



Short notice

The Discovery of an Artist's Portrait: The Landscape Painter Hendrik Voogd Portrayed by Charles Howard Hodges

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Since this spring the Rijksmuseum has displayed a painting that brings together two important artists. It is a portrait of the landscape painter Hendrik Voogd (1768-1839), painted by Charles Howard Hodges (1764-1837) in 1828 (fig. 1). As 'expats', both artists had successful careers abroad. In 1788 Voogd left Amsterdam and went to Rome, where he spent the rest of his life. He was highly praised for his classical landscapes and during his lifetime was already being dubbed 'the Dutch Claude' after the French artist Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), who had raised Italianate landscapes to great heights. In 1792 Hodges moved from London to The Hague, where he established himself as an engraver, and after a number of successful years there went to live in Amsterdam. He made portraits of the upper classes in pastel, and after 1800 in oils, too. He was also given official commissions, and immune to the political upheavals he painted portraits of Louis Bonaparte (1778-1846) and William I (1772-1843).

The portrait of Voogd, unknown until recently, was discovered by C.J. de Bruyn Kops (1926-2015), who during his time as the curator of paintings at the Rijksmuseum (1960-88) wrote a monograph on Voogd and

< Fig. 1
CHARLES HOWARD
HODGES, *Portrait of
Hendrik Voogd*, 1828.
Oil on canvas,
73 x 60 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-C-1811;
on loan from a
private collection.

made every effort to acquire *Italian Landscape with Umbrella Pines* (fig. 2).¹ In memory of De Bruyn Kops, this well-kept secret is presented here for the first time. In this contribution we investigate the history of its creation and the place of the portrait in Hodges's oeuvre. Two drawn copies that provide a key to the identification and a window into the nineteenth-century reception of the painting are also discussed.

'On account of Mr Hodges's portrait'

Voogd became a member of an international colony of artists in Rome, but maintained his link with the Netherlands, corresponding with two friends, Jean Baptiste Wicar (1762-1834) and David Pierre Humbert de Superville (1770-1849), who were also artists. We know from a letter that Wicar wrote from Rome in May 1826 to Humbert, who was then living in Leiden, that Voogd intended to go to the Netherlands.² And it is clear from an old note accompanying a little portrait of Humbert by Voogd that Voogd visited his friend in the Netherlands in 1828.³ We do not know if Voogd spent two consecutive years in the Netherlands or had postponed the journey Wicar mentioned, but a letter from Voogd to



Fig. 2
 HENDRIK VOOGD,
*Italian Landscape
 with Umbrella
 Pines*, 1807.
 Oil on canvas,
 101.5 x 138.5 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. SK-A-4688.

Humbert dated 10 August 1829 tells us that he was back in Rome again in early December 1828. In the same letter, Voogd complained that he had had little free time to visit other places while he was there 'because I was delayed in Amsterdam for too long on account of Mr Hodges's portrait ...'⁴ Unfortunately he failed to mention who commissioned the portrait. It has not been found in collectors' cabinets from that time and it is not mentioned in the surviving correspondence.⁵ It seems unlikely that it was Voogd himself. He could equally well have had his portrait painted in Rome had he wished for one, and the tone of the letter seems to suggest that it was not his own idea: the portrait had 'delayed' him for a long time, forcing him to adapt his travel plans, and it did not feature in the sale of Voogd's own art collection and the contents of his workshop.⁶ The commission may have come through Humbert, who corresponded with Hodges.⁷ For the time being, therefore, the principal remains unknown.

The fact that the portrait of Voogd, the most successful Dutch landscape painter outside his own country, was painted in Amsterdam by the famous portrait painter Charles Howard Hodges was no more than an interesting fact, until De Bruyn Kops discovered the painting as an anonymous portrait at a sale in the nineteen-eighties. He was not able to publish this discovery and it is in his memory that this is being done now. De Bruyn Kops identified the portrait on the basis of a drawn copy by Christiaan Julius Lodewijk Portman (1799-1868), which in turn was copied by Jan Simon Voddigel (1820-1862) (figs. 3, 4).⁸ Portman omitted the bottom part of the composition but followed the rest of the portrait in detail, from the averted gaze to the curl on the forehead and the collar that grazes the left cheek. The artist must have had the painting now in the Rijksmuseum in front of him as his example.



