

## François Dieussart in the United Provinces and the Ambassador of Queen Christina

*two newly indentified busts purchased by the Rijksmuseum*

The study of sculpture has in general lagged behind that of painting or architecture ever since the history of art was established as a subject for serious academic enquiry towards the end of the last century. Some indication of this may be found in the wealth of books devoted to individual painters or architects and the comparative paucity of literature about sculptors, other than the one or two who have achieved universal fame. This imbalance is understandably reflected in the general volumes surveying the art of particular periods or countries. The result is that the names and achievements of many important sculptors are almost unknown, while quite secondary painters are virtually household names. One need only mention the case of a major sculptor like Georg Petel, the German associate of Rubens, who was by far the most brilliant exponent of this style in three dimensions: his sculpture, and indeed his very existence, were scarcely recognized until a decade or two ago<sup>1</sup>. Admittedly, painting happened to be the chosen medium of the three greatest artists in the Netherlands during the 17th century – Rembrandt, Rubens and Van Dyck – and this has inevitably tended to focus attention on this field, quite apart from the fact that the Netherlands school of landscape, genre and portrait painting was one of the most successful and prolific that has ever been seen. Thus both the sheer quantity as well as the quality of painting in the period has overshadowed the study of both architecture and sculpture until recently. Nevertheless, sculptors like Hendrik de Keyser, Artus Quellinus the Elder or Rombout Verhulst were producing work of the highest quality, judged even by comparison

with the work of the Italian masters of Baroque Rome. Yet their brilliance is scarcely known outside the Netherlands and insufficiently celebrated within.

If this is true of artists with their level of talent, it is perhaps explicable that a less gifted sculptor like François Dieussart<sup>2</sup> has received hardly any attention at all, despite the impressive list of patrons who commissioned portraits from him. These include the royal families of England and Denmark, the princely houses of Orange, the Palatinate and Brandenburg, and ultimately even the Hapsburg Regent of the South Netherlands. On closer examination, it soon becomes apparent that Dieussart was the best portrait sculptor available to this coterie of Protestant courts in northern Europe for the whole quarter of a century that elapsed between his appearance at the court of King Charles I in London in 1636 and his death, also in London, in 1661.

The earliest account of Dieussart appeared in *Het Gvlden Cabinet*, a rhyming chronicle about the arts published by Cornelis de Bie at Antwerp in 1661. Unfortunately his poetic eulogy is uninformative in the extreme, providing us with only three solid facts, his place of birth and the place and date of his death. Nevertheless, the tone of praise and indeed the publication of the poem are indicative of Dieussart's reputation:

FRANCISCVS DU SART *ghenoempt VVALONI*  
*Beldt-snijder uyt Henegouw, ghestorven tot Londen*  
*Anno 1661.*

*Hier heerst Naturas kracht oock in DU SART'ENS beldt*  
*Dat menich oogh en lust in't aensien can verleyen,*





Fig. 1. François Dieussart. Pieter Spiering van Silfvercrona. Marble, h. 89 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (gift of the Commissie voor Fotoverkoop, 1971).



*Soo t' self omtrent het hert en inde sinnen spelt  
Daer t' leven uyt den steen is qualijck t' onderscheyen.*

*Als t' Conincklijke oogh van Enghelandt besach  
Een proef van dese Kunst in Marremor ghesneden  
Bevontnen datter niet als levens gheest in lach  
Waer door t' verwonderen DU SART heeft aenghebeden.*

*Te comen in het Hof, soo als oock is gheschiet  
Om stets te snijden en in pot-aert te boetseren  
Al waermen t' wesen van STUARTS gheslacht in siet:  
Niet beter als de Konst Palleyen can stofferen.*

The earliest biography proper, and indeed the only one, is to be found in a brief paragraph devoted to the sculptor by Joachim von Sandrart in his *Teutsche Akademie* of 1675<sup>3</sup>. Though lamentably incomplete, as one now knows, this is at least a trustworthy outline of his career, mentioning an early period in Rome, which is borne out by contemporary documents; subsequent work for the King of England; and later activity in the Hague for the Princes of Orange. Sandrart dwells in particular on a pair of marble busts depicting a certain *Herrn von Spiring* and his wife, both patrons of the arts. This must be Pieter Spiering van Silfvercrona<sup>4</sup>, son of a tapestry manufacturer, art dealer and diplomat, whom Sandrart knew personally. Hitherto Sandrart's concentration on these particular busts at the expense of the large number of portraits of kings and queens, princes and princesses, which we know from other sources to be by Dieussart, has seemed outward and especially frustrating because the busts were lost. It is the purpose of this article to celebrate their rediscovery and their purchase by the Rijksmuseum, as well as to give some account of the intriguing personalities whom they represent (figs. 1, 10). However, in order to justify their attribution to Dieussart and to set them in their proper context, we must first describe the sculptor's career as we now know it. From his handwritten entry of 1622 in the membership register of the Brotherhood of San Giuliano in Rome, we learn that Dieussart was born in Arquinghem near Armentiers, which accounts for the topographical surname *Vallone* (i.e. Walloon) that he adopted in Italy<sup>5</sup>. On the

