Attributed to Anthony van Dyck

Portrait of Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia

c.1628 – 1632

Private Owner
Introduction to Painting Pairs project

This report documents the research we have conducted as part of the Painting Pairs Project, an annual program encouraging close collaboration between art historians and conservators supported by The Courtauld Institute of Art, The Department of Conservation and Technology, and the Sackler Research Forum. By employing a multifaceted approach combining technical and visual analysis with art historical research, we have been able to make several important discoveries and observations.

Introduction to the Painting

The painting (figs. 1 and 1a) is a half-length portrait of the 17th century Infanta of Spain and Regentess of the Spanish Netherlands, Isabella Clara Eugenia. The painting came to the Department of Conservation and Technology from a private owner. The Infanta Isabella, clothed in a nun’s habit and set in front of a green-brown background, turns slightly to the left while her gaze confronts the viewer. A richly brocaded drapery frames the sitter to her right. Her clasped hands, partially obscured by a swath of black cloth, sit just above the bottom edge of the painting.

The painting arrived in stable condition. It is lined and the stretcher is sound. There is good cohesion between the original canvas and lining fabric. The ground and paint layers are in mostly good condition with an overall network of age cracks. There are some areas of abrasion, most noticeably in the face and wimple, and localised raised, vulnerable paint. Discoloured retouching is most evident in the wimple below the sitter’s face. There is a single layer of bloomed, yellowed varnish beneath an overall layer of surface dirt.

Fig. 1 and 1.a Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Attributed to Van Dyck. (front and back) c.1628-32. Oil on Canvas, 81.5 x 70.5 x 2 cm. Private Owner.
The Sitter: Infanta Clara Eugenia, Regentess of Spain and Archduchess of the Spanish Netherlands (1566-1633)

Isabella Clara Eugenia was born to the King of Spain, Phillip II, and his third wife Elisabeth of Valois on 12 August 1566. Phillip II raised his eldest daughter as his protégé, permitting her to aid him in his work and grooming her for leadership from a young age. Eventually, Phillip ceded the Spanish Netherlands to Isabella under the condition she marry her cousin Albert VII, Archduke of Austria. The two wed in 1599 and initiated their rule over the Spanish Netherlands.

Albert and Isabella inherited a difficult political situation upon their ascension of leadership over the Spanish Netherlands. Religious divisions and distrust of Spanish rule fueled the Eighty Years War (1568-1648). Albert and Isabella brought a period of much needed peace and stability to the Southern Netherlands during a period of strict Spanish Catholic rule and the religious turmoil related to the Protestant Reformation. As part of their political agenda to cultivate a unique cultural identity for the Southern Netherlands, Isabella and Albert stimulated the development of Flemish Baroque painting through their patronage of, among others, Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony Van Dyck.

In 1610, the “Archdukes”, as Albert and Isabella were collectively known, appointed Rubens to the position of court painter. A painting by Rubens from about 1615 shows the Archdukes clad in sumptuous and fashionable attire and suggests their shared authority as rulers (figs. 2 and 3).

After Albert’s death in 1621, Isabella became Regentess of the Netherlands and ruled in her own right. It was during this time that she assumed the habit of the Poor Clares, a Franciscan tertiary order, to signal her mourning and piety. In 1625 she visited Rubens’ studio in Antwerp to sit for him, which is when he painted her first initial portrait, as a now chastised and widowed nun (fig. 4).

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2 Johannes Bochius, Historica narratio profectionis et inaugurationis Serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae, Austriae archiducum (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1602), 181-188.
The Infanta likely commissioned Rubens for this painting following the Siege of Breda, a major victory for the Spanish crown in the Eighty Years War. It was a momentous occasion for the Regentess whose triumphal entry into the city marked one of her few public appearances following Albert’s death. The Infanta may well have marked the occasion by commissioning Rubens to visualize her authority in an official state portrait. The Infanta Isabella died in 1633 after twelve years of solo rule in Brussels.

The Artist: Anthony van Dyck

Anthony van Dyck was born in 1599 into a wealthy Antwerp family. His father, a successful silk merchant, noticed Anthony’s artistic gifts from a young age. In 1609, at the age of ten, Anthony enrolled in the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke as an assistant but was quickly drawn into the orbit of Antwerp’s most celebrated painter, Peter Paul Rubens.

Rubens was impressed by van Dyck’s precociousness and lauded him as “the best of his pupils” in 1618. However, van Dyck felt overshadowed by Rubens’s reputation and would continually try to distinguish his painting from his master’s throughout his career, although the stylistic influence of Rubens is visible in much of van Dyck’s work. To this end, van Dyck travelled to Italy in search of new patrons and inspiration from the Italian masters. During his Italian sojourn between 1621-1627, van Dyck drew favour from many patrons in Rome, Venice and Palermo, but it was the Genoese aristocracy that held his work in particularly high regard.

