with a very thin, transparent layer of paint is another technique that is regularly found in Van Cleve's work, primarily in the figures of the Christ Child and the Virgin. One of his most striking idiosyncrasies is the absence of eyelashes. There is also a difference in the transparency of the face and the more opaquely painted hands and torso, which can be seen in other portraits painted by Joos van Cleve. The picture was also subjected to a scientific examination in order to confirm its attribution to Joos van Cleve. Photographs were taken in normal light, ultraviolet and X-ray spectra, and with the infrared reflectography technique (IRR). The panel was also investigated with dendrochronology in order to confirm its assumed date.

Examination with infrared reflectography

More than 100 paintings from Joos van Cleve's workshop have now been examined with infrared reflectography.[36] This scientific method, which was developed in the 1960s by Prof. J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, makes it possible to penetrate the paint layers and look at the artist's initial design, the so-called underdrawing. The technique allows fresh insights into questions of attribution, identifies modifications to the initial design made during the painting process, and provides more general information about workshop practices.

In the case of a portrait, Joos van Cleve would first have followed his usual practice of making a preliminary drawing of the sitter on paper. This was the most practical and quickest way of preparing a portrait. Oil paint takes a long time to dry, and it is highly unlikely that the patron would have been in the workshop throughout the execution of a painted portrait. The drawn study on paper would have been the model on which the artist based the likeness, so little further preparation was made during the underdrawing

Fig. 3.7. IRR assembly of Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1521, oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. Private collection (© Arte-Lab, S.L., Madrid).

stage, as is the case with Christian's portrait (fig. 3.7). No underdrawing was recorded, and barely any modifications were made during the painting process. Only the outline of the king's left thumb was shifted up a little from the reserve left for it in an earlier stage. Van Cleve very clearly had a good idea how the portrait should look, so he must have used a drawing or finished picture as his model.

Another good example of a portrait painted by Joos van Cleve, without any underdrawing is the portrait of Stefano Fieschi Raggio (Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, fig. 3.8). Stefano Raggio, a scion of a prominent Genoese family of merchants and patricians, and a member of the Great Council of Genoa in 1500. In 1511 he became a merchant (*mercante*) and in 1517 was elected a statesman (*anziano*). In 1529 he founded a county palatinate for Charles V, and organized ambassadorial gatherings in 1529-30 and 1536. He also had a seat on the committee responsible for the building of the cathedral in 1530 (the *fabbrica*), so he was clearly a respected man in his native city.

Besides the individual portrait Stefano Raggio ordered the *San Donato Altarpiece* for his family chapel in the Chiesa di San Donato in Genoa. The donor was immortalized on the left wing with Stephen, his name saint. Stefano Raggio's portrait was prepared in the same way as the other figures in the altarpiece, such as St Stephen and the kneeling Caspar. This means that the portrait on the wing was made after the individual one.

Fig. 3.8. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Stefano Raggio*, about 1516-20, oil on panel, 38 x 27 cm. Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola, inv. no. GNL 57/2001.

In other altarpieces, however, that contain donor portraits the same approach could be seen as in the individual portraits. Joos van Cleve has a very recognisable drawing style in the underdrawing of his paintings. He set down his figures and objects with elegant, flowing contour lines and then used parallel hatchings to indicate the shaded passages. By allowing the hatchings to follow the underlying forms here and there, he also created the suggestion of volume. A start could be made on the painting once the underdrawing was complete. Van Cleve and his assistants followed the underdrawing fairly precisely, and very rarely is there a major deviation from it in the painted surface of a picture. A contour may be shifted a little but the basic design remains unchanged, although there are occasional exceptions.

The so-called large *Adoration of the Magi* in Dresden (fig. 3.9), which was ordered by Oberto de Lazario Cattaneo for his chapel in the Chiesa di San Luca di Albaro near Genoa, has detailed underdrawing that is typical of Joos van Cleve. The whole composition, apart from the landscape, was carefully prepared with outlines for the figures, objects and architectural setting. Hatchings mark the shaded passages, and by allowing the parallel hatchings to move with the forms, they also indicate volume. The underdrawing was carefully filled in with paint, with the exception of the self-portrait. Instead of the bearded man in the underdrawing Van Cleve painted his own face, and altered the collar of his shirt at the same time (fig. 3.10). The underdrawing of the bearded man looks the same as that of the other stereotype male figures, such as Joseph, which were drawn extremely precisely. Wrinkles and folds, like the bags under the eyes and the shadows below the cheekbones, were indicated with twisting lines and parallel hatchings. Contours were not just used for the outlines of the hands, as in many other works by Van Cleve, but the shaded side, joints, nails and folds of skin are also indicated. Comparison of the self-portrait with that of the patron on the left of the composition shows that Van Cleve usually adopted a different procedure for portraits done from life. The shape of his own head and its position were defined with just a few lines. It was planned to be a little smaller in the underdrawing, and the mouth was indicated with a sketchy broken line. Comparison of this portrait with the self-portrait demonstrates that Van Cleve had not envisaged including himself at the underdrawing stage.