other hand, we still do not know the year of his birth and must make do with an estimate 'circa 1600', calculated from his likely age of arrival as a student in Rome. Records of his subscriptions to the Brotherhood prove that he was in Rome from 1622 until 1630 at least. This is confirmed by a few other documentary references to minor lost sculptures by him. Thereafter he disappears from view until 1636, when he was engaged by Queen Henrietta Maria in London to construct a huge monstrosity for her newly built Roman Catholic chapel in Somerset House. Destroyed though this was some years later by the puritans, a detailed literary account survives, which provides us with a tantalizing description of its glory<sup>6</sup>.

Dieussart's first surviving work is a bust of King Charles I in Arundel Castle, signed and dated 1636: the provenance of this bust and the identity of its pendant, Charles Louis, Elector Palatine (fig. 2), point to the Earl of Arundel as the most likely patron<sup>7</sup>. It was in 1636 that he undertook his unsuccessful embassy to the German Emperor Ferdinand II to see if a European peace between Protestants and Catholics could be negotiated and the confiscated estates of the Palatinate restored to Charles Louis. These busts are examples of Dieussart's style at its best: the flesh of the face is firmly modelled over a clearly defined bone structure; the hair is chiselled in curls, sometimes daringly undercut, in a manner reminiscent of Roman Baroque sculpture; the delicate areas of skin around the eyes are the object of special care. All these features are to be characteristic of Dieussart throughout his career, and constitute the hallmarks of his style in portraiture.

It was the marriage of King Charles' ten year old daughter Princess Mary Stuart to Prince Willem II of Orange in May 1641 that first brought Dieussart to the notice of the Stadhouder Frederik Hendrik. It ultimately secured the sculptor's, as well as the Stuarts', line of retreat when faced with the threat of civil war in England. From a very revealing letter of introduction written for the sculptor on 28 July 1641 by the painter Gerard van Honthorst and addressed to the Stadhouder's secretary, Constantijn Huygens, we learn that a





Fig. 2. François Dieussart. Charles Louis, Elector Palatine. H. G. the Duke of Norfolk, Arundel Castle, Arundel, Sussex.



portrait-bust of the child-bride had been executed<sup>8</sup>. The main purpose of this letter was to request Huygens to intercede with his master for a sitting at which Dieussart might complete the face of a half-length portrait-bust which he had already finished in all other respects, including the hands. The letter of recommendation seems to have achieved its aim, for a payment to the sculptor was recorded on 21 December 1641 in the *Ordonnantie Boeken van Prins Frederik Hendrik*<sup>9</sup>:

*Syne Hoocheyt ordoneeren hiermede uit te tellen aen Francisco Dussart Beelthouder van den Coninck van Engeland de somme van F. 1500 – ter sake van twee albaste beelden van Syne Hoocheyt ende de Princesse van Engeland, by hem aen Syne Hoocheyt gepresenteert . . . .*

The bust of the Princess was probably one described at Potsdam near Berlin in the late 19th century as virtually weathered away and now totally lost<sup>10</sup>.

The bust of Frederik Hendrik on the other hand, which we know from Honthorst's letter was distinctive in including the hands, has recently been persuasively identified with one formerly in the Gotisches Haus in Wörlitz (fig. 3)<sup>11</sup>. This portrait is intricately composed in the latest Roman Baroque fashion, conveying the grandeur of the subject through the implied movement and sheer physical breadth of the bust. The bent elbows, the arms and the commander's baton give an interesting zig-zag play of forms in three dimensions. This is reinforced by the diagonal of the sash, flamboyantly knotted on the right shoulder and dramatically breaking the contour of the bust to counterbalance the projecting left elbow. The sharply turned head, its features studied from the life, and the left hand toying nervously with a medallion hanging round the Prince's neck provide a dual focus of attention. Of course the inclusion of arms and hands, a significant innovation as compared with the standard type of bust truncated just below the shoulders, gives an added opportunity for indicating character and mood. The device no doubt reflects the sculptor's close attention to contemporary developments in



Fig. 3. François Dieussart. Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange. Formerly Wörlitz.