By 1627, van Dyck returned to Antwerp and initiated what is now known as his Second Antwerp Period (1627-1632), during which he established a workshop, travelled frequently and was appointed court painter by the Infanta Isabella. The now esteemed portraitist, with the help of his workshop, was especially prolific during these years. Van Dyck was described in one account as having had “a positively inhuman appetite for work.”

His portraits, which were “peerless” according to Giovanni Pietro Bellori, the artist and prominent biographer of seventeenth-century artists, show marked influence from Titian, Rubens, and traditional Flemish painting. The finest paintings from the Second Antwerp

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7 “[Van Dyck] achieved the highest esteem for his portraits, in which he was peerless, and sometimes as marvelous as Titian himself.” Giovanni Pietro Bellori, The Lives of Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, translated by Alice Sedgwick Wohl (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 220.
Period exhibit a distinctive, individual style characterised by confident, elegant brushstrokes that forego anatomical accuracy in favour of describing the sitter’s personality. In depicting clothing and fabric, van Dyck employs a painterly application with apparent brushwork that harmonises with cascades of satin and silk. The flowing brushstrokes are then punctuated with impastoed highlights, especially in the cuffs and collar. Precise and delicate brushwork comprise the face, capturing the likeness of the sitter while only relying on subtle modelling and a minimum of shading. The ornamentally and effortless grace of his portraits contrast with the more sculptural figure cast in the dramatic compositions of Rubens.

The Sabauda Portrait

Van Dyck initiated his second Antwerp period, and consequently his tenure as court painter to the Infanta Isabella, by painting his first full-length version of the Archduchess now in the permanent collection of the Galleria Sabauda in Turin (fig. 5). The Sabauda portrait is known to have been painted in Genoa, most likely in 1627 before he returned to Antwerp, and thus it is believed that Isabella could not have been painted from life. Instead, van Dyck likely worked from a Rubens version. Seeking to establish his artistic independence from his former master, van Dyck deviated from the Rubens portrait through compositional and stylistic alterations. He extended the three-quarter length portrait to a full-length one, showing Isabella standing. The curmudgeonly, albeit resolute nun of Rubens bears a discontented expression of grief, whereas van Dyck featured her with the relaxed expression of a confident and experienced leader capable of sole reign. Van Dyck also enlarged her eyes, making the viewer feel the at once scrutinising and earnest gaze of the Infanta (figs. 6 and 7). To amplify the Infanta’s stature towards the monumental, van Dyck grafted the Rubensian torso onto a towering

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and disproportionate lower half. Van Dyck situates the Infanta in front of a column and an ornately embroidered drapery, a device often used by van Dyck in emulation of Titian’s portraiture. Van Dyck presented this splendid full-length portrait to the Archduchess most likely to ingratiate himself to the court. In return, she presented the painter with a gold chain “pour avoir peint S.A”. The chain both served as a valuable gift and symbol of service to the court, marking the beginning of his service to the Infanta as court painter and his return to Antwerp.

The “Suite” of Infanta images

Following van Dyck’s return to Antwerp, many more portraits of the Infanta Isabella as nun were painted in different sizes but with nearly identical compositions. At present, around twenty versions are known, but it is likely that many more have been lost or are in private collections (see table 1). The existence of many copies of this composition owes to the fact van Dyck’s depiction of the Infanta became the official state portrait of the Spanish Netherlands following Albert’s death. These state portraits were sometimes commissioned by potentates throughout Europe. This is the case with the only other known full length version, commissioned and owned by King Charles I (see table 1 no. 6). A three-quarter length version was owned by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, and how much pride he felt for owning this painting is evident through the conspicuous placement of it in David Teniers II’s work The Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his Painting Gallery (see table 1 no. 13 and fig. 8). Generally, because these paintings were presented as diplomatic gifts, many versions of high quality would have been commissioned to impress and delight foreign dignitaries. Van Dyck’s “new and exalted clientele” would have also furnished demand for repetitions of famed portraits to

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10 John Peacock, The Look of Van Dyck: The Self-Portrait with a Sunflower and the Vision of the Painter (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 177-215. Van Dyck: 1599-1641, 1999, 75. Van Dyck was given the title “Schilder van Heure Hoocheyd” (painter to her highness) to signify his official service to the court. The heavy gold chain, or at least a similar one, can be seen in Van Dyck’s Self Portrait with a Sunflower. It was worth 750 guilders according to primary documentation.
fill out their portrait galleries. Given the political value of these paintings as symbols conveying Infanta Isabella’s to rulers abroad, the task of producing them would have been delegated to a highly proficient workshop capable of replicating the magnificence of the Sabauda version.