The Portrait

Voogd's likeness is well-known thanks to a number of portraits, which reflect his increasing success. There is an informal drawn friendship portrait by Wicar that was made in his first years in Rome (Rome, Museo Napoleonico). In 1813, as a successful artist, he was added to the portrait collection of the German painter Carl Vogel von Vogelstein (1788-1868) (Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett, inv. no. C 3516).⁹ Giuseppe Grasse immortalized Voogd on canvas in 1821; the painting is in the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, where Voogd was an 'honorary member' – a special honour for a foreigner (fig. 5).¹⁰ Finally, in the portrait accompanying his obituary, Voogd wears the Order of the Netherlands Lion, awarded to him in 1830.¹¹ The portrait by Hodges can now be added to these. Hodges portrayed Voogd as a gentleman, not an artist. In the only other known painted portrait, the one by Grassi, the drawing materials in Voogd's hand – probably a graphite

Fig. 3
CHRISTIAAN JULIUS
LODEWIJK PORTMAN,
*Portrait of Hendrik
Voogd*, 1828 or later.
Black chalk,
239 x 202 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1940-280;
purchased with
the support of the
F.G. Waller-Fonds.

Fig. 4
JAN SIMON
VODDIGEL after
CHRISTIAAN JULIUS
LODEWIJK PORTMAN,
*Portrait of Hendrik
Voogd*, 1830-62.

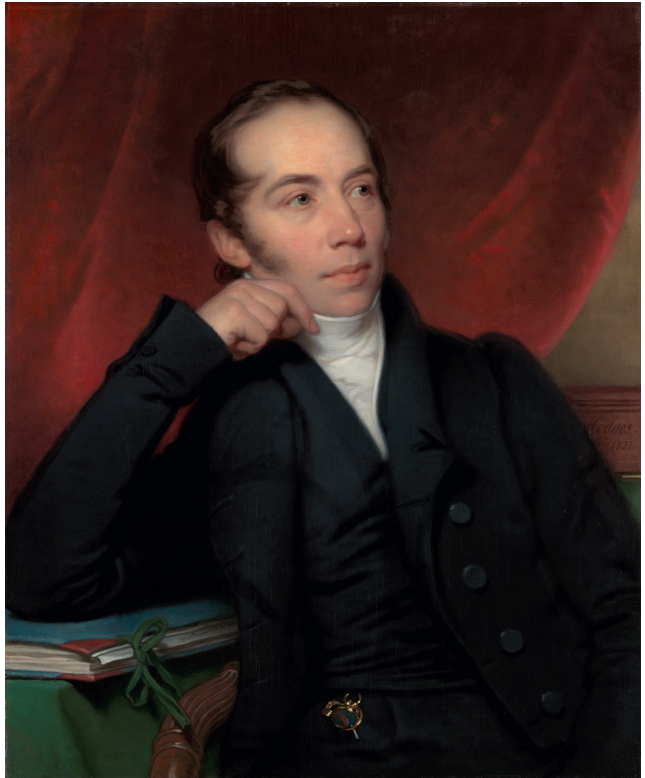
Pencil, with brush and
black ink, 210 x 158 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-FM-371;
on loan from the
City of Amsterdam.

Fig. 5
GIUSEPPE GRASSI,
*Portrait of
Hendrik Voogd*, 1821.
Oil on canvas,
62 x 50.3 cm.
Rome, Accademia
Nazionale di San
Luca, inv. no. 0251.



