

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2010
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Rubenianum Fund gathers momentum

In the past few months, the Rubenianum Fund has continued to gather momentum. The total amount raised so far already exceeds Euro 1.4 million from donors in Belgium, the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Switzerland. This is especially gratifying in these economically difficult times. It signifies that the final target of Euro 2 million is within reach, although obviously quite a lot of ground still needs to be covered.

The next fundraising event will take place in Madrid in the premises of the Fundacion Carlos de Amberes. This is a most appropriate location, as the Fundacion was established at the end of the 16th century by a Flemish merchant who came to Madrid. Moreover, it houses an impressive Rubens Altarpiece depicting Saint Andrew in its Chapel of San Andres de los Flamencos.

Madrid will also be the venue for the first trip for the donors and benefactors of the Fund. During three days, from 19 to 21 November, the participants will be able to see various locations not open to the public. The full but well-balanced programme includes a visit to three important private collections, a private view of the Rubens exhibition at the Prado, the projection of a new documentary on Rubens by Prado curator Alejandro Vergara, a visit to the atmospheric Descalzas Reales monastery and a dinner at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador. Last but not least, the participants will get a sneak preview of Volume XXVI(2),2 of the Corpus in the presence of its author, Jeremy Wood. It promises to be an unforgettable occasion, and it will be an opportunity to forge new links among the community of donors.

Thomas Leysen,
Chairman, Rubenianum Fund



Rubens after Titian, *The rape of Europa*
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

Dear Friends of the Rubenianum,

We are delighted to let you know that the results so far of the fundraising initiatives of the Rubenianum Fund have been immensely encouraging. Only three weeks ago, on 21st September to be precise, our colleagues of the Rubenshuis hosted a splendid fundraising dinner for the Dutch community of patrons and collectors living in our country which was also attended by the Dutch consul-general. The benevolent and generous support of a growing number of international Donors and Benefactors made it possible to hire two talented junior staff members on a fulltime basis. Bert Schepers and Prisca Valkeneers will assist the authors of the forthcoming volumes of the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard and prepare their manuscripts for publication. We hope that we will soon be in a position to hire a third scholarly assistant.

The heartfelt support of such a distinguished group of dedicated and genuine art lovers has been a tremendous source of inspiration. Over the past months the close collaboration between the Centre for the Flemish Arts of the 16th and 17th Centuries and the Rubenianum has been intensified. The new dynamism with which the Rubens Research has been imbued and invigorated has not escaped the attention of our colleagues and supporters worldwide. To all of us this means an extra motivation to further develop and expand the Rubenianum and to complete the Corpus within a reasonable time frame.

Véronique Van de Kerckhof

Curator Rubenianum

Arnout Balis

Chairman Centre for the Flemish
Arts of the 16th and 17th Centuries

The Centrum voor de Vlaamse Kunst van de 16e en de 17e eeuw

Since its foundation on 12th November, 1959 (which was commemorated at Antwerp earlier this year), the Centrum voor de Vlaamse Kunst van de 16de en de 17de Eeuw has published a number of monographs on Flemish art, and, in particular, it has edited more than thirty volumes of the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. The study of the visual arts of the 16th and the 17th century in the Netherlands and the publication of its results have been at the core of its objectives ever since its foundation. The Centrum began work with a modest collaboration on the catalogue of an exhibition of Van Dyck drawings and oil sketches (Rubenshuis, Antwerp, July–August 1960; Museum Boijmans–Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, September–November 1960), but soon became far more ambitious. Its report on the activities in 1960 reveals that it planned to publish complete catalogues of the works of the greatest Flemish artists of the period, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Peter Paul Rubens, as well as a series of monographs on specific subjects. But the Rubens Corpus was the most immediate of its concerns, and has remained so ever since.