Van Dyck’s “Iconographie” and production of prints

The full extent of his productivity in his Second Antwerp period becomes evident in the famous series of prints from between 1630 and 1633. The “Iconographie”, as they came to be known in subsequent re-printings, consisted of engraved portraits of famous men, and a few women, most of which van Dyck had also painted. For many of the engravings that appeared in the “Iconographie”, van Dyck himself prepared etchings as a guide that his engravers could follow for the final print. The portrait of the Infanta Isabella was not among the etchings executed by van Dyck himself, so his most trusted engraving specialist, Lucas Vorsterman, must have worked directly from a painting (fig. 9). The circulation in print of the image of Infanta Isabella as nun cemented van Dyck’s portrait as the standard image of the Archduchess, which served to represent Isabella until long after her death.

As described earlier, the painted portraits of Isabella produced by van Dyck and his workshop were diplomatic gifts and therefore not in the public realm. While the paintings remained confined to centres of power, the disseminated prints presented the Archduchess’ virtuous image to a broader audience. Because the Franciscan rule prohibited the Infanta from making frequent public appearances, the prints became a surrogate for the cloistered ruler, delivering her presence to her subjects and allies. Furthermore, to demonstrate her pious moderation and spiritual asceticism, Isabella relied on a single composition in prints and paintings.

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**Workshop practice**

As suggested earlier, van Dyck and his workshop themselves produced many portraits of the Infanta as widowed nun. Since these paintings so closely resemble each other, it can be very challenging to determine the extent to which van Dyck’s studio assistants were involved in their creation. During his artistic training in the Rubens studio, van Dyck likely absorbed the practices of his master and emulated these qualities in his own workshop. However, little is known of the inner workings of van Dyck’s workshop and our current understanding of the are premised on only a handful of primary documents, most of which only elude to the inner-workings of the workshop. This means that comparison of technical and stylistic details of portraits with firm dates and attribution is the one of the only methods available for filling in gaps of knowledge about his studio practice. From what is known of his studio output, there are three types of execution: firstly, paintings produced entirely by the artist himself; secondly, versions that were painted partially by van Dyck and partially by adroit studio assistants (sometimes referred to as autograph versions); and third, versions executed entirely by his studio but under his close supervision. In each of these cases, van Dycks’ assistants would work from a prototype designed by van Dyck himself.

At present, when a complete provenance for a version cannot be ascertained, it can be assigned to one of these categories only through stylistic observation, technical examination and reference to the few primary sources that describe his workshop practice. Problems of attribution exist in all phases of van Dyck’s career, but particularly in his second Antwerp period. The lack of documentation about workshop practice during this period makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about paintings thought to be by van Dyck but not readily attributable to Dyck’s oeuvre.

**Other portraits for comparison**

The scores of copies and iterations streaming from van Dyck’s brush and workshop during his incredibly productive years in Antwerp give rise to a very challenging complex of issues obscuring the attribution of van Dyck’s work at this time. The sheer number of paintings in combination with the impressive quality and consistency demonstrated by the workshop prevent attribution made on stylistic observation alone. These are precisely the problems present in assessing Infanta Isabella. The provenance of Infanta Isabella cannot be traced back.

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18 Horst Vey, “Van Dyck in Antwerp and Brussels, the Second Antwerp Period” in Barnes, et al., Van Dyck: Complete Catalogue, 2004, 239-245. The author, Horst Vey notes that not even the address of Van Dyck’s residence is known during these years.


beyond 1937, at which time it was listed in a Christie’s auction catalogue and described as coming from the collection of O. V. Overbeke. As no further documentation confirms its origin as a portrait painted by Van Dyck or his workshop under the artist’s supervision, to approach this problem, a broad range of technical analysis was conducted that complemented stylistic observation and comparison with other works from van Dyck’s second Antwerp period. These include another version of Infanta Isabella, also attributed to van Dyck and called *Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia* in the following, was brought to the Department of Conservation and Technology for technical analysis in 2017 (fig. 10). Although *Infanta Isabella Clare Eugenia* would have been a suitable object for stylistic comparison, this painting was compared only through analysis of technique as it had left the department so we were unable to make first-hand observations.21

From November 2018 to March of 2019, the Galleria Sabauda, part of the Musei Reali in Turin, hosted an exhibition entitled *Van Dyck, Court Painter* featuring a range of paintings spanning the whole of van Dyck’s career. The patronage of the Infanta Isabella featured prominently in this exhibition and there was an entire room dedicated to her with three portraits of her as widowed nun: the initial three-quarter length portrait by Rubens on which van Dyck based his own (fig. 4); a three-quarter length version attributed to van Dyck and his workshop (referred to hereafter as *The Workshop Version*; fig. 11); and the prime full-length version by van Dyck (referred to hereafter as *The Sabauda Version*; fig. 5). Because *The Workshop Version* and *The Sabauda Version* on display at this exhibition had a complete provenance and firm attribution, they provided a useful comparative framework for stylistic and technical comparison of our painting.

Using technical examination in conjunction with stylistic analysis we focused on the examination and comparison of how the painting was made; from ground preparation, underdrawing and pigments, to the technique of the paint handling and style in areas of the black habit, hands and face.