Fig. 3.10. IRR assembly of the donor's portrait (Oberto de Lazario Cattaneo), the head of the standing king and the self-portrait in Joos van Cleve, *Adoration of the Magi* (the so-called *Large Adoration*), c. 1517/18. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 809A (© Konstanze Krüger).

In the *Crucifixion Triptych* in New York (figs. 3.11-12) the donor is kneeling in prayer at the foot of the cross. St Paul embraces the cross while laying his left hand on the head of his namesake in blessing, linking him physically to the cross and spiritually to Christ's supreme sacrifice for the redemption of mankind.[37] IRR has revealed that the figures were prepared in detail in the underdrawing. Joos van Cleve used outlines for the shapes of the heads and indicated both shading and volume with an extensive system of hatchings. The alternating use of long and short hatchings is typical of his working method. The curly lines for hair and the short loops along the jawline for the beard of St Paul are also familiar. The underdrawing was followed quite faithfully in the paint, with a few exceptions. A minor change was made to the position of the donor's head (fig. 3.12). As usual, he was prepared with just a few sketchy lines for the shape of the head and the eyes, nose and mouth, but the head was lower down and the man may have been gazing up a little more.

The predella of the *Santa Maria della Pace Altarpiece* in Paris is particularly interesting. It was ordered

Fig. 3.9. Joos van Cleve, *Adoration of the Magi* (the so-called *Large Adoration*), c. 1517/18, oil on panel, arched top, 251 x 185 cm. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 809A >

3.11. Detail with Sts John, Paul and a donor. Joos van Cleve and Landscape Collaborator, *Crucifixion Triptych with Saints and a Donor*, c. 1520, oil on panel, 98.4 x 74.3 cm (central panel); 101 x 32.7 cm (each wing). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of George Blumenthal, inv. no. 41.190.20a-c.

Fig. 3.12. IRR assembly with Sts John, Paul and a donor (© MMA). Joos van Cleve and Landscape Collaborator, *Crucifixion Triptych with Saints and a Donor*, c. 1520 oil on panel, 98.4 x 74.3 cm (central panel); 101 x 32.7 cm (each wing). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of George Blumenthal, inv. no. 41.190.20a-c.

Fig. 3.13. Joos van Cleve, IRR assembly of St Peter and the presumed portrait (© C2RMF Lambert/Bellec), predella with *The Last Supper*, *Santa Maria della Pace Altarpiece*, c. 1525. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 1996.

Fig. 3.7. IRR assembly of Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1521, oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. Private collection (© Arte-Lab, S.L., Madrid).

around 1525 by the Italian merchant Niccolò Bellogio for the Chapel of St Anne in Santa Maria della Pace in Genoa. His portrait and that of his wife are on the centre panel with *The Lamentation*. The underdrawing of the predella with *The Last Supper*, in which Joos van Cleve plays the part of a servant on the left, is executed in the same manner as that of *The Lamentation*. The stereotype figures were very carefully underdrawn, but the portraits of the donor and his wife were, as usual, prepared with much less detail. The IRR assembly for Joos van Cleve's self-portrait once again shows only a broad indication of the outline of the head and the positions of the nose, eyes and mouth. With the exception of the figure to the right of St Peter, Christ and the other apostles are elaborately underdrawn in Van Cleve's distinctive manner (fig. 3.13). The apostle who is the exception has his hands folded together, and in the paint surface he has pronounced features suggestive of a hidden portrait. Technical examination supports that supposition; the infrared reflectogram reveals that the figure was not underdrawn, and in that respect, he differs markedly from Christ and the other disciples. Most striking of all, and inexplicable, is the resemblance between this unidentified man and Van Cleve's portrait of Christian II.

In the case of serial copies of devotional works like *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing* and *The Holy Family*, as well as portraits of royalty and others, Joos van Cleve and his assistants made extensive use of cartoons for tracing the contours. In addition, many scenes were made in duplicate. Perhaps the best example of this is the composition with *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing*.[38] The panel in Brussels is an almost identical version (fig. 3.14) of the Chicago painting for Pompejus Occo, but without the coats of arms of Occo and his wife. There are two comparable scenes of the infants kissing in a landscape, one in a private collection in Antwerp, the other auctioned by Koller in Zürich in 2012.[39] Then there are the smaller variants, one in Utrecht and the other in Weimar. It is conceivable that Joos van Cleve, aided by his assistants, worked on two identical versions at the same time. Another possibility is that as soon as one painting was finished, a copy of it was made. When one of the two paintings on hand was sold, the remaining one was used as the model for another one, which was how variations crept in.

