Students of Van Dyck's large corpus of paintings and sketches, from Bellori (1672) to Glück (1931) and Erik Larsen (1988), have taken pains over the centuries to represent the Flemish master's \textit{manner} with exactitude and with some sense of the man's special gifts, as well as his (elusive) character, career, patronage, and clientele. But only now, in the first decade of the 21st Century, advantaged by a rich harvest of relatively recent delvings into seventeenth-century culture, have art historians been in place to confidently compile a \textit{“complete” catalogue raisonné} of Van Dyck's paintings. This handsomely produced catalogue, flawlessly printed in Singapore and assembled in a stunning large-format volume for the Paul Mellon Centre and Yale University Press by an international team of four distinguished art historians, is a monumental achievement on the life and career of a famous, international artist, second only in mastery and reputation to Peter Paul Rubens. “Our aim in this volume,” writes the catalogue’s four collaborators, “is to produce a Catalogue Raisonné of works in oil by Anthony van Dyck. A great deal of work has been done on Van Dyck since the Second World War and work of no less importance is in progress. This has seemed to us, therefore, to be a good moment at which to compile such a Catalogue, building on the foundations laid by [previous commentators and cataloguers]” (Preface [ix]). In high-quality color and black-and-white images (some 800 images in all, over 692 pages), the catalogue includes Van Dyck's special achievement in portraiture, primarily, as well as his work in wholly different genres, such as religious, historical, and allegorical material. Van Dyck was occupied primarily in the service of the political and social elite; his large, dynastic canvases supplied royals, nobles, and courtiers with a standard and a pattern of public presentation. As Jeremy Wood fairly states, Van Dyck was a master of stagecraft and he effectively reinvented royal iconography for seventeenth-century Europe (\textit{Oxford DNB, 2004}).
The two principal challenges which must have daunted even this catalogue's team of established specialists concern (i) the structure and organization of Van Dyck's rather huge output over some twenty active years of commissions in Antwerp, Italy, Brussels, and London (indeed, one learns that Van Dyck's work schedule was fairly punishing and very probably ego-driven); and (ii) the sheer accessibility of the catalogue (its reader-friendliness) to a broad readership of academic specialists, generalists, students, and uninformed newcomers to Van Dyck and the visual arts of the seventeenth century. Both of these serious matters are addressed by the team's skillful arrangement of the catalogue into four discrete sections, an arrangement which provides both a broad chronology of Van Dyck's work in several geographical locations, as well as the artist's movements and career development amongst the rich and powerful of seventeenth-century Europe, each setting not without its own clientele, patronage, artistic tastes, rewards, and tensions. Readers, thus, are tactically navigated through some 700 dense pages of images, dates, facts, and names owing to this sensible partitioning:

Section I, on Van Dyck's early work in Antwerp and initial visit to London (October, 1620 - March, 1621), is assembled by Nora De Poorter, Director of the Rubenianum, Antwerp, and author of monographs on Rubens and Jordaens; Oliver Millar and Susan J. Barnes, referenced below, assisted with information on Van Dyck's first English visit.

Section II, on Van Dyck's work in Italy (1621-July, 1627), is prepared by Susan J. Barnes, independent art historian, co-curator with Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., et al., of Anthony van Dyck (Washington, D.C., 1990) and curator of Van Dyck a Genova (Genoa, 1997).

Section III, on the mature work of Van Dyck produced in the Netherlands (the second Antwerp period, 1627-March, 1632; Brussels, late 1633/early 1634-mid 1635), is set out by Horst Vey, former Director of the Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, and author of the standard work on Van Dyck's drawings.

Section IV, on Van Dyck's important work as “principalle Paynter” at the Court of Charles I (London, 1632-1641), is presented by Sir Oliver Millar, Surveyor Emeritus of The Queen's Pictures, organizer of Van Dyck In England (exhibition, National
Portrait Gallery, London, 1982-3), and author of several essays and catalogues.

In addition to a Preface, a Note To The Reader, a documented Chronology of the biography and career of Van Dyck (b. Antwerp, 1599 - d. Blackfriars, 1641), as well as an extended Bibliography and Index, the four cataloguers have prepared excellent introductory essays, with endnotes, for each of the four sections; and each of the numbered images throughout the catalogue includes a dedicated commentary on the sitter, the occasion, the probable date of the painting, provenance history, locations of copies and other versions, remarkable "sentiments," technique and iconography, and essential published research on the painting. Clearly, the catalogue’s coverage and attention to detail invite broad applications for scholars of the visual arts, certainly, as well as for students of seventeenth-century literary culture and patronage, and also devotees of interdisciplinary studies. Unmentioned to date by other reviewers of this catalogue is its value in the art market, particularly with regard to connoisseurship and also authenticating attributions; the timely subject of the role of the catalogue raisonée is recently discussed by Michael Findlay and also Peter Kraus in Ronald D. Spencer’s important collection, The Expert versus the Object: Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts (2004).

The new Van Dyck catalogue is a dazzling achievement in sheer physical assemblage and organization, and it surely will be the standard work for many decades to come for all students of Van Dyck and the visual arts of the seventeenth century.

Recent information on Van Dyck, since the publication of this catalogue in 2004, includes John Peacock’s monograph, The Look of Van Dyck: The Self-Portrait with a Sunflower and the Vision of the Painter (2006); the purchase from Historical Portraits, London, of Van Dyck’s widow portrait of Mary (Villiers), Lady Herbert, later Stuart, Duchess of Richmond (very probably the “Ephelia” poetess), by the Timken Museum of Art (San Diego, CA; see Timken’s online newsletter, Spring 2006; see also, “A Royal Van Dyck,” Historical Portraits site, Discoveries link); and commentary on the intriguing gloves iconography in Van Dyck’s double portrait of Mary Villiers and the dwarf Anne Gibson in the online archive, Thumbprints of Ephelia (ReSounding, 2001, updated annually).