

INCREASE MATHER (1639-1723), 1927

Anonymous

after John van der Spriett

oil on canvas

50 x 39 7/8 (127.00 x 101.2825)

Bequest of Henry Winchester Cunningham, 1930

Weis 80

Hewes Number: 81

Ex. Coll.: commissioned by the donor, 1927.

This portrait is a twentieth-century copy after a 1688 portrait of the Reverend Increase Mather painted by John van der Spriett in England. In 1692 returned to Boston with the portrait and in 1798 it was given by his great-granddaughter to the Massachusetts Historical Society.¹ In 1927 Henry W. Cunningham (cat. #36), a member of the American Antiquarian Society who was also recording secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society, commissioned an unknown artist to make a copy of the van der Spriett portrait for his own collection. The copy hung in the library of Cunningham's home in Boston until it was bequeathed to the American Antiquarian Society in 1930.

¹ The portrait was given to the Massachusetts Historical Society by Hannah Mather Crocker (1752-1829), who later gave the American Antiquarian Society the bust-length portrait of Increase Mather (cat. #80). The 1688 portrait is illustrated in Portraits in the Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1988), 68, pl. 17.