

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2011

Donor community growing

The fundraising efforts for the Rubenianum have continued to proceed at an encouraging pace. So far, the Rubenianum Fund has raised somewhat more than 1.5 million euros, taking us over three quarters to the minimum goal of 2 million euros. All in all, more than 75 donors have committed up to now. About half of the amount raised came from private individuals (of which in turn almost half came from Belgium, and the balance from all over Europe and from the United States). Nineteen percent was accounted for by two Belgium-based foundations, the InBev-Baillet Latour Foundation and the Fonds Courtin-Bouché. Art market professionals and auction houses contributed some 20 percent, and corporate donations amounted to slightly over 13 percent of the total amount. A few more fundraising events are planned in the course of 2011, leading hopefully to the gathering of the full amount originally envisaged.

The dates for the second field trip for the donors (after the highly successful event in Madrid, on which we reported in the previous issue of the *Rubenianum Quarterly*) have been set. It will take place between 2 and 5 July, and will take the participants to London, Boughton House and Chatsworth. In London, there will be a visit to the drawings in the Seilern Collection at the Courtauld Institute. At Boughton, one of the highlights will undoubtedly be the full series of Van Dyck oil sketches for the so-called *Iconography* (portraits of leading Antwerp citizens). In Chatsworth, participants will be able to view the print room and see among many treasures the 'Antwerp Sketchbook' with copies after Rubens's lost 'Theoretical Notebook' (as discussed by Arnout Balis on pages 3–4 of the present issue). The programme will close with a dinner at the residence of the Belgian ambassador. The donors will be advised of the full programme shortly by a separate mail. In view of the limited number of participants, early registration will be advisable.



Dear Friends of the Rubenianum,

As I look back at the first full year of existence of the Rubenianum Fund, it is clear that our initial expectations at the time of creation of the Fund have been exceeded. This fills me with gratitude towards our benefactors and donors, but also towards the many people who contributed so effectively to the fundraising effort.

It was fantastic to see how, in such a short period, the Rubenianum Fund has energized the whole scholarly community and led to a new momentum in the preparation and publication rhythm of the Corpus Rubenianum. It was also a crucial factor in gaining increased attention from the public authorities and securing their support for our endeavours. It was equally gratifying to see that we have been able to reach out to a wider public beyond the 'hard core' of the Rubens connoisseurs through this Rubenianum Quarterly, but also through the 'Rubenianum Lectures' and indeed through the first field trip which we organized.

The challenge is now to maintain this momentum in the years ahead. Based on the enthusiasm which we have been able to generate collectively, I feel confident that we will succeed.

Thomas Leysen
Chairman Rubenianum Fund

Corpus authors meet in Antwerp

1 December 2010 will go down as a red-letter day in the annals of the Centrum voor de Vlaamse Kunst van de 16e en de 17e eeuw and the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*. For the first time ever, current and designated authors of the series were invited to come together for a meeting, and despite relatively short notice, twenty-two authors made their way to Antwerp, with only four unable to attend.

The initiative for such a gathering was in no small way indebted to the enthusiasm generated by the success of the Rubenianum Fund, whose generous financial backing has given the Centrum the resources to provide increased assistance to authors. At the same time it was important to explain to authors that such support brings with it the obligation to meet the deadline of 2020 for completion of the publication of the *Corpus*.

The meeting was addressed by three members of the Editorial Board: Prof. Arnout Balis, chairman of the Centrum, Prof. Emeritus Carl Van de Velde, and Dr Fiona Healy (this writer). In his introduction Arnout Balis outlined the points to be covered: a brief résumé of the current state of the *Corpus*; the importance of the Rubenianum Fund; an overview of the Burchard Documentation; the structure of a *Corpus* volume (essay and entries) and what the Centrum offers and expects from its authors. Although seasoned *Corpus* authors were in the audience, many were new to the task, and all welcomed the information given by Arnout Balis and especially Carl Van de Velde, who explained the history of