The founders of the Centrum, Roger–A. d’Hulst, professor at Ghent University and curator of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts at Brussels, and Frans Baudouin, curator of the art–historical museums of the City of Antwerp, including the Rubenshuis, knew through personal contacts that Ludwig Burchard (1886–1960) and his heirs, his widow and his son Wolfgang, were considering donating to the City of Antwerp the documentation that he had collected since the early 1920s in preparation of a complete *catalogue raisonné* of the works of Rubens. Antwerp was considered by them to be the ideal place to house his material and to make sure that his life’s work would ultimately be realized. His books and catalogues, his photographs and his notes would be preserved in a building close to the Rubenshuis, now known as the Rubenianum, which was specially designed for it, and where scholars from all over the world could come to study. Also, and perhaps even more importantly, the *catalogue raisonné* of Rubens’s works which Burchard had been unable to complete, would at last be realized in Antwerp.

The concepts of a research institute devoted to the art of Rubens and of the new complete catalogue of his works originated almost at the same time, at the end of the First World War. In 1919 Paul Buschmann (1877–1924), who in the last years of his life was curator of the Antwerp Museum of Fine Arts, wrote an essay on the restoration and future use of Rubens’s house, which had been acquired by the City of Antwerp. This essay, which was only published in 1938, defended the idea that the Rubenshuis should not only be a museum, but should also contain a Rubens library and Rubens archive, where scholars could consult publications, photographs and engravings of his works.

Ludwig Burchard had planned a new *catalogue raisonné* of Rubens’s paintings and drawings to replace Max Rooses’s five–volume *Oeuvre de P.P. Rubens*, published between 1886 and 1892, from at least as early as the first years after the War. At that time,

he was living in Berlin and was active as editor of the *Allgemeines Künstler–Lexikon* of Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker and the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*. In 1921, he had finished the publication of Rudolf Oldenbourg’s volume on Rubens in the *Klassiker der Kunst* series. In a draft note (Antwerp, Rubenianum), probably meant to persuade a publisher to finance the project, he wrote in 1922 that he had been working for many years on a Rubens catalogue and had devoted all his energy to that project (“beschäftigt sich seit vielen Jahren mit den Vorarbeiten für einen Rubenskatalog. Er hat dem seit Jahren seine Arbeitskraft gewidmet”). He had made a lot of observations on matters such as authenticity, overpainting, dates, etc. He had collected numerous photographs and notes and had even fully corrected a copy of Rooses’s five volumes. These books, with interspersed blank pages covered with countless notes by Burchard, are still preserved in the Rubenianum.

The proposal of 1922 included the participation of Gustav Glück, curator of the Kunsthistorisches Museum at Vienna. The latter would put at Burchard’s disposal his own collection of photographs and his notes, mostly on Rubens drawings, and the two scholars agreed to meet at regular intervals to discuss the progress of the project, and to publish the catalogue under both their names. Burchard would produce most of the work, since he would take care of the catalogue. Glück would only add an introduction with a short appreciation of Rubens (“eine kurze Würdigung”).

The new catalogue, so Burchard argued, would be superior to Rooses’s work in several ways. The material was to be organized in the same way according to subjects (Old Testament, New Testament, Mythology, History, Portrait, Landscape, etc.), but many of the older attributions were to be reconsidered, hundreds of new drawings, sketches and paintings were to be added and the connection between the different stages of Rubens’s creation, drawings, oil sketches, finished paintings, engravings would