21 The fabric in *Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia* is very different to that of all the other versions compared in this analysis including a symbol, much like a coat of arms and a fluer de lis. This could suggest this copy was commissioned by a particular patron due to heraldic symbols (fig. 10). When comparing the photographic image, we see a stricter and solid application of paint with sharp highlights used in *Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia* when compared to the loose, wet in wet fluidity of *Infanlia Isabella*. However first hand examination needs to be carried out.
Ground preparation

Analysis of paint cross-sections from shows that the canvas was prepared with a double ground of chalk, followed by a grey layer. This was most likely after sizing the canvas with a material such as an animal glue. The first layer is composed of calcium carbonate, indicated by a calcium peak identified by XRF/EDX²² and large coccoliths (fig. 12).

A staining test using Rhodamine B suggested that the ground is bound in oil (fig. 13). Organic analysis done by The National Gallery London in 1999 showed that linseed oil was van Dyck’s preferred medium.²³ In various cross-sections orange-red particles can be seen in this first ground layer, which EDX analysis suggested might be particles of red lead, added as a drier (fig. 14). This siccative has been found in other Flemish paintings of the time, such as Gaspar de Crayer’s The Crucifixion with Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Francis painted in 1638-48 in Brussels.²⁴

Cross-sections from multiple areas confirm the presence of an upper grey ground over the whole painting. EDX and microscopy confirmed this layer to be a homogenous mixture of lead white and carbon black. OSIRIS imaging shows a rapid application of this layer in horizontal strokes (fig. 15). Grey grounds of this general type were standard in Antwerp and elsewhere in the Low Countries from the early 17th century and are found in many paintings by Rubens and David Teniers.²⁵ Van Dyck utilised this double ground in paintings from both his First and Second Antwerp periods. Portrait of a Woman and Child from his First Antwerp period and Charity from the Second both contain a double ground with the grey upper layer.²⁶ These double grounds are specific to his Antwerp years as his portraits from Italy generally contain brown grounds for instance most of his Genoese portraits have a single light or medium brown ground layer.²⁷ Van Dyck seems to have been content to adopt the priming method common in whatever country he was painting in and may even have resorted to locally primed canvases, using them either as they came or after

²² XRF: X-ray Fluorescence is a qualitative non-destructive technique that provides elemental information for inorganic materials based on unique characteristic spectra. EDX: Energy Dispersive X-ray is for the characterisation of elements which correspond to the composition of pigments in inorganic and some organic materials.
²³ White, R. Van Dyck’s Paint Medium, 1999. 84.
²⁴ Stols-Witlox, M. Grounds on Canvas, 2017. 61.
modifying them himself. By the seventeenth-century, professional primers were recorded in Dutch cities as well as Britain and Italy. Visual examination of *The Sabauda Version* suggests that van Dyck used a thin medium brown ground, which is consistent with his Genoese method of preparation, which supports he executed this painting around the end of his Italian trip and before his Second Antwerp period. Visual inspection of *The workshop Version* leads us to believe that there is a grey ground evident through the hands of the sitter which corresponds to that of *Infanta Isabella* which could imply that both these portraits were produced in his workshop in Antwerp.

### Underdrawing

After Van Dyck’s time in Italy, primary documents and more recent technical imaging demonstrate his increasing use of preparatory sketches in paint applied directly to the primed canvas in a rapid and nimble manner. An important contemporary source by Sir Theodore de Mayerne in *Pictoria Sculptoria, Tinctoria et Quae subalternum atrium spectantia* describes van Dyck’s technique of composing his first loose ‘sketch’ of the forms so perfectly that there was no reason to make a change afterwards. It also corresponds to the account of a sitter, Eberhard Jabach, who disclosed that van Dyck usually began with a fluid sketch rather than a linear one.

Examination of *Infanta Isabella* with infrared reflectography indicates that there is no carbon-containing underdrawing (fig. 15). Microscopy reveals a brown paint passage beneath the interface of the paint passages of the black veil and the sitter’s cheek, following the contours, suggesting that the underdrawing was carried out using a material transparent to IRR, such as an umber (fig. 16). This practice is coherent with contemporary accounts of his rapid painting technique. It also corresponds to the underdrawing in *The Workshop version* as infrared imaging shows a preparatory sketch similar to that of *Infanta Isabella*.

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There is no evidence of a carbon-containing underdrawing but the composition appears to be completed in a fluid wash of colour (figs. 18 and 19). This indicates an identical workshop practice to produce these portraits.

Comparison of the underdrawing techniques using infrared reflectography for *Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia* show clearly delineated underdrawing with a carbon-based medium, perhaps charcoal. There are visible outlines around the face/chin and into the sitter’s wimple with the same medium (fig. 17). However, when considering the low standard and poor quality of painting in this version, this form of underdrawing could denote it is a copy by another artist.