the Centrum and its association with the *Corpus* (see *The Rubenianum Quarterly* 2010, nos. 2 & 3) and what it means to be a *Corpus* author. Some aspects were easily clarified, others required greater elaboration. The arrangement and use of the Burchard Documentation were described in detail and authors informed of what can or must be incorporated into their published texts: for instance, catalogue entries must cite Burchard's opinion (when known) on whether the work is an autograph Rubens, retouched by him, a studio version or a copy; authors are however free to disagree with his judgement and make a different attribution. Particularly intriguing was the account of the *Corpus*'s complex genealogical structure: an author does not write a book but a part, or even a sub-part, which may consist of one or more books with one or more volumes. To give you an example: *Part xxvi* on "Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists" consists of *sub-part 1*: "Northern Artists" and *sub-part 2*: "Italian Artists". Kristin Belkin's *sub-part 1* is one book in two volumes, while Jeremy Wood's *sub-part 2* comprises three books of two volumes each. It has been calculated that on completion the 29 parts of the *Corpus* will total almost 50 books and that the number of volumes could be as high as 86. With considerable work remaining to be done, the meeting constituted an important factor in motivating all authors to achieve the goal of completing the *Corpus* by the end of the decade.

Communication plays a vital role in maintaining the motivation required to see long-term projects to their desired conclusion. Authors need someone

they can turn to for help, be it to acquire photographic material, when making a study trip, or to enquire who might assist in solving a particular problem. Equally, the Centrum requires regular reports on the progress of individual authors so that the publication schedule can be monitored and updated. It needs to be able to figure travel expenses into the annual budget and be kept informed of any problems. To streamline these and a number of other organizational aspects, the Editorial Board appointed me 'corpus coordinator'. Though still early days, the network of communication made so easy by email is functioning well, so much so that authors are already distributing electronic copies of recent articles to their *Corpus* colleagues.

But just who are our authors and what qualifies them for the task of writing on Rubens? Given that we are on Rubens's home territory, it is hardly surprising that sixteen of the nine women and seventeen men are from Belgium, with four from Great Britain (one also an Australian national), three from Germany, two from France and one from Ireland. It is of course the policy of the Centrum to secure the most qualified scholars as authors, so while no Americans are currently on the team, they have made a major contribution to the *Corpus* in the past, with no less than nine parts having been written by seven authors, the most recent published by Kristin Belkin in 2009. Most authors work or have worked in museums and/or universities, a few are independent scholars. Generally an author is chosen for his or her expertise on Rubens, and will usually have worked on the specific genre or iconography of the allocated part. But specialists in baroque sculpture and architecture have been called in for the parts covering Rubens's work in these areas. The Editorial Board generally appoints one author to write a part or sub-part, but in the case of the vast number of mythological works it decided that designating a team of seven authors would be the best solution and the one most likely to speed up the publication process.

In his opening address, Arnout Balis expressed the hope that the gathering would create an *esprit de corps* among all those involved in the production of the *Corpus*. Judging by the animated discussions over lunch, during the tour of the Burchard Documentation, and at dinner, authors certainly made the most of this unique opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and experiences. The official part of the day ended with the launching of Jeremy Wood's second book, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists II. Titian and North Italian Art*. This gave all participants a glimpse of the kind of occasion they may expect when their research is published and the completion of the *Corpus* is a step closer.

Fiona Healy



Some *Corpus* authors in the Kolveniershof before Rubens's *Interpretation of the Victim* from the *Decius Mus* tapestry series. Back row (left to right): David Jaffé, Bert Schepers, Ulrich Heinen, Nico Van Hout, Carl Van de Velde, Gregory Martin, Hans Vlieghe, Reinhold Baumstark, Piet Lombaerde; front row: Fiona Healy, Jeremy Wood, Blaise Ducos, Christine Van Mulders, Valerie Herremans, Elizabeth McGrath, Arnout Balis, Karolien de Clippel, Nora de Poorter, Ria Fabri, Ben van Beneden

Rubens's lost Theoretical Notebook

Arnout Balis

What is presented here, is a summary of a lecture delivered at the Kolveniershof in Antwerp on 19 December 2010, in the context of our recently founded series of 'Rubenianum Lectures'. Eventually, the material treated here will be published in the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard (volume xxv: The Theoretical Notebook). This publication will be authored by myself and David Jaffé of the National Gallery, London.