Rome, for it seems to be copied from a bust of Principe Michele Damasceni Peretti now in East Berlin (fig. 4)<sup>12</sup>. We have no documentary information about this bust and cannot even be sure whether it is by Algardi or Giuliano Finelli, but in the absence of any evidence, we may assume that it was begun soon after the sitter's death in 1631 and could therefore have been studied by Dieussart before he came to execute his Frederik Hendrik. Even so, the boldness and skill with which he adapted the idea and introduced the novel type of portrait into the northern milieu is worthy of recognition. A later bust of Willem II, paired at Wörlitz with Frederik Hendrik, shows the sculptor playing a variation on the same theme, some five or six years later, judging from the subject's age. He also employed the device on two other occasions, which testifies to its popularity with his patrons.

Apart from the House of Orange, the other focus of the arts in the Hague at this time was the court





Fig. 4. Giuliano Finelli (?). Principe Michele Damasceni-Peretti. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



in exile of Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia<sup>13</sup>. Sister of King Charles I, she had enjoyed the crown of Bohemia for one winter with her husband King Frederik V, before he was defeated in the battle of the White Mountain (1620) and fled to the Hague. On Frederik's death in 1632, their son Charles Louis inherited the title of Elector Palatine and dedicated his life to recovering the estates that had been sequestered by the Catholic forces. Dieussart's first surviving sculptures, it will be remembered, are busts of Charles Louis and his uncle, King Charles, and so Elizabeth may have been aware of the sculptor before his arrival in the Hague. In any case, she was one of the principal patrons of Gerard van Honthorst, who would no doubt have introduced him to her, just as he had done to the Stadhouder. A bust of the Winter Queen was recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from the collection of the Earls of Craven (fig. 13)<sup>14</sup>. It has for some time been attributed on stylistic and circumstantial grounds to Dieussart and the date on the socle, 1641, suggests that Elizabeth secured the sculptor's services soon after he arrived from London. The problem is complicated by the recent discovery of another version of this bust, paired with one of her deceased husband, in the collection of H.R.H. the Prince of Hannover at Marienburg (fig. 12)<sup>15</sup>. Though closely similar, these busts are not identical in details or in handling: in fact the Marienburg version is closer to Dieussart's autograph works, while the London bust betrays slight discrepancies that suggest an assistant's hand. The busts are an important addition to the sculptor's known work, particularly in that they show how he handled portraits of women. Actually, the treatment of facial features and hair is exactly the same as in Dieussart's male portraits: it is the drapery which might not have been so easily predicted, for most of his men wear armour. Shortly after this initial period of activity in the Hague, Dieussart returned briefly to Italy, why we do not know, and then undertook some important work for King Christian IV of Denmark, most of which was actually carried out in the Netherlands<sup>16</sup>. An equestrian monument repeatedly men-



Fig. 5. François Dieussart. King Christian IV of Denmark. Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen.

tioned in the documents was never executed, but Dieussart did cast in bronze an over life size bust of his new patron (Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen). This is one of his veritable masterpieces in terms of technique and characterisation. Another souvenir of his activity for Christian is a marble bust dated 1644, also in Rosenborg (fig. 5). It is admittedly far less exciting than the bronze, but is absolutely typical of the general run of his marble sculpture, much of which may have been carved by assistants, judging from the uneven and sometimes uninspired quality. Payments for work ordered by the Danish crown continued until January 1647, when all the outstanding accounts were finally settled with a lump sum.

By this time Dieussart was positively inundated with prestigious commissions from Princess Amalia, wife of Frederik Hendrik: the first was a series of four life size statues of past and present





Fig. 6. François Dieussart. Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange. Formerly Potsdam, Berlin.

Princes of Orange (fig. 6)<sup>17</sup>. It has recently been demonstrated that these statues were installed in the vestibule of Huis ten Bosch, where they are shown on an engraving of 1649<sup>18</sup>. They evidently stood on pedestals in front of Ionic pilasters and were arranged in a coherent scheme, seeming to glance at each other across the room. This discovery at last explains the frontal and rather static design of these figures, which has hitherto been a mystery. We first hear of preparations for the series in a letter of 16 April 1646 from Huygens to the Stadhouder: . . . *le statuaire Francisco me donnera quatre petits modèles de terre pour les statues de*

*Madame*. Huygens goes on to discuss his hopes of persuading Dieussart to reduce the high price he had evidently quoted for the set. In this he was unsuccessful (which is evidence of the sculptor's strong position in the Hague by this time), for the original price of 1000 gulden for each statue was retained in a contract signed only three days later. The series was completed by 16 September 1647, when Dieussart received a final payment. They were subsequently taken by Frederik I of Prussia to Potsdam, where they were destroyed during the last war.

The death of Frederik Hendrik in 1647 gave an added significance to the four statues in Amalia's eyes, for they were installed in Huis ten Bosch, which the devoted widow decided to transform into a mausoleum for her husband. At approximately this date, it seems, the bust of the Stadhouder carved in 1641 was incorporated by Amalia in a funereal grotto, either at Rijswijk or Honselaarsdijk, if the scheme shown on a recently discovered watercolour in the Rijksprentenkabinet was ever actually carried out<sup>19</sup>. Whether it was at this stage, or after his death in 1650, that the pendant bust of Prince Willem II was carved is not yet certain.

