

# Pick a Portrait

## How do we know what Robert Leighton looked like?



If you were to go online and search for portraits of Robert Leighton, you would find many different images. There are more than thirty different prints depicting Robert Leighton, drawn by at least thirteen artists of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Robert Leighton did not like himself being portrayed. No image of him appeared in books until after he had died (he died in 1684). One of the first images of Robert Leighton printed in a book was dated 1701. It's thought this was made from a drawing from 1654.



Robert Leighton was born in 1611. He became a Minister in the Church of Scotland, then Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and later became Bishop of Dunblane, then Archbishop of Glasgow. He left his large collection of books to Dunblane, so that today we have the Leighton Library in Dunblane, built to hold all of his books. Robert Leighton believed that people should be kind to those who have different religious views, and was known as Scotland's "Apostle of Peace".

Throughout history, a portrait is an image of a specific person which tries to capture something about their **personality** (what they are like), **identity** (who they are, their name) or **status** (their role, who they are to others)

How would you describe your:

A portrait is a painting, drawing, photograph, or engraving of a person, most often showing only the face or head and shoulders.

**Personality** .....

**Identity** .....

**Status** .....

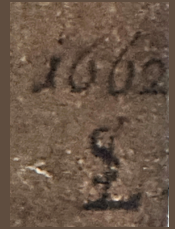


The University of Edinburgh has a three-quarter-length portrait, painted in oils, of Robert Leighton dated 1662. Robert Leighton was Principal of University of Edinburgh from 1653 to 1662.

Robert Leighton is shown wearing robes and a collar. His body faces to the side, but his head is facing forward. His right hand rests on his chest. His left hand lies on a table touching a book, and the table is covered with a patterned cloth and also has paper, pens and a pewter inkpot on it.

The paper, pen and inkpot show his interest in writing. The inkpot is made from pewter and not silver, to show that he doesn't want to see himself as showing off.

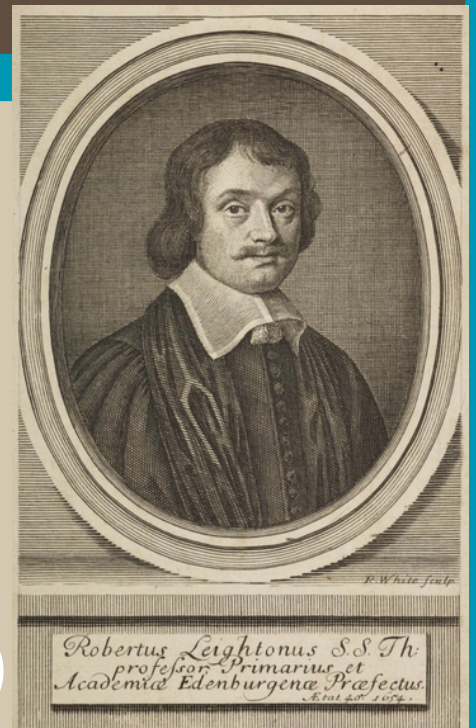
It's not known for certain who the artist is, but is thought to be L Schuneman, as there is an artist's monogram on the painting, showing the letters SL or LS. He originally came from Germany, but in the later seventeenth century he worked for several leading Scottish families to produce portraits.



The portrait shows Robert Leighton holding a book (about how to live life as best as you can). This is thought to be the book he almost always carried with him, his miniature 1564 edition of "De Imitatione Christi" (The Imitation of Christ) regarded to be by German priest & mystic Thomas à Kempis. This is the smallest book in Dunblane's historic Leighton Library, and Robert Leighton made many notes in this book - in tiny handwriting for the tiny book! As Principal of the University he was frequently recommending it to students (though the lecturer didn't like it!).