Fig. 3.14. Joos van Cleve, *The Infants Christ and St John the Baptist Embracing*, c. 1515-20, oil on panel, 72.5 x 54 cm. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. no. 7224.

There is also an almost identical version of the portrait of Christian II which, though I have not actually seen it, could also probably be an autograph version according to an old image (fig. 3.15). Its whereabouts since 1943 are a mystery, and it is only known today from a black-and-white photograph. At 40.5 x 31 cm, it is larger than the one now in the private Spanish collection. A rug is depicted at the bottom, as there is in the portrait of Isabella from the workshop of Jacob Cornelisz in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid (fig. 2.5), although the pattern is different. That second version was with the art dealers Katz of The Hague in 1940, according to an autograph annotation on the back of a black-and-white photograph in the archive of the German art historian Max Jacob Friedländer (1867-1958). He also added 'cf. Massijs'. In other words, he suspected that the picture was derived from or had to be compared with the portrait that Quinten Massijs made of the Danish king (fig. 2.9). On another photograph of the same picture Friedländer suggested Jan Gossart as the possible maker. He did not mention Joos van Cleve, but that is not surprising, since he considered the portrait of Christian II in Copenhagen (fig. 1.1), which is now thought to be by Michiel Sittow, to be the work of the 'M[ei]st[er] v[on] Tode M[ari]ae?', in other words Joos van Cleve. It is not such an odd idea, since several portraits by Sittow have been re-attributed to Joos van Cleve, and vice-versa.

Dendrochronological examination of Van Cleve's portrait of Christian II

Dendrochronological analysis was conducted in addition to IRR in order to identify and date the wood of the panel. An earliest possible date can be determined from the precise measurement of the width of the annual rings, from which the specific growth cycle of a tree (oak in Van Cleve's case) can be established.[40] IRR and dendrochronology are the two methods that have made the greatest contributions to the technical examination of Netherlandish art in the past 20 to 30 years.[41]

The panel with Christian's portrait consists of a single oak plank with a horizontal grain (fig. 3.16). As usual with Joos van Cleve (and with southern Netherlandish artists in general), the wood came from the Baltic/Polish region. A total of 142 annual growth rings were counted, with the youngest heartwood ring dating from 1479, so the panel could not have been used before that date. Freshly felled wood is unusable, though, and has to be seasoned. Only the innermost heartwood is suitable for a panel painting, so the bark and the softer sapwood on the outside of the tree, which is susceptible to infestation by insects, has to be removed, along with the outermost (and youngest) heartwood rings. Statistical analysis has demonstrated that at least 9 heartwood rings will have been re-

Λ Fig. 3.15. Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II*, c. 1521, oil on panel, 40.5 x 31 cm. Present whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 3.16. Reverse of Joos van Cleve, *Portrait of Christian II of Denmark*, c. 1521, oil on panel, 20 x 15.1 cm. Private collection (© Arte-Lab, S.L., Madrid).

moved, but it is better to assume an average loss of 15. Transportation from the Baltic to Antwerp, drying time and processing the tree trunks into painter's panels took at least two years, but it is usual to allow for ten years.

It has been established from dendrochronological examination of more than 60 panels associated with Joos van Cleve that one has to add 25 years to the youngest heartwood ring (15 for the discarded growth rings and 10 for drying, transport and treatment) to arrive at the earliest possible date of execution for the painting.[42] In this particular case, the most probable date for the panel with Christian II is 1504 or later. Needless to say, the earliest dendrochronological date does not rule out a later one. Although the painting could have been made in 1504 or later, the historical and art-historical evidence narrows that down to a date in or after 1519, the year in which the king was admitted to the exclusive Order of the Golden Fleece, the insignia of which he is wearing around his neck. Furthermore it seems plausible that the panel can be dated in or shortly after 1521, when Christian II visit Antwerp.

The youngest heartwood ring of Sittow's panel of the Christian II in Copenhagen dates from 1471,[43] so the addition of 25 years for the discarded annual growth rings, drying time, transport and treatment points to 1496 as the likeliest date of execution. However, that is also too early, historically and art-historically, for both the portrait of Christian II and the underlying one of Charles V (see chapter 2), who was only born in 1500. The dendrochronological data are nevertheless also of great importance in these two cases, because portraits and popular devotional scenes were often copied, and could thus have been made much later than one suspects. In the case of Joos van Cleve's portrait of Christian II, the data from the other, slightly larger missing version would be very interesting for comparison with the newly discovered portrait in the Spanish collection.