Infrared imaging of *The Sabauda Portrait*, on the other hand, revealed two campaigns of underdrawing. The first is a more delineated underdrawing used for important contours of the face, in this carbon-containing material for outlines in the chin, the upper right eyelid, around the neck and in the fingers. The lines likely set up the composition (figs. 20 and 21). The second campaign consists in a more extensive use of fluid paint, used to complete the initial sketch, and similar to that of *Infanta Isabella* and *The workshop Version*. It was not uncommon for van Dyck to use a twofold drawing method, especially in his first Antwerp period and Genoese portraits, for example in his *Saint Jerome* from 1613-21 in the Maagdenhius Museum, Antwerp. Infrared imaging found that a free-hand drawing was present on top of the grey priming with a dark, infrared-absorbing dry medium and dark brown outlines applied with a brushy liquid medium. Another technical examination of the *Balbi Children*, painted in Genoa and in the collection of the National Gallery, London, determined that the artist used a similar dry carbon-based medium to outline the costumes, heads and hands. The dry sketch was then reinforced with a dark and brushy application of fluid paint.

As it is commonly agreed that *The Sabauda Portrait* is the prime version by van Dyck derived from Rubens’s initial version, it is possible that van Dyck

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34 OSIRIS imaging also shows that there are pentimenti in the drapery behind the sitter.
36 Harth, Astrid., et al. *The young Van Dyck’s fingerprint*, 2017. 5.
used this first dry sketching medium to change vital facial features to make Infanta Isabella look older and to distance his work from that of his former master. There is also a pentimento of the finger placement that could also indicate that van Dyck extended and elongated the smaller fingers in a deviation from Rubens’s version.

**Paint Layers**

XRF and EDX\(^{38}\) analysis of the paint layers confirmed the use of a typical seventeenth-century paint palette used in the production of the *Infanta Isabella*, which also concurs with what is known about van Dyck’s paint materials. The palette for *Infanta Isabella* includes lead white, bone black, carbon black, various earth/ochre pigments, vermilion and lead-tin yellow.

X-ray imaging of *Infanta Isabella* shows a controlled handling of these paint layers with confident brushstrokes and measured understanding of preliminary composition, for example in the handling of the face and hands (fig. 22). This is supported by the comparison of the X-ray image of *Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia* which lacks the technical facility in brushwork and shows a more hastily applied ground and paint (fig. 23 and 24).

The x-ray of *Infanta Isabella* also demonstrates that the original support is a single piece of tightly woven fabric, which coincides with what is known about van Dyck’s preferences for such supports.\(^{39}\)

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38 See footnote 24.

Black Habit

This skilled and well-directed handling of paint is also seen in the modelling of the black habit. A contemporary artists’ manuscript dated to 1640 and attributed to Anthony van Dyck by Horst Vey, a scholar on van Dyck, describes the technique of how the artist modelled fabric. After applying the base colour, he models the drapery by building up the shadows with multiple dark paint layers which subsequently brings forward the base colour to act as the highlight.\(^{40}\) He would then apply a glaze in just the shadows which he incorporated pine resin into his oil binder and pigment mix for glossier, deeper translucent shadows.\(^{41}\) A number of samples were taken from areas of the black habit in *Infanta Isabella* which suggest the artist used this technique. Sample 8a from a mid-tone section of the black veil shows one paint layer which is a homogenous mixture of lead white, bone black and carbon black (figs. 25-26). Sample 1 from a shadow in the black veil shows two paint layers. The first layer is this same black homogenous paint mixture and on top of this a second paint layer consisting of the same pigment mixture, however, this layer fluoresces more strongly under ultraviolet illumination (figs. 27–28).\(^{42}\)

\[^{40}\text{Wheelock, A. *Van Dyck: Paintings*, 1991. 45.}\]
\[^{41}\text{Kirby, Jo. *The Painter’s Trade*, 1999. 32.}\]
\[^{42}\text{“the painter should put in the darkest shadows, whereby the colours of the clothing should be glazed in some places with lakes, ultramarine, and other colours in accordance with the work” - Wheelock, A. *Van Dyck: Paintings*, 1991. 45 –46.}\]
\[^{42}\text{More analysis needs to be done, organic analysis to confirm whether this is similar to the final glosses used by van Dyck.}\]
In comparison to *The Sabauda Version* and *The Workshop Version*, the painting styles of the Infanta’s veil differ. *The Sabauda Version* has smoothly blended blacks with deftly placed highlights and shadows creating a spectrum of blacks (fig. 29). The glossiness of the veil in van Dyck’s prime version is consistent with what is previously described about his painting technique. In the workshop version, a similar approach was taken to depict the Infanta’s costume, however the sleeves and veil appear to be rendered in a more formulaic manner (fig. 30). Instead of smoothly blended blacks that create a spectrum of tones, the workshop version relies on a few tones applied strategically to give the look of cascading folds. In *Infanta Isabella* the application of paint observed resembles an intermediate between the smoothly blended and subtle blacks in the *The Sabauda Version* and the more formulaic *Workshop Version*.