holder with a stick of graphite or chalk – allude to his occupation. In Hodges's portrait Voogd's hand emerges from his velvety cloak and rests on his chest. His face is turned a little to his right, the look serious. Thanks to the letter to Wicar, we know that the portrait was made in 1828. Its distinguished air reflects the position he had by then acquired as a successful artist. Like many of Hodges's portraits it is unsigned, but his hand is easily recognizable. In his monograph Van der Feltz describes the style development that the painter underwent. Hodges's early portraits are suffused with the atmosphere and style of English portraiture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The colours of his palette – green, blue, red, brown and yellow – are clear of tone and transparent and distributed over the canvas in harmonic passages. At the end of the eighteen-twenties, his style gradually changed and his portraits increasingly aligned with the Dutch tradition. The brushstrokes became harder and heavier and the colours were no longer transparent. At the same time, Hodges tailored his style to his clients, sometimes more French, sometimes English influences.¹² The portrait of Pieter Ernst Hendrik Praetorius (1791-1876) in the Rijksmuseum is signed and dated 1827 and provides a good case for comparison (fig. 6). Although Praetorius is shown sitting at a table in front of a curtain, the portraits are very similar. The tone is comparable and details such as the eyes are painted in the same way. Throughout his career Hodges also painted a number of portraits that are similar in composition – three-quarter profile and with a uniform background – where the likeness to the portrait of Stewart John Bruce from around 1823 (private collection, Netherlands) is the most striking.¹³

Hodges's clients were members of the upper classes. They prided themselves on their elegance and distinction, which Hodges's smooth handling



accentuated, with the result that many of his portraits display a certain uniformity. What is striking about Voogd's portrait is the strong character it exudes and the bravura with which it was painted. The silvery background was applied with coarse strokes and seems to vibrate. There is tension and drama in the portrait, conveying the romantic spirit of the times. Here it seems as if Hodges had looked at the work of the leading portrait painters in England. Voogd's portrait is not as exuberantly romantic as portraits by Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), but in terms of atmosphere and gravitas it calls to mind the three-quarter length portraits of men by John Hoppner (1758-1810) and John Opie (1761-1807). The portrait seems to be more rooted in this English tradition rather than echoing the work of Dutch contemporaries like Jan Willem Pieneman (1779-1853) and Jan Adam Kruseman (1804-1862).

Fig. 6
CHARLES HOWARD
HODGES, *Portrait
of Pieter Ernst
Hendrik Praetorius,
Broker, Draftsman
and Painter. Chair-
man of the Board
of the Rijksmuseum
1852-74, 1827.*
Oil on canvas,
72.5 x 60 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-A-4965;
gift of Jonkvrouw
C.W. van den Bosch,
The Hague.

Hodges would have wanted to prove himself to Voogd. He probably also had more artistic freedom in this portrait than he could permit himself in commissions from the ruling elite. This can also be seen in the portrait of his son, the artist James Newman Hodges (1786-1821) (fig. 7).¹⁴

To find out more about Hodges's painting technique and use of materials, we used infrared reflectography (IRR) to examine the portraits of Voogd and Praetorius, as well as that of Christiaan Everhard Vaillant (1746-1829), also in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 8).¹⁵ With this technique using infrared light, underdrawings (provided they were made in a medium containing carbon) and *pentimenti* (changes during the painting process) can be revealed. No underdrawings or significant *pentimenti* were revealed, from which it can be cautiously concluded that Hodges created his portraits with paint applied directly to the canvas, based on drawings he had made during the sittings.¹⁶ This swift manner accords with the painter's high output.

Voogd's portrait is well preserved, but examination of the tacking edges

shows that the surface area of the portrait was reduced slightly in the past. The ground is visible on the tacking edge on the left-hand side and at the bottom, and the original nail holes are present, which tells us that the canvas was not shortened there. On the right-hand side the grey paint layer of the surface runs over the edge of the stretcher. Remnants of the original tacking edge covered with ground are still visible, but folded over to the back of the painting. This indicates that the painting was reduced by around two centimetres on the right-hand side when it was mounted on a new, smaller stretcher. At the top edge the grey paint layer also runs over the edge of the stretcher, but there are no remains of an older tacking edge with ground present here, which means that we cannot say with certainty by how many centimetres the painting was reduced at the top. The copies by Portman and Voddigel show a section of the painting and consequently give us no idea of the painting's original size. These drawings are, however, indicative of the reception of the portrait and the status Voogd enjoyed.