Rubens has been called one of the most erudite of painters; witness his constant rethinking of iconographical themes on the basis of his readings and his vast (but only partially preserved) correspondence (see the next issue of this *Quarterly*). His interests were wide and diverse, but he left us few explicitly formulated thoughts on artistic matters.

Tantalizing, then, are the rumours, which already circulated in the 17th century, concerning a manuscript notebook containing Rubens's remarks on optics, symmetry, proportions, anatomy, architecture and a study of the human passions by way of a juxtaposition of quotations from classical literature (e.g. Virgil) and visual parallels (e.g. Raphael). Our first source is Giovanni Pietro Bellori, in his 1672 brief but well-informed biography of the painter, shortly afterwards followed by the Frenchman Roger de Piles (1677). But this devotee of the Flemish master went one step further and tried to hunt the manuscript down in Antwerp, where he was well connected. Apparently with success, since in a later publication (1699) he could claim: 'the original is in my hands'. And

he published two extracts from it: thoughts on Leonardo's treatment of the concept of decorum ('that which is fitting'), and some well-aimed reflections on how (not) to go about when imitating the prototypes of the human figure found in ancient sculpture. It is this brief text, *De imitatione statuarum*, that has assured Rubens a place in the theorizing about art. This might indeed be called a central focus from which to start a study of Rubens's treatment of the human body. But of course, in the meantime we know that the manuscript contained much more and we would like to study it in detail.

Unfortunately, this would no longer seem possible since Rubens's original manuscript was consumed in a fire in the workshops of the famous French cabinetmaker André-Charles Boulle on the night of 30 August 1720. But this is not the end of the story. Before that date, still in the 17th century, the Rubens manuscript had been copied more than once. One of these copies, the so-called De Ganay MS, was even published as early as 1773 in a French translation, accompanied by engravings that give a faithful rendering of the illustrated sections. In this guise it was well known to Rubens scholars. But for unclear reasons this material was discarded as 'apocryphal' by Max Roeses, the foremost Rubens specialist around 1900. It had to remain 'in limbo' till the well-researched (and courageous) publication in 1966 by Michael Jaffé of another copy in the collection of the Dukes of Devonshire in Chatsworth, which he called *Van Dyck's Antwerp Sketchbook*. The scholarly literature since then is far

from unanimous about the attribution of this manuscript to the young Van Dyck, and it seems advisable to give it a more neutral name, such as the 'Chatsworth MS'.

In his research on the Chatsworth MS, Michael Jaffé concentrated on the visual motifs, which to a large degree were based on existing material (mostly engravings). But he also meticulously reconstructed what happened with Rubens's original manuscript till its disappearance in 1720, and he also unearthed many facts about a third copy, which is now called the 'Johnson MS' after its first known owner (now in the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London).

Nobody had expected it, but after so many years a fourth copy of Rubens's lost notebook has come to light: fragments of it were published by Juan Borges, who had acquired it for his own collection in Madrid (let us call it the 'Borges MS'), and so it came to the attention of my co-author, David Jaffé.

If I may summarize: the original Rubens manuscript is lost for ever, but we have four copies of it available for study, and they deserve better than being termed 'apocryphal'. Let us, then, explore their possible importance for Rubens research.

When reading the reports by Bellori and De Piles, one might get the impression that Rubens's notebook contained rather standard ingredients, typical for art-theoretical treatises: anatomy and proportions of the human body, symmetry and perspective (if this is what they meant by 'optics'). The exploration of the passions and emotions is perhaps the most original



Geometrical analysis of the Hercules Farnese (Bordes MS)

Comparison between the face of an antique Venus and a horse's muzzle (Chatsworth MS)



Various motifs of weeping women (Chatsworth MS)

ingredient, and it had certainly impressed both writers.