An almost contemporary source describes van Dyck and his assistant’s practice in the workshop and who was responsible for rendering clothing:

“He gave the drawing to the skillful people he had about him, to paint after the sitter’s own cloaths, which, at Vandyke’s request, were sent to him for that purpose. When his disciples had done what they could to these draperies, he lightly went over them again; and so, in a little time, by this great knowledge, displayed the art and truth which we at this day admire.”

As it is believed *The Sabauda Version* was painted in Genoa where, given his itinerant status while in Italy, van Dyck was unlikely to have a workshop, the depiction of clothing in the full-length version can perhaps be ascribed to van Dyck’s hand alone. The more formulaic and painterly black fabric in *The workshop Version* and *Infanta Isabella*, which were almost certainly painted in Antwerp, appears to have been painted by “the skillful people” in the workshop.

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Hands

In contrast to the formulaic and painterly handling in the Infanta’s clothing in *Infanta Isabella*, the hands and face of the sitter are composed with smooth modelling and minute brushwork. This is characteristic of van Dyck’s work during his Second Antwerp Period, both in paintings executed by van Dyck alone and those produced by his workshop.

A near contemporary description of van Dyck’s practice of painting the hands suggests that the hands of his sitters were painted separately from the other parts of the portrait. The artist and diplomat Roger de Piles wrote that “with respect to hands, [van Dyck] had in his studio hired persons of one or the other sex who served as models.” A photomicrograph of our version confirms that the hands were indeed painted after the body of the Infanta (fig. 31). As can be seen in figures 32 - 34, the hands in each of the three portraits (*Infanta* are depicted in a highly finished manner. In *Infanta Isabella*, the grey ground gives tone to the upper paint layers, conveying a pearly bluish effect to the skin.

Face

The faces of *The Sabauda Version*, *Workshop Version* and *Infanta Isabella* are painted in a fashion similar to the hands, although there are a few more pronounced formal and technical differences between them. For instance, in *The Sabauda Version*, the Infanta bears a darker complexion and relatively youthful features, while in other two versions she is markedly more aged suggesting these were painted by at similar times (figs. 59-61).

However, the brushwork in the face differs significantly in the three portraits. *The Sabauda Version* has a more finished paint surface with very fine brushwork exemplified in the bridge of the nose where individual brushstrokes are hardly visible. Coarser brushwork typifies *The Workshop Version* and our version. This is most evident in comparison of the very slight impastoed areas in the corner of the nose, paint handling in the left brow and the bridge of the nose.\(^{46}\) This could well suggest a similar artistic training in both the artists responsible for *The Workshop Version* and *Infanta Isabella*.

\(^{46}\) However, different lining campaigns and varying physical histories of the paintings make close comparison of painting techniques somewhat unreliable.
Conclusion

As discussed above attributions of works to van Dyck’s oeuvre, especially during his second Antwerp period, are challenging. Our technical analysis and stylistic comparison of *Infanta Isabella* allows for a confident claim to seventeenth-century Flemish origin while the adroit skill of painting on display in the portrait leads us to tentatively propose that *Infanta Isabella* can be attributed to van Dyck’s workshop and that it was completed during his lifetime and under his supervision. However, we cannot confidently assess the extent of van Dyck’s direct participation in the painting process.

Given that there are so many versions of the Infanta Isabella as widowed nun—some solely by van Dyck, workshop versions and copies by other artists—the suite of Infanta images provides an excellent opportunity to develop a more objective method for making attributions based on style and technique in the case of uncertain provenances.

Although more research needs to be done on the practices and methods through which van Dyck operated his Antwerp workshop, we can ascertain that he sought to maximise his output without jeopardizing the quality of his work. The technical consistency and proficiency of paintings made in his workshop indicate that Van Dyck himself maintained a fairly standard procedure for his assistants and that he closely supervised their output.  

The impressive abilities of these little-known or anonymous painters deserve closer study, as does van Dyck’s management of the workshop. A more complete understanding of studio practices will allow for more rigorous attributions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Timeline

Blue: Isabella Clara Eugenia  Black: Van Dyck  Red: Rubens

- 1566 – Isabella Clara Eugenia Born on August 12th
- 1595 – Albrecht becomes Regent of Spanish Netherlands
- 1599 – Eugenia marries Albrecht
- 1599 – Van Dyck was born on March 22
- 1609 – began studying painting under Baroque painter Hendrick van Balen
- 1615 – Became and independent painter and set up workshop with Jan Brueghel the younger
- 1618 – admitted to the Antwerp painters’ Guild of Saint Luke ad a free master
- 1618 – Chief assistant to Rubens and specialised in portraiture
- 1620 – went to England to work for James I (opportunity to study colour and Titian) then returned to Flanders after a few months
- 1621 – Albrecht dies and Eugenia adopts the poor clares habit
- 1621 – Six years in Italy studying under portraitists. Spent most of his time in Genoa and painting aristocracy. Influenced by Veronese, Rubens and Titian
- 1625 – Rubens paints the “initial portrait”
  - Eugenia visits Rubens studio in 1625 when he is painting the portrait
- 1627 – 1632 returned to Antwerp – portraits for Flemish patrons
- 1628 – Van Dyck paints “initial portrait” from Rubens copy Sabauda
- 1630 – Court Painter to Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia
- 1632 – Travels to England and becomes court painter to King Charles I.
- 1634 1635 – Antwerp
- 1635 – England – 1641 died
Appendix B: Bibliography


