

DIEGO VELASQUEZ

Spanish school, 1599 - 1660.

^{Th. J. A. V. S.}
His full name was Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velasquez ; he signed himself "Diego Velasquez" or Dãego de Silva Velasquez. He was born in Seville, and is supposed to have worked there for a short time, around 1612, under Francesco Herrera the Elder. From 1613 to 1618 he was a pupil of Francisco Pacheco. He first went to Madrid on a brief visit in 1622. The following April he was summoned there by Philip IV's minister, the Conde-Duque de Olivares. His success in Madrid was immediate ; he was commissioned almost at once to do the King's portrait and entered the royal service in October, with the promise that he alone should paint Philip IV. He remained attached to the Court for the rest of his life, and from then on most of his paintings consisted of portraits of the royal family and of members of the court. He was made a Gentleman Usher in 1627, the first of a series of court appointments. ~~In 1628-29 he met Rubens in Italy.~~ In July 1629 he left Madrid to visit Italy, and first spent time in Venice, studying and copying the great Venetian painters. He then travelled on to Rome in 1630, and at the end of the year to Naples. He returned to Madrid early in 1631. Early in 1649 he visited Italy a second time, going to Genoa, Venice, Naples and Rome and coming back to Madrid in June 1651. His ~~single~~ most important ^{single} work, Las Meninas, was apparently completed in 1656. He was made a Knight of Santiago in 1659 and died in Madrid the next year. To judge from the number of copies and versions of his portraits, he must have employed a large number of assistants ; and he probably produced only a relatively small number of autograph works.

Portrait of a Lady

oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins.

Condition

Condition

A photograph from 1909 (Witt Lib.) shows that the painting, which then measured 65×54 cm., has been cut down at the bottom. More of the white of the sleeves was then visible, and comparison with the photograph also suggests some retouching.

Provenance

Stchoukine Colln., Moscow ; sold Paris, May 1909, no.106.
Acquired by Dr Clowes in 19 .

Acquired as a Velasquez, this appears to be a school of Madrid painting of the second half of the seventeenth century which depends compositionally upon portraits by Velasquez.⁽¹⁾

Notes.

1. I am grateful to A. Sánchez Pérez of the Prado for his help here (given orally, 1966)