A series of busts depicting three of the same Princes of Orange which are closely dependent on the full-length statues and one of Prince Philips Willem must have been carved soon after for Count Johan Maurits of Nassau<sup>20</sup>: at any rate he was in a position to sell them to the Elector of Brandenburg with the rest of his art collection in 1652 as Lot 27:

*De vier Prinzen von Oranien, Brustbilder, in weissen Marmor Künstlich ausgehauen, van dem Italienischen Meister (!) Franzesco Diessart.*

These busts form part of a series still in the gardens of Sanssouci at Potsdam, outside Berlin; other busts, also apparently by Dieussart, our would-be 'Italian', were added to this series, including one of Amalia herself and a pair of the *Grosse Kurfürst* and his wife, Princess Louise Henriette of Orange, dated 1652 (see below: pp. 151-152, fig. 8).

The marriage of this couple in November 1646





Fig. 7. François Dieussart. Friedrich Wilhelm, Elector of Brandenburg and his wife Louise Henriette of Orange. Stichting Huis Doorn, Doorn.

had been an important diplomatic event and was celebrated in terms of sculpture by both the German bridegroom and his mother-in-law, Amalia. A pair of oval portrait medallions of Friedrich Wilhelm, the *Grosse Kurfürst*, and Louise Henriette (fig. 7) were carved in marble in 1647, probably by our sculptor, judging from the evidence of style and circumstance<sup>21</sup>. Their connection with the wedding is proved by the symbolically linked hands that are carved under the truncation of the bust of the *Kurfürst*. An attribution which is less secure depends in turn from this one: an oval portrait medallion of Constantijn Huygens dated 1651, now in the Gemeente Museum in the Hague. The main problem is the distinctly less subtle portrait and the less careful lettering: otherwise, its general style and of course the known relationship between the subject and the sculptor favour an attribution to Dieussart. The discrepancy in quality is probably best explained by execution in the workshop: for as

we have seen in the case of the two busts of the Winter Queen, Dieussart did employ assistants on carving, at least from time to time.

At this stage, Dieussart seems to have been drawn into the service of the *Grosse Kurfürst* and his wife, not only to carve portraits but also to execute garden sculpture for their palaces at Cleves and later in Berlin. He ceased to pay his dues to the Guild of St Luke in the Hague after 1647 and does not re-appear in any documents until he is recorded in the guild in Brussels ten years later, in 1656. His presence and work in Berlin is however recorded in a Latin manuscript entitled *Hortus Berlinensis* written by Dr. Johann Sigismund Elsholtz and personally presented to Friedrich Wilhelm in 1657. First and foremost he describes an existing statue of the *Kurfürst* as by that *alter Phidias Franciscus Dussardus Italus*. It was commissioned by Louise Henriette in 1651 as the centrepiece of an elaborate fountain near an entrance of the *Lustgarten* outside Sanssouci. It is in fact





Fig. 8. François Dieussart. Louise Henriette of Orange. Schloß Sanssouci, Berlin.

closely modelled on the four statues of the Princes of Orange and unmistakable as a work by Dieussart. A statue of the infant Kurprinz Wilhelm Heinrich who was born to the couple in 1648 but died the following year is also mentioned, together with a Venus, but both are lost. It was at this stage that Dieussart carved the remainder of the busts which were added to the set purchased in 1652 from Count Johan Maurits: they were installed in the *Rondel*, out of doors, where they still are. Those representing the Electoral couple are modern but faithful copies, as one can tell by comparison with the badly weathered originals now preserved inside the palace. That of Louise Henriette provides the second female portrait by Dieussart (fig. 8): the bold modelling and incisive carving of the face and hair correspond perfectly with the busts of the Winter Queen. The fall of drapery in rather complicated and repetitive folds and the charming motif of a brooch bearing a

profile portrait of her husband link the *Kurfürstin* closely with the Winter Queen too.

After this period as court sculptor to the Brandenburgers, as we have remarked, Dieussart next turns up in Brussels, enrolled in the guild as a partner of one Vincentius Anthony, in 1656<sup>22</sup>. In that year he also dated and signed a marvellous half-length bust of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, the Hapsburg Regent of the South Netherlands (now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna<sup>23</sup>). In the following years he is also recorded as carving two busts of King Charles II of England, who had recently taken up residence in Bruges in the course of his lengthy wanderings in exile<sup>24</sup>. The busts, which were commissioned by shooting clubs to which he belonged in the city, still survive, one in the guild house of St. Sebastian, in its original frame, and the other in the Gruuthuse Museum. This connection with Charles II is probably the reason why in the year of the King's Restoration, 1661, we find Dieussart once again in London, according to De Bie: he must have been offered an appointment to the Stuart court, only to have this prize snatched away by his death in the same year.

