

monogram seems to have been interpreted as an indication of both the artist and the sitter. In 1736 Horace Walpole described the painting as a self-portrait of Frans Hals,<sup>3</sup> an identification repeated in an engraving (in reverse) after the painting, published in 1777.<sup>4</sup> This identification was also followed by subsequent Hermitage cataloguers. Later, when it became obvious that the sitter was too young to be Frans Hals, he was identified as Frans Hals the Younger.<sup>5</sup> Bode speculated, on the basis of the monogram, that the artist might be Frans Hals' son Harmen Hals, but, after Bredius discovered this artist's monogram was different in character, Bode immediately rejected his own hypothesis.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, whatever the explanation for the double monogram, there is no reason to question the attribution of this expressive portrait.

#### Notes

1. Slive 1970–1974, 3: 86, no. 167.
2. Slive 1970–1974, 3: 86, no. 167.
3. Walpole 1736. He identified 430 paintings in his father's various houses. In the list entitled "A Catalogue of Sir Robert Walpole's Pictures at Chelsea," pp. 33–34, appears: "Francis Halls, Master to Godfrey Kneller... Francis Halls."
4. The engraving was made by J. B. Michel. According to Slive 1970–1974, 3: 86, the print is inscribed: "FRANCIS HALLS./In the Common Parlour at Houghton/Size of the Picture 1F 3/4 [nches] by 1F 7/2 [nches] high/Published May 1st, 1777 by John Boydell Engraver in Cheapside, London./F. Halls Pixit. G. Farington del. J.B. Michel sculpsit."
5. Semenoff 1885, 1: 254.
6. Bode 1883, 90, no. 128.

#### References

- 1736 Walpole.  
 1747 Walpole: 40 (also 1752 2nd ed.: 40).  
 1809 Gilpin: 69.  
 1838 Hermitage: 2: 254, no. 26 (as *Self-Portrait*).  
 1863 De Köhne: 2: 165, no. 770 (as *Portrait of Frans Hals*) (also 1870 2nd ed., 2: 123, no. 770; 1895 3rd rev. ed. A. Somof, 2: 122–123, no. 770, repro.; and 1901 ed., 2: 139–140, no. 770, repro.).  
 1864 Waagen: 172, no. 770.  
 1883 Bode: 90, 101, no. 128.  
 1885 Semenoff: 1: 254 (as portrait of *Frans Hals the Younger*).  
 1896 Knackfuss: 52, repro. 37 (also 1923 ed.: 64, repro. 45).  
 1902 Davies: 144, no. 770 (also 1908 rev. ed.: 139, no. 770).  
 1907–1927 HdG, 3 (1910): 88.  
 1909 Moes: 108, no. 180 or 182.  
 1909 Wrangell: 145 repro. (also 1923 German rev. ed. by P. P. von Weiner: 117 repro.).  
 1912 Péladan: 89–90, repro. opposite 162.  
 1914 Bode and Binder: 2: 62, no. 213, pl. 136 (also English ed., 2: 15, no. 213, pl. 136).  
 1921a Valentiner: 320, no. 219, repro. (also 1923 rev. ed.: 320, 234, repro.).  
 1930 Dülberg: 186.

- 1936 Valentiner: no. 91, repro.  
 1941 Trivas: 55, no. 92, repro. no. 123.  
 1941 NGA: 95–96, no. 71.  
 1946 Gratama: 98, repro.  
 1965 NGA: 65, no. 71.  
 1968 NGA: 58, no. 78, repro.  
 1970–1974 Slive, 1 (1970): 52, 160–161; 2 (1970): fig. 256; 3 (1974): 86–87, fig. 60 (monogram).  
 1972 Grimm: 107, 205, no. 134., repro. no. 150.  
 1974 Montagni: 105, no. 171 repro. (also 1976 French ed.).  
 1975 NGA: 170, no. 71.  
 1976 Walker: 268, no. 352 repro.  
 1976 Gerson: 422–424.  
 1981 Wheelock: 14–15, repro. (also 1988, 100, fig. 6).  
 1985 NGA: 197, repro.  
 1985 Washington: 324.  
 1990 Grimm: 241–242, 257, fig. 105a, 288, no. 129 repro.

1942.9.28 (624)

### *Portrait of a Man*

1648/1650  
 Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 53.5 (25 x 21)  
 Widener Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower left along the edge: *FH*

**Technical Notes:** The original support, a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, has been lined with the tacking margins trimmed. Cusping is visible in the x-radiograph along the left, right, and top edges. Striations are visible from the brush used to apply the thin white ground. Paint is applied in opaque layers, thinly in the sketchy background, and with more body in the figure. Lively brushstrokes are applied wet into wet but left distinct and unblended. Losses are small and scattered, and moderate abrasion is present, particularly in the black hat and adjacent background.