Burchard's house

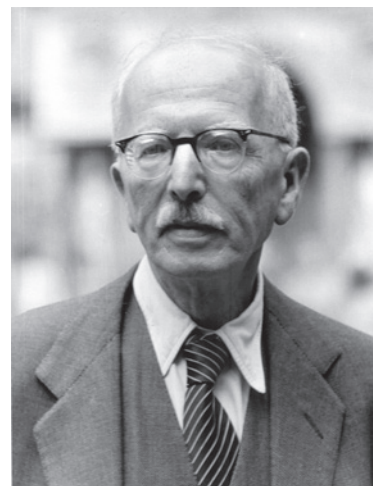
be studied in detail. What Burchard called Rooses’s “endlessly long descriptions” (“endlos langen Beschreibungen”) were to be replaced by small photographic illustrations. They would make the catalogue more accessible to the reader. Burchard estimated that the catalogue could be finished within two years if he received the opportunity to devote all his time to it. However, the proposed collaboration between Burchard and Glück did not materialize. A few years later, in 1928, the latter published, together with Franz Martin Haberditzl, a book on Rubens drawings, *Die Handzeichnungen von Peter Paul Rubens*. In its Foreword, he claimed it had already been planned before the war. Ludwig Burchard, “the excellent specialist in this field” (“dem ausgezeichneten Kenner dieses Gebietes”) was specifically thanked for providing information and suggestions and for his help in correcting the galley–proofs.

The failure of the plans of 1922 did not discourage Burchard. He went on to collect and to classify material for his Rubens catalogue, even though he had to work single–handed. Nothing was heard about the publication for many years. In 1938 – Burchard had moved to London in 1935 –, the publication was announced by Elsevier in Amsterdam of *Ludwig Burchard: The Work of Peter Paul Rubens. An illustrated catalogue of the paintings, drawings and engravings, in six volumes demy quarto*. The brochure even contained a sample of one of the catalogue entries. One can assume that Burchard planned to write the six volumes one after the other. But the Second World War made this impossible.

*This is not the end of the story.
To be continued in the next issue of the
Rubenianum Quarterly.*

Carl Van de Velde

Ludwig Burchard



A new acquisition for the Rubenshuis

Ben van Beneden

The Rubenshuis, which has a small but interesting ensemble of seventeenth-century Flemish masters, recently added a rarity to its collection: a genre piece painted by Jacob Jordaens around 1640–45. The painting was purchased in December 2009 at a London sale by the Courtin–Bouché Fund and given on long-term loan to the Rubenshuis, where it will be on display from 9 November as part of the permanent collection. What makes *The Bagpipe Player* special is that we recognize in this painting the artist himself, albeit with some difficulty. The same man, passionately making music, figures in a small number of other paintings by Jordaens, beginning with the splendid version of ‘As the old sing, so twitter the young’ now in the Musée des Beaux–Arts in Valenciennes. In addition to this painting, which is generally dated slightly earlier than *The Bagpipe Player*, there are at least three works by the master (or his studio) in which the same visage is recognizable.



Jacob Jordaens
The Bagpipe Player.

Jordaens painted himself half-length against a uniform background, with his gaze directed at the viewer. His flushed face, round cheeks, half-closed eyes and forehead wrinkled with the effort of blowing all testify to his total absorption in playing the instrument. He decked himself out for the occasion in a fantasy costume befitting an actor on the stage. Although Jordaens used himself as a model, the painting is definitely not autobiographical, but rather intended as a ‘tronie’: a portrayal of a certain figure type or characteristic facial expression. Not only that, but by casting himself in the role of bagpipe player, Jordaens was perhaps striving for a humorous effect.

The Bagpipe Player, which was in reasonably good condition at the time of its purchase, was nevertheless in need of conservation treatment, since the paint layer had been marred by a combination of surface dirt, yellowed layers of varnish and disturbing retouches. The restoration, financed by the Courtin–Bouché Fund and carried out by Marie Postec, has made it possible to display the painting once again in its original state, inasmuch as this is possible. In addition, the restoration has provided more insight into both the evolution of the work and Jordaens’s painting technique. Technical research has revealed that it is almost certainly an independent work of art and not a fragment of a larger picture. In accordance with what we have come to expect from Jordaens, the composition was executed rapidly with vigorous brushstrokes and the necessary artistic nonchalance. Many changes made during the painting process are visible, and it is clear that Jordaens took no pains to cover up his previous design. These so-called pentimenti are particularly noticeable in the hands, for which the painter seems to have tried out various positions. The most conspicuous pentimento, however, can be seen at the height of the headwear, where Jordaens painted a blue cap over a lady’s red hat. It is nice to discover that both pieces of headgear appear in other works by Jordaens, such as his 1638 version of ‘As the old sing, so twitter the young’ in Antwerp’s Royal Museum of Fine Arts. The crowning touch to the restoration was a new, historically correct frame.