Such then is the career of François Dieussart in so far as it can be reconstructed at the moment. The outlines of his activity have been published piecemeal in each of the countries where he worked, but the only comprehensive account is an entry in Thieme-Becker *Künstler-Lexikon*, which is of necessity brief and unillustrated. Only by collating the existing scholarly literature, rationalizing its inconsistencies and collecting photographs of all Dieussart's known sculpture has it become possible to form a balanced and accurate impression of his style. The process of collation has borne fruit in permitting the confirmation of several earlier attributions by cross-checking them against each other and against the documented sculpture. One example of particular interest in the present context is a marble bust in the Rijksmuseum showing a young man in armour, wearing the Order of the Garter (fig. 9). Formerly in the Royal Palace in the Hague, it has long been thought to





Fig. 9. François Dieussart. King Charles II of England. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

represent King Charles II of England. The first serious attempt at identifying its author was made by M. van Notten who tentatively gave it to Rombout Verhulst in his monograph. The credit for dismissing this implausible theory goes to Mr Jaap Leeuwenberg, until recently Keeper of the Department of Sculpture: he first discerned the hand of François Dieussart in the style of the bust. Everything that has since been discovered about the sculptor tends to support this attribution. The absence of documentation forces one to fall back on the evidence of the sitter's age (about twenty, by comparison with other datable portraits) to define the date of execution at circa 1648–50; while the circumstances of the commission can only be guessed at from the provenance of the piece from the Dutch royal collection and the cordial relationship between the Stuarts and Oranges at the date in question.

The collation of all the available data about

Dieussart has also permitted several new attributions to his oeuvre. In particular it has resulted in the Rijksmuseum being able to purchase a pair of hitherto unknown busts which prove to be exceedingly interesting from several points of view (figs. 1, 10, 11).

With no more than a vague provenance from France and without signature, inscription or date, these busts while in the art trade constituted a difficult problem of attribution and an apparently insoluble one of identification<sup>25</sup>. Only when seen in the context of Dieussart's re-assembled portrait sculpture did they suddenly become explicable: for the busts of this obviously prosperous, bourgeois couple manifest all the hallmarks of style that have been singled out as Dieussart's, from superficialities such as the portrait medallion worn by the wife and the design of the socles, to fundamentals, such as the total compositions, the rendering of the facial features and the details of the drapery.

The lady is closely comparable with the busts of the Winter Queen (figs. 12, 13) and Louise Henriette (fig. 8): the loose end of her gown is wound neatly round her shoulders in a way that disguises and visually justifies the truncation of the bust (the same tendency is even more explicit in the case of her husband, where the fur-lined cloak looks almost as though it has been carefully wrapped round a standard bust); her drapery has the same sort of frill at the edge and the same delicate lace trimming, though an elegant collar of Flemish lace takes the place of the Queen's royal pearls. Her plump, matronly face is competently modelled and the curls of hair which frame it are drilled out just as in the busts of Elizabeth, while the purposefully compressed lips and bold, staring eyes constitute an exact stylistic parallel.

In the case of the man (fig. 1), analogies for the interrogative turn of the head and self-assured glance may be found for instance in the Winter King or King Christian IV of Denmark (fig. 5). The hair is treated in a manner deliberately reminiscent of Bernini, Algardi or Finelli, its curly locks thrown into relief by bold undercutting, and may be paralleled in the bust of Charles Louis





Fig. 10. François Dieussart. Johanna Doré, wife of Pieter Spiering van Silfvercrona. Marble, h. 82 cm. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (gift of the Commissie voor Fotoverkoop, 1971).





Fig. 11. François Dieussart. The same as fig. 10.





Fig. 12. François Dieussart. Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia. Collection of H.R.H. the Prince of Hannover, Marienburg.

(fig. 2); the heavy frowning brow, large nose, 'walrus' moustache and double chin are common property with Christian IV. Like his wife, this gentleman is clad in sober, middle-class garments, reflecting his prosperity without any sign of pretentiousness. The broadcloth of his jacket betrays the marks of stretching to accommodate the comfortable form beneath, as does the dress of his equally well-endowed wife. Altogether, they make a rather charming impression of well-to-do bourgeois such as appear in countless Dutch paintings of the period. One thus had little expectation of discovering their identity.