But when we turn to the four manuscripts we get another image of what the notebook might have contained. It should be pointed out that none of the manuscripts mentioned can be called a faithful replica of the lost original. Each copyist made his own selection, leaving out material and rearranging what he borrowed, and apparently supplementing it with extraneous stuff. Although it would seem that even in combination the four manuscripts do not offer a complete picture of the notebook, there is enough to surprise us and make us think differently about the artist's intellectual make-up. Rubens's physiognomical studies, for example, in which he draws parallels between human forms and those of certain animals, such as the lion, the bull and the horse, may at first sight look just amusing, until we realize that for Rubens this was a serious exploration with metaphysical ambitions. Similarly, his geometrical analysis of the human form, which at first approach might seem like an exercise in artistic ('cubistic') geometry, is again packed with metaphysical ideas about the pristine perfection of mankind as created by God, and its subsequent degeneration. Instead of a purely artistic theory, Rubens here expounds a sort of neo-Pythagorean conception of the human form, imbued with cabalistic ideas and notions from Paracelsian alchemy.

Is it 'another Rubens', then, with whom we are confronted here? And how should we harmonize the contents we encounter here with the received opinion concerning humanism and Counter-Reformation as being characteristic for the intellectual climate in the Southern Netherlands in the baroque age? It is clear that this unexpected material deserves further study.

Three new studies on Flemish art presented at the Rubenianum

21 February 2011 was a lively day at the Rubenianum. Well over a hundred scholars and enthusiasts of Flemish art met in the Kolveniershof for the presentation of three interesting studies on early Netherlandish art.

The new Teniers biography by Professor Emeritus Hans Vlieghe had long been expected. Exactly 400 years after the birth of David Teniers the Younger, Hans Vlieghe could present his impressive work to the audience. Having devoted his master thesis to Teniers, Vlieghe returned to the subject of Teniers's long and eventful life some years ago. The result is a thorough and critical biography, based on all known – and some new – archival data. In his presentation, Hans Vlieghe situated his book within the rather scarce Teniers literature. He also presented the public with a synoptic and erudite sketch of Teniers's life, illustrated by a manifold of historical facts, interpretations and paintings.

David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690): A Biography is volume xvi in the Brepols's highly valued series *Pictura Nova. Studies in 16th and 17th Century Flemish Painting and Drawing*. Initiated and edited by Hans Vlieghe and Katlijne Van der Stighelen, this series of art-historical studies already includes several monographic and thematic studies that are indispensable in every art library.

In addition to Hans Vlieghe's book, there were two more studies at – and as many reasons to attend – the book presentation. Katlijne Van der Stighelen introduced two further new titles in the Brepols catalogue. Both volumes, co-edited by herself and published in the series *Museums at the Crossroads*, bundle the proceedings of symposia held at Leuven University. Both explore pictorial themes – the portrait

and the nude – in an innovative and interdisciplinary way and their authors are internationally renowned specialists.

Rather than briefly touching upon the variety of topics dealt with in these publications, Katlijne Van der Stighelen cited an anecdote linking the respective themes in a literal and amusing way. It stems from Judith van Gent's recent dissertation on the Dutch portrait painter Bartholomeus van der Helst. In the 1670s, a young woman pressed charge against Bartholomeus's son Lodewijk van der Helst, also a portrait painter. He had painted her portrait, as commissioned by her and to her satisfaction, but he also had used her features in a naked Venus, without asking her permission. The anecdote ends happily as the case was settled by mutual agreement: the sitter and the artist eventually got married.

For those who are interested in the study of Flemish art history, books remain indispensable and precious bearers of information, the most suitable medium to reflect and divulge research.

The Rubenianum may be considered a natural host for such book-related events, as on the one hand it offers base material for art-historical research through its collections, while with its library on the other hand it is an eager consumer of studies like these. Just as the Kolveniershof was once designed to accommodate festive receptions and cultural events, one of the key roles for which the Rubenianum was created is to be the Antwerp-based centre and meeting place for the community of researchers and devotees of Flemish Renaissance and Baroque art. Such was – to our delight – once again the case on this occasion. But no matter how much we would like to, with an average acquisitions figure of nearly 85 titles a month, we cannot unfortunately welcome all new books in an equally festive way.