Fig. 7

CHARLES HOWARD HODGES, *Portrait of James Newman Hodges (1786-1821)*, c. 1815-16. Oil on canvas, 65 x 51.5 cm. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, inv. no. OS 81-201; on long-term loan to the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede.

Fig. 8

CHARLES HOWARD HODGES, *Portrait of Christiaan Everhard Vaillant (1746-1829), Government Official*, c. 1819. Oil on canvas, 73 x 62 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4161.



The Reception of the Portrait

Gerrit Lamberts (1776-1850) is the earliest known owner of Portman's drawing and may have commissioned it. Lamberts was an Amsterdam art and book dealer and in 1824 became the first superintendent of the Rijksmuseum, which at that time was housed in the Trippenhuys on Keizersgracht. He also made topographical drawings of Amsterdam, which were popular with collectors. In 1826 Lamberts started his own collection and the topography of the capital city occupied an important place within it. He also focused on portraits ranging from naval heroes to poets to members of institutions, like the Felix Meritis Society and the Royal Institute of Sciences, Literature and Fine Arts (hereafter RI).¹⁷

Lamberts's surviving correspondence gives a good idea of the development of his collection. Lamberts kept in touch with many collectors, with whom he exchanged desirable objects and sometimes also items for the collections. The Leipzig-based print dealer and collector Rudolph Weigel (1804-1867), for instance, sent him portraits of members of the RI. In reply, Lamberts supplied a list of members, correspondents and associates whose portraits he did not have, and asked Weigel to look out for them, because he 'wanted them to complete his collection of that institute as far as possible'.¹⁸ Voogd was a correspondent of the Fourth Class of the RI, the department that advised the government on cultural policy. In the light of Voogd's portrait it is interesting that Lamberts was a good friend of Humbert's. After Humbert's death in 1849, Lamberts wrote to Nicolaas Cornelis de Gyselaar (1792-1873), telling him that he cherished Humbert's portrait 'so superbly made by my friend Mr Cornet [Jacobus Ludovicus Cornet, 1815-1882]' and describing it as 'one of the jewels of my collection concerning the fourth class of the Institute'.¹⁹

There is a good chance that Lamberts also knew the portrait and history

painter Portman and the amateur artist Voddigel. Portman had connections with collectors and held official posts in Amsterdam's cultural life. Lamberts may have commissioned Portman to copy Hodges's portrait – he could have been tipped off about it by Humbert, who after all knew of the portrait of Voogd. Lamberts could also have purchased the drawing at the *Exhibition of Living Artists*, where Portman exhibited a portrait of an artist in 1830.²⁰ Voddigel, in turn, could have copied the copy owned by Lamberts, whose self-portrait he also copied.²¹ Another possibility is that Lamberts, who promoted his collection to various institutions, took it to the Felix Meritis Society – whose members included Portman and Voddigel – and Voddigel's copy was created in this context.²² The drawing was there in 1889, when the Felix Meritis Society loaned it and the rest of its collection to the city of Amsterdam.

Lamberts died in 1850 and a year later his collection was sold at auction. At that sale the Amsterdam book dealer, publisher and collector Frederik Muller bought the entire collection of RI portraits.²³ Portman's portrait of Voogd then came into the possession of the Brussels art collector and bibliophile Bernard Amé Leonard du Bus de Gisignies (1808-1874).²⁴ This provenance shows just how sought-after the portrait of Voogd was. In 1940 it was finally acquired by the Rijksmuseum. Now that the portrait of Voogd painted by Hodges is also in the Rijksmuseum, the circle is complete. It has been rescued from oblivion and given a place of honour among the portraits and Italian landscapes by the two artists.