Nevertheless, attention was inevitably drawn to



Fig. 13. François Dieussart. Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

the mysterious statement of Sandrart that Dieussart had executed at the Hague, apart from the portrait of the Prince of Orange, *auch des Kunstvatter Herrn van Spirings Contrafät nebenst seiner Gemahlin, als welche gleichfalls wol würdig, in harten Marmorstein zur ewigen Gedachtnis gebildet zu werden, weil sie von so edlen Verstand, grosser Tugend und eine sonderbare Liebhaberin der freyen und Adelichen Künsten gewesen*. It has always seemed strange that Sandrart should mention these sitters at the expense of all Dieussart's royal patrons, who are passed over in silence. In any case it became imperative to investigate the Spiering couple: the Dutch literature reveals that Pieter belonged to a





Fig. 14. Unknown Netherlands artist. Pieter Spiering van Silfvercrona. Miniature. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

family long famous in Delft for the manufacture of tapestry and that he became intimately connected with Queen Christina of Sweden<sup>26</sup>.

Through this connection a miniature depicting Pieter Spiering was traced in the Swedish Nationalmuseum in Stockholm (fig. 14)<sup>27</sup>: it shows a man strikingly like the subject of the bust, though perhaps some years younger. Common to both portraits are the heavy, frowning brows; the shrewd, wide-set eyes; the broad, 'Roman' nose; the set mouth with a drooping moustache; and the square jaw with a fleshy jowl behind. The sculptor has merely added a fashionable flourish in his stylization of the hair in swirling, Baroque curls.

It therefore seems incontrovertible that the anonymous busts are the pair credited to Dieussart by his biographer Sandrart in 1675 and lost from view since then. The lady must be Johanna Doré, widow of one Jan Brommert, whom we know Pieter married in the Hague in 1636. As he died in 1652 the busts probably date from the 1640's and perhaps not long after the sculptor's arrival in Holland.

Pieter Spiering was the younger son of the celebrated tapestry manufacturer François Spiering (d. 1630): while his elder brother Aert supervised the factory, he seems to have acted as sales manager, making a name for himself by persuading





Fig. 15. Maximiliaen van der Gucht. Tapestry, one of the series of the 'English Hunts'. Woven in 1647 for the coronation of Queen Christina of Sweden. H.M. King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden, Kungl. Husgeräds-kammaren.





Fig. 16. Joachim van Sandrart. Pieter Spiering (?). City Art Museum, Riga.



the King of Sweden, Gustavus II Adolphus, to purchase several whole sets of tapestries as decorations for his wedding in November 1620. This early commercial contact with Sweden later developed into an unexpectedly close and fruitful relationship with Queen Christina. She made Spiering Swedish Ambassador in the Hague in 1637 and endowed him with the fiefs of Norsholm and Silfvercrona in Sweden. Ultimately, he was entrusted with a post of supreme responsibility as Lord High Treasurer in Stockholm (1650). In the following year he returned to the Hague, dying soon after (1652).

Alongside his diplomatic responsibilities, Pieter Spiering van Silfvercrona continued to purvey tapestries from the Delft manufactory, even after it had changed hands. For instance in May 1647 he handled an enormous export order for several whole sets of tapestry to decorate the royal castle at Uppsala for Queen Christina's forthcoming coronation<sup>28</sup>. As time was short, he did not think it feasible to have new designs made depicting some appropriate theme such as the *heroische Thäten und victorien* of King Gustavus Adolphus. Instead he wrote that they would have to make do with *Patronen, die sich am ersten und besten haben an die hand gegeben und die auch schon vorher seindt gebraücht gewesen*. The major series of tapestries are still preserved in the Swedish royal collection (fig. 15).

The indefatigable Pieter also extended his attention to the whole range of the arts: he acted as entrepreneur in the import of classical statuary to Sweden, as we learn from an inventory of Christina's collection taken in 1652, not long before her abdication (1654), which records his having delivered: *Forty eight large and small marble images lying one on top of the other*. Evidently these had not been installed and subsequently were taken away in the convoy of works of art which the Queen sent ahead of her to Rome. None can be precisely identified today.

We learn most about Spiering's art collecting and dealing from a number of references in Sandrart's *Teutsche Akademie*. They evidently knew each other personally, which is presumably why the



Fig. 17. Raphael. Putto with the Device of the Medici. Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

biographer singled out the Spiering busts by Dieussart for comment in his biography. Elsewhere we learn that Sandrart himself painted a life size group portrait of the Spierings too. This remains to be re-discovered, though a portrait of a gentleman signed by Sandrart and dated 1639, formerly in the museum of Riga, was tentatively identified some time ago as Pieter Spiering (fig. 16)<sup>29</sup>. In fact it could well represent our man in 1639, when he was considerably younger. The relationship between the two men went further



than just that of artist and patron: both were avid collectors of Old Master drawings and engravings. Sandrart tells us in the *Teutsche Akademie* how he sold to Pieter two volumes of mounted drawings (collected during his Italian stay 1629–37) for the unparalleled sum of 3500 gulden (i.e. only just under the price of Dieussart's series of statues of the four Orange Princes!). These probably contained drawings by Raphael (fig. 17) and Michelangelo (fig. 18) which may be identified with those that are now the star pieces of the Teyler Museum in Haarlem<sup>30</sup>. They came there indirectly from the collection of Queen Christina, being some of the few drawings which she bothered to take with her to Rome, according to contemporary inventories. She must have bought them from Pieter Spiering about 1651.

