

M0007200: Manuscript illustration of Saint Cosmas and Damian, 15th century

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Bart., of London, with a memorandum by Dr. Chaplin, Harveian Librarian of the Royal College of Physicians, which seems to shed some light on the subject of the Sydenham portraits. These portraits are no longer accessible due to the war in Europe, but their description, given by Dr. Chaplin, agrees generally with the records available and with such information as I have been able to gather. Dr. Chaplin says, however, that the Beale portrait (Fig. 1) was presented by Theophilus Sydenham in 1747 and not by William Sydenham in 1691 as I have recorded. This is no doubt the best existing portrait of Sydenham, and according to the memorandum a copy of it, by Wollaston, is in the Bodleian. Another by J. Jackson is at All Souls. A third is at Hertford College, while a fourth, attributed to Closterman, is in the National Portrait Gallery. This explains the existence of several portraits which were not painted from life, and certainly it does not increase the number of authentic originals.

The second portrait described in this paper has been attributed to Lely, and Dr. Chaplin places a question mark here and thinks possibly it may have been by Closter-

man. He does not mention the possibility of its being the work of Mary Beale. It is now in the custody of the National Portrait Gallery, and according to Dr. Chaplin it was presented by Sydenham's son William in 1691.

The third portrait, which was acquired in 1832 as a gift from Mr. Bayford, is similar to the portrait by Mary Beale (Fig. 1). Whether it is an original or merely a copy, which seems more likely, Dr. Chaplin does not state. Evidently the artist is unknown.

The net result of the information I have been able to get direct from London is that in England there are not more than three original portraits of Sydenham, and possibly only two, if Mr. Bayford's gift turns out to be a copy. This would make the portrait in the Army Medical Library the more valuable. Although I wrote Sir Humphry that we had a supposed original portrait of Sydenham, he was apparently unable to give me any information concerning this, and those in London are seemingly in ignorance of its existence. It should be noted that the portrait at Oxford (Fig. 3), which was regarded as an original, is undoubtedly a copy.

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