In conclusion

This newly discovered portrait of Christian II is an important addition to the autograph oeuvre of Joos van Cleve. It can be dated almost certainly in (or shortly after) 1521, when the Danish king visit Antwerp, due to historical and technical data. Joos van Cleve had only one workshop assistant at that moment, Claes van Brugghe. He may have been set to work mainly on the popular devotional panels and altarpieces, under the watchful eye of the master, while Van Cleve himself concentrated on portrait commissions.

Examination with infrared reflectography of the portrait of Christian II did not show any underdrawing, which is similar to other autograph portraits by the artist. The portrait is realistic and painted in Van Cleve's characteristic style. The face is built up with several transparent layers, one on top of the other, to create his distinctively soft modelling. There are no outlines, and the treatment of textures are testimony to a very talented artist.

During his lifetime, the portrait would undoubtedly have appealed to Joos van Cleve's clientele. And even today it charms the viewer and demonstrates that Joos van Cleve belonged among the ranks of the great sixteenth-century portraitists, along with Michiel Sittow, Albrecht Dürer, Bernard van Orley and Quinten Massijs.

Notes

1.- Hand 2014; Hand/Leeflang 2011, pp. 20-29; Hand 2004, pp. 1-7.

2.- See Hand 2004, pp. 194-96, for transcriptions of documents of 1523, 1527, 1540 and 1542.

3.- There is the coat of arms of a Van der Beke family on a font in the church in Alt-Schermbeck, a town near Wesel in the north-west of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Archival documents in the town also mention an Evert van der Beke several times between 1478 and 1505; see Gorissen 1973, p. 206, note 174, and Hand 2004, p. 13. It is not known, though, whether Joos van Cleve was related to Evert van der Beke, or whether he belonged to the same branch of the family that commissioned the font.

4.- For the Kalkar altarpiece see Baudisch 1940, pp. 27-50; Willemsen 1967, pp. 105-02; Gorissen 1973, pp. 149-206; Wolff-Thomsen 1997, pp. 115-340. The most recent monograph on Jan Joest is Schollmeyer 2004.

5.- Hand/Leeflang 2011, pp. 22-24.

6.- The emperor sometimes holds a carnation, but there are also paintings in which he has a ring or a roll of paper in his hand.

7.- Hand 1978, pp. 54-59.

8.- Hand 2004, p. 113.

9.- They are the triptychs with *The Death of the Virgin*, 1515, oil on panel, 65 x 125.5 cm (central panel); 66.8 x 59 cm (each wing), Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, inv. no. 430, and *The Death of the Virgin*, before 1518, oil on panel, 130.1 x 153.5 cm (central panel); 131.9 x 73.8 cm (left wing); 132.1 x 73.8 cm (right wing). Munich, Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, inv. no. WAF 150-151-152.

10.- Teplitzky 2012; Eikemeier 1983, p. 141; Schmid 1988.

11.- Schmid 2001, pp. 55-56.

12.- Merlo 1863, pp. 24-25; Hiller/Vey 1969, p. 22; Schmid 2001, pp. 56-58.

13.- Hiller/Vey 1969, p. 22, letter of 20 November 1504 from Maximilian to the councillors of Cologne.

14.- Merlo 1863, pp. 24-25; Hand 1978, p. 77.

15.- Rombouts/Van Lerius 1864-76, vol. 1, p. 100. Since Claes van Brugghe was an apprentice of Joos's, this might be a clue to the latter's connection with Bruges.

16.- Floerke 1905, p. 130.

17.- Leeflang 2007a, pp. 69-82.

18.- Zoege von Manteuffel 1913, p. 291. Van Dale registered with the Antwerp Guild of St Luke in 1502, and took on apprentices in 1505, 1506, 1509, 1513 and 1523. His pupil in 1509 was Marinus van Reymerswaele; see Rombouts/Van Lerius 1864-76, vol. 1, p. 71: 'Moryn Claessone, Zeelander'.

19.- Rombouts/Van Lerius 1864-76, vol. 1, p. 103.

20.- Huth 1923; Prims 1951.

21.- Ibid.

22.- Van der Stock 1990, pp. 127-44, esp. pp. 131-33, and doc. III, pp. 139-41.

23.- Ibid., p. 130.

