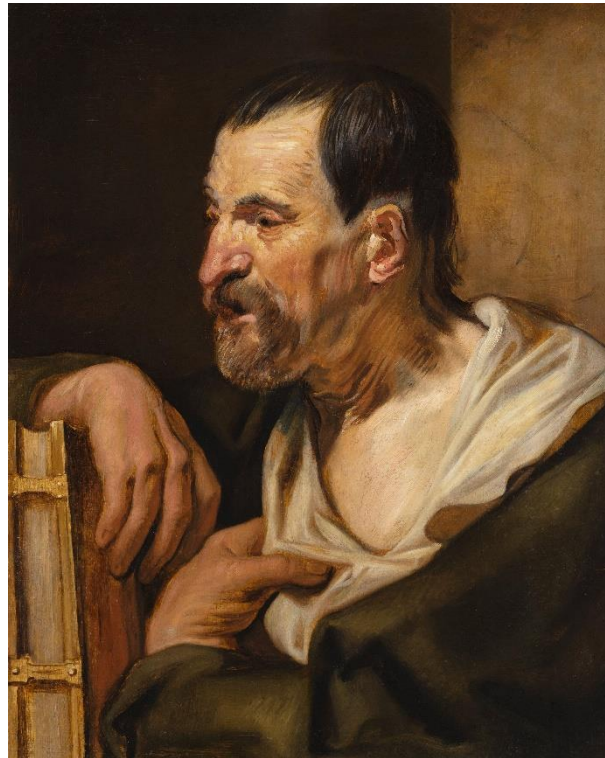


Klaas Muller is pleased to present a highlight that will be unveiled at BRAFA 2023

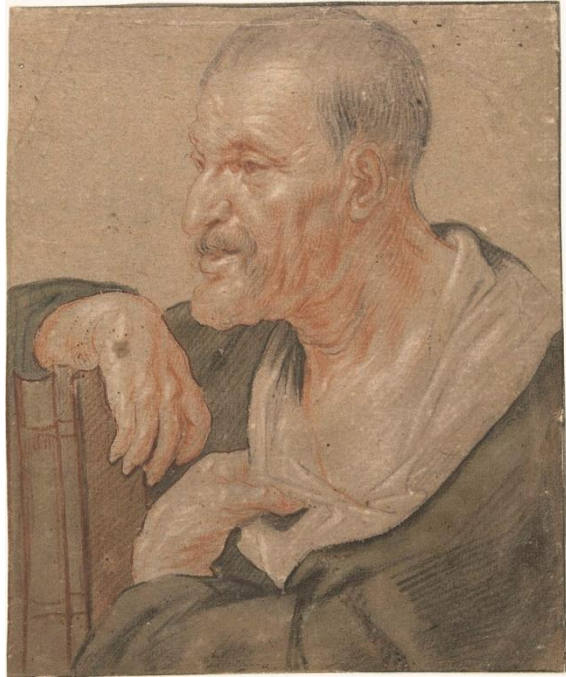


Jacob Jordaens (Antwerp, 1593-1678)
Study of an Evangelist, 17th century
Oil on panel
65 x 49 cm

Jacob (Jacques) Jordaens, together with Pieter Paul Rubens and Anthony Van Dyck, belonged to the 'big 3' of Flemish 17th century painting. Unlike Rubens and Van Dyck, Jordaens never visited Italy: apart from a few trips to the Northern Netherlands, the master remained in Antwerp all his life. He was the son-in-law of the painter Adam Van Noort and, in addition to being a painter, a successful businessman. His sympathy for Protestantism was not universally appreciated.

Jordaens, who was much influenced by Rubens, nevertheless developed his own style that is quite characteristic and recognizable: on the one hand realistic with a Caravaggistic touch and at the same time monumental and quite expressive as the example here. Unlike Van Dyck and Rubens, Jordaens was never a court painter. His clients were therefore mainly local well-to-do citizens and clergy. It was only after Ruben's death (1640) that royal commissions began to arrive, and he became the infallible number one in Antwerp.

This 'tronie' or study-head may have been a design for an evangelist, as the man is holding a book. He looks dreamily ahead with the other hand on his chest. Jordaens used the 'wet-on-wet' and impasto-technique for this powerful and virtuoso work, which generates a very lively effect. We can make a very interesting comparison with a beautiful and typical drawing by the master that is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam: 'Evangelist, looking to the left' (black, red and white chalk and brush, 264 x 219mm, object no RP-T-1954-90).



The similarities are obvious, but there are small differences (for example the shape of the nose and beard, the hairline...) and we can ask ourselves whether Jordaens made the drawing first or our painting. This study is clearly 'alla prima', painted very spontaneously and it was not unusual that after an oil study of life, a drawing - for clarification - was made. This painting is very similar to other study heads by Jordaens such as 'Head of a bearded man, possibly an apostle' (Christie's NY, 14/10/2021, lot n° 4) or 'Head of an old man' (Amiens, Musée du Picardie) and 'Job' (Detroit, Institute of Arts, Inv.43418). But also finished paintings such as Jordaens' 'Four Evangelists' (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 1404) or some heads 'Peter Finding the Silver Coin in the Mouth of the Fish' (Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. KMS3198). The work can be dated to around 1630.

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