The acquisition of *The Bagpipe Player* gives a considerable boost to the collection of the Rubenshuis. Jordaens was already represented by several other works of high quality, but this new acquisition enables the museum to present more clearly the various aspects of his work.

Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678), the son of a linen merchant, received his training in the studio of the history painter and portraitist Adam van Noort (1562–1641), in whose house he lived until 1618. It was there that he married his master’s eldest daughter, Catharina, in 1616. As a young painter Jordaens, together

with Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), worked in Rubens's studio, where they had access to material normally kept under lock and key. The two young painters shared subjects, motifs and models, and it was Van Dyck's influence that prompted Jordaens to explore more thoroughly his 'rough' manner of painting. Nearly two decades later, Jordaens worked as a kind of sub-contractor on a number of important commissions executed by Rubens and his studio.

Jordaens owed his fame as an artist mainly to his work as a history painter: the majority of his works are paintings of religious or mythological subjects. In addition to biblical and mythological themes, however, his repertoire also included genre pieces. Indeed, a small but important part of his oeuvre consists of high-spirited depictions of the Feast of Epiphany, or Twelfth Night ('The King Drinks'), a holiday traditionally celebrated in the Low Countries by having a jolly meal with family and friends. According to a time-honoured custom, one of the merry-makers was proclaimed 'king' – usually the one who found a bean in a cake specially baked for the occasion, or the person who drew the winning lot. The other guests also drew lots to determine who would play the fool, the master of ceremonies, the cook, and of course the musician, who in Jordaens's paintings is invariably a bagpipe player. The climax of the evening was the moment when the king put his glass to his lips, at which point the entire company roared: 'The king drinks.'

Also very popular were Jordaens's festive interpretations of 'As the old sing, so twitter the young', a proverb he had dug up from the work of the popular writer and statesman Jacob Cats (1577–1660). In 1632 the Hague printer Isaac Burchoorn published Cats's splendidly produced *Spiegel vanden ouden ende nieuwen tijdt* (Mirror of old and new times), which treated in a manner at once accessible and erudite important areas of private life, such as marriage and the family, as well as such themes as instruction and imitation. It emerges from the way in which the well-known proverb was used in seventeenth-century literature that it served either to emphasize man's innate nature or to stress the importance of example and education. Works such as 'The King Drinks' and 'As the old sing, so twitter the young' are often seen as proof that in those days, too, people knew how to enjoy themselves. However, the fact that artists and their public were obviously amused by the subject does not rule out the possibility that such paintings were conceived as moralizing works.

A piquant detail is that Jordaens allowed his wife and daughter, as well as his father-in-law and teacher, Adam van Noort, to figure more or less recognizably in these compositions, even if their likenesses were not intended as portraits in the usual sense.

Although this practice was common among seventeenth-century artists, it is not easy to say whether they were trying to make a statement of some kind. Presumably Jordaens liked to use notably 'paintable' models from his immediate circle, in order to demonstrate that a picture was patterned after life. An artist of his stature understood all too well that the more recognizable a composition, the more likely it was to get the message across.