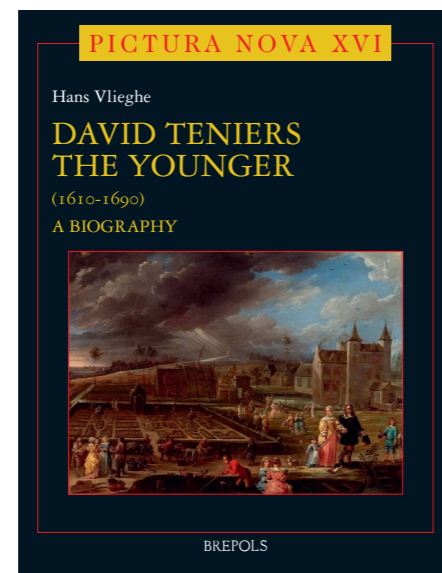
HANS Vlieghe

David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690): A Biography [*Pictura Nova. Studies in 16th and 17th Century Flemish Painting and Drawing*, xvi], Turnhout 2011 – 214 pp.

K. VAN DER STIGHELEN, H. MAGNUS, B. WATTEUW (eds.) *Pokerfaced. Flemish and Dutch Baroque Faces Unveiled*, Turnhout 2011 – 277 pp.

K. DE CLIPPEL, K. VAN CAUTEREN, K. VAN DER STIGHELEN *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries*, Turnhout 2011 – 220 pp.

The detailed contents of the latter two can be viewed on www.rubenianum.be www.brepols.net



Hans Vlieghe's David Teniers monograph

Rubeniana

New York auctions at Christie's and Sotheby's, 26–28 January 2011

26 January 2011 was an exciting day for anyone interested in Flemish, especially Rubens drawings. The Christie's auction of *Old Master & 19th Century Paintings, Drawings & Watercolors*, Part II (sale 2511) included twelve drawings (lots 269–280) from the collection of the late Ludwig Burchard (1886–1960), the founder of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, among them at least five Rubens drawings: no. 269, the double-sided sheet with the *Abduction of Hippodameia* [also called the 'Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs'] and *Christ Shown to the People*, sold for \$218,500; no. 272, *Henry of Luxembourg*, a fragment from the *Costume Book* (sold for \$43,500); no. 273, *Three figures, probably apostles*, and a letter on the verso in Italian sold for \$122,500. No. 277, an unpublished *Anatomical study of a man's legs* fetched the highest bid of \$254,500. The study of a *Standing Angel* (no. 270; \$35,000) which the catalogue also accepted as an original is here discussed as 'attributed to'. All are reproduced in colour and are also available online (www.christies.com).

Below are some remarks and additions gathered during my New York visit before the sales when I was able to study the drawings out of their frames.

Several of the drawings had notes by Ludwig Burchard that might be of interest and are noted here.

Two drawings that Ludwig Burchard, who moved to London in 1935, seemed to treasure especially were in a British Museum type mount, namely lot 270, *A Standing Angel with a spear* (earlier, on-line as 'attributed to' but in the catalogue as 'Rubens'), and lot 273, *Three figures in classical mantles, probably apostles*.

Lot 269: The double-sided sheet of studies with *Hippodameia Abducted by the Centaur Eurytion*, and *The Way to Calvary* [at the left] and *Christ Shown to the People* [at the right] is one of Rubens's rare, significant late compositional drawings that was exhibited as early as 1933 but basically has been inaccessible for study until now. Since the early collector P.H. Lankrink (1628–1692), followed by J. Richardson, Sr., and T. Hudson, all added their collector's stamp on the side with *The Way to Calvary* and *Christ Shown to the People*, this side should probably be considered the recto, as J. Richard Judson did in the *Passion of Christ* volume (*Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, part vi, London 2000, p. 68, no. 14a, fig. 38 and no. 19a, fig. 57). In these two studies, separated on the sheet by a

vertical chalk line slightly right of centre, Rubens was more carefully delineating the individual figures and more clearly established the intended compositions. The left half with *Christ Carrying the Cross (The Way to Calvary)* is related to Rubens's commission of 1634 for the altar in Affligem, which also points to an earlier origin than the abbreviated sketch in red and black chalk for the *Abduction of Hippodameia* on the obverse, which was part of the Torre de la Parada commission that the artist received around 1636. Alpers catalogued it as the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* (Alpers 1971, no. 37a, fig. 137).