Prior to 1883, when the painting appeared in the art market in Vienna, the background had been overpainted to cover up the hat, and the hair repainted in a longer style (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The restoration of the painting in 1990 and 1991 removed the later repaints and exposed the original hat, hair, and background. Although abraded, enough original paint remained to permit reconstruction of these elements.

**Provenance:** Remi van Haanen, Vienna, by 1883;<sup>2</sup> (Laurie & Co., London), by March 1898;<sup>3</sup> (Bourgeois, Paris, in 1898); (Léonardus Nardus, New York, in 1898); Peter A. B. Widener, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania;<sup>4</sup> inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park.

**Exhibited:** *Gemälde alter Meister aus dem Wiener Privatbesitze*, Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, Vienna, 1873, no. 38. New York 1909, no. 32, repro.



Fig. 1. 1942.9.28 prior to treatment

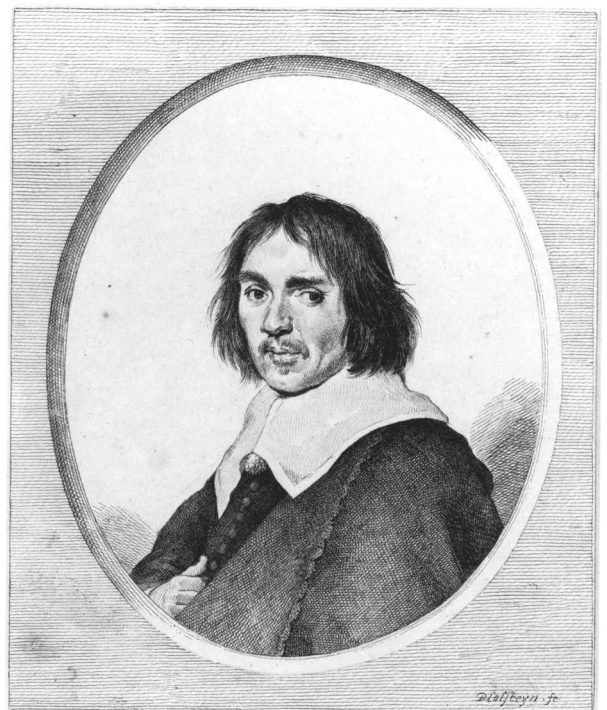
THE VAGARIES of Frans Hals' artistic reputation are more extreme than those of most artists. After having been the preeminent portrait painter in Haarlem during his day, he was almost totally forgotten after his death. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the vigorous and free brushwork that brought his portraits of Dutch burghers vividly to life was once again appreciated by critics, collectors, and contemporary artists. Paintings long relegated to obscurity in back rooms or in attics were proudly brought forward, sent to exhibitions, and sold to dealers and collectors eager to own his works.<sup>5</sup>

This *Portrait of a Man* first became known to the public when it was exhibited in Vienna in 1873. The New York dealer Léonardus Nardus, who was not above manufacturing old provenances for the paintings in his possession, sold it to P. A. B. Widener in 1898.<sup>6</sup> The work was featured in 1908 in an enthusiastic article about acquisitions of Dutch and Flemish paintings in the United States by one of the foremost authorities of the day, Willem Martin, who

in that year was appointed director of the Mauritshuis in The Hague. He wrote of this work: "It is treated with splendid dash and fluency, without a single *repentir*. every stroke was absolutely right, and nowhere is there any alteration of the original composition." He then proceeded to date the portrait to the years 1640–1645 on the basis of comparisons with other Hals' portraits.<sup>7</sup>

The vagaries of time, however, affect paintings as well as artistic reputations. Despite Martin's claims, a great deal had been changed in this work. As was first noted by Grimm in 1972,<sup>8</sup> the dim shadow of a hat once worn by the sitter could be seen against the gray background. The long wavy locks that flowed over his collar were later additions, as is evident from a drawing made after the painting by Pieter Holsteyn II (c. 1614–1673) (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> Since Holsteyn's drawing does not include a hat, it appears that the portrait had been altered at least twice in its history, once prior to 1673 and again at a later date. In 1991 National Gallery conservators removed the overpainted locks of hair and the overpainting in the background that covered the remains of the badly abraded hat. Technical examination helped determine that the hat had been an original part of the composition, and the decision was made to recon-

Fig. 2. Pieter Holsteyn II, drawing after *Portrait of a Man*, black ink, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet





Frans Hals, *Portrait of a Man*, 1642.9.28

struct its appearance.<sup>10</sup> It is not known why the hat was originally removed, although it may have been a question of fashion.<sup>11</sup>