24.- Guicciardini 1567, p. 98: 'Gios di Cleues cittadino d'Anversa rarissimo nel colorire, & tanto eccellente nel ritarre dal naturale, che hauendo il Re Francesco primo mandati qua huomini a posta, per condurre alla Corte qualche maestro egregio, costui fu l'eletto, & condotto in Francia ritrasse il Re, & la Regina, & altri Principi con somma laude, & premi grandissimi'. The translation is from *Guicciardini's Account of the Ancient Flemish School*, London 1795, pp. 8-9.

25.- Hand 2004, pp. 166-70.

26.- Vermeylen 2003, pp. 63-64.

27.- Paris 1991, pp. 79-80; Scailliérez 1997, pp. 120-24; Hand 2004, p. 103, who dates the portrait of Henry VIII between 1530 and 1535.

28.- Leproux 2001, p. 195, doc. 16; Demarcel 2002, p. 23. On Vezeleer see Vermeylen 2003, pp. 63-67; Campbell 2002, esp. pp. 280-81.

29.- The inventories of Margaret of Austria drawn up on 17 July 1515 and in 1524 list a panel of two children embracing: 'Firstly, a painting of two small infants who are kissing one another': Regest-no. 2979, *Inventar des gesamten Besitzes der Erzhertogin Margarethe, Tochter Kaiser Maximilians, an Kunstgegenständen und Büchern*, 20 April 1524, see H. Zimmermann in *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 3 (1885), pp. 93-123, esp. p. 98. no. 135: 'Premierement ung tableau de deux petis josnes enffans qui se baisent l'ung l'autre'. See also Le Gay 1839, p. 482; Eichberger 2002, pp. 307-10; Hand 2004, p. 98; Ewing 2011, p. 120.

30.- Leeflang 2015, pp. 79-80.

31.- Wolff in Coll. cat. Chicago 2008, pp. 159-67.

32.- On Occo see Nübel 1972. The Chicago version is listed as autograph in Friedländer 1972, p. 57, and Hecht 1981, p. 25. According to Hand 2004, pp. 98-99 and cat. nos. 80-84.9, pp. 164-66, there are no versions that are solely by Joos van Cleve. He catalogues most of them as 'Joos van Cleve and workshop', 'workshop of Joos van Cleve' or 'copy after…' .

33.- Wolff in Coll. cat. Chicago 2008, p. 165.

34.- Guiffrey 1879, pp. 42-44; Adhémar 1946, p. 12; Cox-Rearick 1995, p. 68; Hand 2004, p. 99.

35.- Ewing 2011, p. 121.

36.- On the IRR method see, among others, Van Asperen de Boer 1976, pp. 1-40; Faries in Faries/Spronk 2003, pp. 159-160.

37.- Ainsworth in New York 1998, p. 356.

38.- Leeflang 2015, p. 81.

39.- Ibid., figs. 2.67 and 4.5.

40.- Klein 1989, p. 25; Klein 1994, pp. 101-03; Klein 1995, pp. 209-11.

41.- Faries 2003, p. 3.

42.- On this see Leeflang 2015, pp. 177-193.

43.- Dendrochronology report by Peter Klein, 23 December 2004; with thanks to Margreet Wolters, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague.

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With thanks to:

Marina Aarts
Maryan Ainsworth
Till-Holger Borchert
Peter den Held
Annabel Dijkema
Maria Elzari
Dan Ewing
Molly Faries
Jan Piet Filedt Kok
Francisco Galante
Maria Galassi
John Hand
Lars Hendrikman
Carlos Herrero Starkie
Michael Hoyle
Owen Humphrys
Pedro Jimenez
Peter Klein
Hanne Kolind Poulsen
Tanja Kootte
Daantje Meuwissen
Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht
Uta Neidhardt
RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History
SMK, National Gallery of Denmark
Cécile Scailliérez
Alice Taatgen
Bert and Maria Twaalfhoven
Peter van den Brink
Humphrey van der Beesen
Caroline van der Elst
Arno van Os
Paula Pumplin
Marieke van Schijndel
Ronnie Weijers
Martha Wolff
Margreet Wolters

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© KING CHRISTIAN II OF DENMARK IN PORTRAITS • A portrait by Joos van Cleve rediscovered
Editor: Micha Leeflang
Project director: Carlos Herrero Starkie
Text editing: Antonio Pareja
Publisher: INSTITUTE OF OLD MASTERS RESEARCH
English translation and editor of chapter 2-3: Michael Hoyle
Text editor of chapter 1-3: Paula Pumplin
Book desing: Antonio Pareja Editor
© 2017 INSTITUTE OF OLD MASTERS RESEARCH
ISBN: 978-84-95453-81-9
Legal Deposit: TO 432-2017

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