In a few compositions, such as 'As the old sing, so twitter the young' in Valenciennes and *The Bagpipe Player* in the Rubenshuis, Jordaens apparently did not shrink from taking centre stage himself. Certainly he was not the only seventeenth-century artist to cast himself in the role of protagonist or supporting actor. Genre painting provides us with examples by Adriaan Brouwer, David Teniers, Theodoor Rombouts, Frans van Mieris and Jan Steen. The incorporation of the painter's self-portrait in a composition became standard practice in the Renaissance. Like a painted signature, the 'hidden self-portrait' helped spread the artist's fame and preserve his features for posterity. Moreover, it strengthened the ties between the artist and his public. The influential Florentine architect and art theorist Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) had advised painters to include a figure that looks at the viewer, thus drawing him into the story. Raphael, for instance, painted himself in his famous School of Athens in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican. According to the artists' biographers Giorgio Vasari and Karel van Mander, many painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries portrayed themselves in important commissions. By turning an accessory figure into a self-portrait, the artist assumed the role of eyewitness, which in a history painting lent a special authority to his version of events and in the case of a biblical subject testified even more strongly to his devotion. In genre scenes this trick intensified the satirical effect by allowing the viewer to share in both the reproof and the amusement.

Supposing that *The Bagpipe Player* does display certain characteristics of Jordaens's work, how are we to interpret it: as a version of the old saying that every painter always paints himself ('ogni dipintore dipinge sé'), or as a more general expression of seventeenth-century humour? Since the end of the nineteenth century, Jacob Jordaens has been viewed as a popular painter whose canvases are frank expressions of his personal feelings, even though most of his oeuvre is devoted to the exalted genre of history painting: representations based on the Bible, mythology and stories from Antiquity. At first glance *The Bagpipe Player* seems to confirm Jordaens's image as an exponent of folk life. In the paintings in both Valenciennes and Antwerp, Jordaens

portrayed himself rather unflatteringly, playing a dubious instrument generally associated with the vulgar sounds of rural fairs, suspect inns and raucous folk festivals. In the scenes of gorging and guzzling peasants painted by Pieter Bruegel and Adriaan Brouwer, the personages nearly always dance to the music of bagpipes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a distinction was made not only between 'high' and 'low' music, but also between noble and vulgar instruments. The bagpipes, in particular, were much maligned, as seen, for instance, in a print by Philips Galle after Frans Floris, *Two Sorts of Music*, in which respectable and questionable instruments are contrasted, and the bagpipes are relegated to the group of inferior instruments. Obviously those who chose to play such undignified instruments would have to content themselves with a humble social status.

An instrument almost always presented as illustrious – and far higher in the social hierarchy than bagpipes – was the lute. It cannot be a coincidence that Jordaens portrayed himself no fewer than three times playing this instrument. Among his early works from the period 1615–16 are two lively group portraits – one depicting his own family and the other his in-laws – both of which show the painter strumming a lute as proof of the 'concordia', or harmony, prevailing among the family members. In the masterly group portrait, dating from 1621–22, which includes his wife, his daughter Elisabeth and a maidservant – a painting filled with references to love, family harmony and fertility (now in the Museo del Prado in Madrid) – the painter portrayed himself holding a lute. By contrast, in his official self-portraits – which bear no hint of irony whatsoever – Jordaens invariably depicted himself as a true gentleman, an extremely self-conscious man who takes life very seriously indeed. Even though one is tempted at first to describe *The Bagpipe Player* as a self-portrait on the basis of the model's recognizability, this does not completely tally with the idea behind the composition, which should be construed as a 'tronie'. Moreover, we see in this painting an artist ridiculing the behaviour expected from someone of his standing. Jordaens's erudition, his versatility as an artist, his clientele and his self-awareness – all these things are at odds with the image presented here. At the same time, however, this painting – which is eloquent and appealing in every respect – is a perfect illustration of the numerous ambiguity and wit for which seventeenth-century artists appear to have held patent.