Sandrart also mentions elsewhere Spiering's appreciation of the northern schools, a taste which the Italophile Queen could not share. He evidently owned some drawings by Albrecht Dürer for his famous paintings of Adam and Eve; some by Albrecht Aldegraver; and some engravings by Lucas van Leiden, as well as a painted altarpiece by Grünewald.

Finally, Sandrart gives a fascinating account in his life of Gerard Dou of how Spiering paid the painter a handsome annual retainer in return for first refusal on all his pictures<sup>31</sup>. The accuracy of this statement is attested by an excerpt from a speech made by Philips Angel to the members of the Guild of St Luke in Leiden on the saint's day, 18 October 1641, and published in the following year in his *Lof der Schilderkonst*. In the course of a discussion about the eternal problem of artists of how to make a living, he cites as highly enviable the business relationship between Dou and his patron: 'And to go no further, but to look in our own country, nay within our own city walls, we may see the very excellent Gerrit Dou, who earns yearly, by giving the honourable Herr Spiering the first refusal of his works, a payment of 500 gulden'.

Again from Sandrart we hear that Dou not unnaturally painted a portrait group of his patron 'sitting at a table in his art-cabinet, with his hand



Fig. 18. Michelangelo. Male Nude. Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

on the table cover; near him the lady his wife, likewise seated, with their eldest daughter handing a book to her mother'. Sandrart cannot refrain from mocking the unconscionable length of time Dou took over the sittings for his portraits and contrasting the speed and facility with which he had executed his own portrait of Spiering *en famille*, which he thought every bit as good. Before leaving the subject of Spiering and Gerard Dou, it is illuminating to note that Queen Christina refused to be dissuaded from her pre-





Fig. 19. Gerard Dou. The Violonist. Duke of Sutherland Collection, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.



judice against northern art by her adviser, even when he offered her the choice of a consignment of no fewer than ten pictures by Dou<sup>32</sup>. These were on approval at the time of the inventory of 1652 and are thus included in it, even though they were finally turned down. Several can still be identified today among Dou's prolific oeuvre, from the painstaking descriptions in that inventory. One, the *Violinist* (National Gallery of Art, Scotland, deposited on loan by the Duke of Sutherland) is shown here as a memento of Spiering's vital role in the painter's career (fig. 19). It is to be hoped that even the group portrait of the Spiering family may be identified, now that we have a clear idea of the subjects' appearance.

In the Rijksmuseum's new acquisitions we thus have before us the portrait of a man who was extremely important not only in the sphere of grand diplomacy between the United Provinces and Sweden, but also in the European art trade and in the history of seventeenth century patronage and collecting. From this point of view the identification of the lost busts recorded by Sandrart is of more than parochial interest and has wider implications than the mere filling out of the catalogue of sculptures by François Dieussart.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See T. Müller and A. Schädler, *Georg Petel, catalogue of an exhibition at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München, 1964*.

<sup>2</sup> The spelling of the sculptor's surname varies from *Du Sart* or *Dusart* (De Bie; Sandrart; George Vertue; Hoogewerf in Thieme-Becker) to *Dieussart* (signatures on busts of King Charles I and Leopold Wilhelm; his signature in the Register of San Giuliano dei Fiamminghi, Rome, and on the contract for the four statues of the Princes of Orange): the latter spelling thus has by far the greater authority and is adopted here. Corruptions such as *Diessart* or *Dysart* also appear, as does the Latin form *Dussardus*. Almost every conceivable variation of his christian name is used, from *François* to *Francisko*. He adopted the locative surname *Vallone* (Walloon) in Rome and later in his career occasionally passed himself off as an Italian, or at least was thought of as such.

<sup>3</sup> A. R. Peltzer ed., *München, 1925, pag. 234*.

<sup>4</sup> See E. Neurdenburg, *De Zeventiende Eeuwse Beeld-*

*houwkunst in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, Amsterdam, 1948, note 268*.

<sup>5</sup> G. J. Hoogewerf, *Bescheiden in Italie omtrent Nederlandsche Kunstenaars en Geleerden, The Hague, 1913, vol. II, pp. 140, 144, 150-2: extracts from the Liber Confraternitatis Sancti Juliani ab anno 1574*.

<sup>6</sup> See M. Whinney and O. Millar, *English Art, 1625-1714, (Oxford History of English Art, VIII), 1957, p. 123, and note of source*.

<sup>7</sup> The busts are published and reproduced by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk. Cf. Lady Victoria Manners, *Dusart's Busts at Arundel Castle, in Connoisseur, 1930, pp. 24-6. Photo: Courtauld Institute of Art*.