NOTES

- 1 C.J. de Bruyn Kops, 'Hendrik Voogd Nederlands landschapsschilder te Rome (1768-1839)', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 21 (1970), pp. 319-69.
- 2 Cornelia Magdalena de Haas, *David Pierre Giottino Humbert de Superville 1770-1849*, Leiden 1941, p. 13; De Bruyn Kops 1970 (note 1), p. 333.
- 3 Print Room, Special Collections, University of Leiden, inv. no. PK-T-2089; see De Bruyn Kops 1970 (note 1), p. 334.
- 4 'daar ik mijn telang in Amsterdam heb moeten ophouwe weegens het portret van de Heer Hotges...'. Quoted from De Bruyn Kops 1970 (note 1), p. 334. The letter is in the collection of the University of Leiden Print Room.
- 5 Correspondence from Voogd, Hodges, C.J.L. Portman and Gerrit Lamberts in the following collections: National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague; Artists' Letters, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam; Special Collections, University of Amsterdam.
- 6 Sale cat. Hendrik Voogd 1842 (Lugt 16679).
- 7 De Haas 1941 (note 2), p. 163.
- 8 The fact that neither Portman nor Voddigel was ever in Rome, as far as is known, is another indication that the portrait was made for a Dutch client. Voogd's name is in the inscription on the back of both drawings.
- 9 See for this collection of portraits Hans W. Singer, 'Some English Portraits by Carl Vogel von Vogelstein', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 11 (1907), no. 54, pp. 380, 382-83.
- 10 *Reizen naar Rome: Italië als leerschool voor Nederlandse kunstenaars omstreeks 1800*, exh. cat. Haarlem (Teylers Museum)/Rome (Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome) 1984, p. 97.
- 11 'Il Cav. Voogd', *L'Album giornale letterario de belle arti*, vol. 6 (1839-40), pp. 244-45, see <https://babel.hathitrust.org>.
- 12 A.C.A.W. van der Feltz, *Charles Howard Hodges 1764-1837*, Assen 1982, pp. 31-40.
- 13 Van der Feltz 1982 (note 12), cat. no. 96; see also cat. nos. 35, 138, 257, 440, 441, 489, 494 and 519.
- 14 Van der Feltz 1982 (note 12), p. 170. With thanks to Duncan Bull, senior curator of international paintings, Rijksmuseum, who pointed to the relationship with English portraiture.
- 15 IRR images made by Carola van Wijk (Rijksmuseum).
- 16 The underdrawing could also have been made with a medium that cannot be detected with IRR, such as white or red chalk, so the method is subject to some reservations.
- 17 See J. Knoef, 'Gerrit Lamberts (1776-1850)', in *Tusschen rococo en romantiek*, The Hague 1948, pp. 225-42.
- 18 'verlangde dezelve om zoo veel mogelijk mijne verzameling van dat instituut te completeeren'. Quoted from a letter from Gerrit Lamberts to Rudolph Weigel, June 1839. Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-D-2017-847.
- 19 'zoo uitmuntend fraay vervaardigd door mijnen vriend den Heere Cornet'.... 'een der sieraaden van mijn verzameling betrekkelijk de 4e klasse van het Instituut'. Quoted from a letter from Gerrit Lamberts to n.c. de Gyselaar, 1849. Amsterdam University Library, Special Collections, HSS-mag.: 14 E2.
- 20 *Lijst der schilder- en kunstwerken [...] de tentoonstelling te 's Gravenhage van den jare 1830*, p. 25, no. 249. He also submitted artists' portraits to the 1822 and 1828 exhibitions.
- 21 Gerrit Lamberts, *Self-Portrait*, 1840. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1940-110; Voddigel, *Portrait of Gerrit Lamberts*. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-FM-360-1.
- 22 He gave lectures at the Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen en de Hollandsche Maatschappij van Fraaie Kunsten en Wetenschappen and he invited the second class of the R1 for a viewing. Amsterdam University Library, Special Collections, HSS-mag.: Bi 484, Ec39 and Knoef 1948 (note 17), p. 232.
- 23 Sale cat. Gerrit Lamberts 1850 (Lugt 20041), p. 8, annotated copy RKD, The Hague; sale cat. Frederik Muller 1853 (Lugt 21525), p. 75, no. 7460. In addition to the drawing by Portman, Lamberts also owned a printed portrait of Voogd. This may be the portrait in the painter's obituary (see note 11).
- 24 Sale cat. Bernard du Bus de Gisignies 1876 (Lugt 36134), p. 144, no. 955.