A sleeping Pan

Rubens was a great admirer of Antiquity. He spent 8 years in Italy, from 1600 to 1608, where he avidly studied and copied classical sculptures. The majority of these copies were made directly after the originals and his drawings of some celebrated statues show us that he must have moved around them, reproducing them under different angles, making front and back views and even trying out rather unconventional viewpoints. In Rubens's time the life size marble of this sleeping Pan was probably regarded as an antique statue. Today it is attributed to Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (ca. 1507–1563), a Florentine sculptor and architect and at one time an assistant of Michelangelo. On the latter's recommendations he restored the antique sculptures in the Vatican, including the Laocoön group and the Apollo Belvedere. No wonder that this impressive Pan was once considered a classical work of art. It was probably intended for a fountain and is now in the Saint-Louis Art Museum, Missouri.

This marble block stood on the floor, like a sarcophagus, and Rubens must have leaned over it, in order to draw the whole surface while standing at the feet of the sleeping Pan. The highly finished drawing was executed in red chalk and heightened with white. Another Rubens copy, previously in the Burchard collection and now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, shows the same Pan but from a different angle.

It is in mirror image and heavily reworked by Rubens over a counterproof of a now-lost red chalk drawing.

Rubens's copies after the Antique served several purposes, like refining his drawing technique and making a thorough study of the three-dimensional qualities in a statue. This he did splendidly in the very refined Pan drawing, reproducing with great skill the subtleties of the anatomy, with all the variations in the relief of the muscles. He also regarded his drawings as records, a valuable documentation of the monuments and other splendours he observed in Italy and would probably never see again. Those studies were taken back to Antwerp and stored in his 'Cantoor', a cupboard or a room in which he kept his study material. They served as an important source of inspiration for his paintings or other compositions. Since Rubens took the pains of rendering this Pan from two different points of view, he must have liked the sculpture, but up to now this model could not be linked with a figure in a later composition.

The sleeping Pan drawing was completely unknown to the Rubens scholars. It showed up at a sale organized at the Hôtel Drouot, Paris, by Camard & Associés on 7 June 2010 where it was sold for the price of Euro 433.720. This is a good price for a Rubens drawing and although entirely by his hand one must take into account that it is a copy, after an existing composition, and not an invention of the artist himself.

Cécile Kruyffhoof



Rubens,
A sleeping Pan

The Rubenianum Lectures

Arnout Balis,
Het Theoretische Notaboek
19 December 2010, 11 am, Rubenianum

We kindly invite you to our second *Rubenianum Lecture*, entitled *Rubens' Theoretische Notaboek*. Professor Arnout Balis, President of the Centre of Flemish Art of the 16th and 17th Centuries, will talk about the intriguing theoretical notebook of Peter Paul Rubens. This notebook, also known as Rubens's 'pocket book', was recently the subject of his paper at the *Rubens and the Human Body* congress (University of York, 17–18 September) and it will be treated in depth by Arnout Balis and David Jaffé in part XXV of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*.

Celebration of Carl Van de Velde

Professor Emeritus Carl Van de Velde has been a pillar of support at the Centrum voor de Vlaamse Kunst van de 16de en de 17de eeuw ever since 1960 when he was appointed its very first research assistant. Dr Ludwig Burchard died 7 September that same year, and Carl took on the task of making an inventory of the immense body of documentation that Burchard had left behind. The young art historian was dispatched to Hampstead in London, where Burchard had lived and died, to compile the 'black books' which have since become legendary, a full record of the Burchard documentation which amounts to no less than 2300 files. Luckily Carl has been and still is a hard worker. Even during the demanding years that he spent at Brussels University – as a professor, chairman and dean – Carl has been most loyal to the Centrum, and he is not planning on giving up yet. Of course, this fiftieth anniversary could not pass without a celebration.

On 1 October 2010, marking the exact day of his arrival at the Centrum, Carl's years of continuous dedication were warmly celebrated with a very special surprise party attended by his many friends, his colleagues and, not least, his family.

Prisca Valkeneers



Carl between 'the latest acquisitions':
Prisca Valkeneers and Bert Schepers, the new editorial assistants.

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