

## **Investigating Jan Swart's Stay in Venice**

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Little is known about the life and work of Jan Swart van Groningen (ca. 1500-ca. 1560). The scant biographical information we have comes from Karel van Mander's very brief note on the artist in his famous *Het Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem, 1604). Among other things, it states that he travelled to Italy and stayed for a time in Venice, where he learned a "new maniera" of painting which he then, like Jan van Scorel, helped to spread north of the Alps. However, this is not confirmed by any documentary source. Although Giovanni Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura* (Milan, 1584) mentions a Giovanni di Frisia, traditionally associated with Jan Swart, it turns out that this is an unfortunate homonymous confusion.

Did Jan Swart actually go to Venice? Can the dates of such a stay in the peninsula be specified despite the lack of written sources? What impact did it have on his own style? Can Jan Swart be considered to be one of the pioneers of Italian maniera in the Low Countries? These are the questions this paper aims to answer in the light of an in-depth iconographic and stylistic analysis of the artist's works.

Jan Swart's travels in Italy are the subject of a two-part contribution. His possible stay in Venice is discussed in the present edition, while the artist's potential journey to Rome will be considered in a forthcoming edition.