Technical Bulletins


Websites

https://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/van-dyck/about-van-dyck/films/
Appendix C: Figure list

Fig. 1. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Attributed to Van Dyck. (verso) c.1628-32. Oil on Canvas, 81.5 x 70.5 x 2 cm. Private Owner. Image taken before treatment. Normal Light

Fig. 1a. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Attributed to Van Dyck. (recto) c.1628-32. Oil on Canvas, 81.5 x 70.5 x 2 cm. Private Owner. Image taken before treatment. Normal Light

Fig. 2. Portrait of Archduke Albrecht, Studio of Peter Paul Rubens, 1615. Oil on Canvas. 122 x 89 cm, National Gallery London

Fig. 3. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella, Studio of Peter Paul Rubens, 1615. Oil on Canvas, 120.5 x 88.8 cm, National Gallery London

Fig. 4. Portrait of the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia as Nun, Peter Paul Rubens. 1625. Oil on Canvas, 183 x 121 cm. Galleria Sabauda (Musei Reali) Turin

Fig. 4. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Workshop of Anthony Van Dyck. c.1628-29 Oil on Canvas, Private Owner (exhibited in the Van Dyck Court Painter exhibition, Galleria Sabauda Turin in 2019.)

Fig. 5. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, attributed to Anthony Van Dyck (?). Oil on Canvas, Private Owner.

Fig. 6. Portrait of the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia as Nun, Peter Paul Rubens. Detail

Fig. 7. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Anthony Van Dyck. Detail

Fig. 8. The Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his painting gallery, David Teniers the Younger. 1647, Oil on Copper 104.8 x 130.4 cm. Prado Museum, Madrid

Fig. 9. Portrait of Isabella Clara Eugenia, Infanta of Spain, Lucas Vorsterman I Culture. Print – engraving, 1595-1675, 17.14 cm x 26.03 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art

Fig. 10. Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, attributed to Anthony Van Dyck (?). Oil on Canvas, Private Owner.

Fig. 11. Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Workshop of Anthony Van Dyck. c.1628-29 Oil on Canvas, Private Owner (exhibited in the Van Dyck Court Painter

Fig. 12. Sample 3: Rope Normal Light – before treatment

Fig. 13. Sample 3: Rope Normal Light. Staining with Rhodamine B - positive for oil

Fig. 14. Sample 2.A: Background Normal Light – before treatment- Orange particles (red lead-minium)

Fig. 15. Infanta Isabella, Infrared reflectograph, Osiris imaging camera. Detail. sensitivity c.900-1600nm

Fig. 16. Infanta Isabella. Micrograph showing brown underpaint in eyebrow

Fig. 17. Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, Infrared reflectograph, Osiris imaging camera. Detail. sensitivity c.900-1600nm

Fig. 18. The Workshop version, Infrared reflectograph Detail. Canon infrared adapted camera

Fig. 19. The Workshop version, Infrared reflectograph Detail. Canon infrared adapted camera

Fig. 20. The Sabauda Version. Infrared reflectograph Detail. Canon infrared adapted camera sensitivity

Fig. 21. The Sabauda Version Infrared reflectograph Detail. Canon infrared adapted camera sensitivity

Fig. 23. Infanta Isabella, X-radiograph.