<sup>8</sup> J. H. W. Unger, *Brieven van eenige Schilders aan Constantin Huygens, in Oud Holland 9 (1891), p. 188; 194-5*.

<sup>9</sup> G. Galland, *Der Grosse Kurfürst und Moritz von Nassau der Brasilianer, Frankfurt a. M., 1893, p. 137 ff.*

<sup>10</sup> G. Galland, *op.cit.*, p. 152: 'als unrettbar verloren muss leider auch der Kopf der Maria Stuart gelten'.

<sup>11</sup> W. Boeck, *Die Fürstenbüsten im Gotischen Hause zu Wörlitz, in Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft, IV, 1937, pp. 39-50. The identification of the bust with that of 1641 was proposed by J. Q. van Regteren Altena, De grotten in de tuinen der Oranjes, in Oud Holland 85 (1970), pp. 33-44*.

<sup>12</sup> F. Schottmüller, *Bildwerke der Kaiser Friedrich Museum, I, Berlin, 1933, pp. 221-3. Attribution recently discussed by A. Nava-Cellini, Ritrattistica di Alessandro Algardi, in Paragone XV (1964), no. 177, p. 35, n. 18*.

<sup>13</sup> See *The Winter Queen, catalogue of an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London, 1963*.

<sup>14</sup> No. A.8-1967, inscribed on the socle: AELIS.REG / BOH / FIL.JAC.REX.MAG.BRIT. 1641.

<sup>15</sup> Reproduced by gracious permission of His Royal Highness Prince Ernst August of Hannover.

<sup>16</sup> V. Thorlacius-Ussing, *Arbejder af Fr. Dieussart, Fr. Duquesnoy og Barth. Eggers, in Kunstmuseets Årskrift, Copenhagen, 1921-3, p. 305 ff. Also G. Boesen in Weilbach, Kunstner Leksikon I (1947), p. 252, s.v. Dieussart*.

<sup>17</sup> E. Neurdenburg, *op. cit.* and H. E. van Gelder, *Een Medaillonportret van Constantin Huygens uit 1651, door François Dieussart, in Mededeelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, Hague, IV (1937), p. 89 ff.*

<sup>18</sup> Th. Lunsingh Scheurleer, *De Woonvertrekken in Amalia's Huis ten Bosch, in Oud Holland 84 (1969), pp. 31-2*.

<sup>19</sup> J. Q. van Regteren Altena, *loc. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> G. Galland, *op. cit.* gives a full account of these and the other sculptures by Dieussart in Berlin, discussed below.

<sup>21</sup> H. E. van Gelder, *loc. cit.*, repro. p.93, also citing earlier literature.



<sup>22</sup> G. J. Hoogewerf, in *Thieme-Becker, Künstler-Lexikon*, s.v. *Dusart*.

<sup>23</sup> H. J. Hermann, *Zwei Unbekannte Büsten des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm von Hieronymous Duquesnoy d. J. und François Dusart*, in *Festschrift für Julius Schlosser*, Vienna, 1927, pp. 254-266.

<sup>24</sup> V. Vermeersch, *Brugges Kunstbezit, I, Brugge|Utrecht*, 1969, no. 19.

<sup>25</sup> I am indebted to the Director of the Heim Gallery, London, Dr. Andrew Ciechanowiecki, for bringing the busts to my attention. My suggestion that they might be the lost Spiering busts was pursued to its conclusion by Gay Seagrim, who traced the miniature.

<sup>26</sup> E. A. van Beresteyn, *Korte Genealogie van het Geslacht Spiering*, in *Mededeelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie*, Hague, I, p.13. Also G. T. van Ysselsteyn, *Geschiedenis der Tapijtweverijen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, Leiden, 1936, passim.

<sup>27</sup> See catalogue of the Council of Europe Exhibition *Queen Christina*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1966, no. 1027.

<sup>28</sup> C. Nordenfalk, *Queen Christina's Roman Collection of Tapestries*, in *Queen Christina of Sweden: Documents and Studies*, *Analecta reginensia I*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1966, p.262.

<sup>29</sup> T. Kutter, in *Blätter für Gemäldekunde*, VII, 1912, p. 27, repro. p.28. See also p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> J. Q. van Regteren Altena, *Les Dessins italiens de la Reine Christine de Suède*, *Analecta reginensia II*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1966, p. 13 ff.

<sup>31</sup> W. Martin, *Gerard Dou*, London, 1902, p. 43 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Queen Christina exhibition*, no. 1296. See O. Granberg, *Svenska Konstsamlingarnas Historia*, Stockholm, 1929, I, pp.69-70; K. E. Steneberg, *Kristinatidens Maleri*, Malmö, 1955, pp.62-3; 82-3.