Since Martin's initial assessment that the painting should be dated to 1640–1645, various other dates have been proposed. Valentiner suggested c. 1650, Grimm c. 1648, and Slive c. 1655/1660.<sup>12</sup> A dearth of dated paintings makes it difficult to determine a precise chronology of Hals' mature works, but the information gained from the conservation of the painting suggests that a date of 1648/1650 is the most probable. The fluid brushwork in the face, on the whites of the collar, and in the blacks of the costume is more broadly executed than comparable areas in Hals' portrait of *Willem Coymans* (1937.1.69). The broad handling of paint, however, is consistent with his style from the end of that decade (see *Adriaen van Ostade*, 1937.1.70). A date from the mid-1650s seems less plausible than it once did, now that the overpainting in the hair has been removed. Brushwork defining the individual strands of hair has been revealed that is consistent with Hals' style at the end of the 1640s. Also helpful for narrowing the date is the style of hat. Similar hats, with cylindrical crowns and raised brims, worn high on the head, are found in a number of Hals' portraits from the 1640s, but they go out of fashion in the 1650s.

The identity of the sitter has not been established. Although Grimm saw a certain resemblance to Michael Willmann, a German artist active in the Netherlands in the 1640s, no evidence of contact between Hals and Willmann has come to light.<sup>13</sup> The idea that the sitter may be an artist, however, is plausible, for Hals represented a number of artists without specific attributes.<sup>14</sup> The manner in which the right hand is brought near the chest, and by implication the heart, is comparable to an established iconographic tradition for artists' portraiture. This rhetorical gesture conveyed not only the sitter's sincerity and passion, but also his artistic sensibility.<sup>15</sup>

#### Notes

1. Pigment analysis, available in the Scientific Research department (28 March 1991), found pigments not available before the eighteenth century in all overpaint and repaint layers.

2. Cited by Bode 1883, 89.

3. HdG 1907–1928, 3: no. 311.

4. The 1898 date for *Bourgeois and Nardus* comes from notes by Edith Standen, Widener's secretary for art, in NGA curatorial files.

5. For an excellent assessment of Hals' reputation see Frances S. Jowell, "The Rediscovery of Frans Hals," in Washington 1989b, 61–86.

6. The Widener files and Widener 1885–1900, no. 207,

list the previous owner as Roo van Westmaas, Woortman, Holland, perhaps a fictional provenance provided by Nardus, since no supporting evidence has been found, and there is no town of Woortman in the Netherlands.

7. Martin 1908, 60.

8. Grimm 1972, 24.

9. The drawing was first published in Slive 1970–1974, 3: 102–103, cat. 198.

10. See Technical Notes.

11. Another Hals portrait suffered the same fate, his powerful *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1650–1653 (Hermitage, Saint Petersburg) (see Washington 1989b, cat. 73).

12. Valentiner 1921, 238; Grimm 1972, 107, no. 137; Slive 1970–1974, 3: 102–103, no. 198.

13. Grimm 1972, 107. A comparison with Willmann's self-portrait in Breslau is not convincing. See Maul 1914, frontispiece.

14. Hals' depictions of artists include *Adriaen van Ostade* (1937.1.70) and a half-length bust comparable in format to this work, *Vincent Laurensz. van der Vinne*, c. 1655–1660 (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto) (see Washington 1989b, cat. 76).

15. On the meanings of such gestures see Raupp 1984, 108–115.

#### References

- 1883 Bode: 122.  
 1885–1900 Widener, 2: no. 207, repro.  
 1908 Martin: 59–60, repro.  
 1907–1927 HdG, 3 (1910): 89, no. 311.  
 1913–1916 Widener: unpaginated, repro.  
 1914 Bode and Binder: 2: 191, repro. 120b (also English ed.).  
 1921a Valentiner: 320, 238 repro. (also 1923 rev. ed.: 321, 251 repro.).  
 1923 Widener: unpaginated, repro.  
 1930 Dülberg: 198.  
 1931 Widener: 80, 81 repro.  
 1936 Valentiner: no. 96, repro.  
 1942 Widener: no. 624.  
 1963 Walker: 337, repro. 311.  
 1965 NGA: 66, no. 624.  
 1968 NGA: 170, repro. 58.  
 1970–1974 Slive, 2 (1970): no. 310 repro.; 3 (1974): 102–103, no. 198.  
 1972 Grimm: 24, 28, 107, 205, no. 137, repro., 161.  
 1974 Montagni: 106, no. 187, repro. (also 1976 French ed.).  
 1975 NGA: 170–171, no. 624 repro.  
 1976 Walker: 268–269, no. 353 repro.  
 1985 NGA: 197 repro.  
 1989b Washington: no. 73 repro.  
 1990 Grimm: 194–195, repro., 288, no. 132 repro.