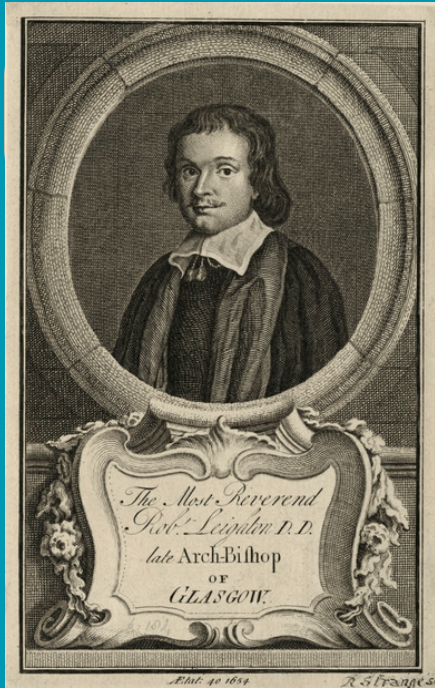
This engraving of Robert Leighton is from a book published in 1701. The engraver, Robert White (1645 – 1703), is said to have engraved this from a drawing by an unknown artist from 1654 (possibly the artist was H Adler). The artist used cross-hatching to create the shadows and highlights in the portrait.

Although this engraving is from many years after Robert Leighton had died, family members and those who had known him well seem to have thought it looked like him.



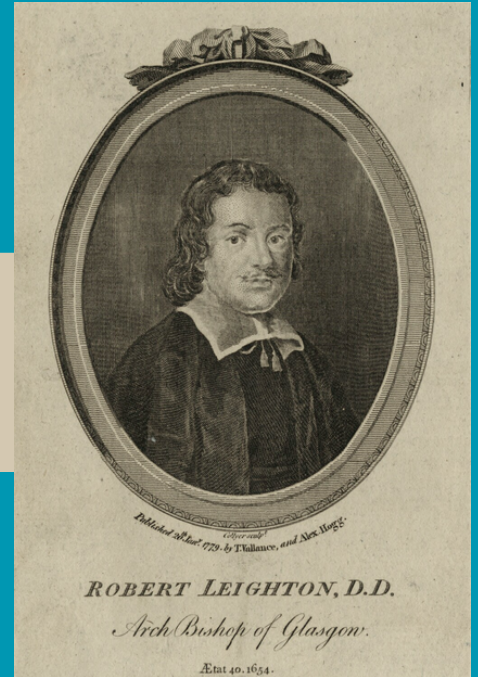
How many years after Robert Leighton died was this engraving published? .....

Most images of Robert Leighton are from engravings. An engraving is a picture printed onto paper from a piece of wood or metal into which the design has been cut, scratched or gouged.



This line engraving of Robert Leighton by Sir Robert Strange (1721-1792), was published in 1758.

This engraving of Robert Leighton by Joseph Collyer the Younger (1748-1827), was published in 1779.



Although these engravings look different to the 1701 engraving, there is tiny text at the foot of all three engravings which shows they have made their own versions of the same drawing of 1654. The tiny text at the foot of each engraving also shows the word **aetat**. This is a shortened form of Latin **aetatis**, meaning age.

How old would Robert Leighton have been in 1654? .....

Could you draw someone from memory several years after you'd last seen them? Draw someone who you know well, only from your memory, without any pictures or seeing them as you draw.

Draw your own version of one of these portraits of Robert Leighton



What's similar between the four portraits, and which things are different?

Artist or Engraver	Describe hair (style, length, colour)	Describe facial features (moustache, eyes)	Describe clothing (robe, collar, buttons)	Is Robert Leighton's body facing to the left, right or forward?
Schuneman				
White				
Strange				
Collyer				

What would you include in a portrait of you to show your interests, or to show something about you? What would people see in the portrait?

**Videos showing how an engraving for printing was created in the past**

- Royal Academy of Arts <https://youtu.be/eKmArIrxLI>
- Edinburgh Printmakers <https://youtu.be/QA-La4ljQIA>
- Book Arts Lab, Carleton University <https://youtu.be/xl1UjvwAvao>

**Videos showing how to create a simple engraving using materials to which you may have easy access**

- National Gallery of Ireland [https://youtu.be/OocokxC\\_dGc](https://youtu.be/OocokxC_dGc)
- How to do Printmaking with Styrofoam <https://youtu.be/g9f0yKfLBpY>