Lot 270: Sir Peter Paul Rubens: *A Standing Angel with a spear and the nails of the cross*. Since Burchard had the drawing mounted specially, he must have believed in the Rubens attribution; an opinion that is here modified to 'attributed to Rubens'. The angel does relate to sculptures that once were placed on the pediment of the Antwerp Jesuit Church and would have to be regarded as an early idea for the sculpture. It is also close to the engraving by Pieter Clouwet in reverse (but not traced for transfer).

Lot 272: Sir Peter Paul Rubens: *Henry of Luxembourg and another man*. Burchard wrote on the mount in pencil: *marque de la collection Eugène Rodrigues, Lugt 897*. Faint annotation: *Ec. franc. XVI^e. S; Henri de Luxembourg*; and 121 in pencil.

The drawing is on a heavier grey paper that is different from the sheet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (61.54.1, reproduced in colour in exh. *Rubens. A Genius at Work*, Brussels 2007, no. 10) and cannot have been part of it.

Lot 273: Sir Peter Paul Rubens: *Three figures in classical mantles, probably apostles* and a letter on the verso. The letter is in the opposite direction from the recto. The corners are cut and made up; at top right possibly to safeguard information. There is also a slight loss at top left. The scribbles at top centre look like writing samples of a finer and a heavier pen. An annotation on the mount in pencil reads: *apostelen / brief*. Since the apostle figures cannot be associated with a Rubens work, one may wonder whether they possibly are quick sketches after the work in question recently discussed in the letter?

Lot 277: Sir Peter Paul Rubens: *An écorché study of the legs of a male nude*. It is amazing that the existence of this fine Rubens drawing of a man's legs with a separate study of his right leg inserted in between them has remained unknown all these years. Its composition has been familiar thanks to a sheet in the Albertina (inv. 8309) that Michael Jaffé first published as an original in 1966, an opinion often supported. In the late 1970s Haverkamp-Begemann correctly labelled it a copy, an opinion that can now be



Rubens, An écorché study of the legs of a male nude

confirmed. The version in the Copenhagen *cantoor* group on which Willem Panneels wrote that he copied it from Rubens's *cantoor* can now also be verified because he faintly indicated a floor that is missing altogether in the Vienna example. On the verso, at top right of the Burchard drawing, we find another small, faint sketch in pen and brown ink of a leg or arm (?). Annotated at the lower centre in black chalk: *P. Rubbens*.

Also on 26 January 2011 Sotheby's showed in their *Old Master Drawings* sale an unpublished and previously unknown Rubens drawing from the Mariette collection of *Venus Nursing the Cupids*, signed *Petrus Paullus Rubenius* and dated April 1616 (lot 585, ill. in colour and available online. The Mariette mount is too damaged to exhibit. Lot 1007 in the 1775–76 Mariette sale.) Rubens dedicated the drawing to the Antwerp senator Paulus van Halmale with a lengthy Latin inscription. An earlier collector, perhaps Mariette, cut a horizontal strip around the caption *Crescetit Amores* that originally was probably included at the bottom of the drawing and pasted it at the top. The sheet also darkened somewhat due to exposure to light. The drawing with an estimate of \$500–800,000 did not sell. Cornelis Galle II engraved it in reverse without Rubens's inscription (Hollstein vii, p. 65, no. 145; 218 x 171 mm). Galle's drawing in black and red chalk on brown paper to approximate this recently discovered Rubens drawing, incised and reddened on the verso, was auctioned at Christie's, London, on 3 July 2007, lot 94 (156 x 156 mm).

Anne-Marie Logan

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