Fig. 24. Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia X-radiograph

Fig. 27. Sample 1: Black Veil, Normal Light. Before treatment.
Fig. 28. Sample 1: Black Veil, Ultraviolet Light. Before treatment.
Fig. 29. *The Sabauda Version*, Black habit Detail.
Fig. 30. *Workshop Version*, Black habit Detail.
Fig. 31. *Infanta Isabella*. Flesh paint over the dry costume. Micrograph.
Fig. 32. *The Workshop Version*. Hand Detail.
Fig. 33. *Infanta Isabella*. Hand Detail.
Fig. 34. *The Sabauda Version*. Hand Detail.
Fig. 35. *The Workshop Version*. Face Detail.
Fig. 36. *Infanta Isabella*. Face Detail.
Fig. 37. *The Sabauda Version*. Face Detail.
## Appendix D: Table 1 – List of Infantas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Image Available</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Size CM (bust, ¾., half, full)</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Infanta Isabella (private)</td>
<td>Rubens, Van Dyck, workshop of Van Dyck, Copy After Van Dyck unknown</td>
<td>¾ length 80 x 68 cm</td>
<td>Alex Levitt, Blenheim Street, London 1970, £65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Gallery Palatina, Pitti Palace (Uffizi) Florence</td>
<td>Rubens</td>
<td>¾ length 116 x 96 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Turin, Sabauda Gallery (Musei Reali)</td>
<td>Van Dyck</td>
<td>Full length 183 x 121 cm</td>
<td>King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia, (1796-1849) (may have come from Genoa) - Angelo Boucheron (c.1776-1859) - sold to Carlo Alberto of Sardinia – Turin Sabauda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Workshop of Van Dyck</td>
<td>Turin exhibition – private owner</td>
<td>¾ length</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, private owner</td>
<td>Half length</td>
<td>Bought in 1970 for £65 from Alex Levitt, Blenheim, London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Van Dyck</td>
<td>Vaduz, Lichtenstein</td>
<td>Full length</td>
<td>204 x 122 cm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioned by King Charles I for £25 in August 1632 - sold to Commonwealth to Col. William Webb in 1649- Liechtenstein collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>National Gallery Ireland</td>
<td>Workshop of</td>
<td>¾ Length 115.5 x 88.7 cm</td>
<td>Purchased in 1862</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool</td>
<td>Workshop of</td>
<td>¾ Length 143.5 x 114.3 cm</td>
<td>This been regarded as a three-quarter length variant of the TURIN by the studio. Fergus Hall suggests that the quality of the Walker Art Gallery’s painting points to it being an autograph repetition by Van Dyck himself, or possibly the prime version which may have served as the prototype for the Turin full length variant. The painting was given to the Walker Art Gallery by the Royal Insurance Company in 1954. Purchased in Holland c.1800 or earlier for £300 by the London print dealer Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum/Location</td>
<td>Date and Details</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Museo del Prado</td>
<td>1995 Copy after</td>
<td>( \frac{3}{4} \text{ Length} 109 \text{ cm} \times 90 \text{ cm} )</td>
<td>Leon Adolfo Laffitte Maurin (1809-1876); by inheritance to Xavier Laffitte and Charlesteuguy; donated by him to the Prado Museum, 1930.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Louvre, France</td>
<td>2003 (workshop)</td>
<td>( \frac{3}{4} \text{ Length} 117 \text{ cm} \times 102 \text{ cm} )</td>
<td>From the collection of Jan Karel de Witte who ceded it to King Louis XIV of France in 1669.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum</td>
<td>Van Dyck (on website)</td>
<td>( \frac{3}{4} \text{ Length} 109 \times 89 \text{ cm} )</td>
<td>From the imperial collection in Vienna, once belonged to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662), and can be seen in one of the paintings that David Teniers II made of the Archduke’s picture gallery while it was in Brussels, c.1651-3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Dundee Art Gallery</td>
<td>Workshop of</td>
<td>Half Length ( 85.7 \times 65.4 \text{ cm} )</td>
<td>William G. Shiell, gift 1954.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15.</strong></td>
<td>Pollok Glasgow</td>
<td>Copy After</td>
<td>Bust 67.6 x 56.5 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stirling Maxwell Collection, gift, 1967. Passed by descent to Mrs Anne Maxwell Macdonald who gave it to Glasgow in 1967 along with the rest of the collection.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16.</strong></td>
<td>Brussels, Koninklijk Musea voor Schone Kunsten</td>
<td>Copy After</td>
<td>Half length 95 x 68 cm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bought at the sale of Dr Fraikin of Liège, Brussels, 28-29th December, 1858, lot 88</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17.</strong></td>
<td>Potsdam, Gemäldegalerie</td>
<td>Workshop of</td>
<td>Half length 101,5 x 77 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- private collection Frederik Hendrik (Prince of Orange), 1632 – seen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- private collection Friedrich II von Preußen, 1740 – 1786</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Gemäldegalerie der Königliche Museen zu Berlin, 1830 – 1906</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Jagdschloss Grunewald, Berlin (Grunewald), inv./cat.nr GK I 10026 1933</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Artist/Workshop</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Bruges, Museum Groeninge</td>
<td>Copy After</td>
<td><em>Bust</em></td>
<td>55.7 x 45.7 cm&lt;br&gt;Acquired by the museum (Oudheidkundig Genootschap, 1898).&lt;br&gt;Originally from the Gerechtshof, Ypres and then, in the Alphonse Naert collection, Bruges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Parma, Galleria Nazionale</td>
<td>Workshop of</td>
<td><em>Bust</em></td>
<td>Possibly from the collection of Marie De Medici</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Christie's, New York, Auction – 1st May 2019.</td>
<td>Workshop of ¾ length</td>
<td><em>King Louis-Philippe d'Orléans</em> (1773-1850)&lt;br&gt;Chateau d'Eu, by 1836, and by descent to his grandson Prince Emmanuel D'Orléans (1872-1931), and by inheritance to his wife Princess Henriette of Belgium (1870-1948), and by descent to their son Prince Charles-Philippe d'Orléans, Duc de Nemours (1905-1970); sale, Château de Tourronde, 5 June 1950.</td>
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