

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2014 1

On Blank Spots and Pitfalls

One of the blank spots in the field of Rubens research concerns the work produced by Rubens before May 1600, when he left for Italy where he was to spend the next eight years. In 1598, at the age of twenty-one, he had become a member of Antwerp's painters guild, the Guild of St Luke, and could officially call himself a 'master'. Rubens had received most of his training in the studio of Otto van Veen (1556–1629), Antwerp's most important history painter. Only a handful of works, one of which is the *Battle of the Amazons*, survive from that early period.

The *Battle of the Amazons* is not only one of Rubens's oldest known works, but also the result of his earliest known collaboration with his older colleague and good friend Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625). This early composition exists in several versions. How do they relate to one another, and what is their status? On the basis of its overall pictorial quality, the work from Potsdam has always been considered the original version, executed entirely by Rubens and Brueghel. But is this really the case? And what about the other two versions? There is no doubt that both paintings were made around the same time as the original. But where and by whom were they painted? Had Rubens already set up his own studio by this time, in his first years as an independent master? Or did he continue to work – as a 'freelance' assistant – in the studio of his teacher, Otto van Veen? There are no straightforward answers to these questions; indeed, they illustrate the complex issues surrounding the research into Rubens and his work.

The three versions of the *Battle of the Amazons* will hang alongside one another in the Rubenshuis until 20 April. The examination of the *Battle of the Amazons* fits into broader research undertaken for the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, the catalogue of Rubens's work published by the Centrum Rubenianum. The need for in-depth research into these versions has arisen because of the planned publication in 2015 of the first volume on Rubens's mythological paintings. The first, provisional results of that research will be presented this year in a special issue of *The Rubenianum Quarterly*. To be continued ... | *Ben van Beneden*



Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder, *The Battle of the Amazons* (detail).
Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Potsdam

*'Très humble, très affectionné et très obligé'**

The year has gotten off to an energetic start at the Rubenianum, with many exciting projects scheduled for the coming months. Together with our partner KU Leuven, we look forward to a promising symposium, '(Un)dressing Rubens', on which you can read more in this newsletter. In May, the second phase of the project 'Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum' will commence, while in July full attention will go to the further publishing of our core collection: the archive of Dr Ludwig Burchard. Meanwhile, on the Corpus Rubenianum front, there has been no less activity, and we can look forward to new publications from this autumn onwards.

To generate such dynamic output, the encouragement of our stakeholders and public remains vital. The Rubenianum is blessed with diverse forms of generous support from many sides, for which we cannot be grateful enough. While maintaining its support for the Corpus, the Rubenianum Fund recently decided to provide additional funds to install a Rubenianum Fellowship within the Belgian American Educational Foundation for three years. Thus, American scholars in the early stages of their careers will be able to follow in the footsteps of Abigail Newman, who introduces herself in this issue.

Fundamentally contributing to our mission, donors of books and archival material continue to strengthen the Rubenianum's holdings. A number of significant donations of auction catalogues – an ever-important source for art-historical research – have been made in recent years, prompting me to thank the generous donors here. They include Rubenianum supporters Dr Helena Bussers and Mr Eric Le Jeune, as well as Corpus authors Emeritus Professor Guy Delmarcel and Dr Margret Klinge, the latter having just recently promised her donation, to which we look forward. Together with the numerous catalogues from Pierre de Séjournet and a recent transfer from the Antwerp Heritage Library, these acquisitions leave ever fewer gaps in our holdings.

Less tangible – moral – support is just as essential. We greatly value the numerous delighted reactions we read on e-mail and social media upon launching the 'Digitizing the Corpus' project. All of this support will continue to enhance further plans on the Rubenianum's agenda, on which we will keep you posted here.

Véronique Van de Kerckhof
Director of the Rubenianum

*From Rubens's Letter to Carlisle of 30 January 1629.

Research fellow Abigail Newman (Princeton University) on her research on Flemish painters in Madrid

From Isabel of Castile onwards, Spanish monarchs, ecclesiastics and nobles hungered for Flemish paintings. The Spanish court called various painters from the Low Countries to serve them in Spain, ordered shipments of paintings from Flanders, and sent Spanish artists to train there.

My Princeton University doctoral dissertation – advised by Professors Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Christopher Heuer – addresses a late chapter in Spain and Flanders’ centuries-long exchange. It examines the Flemish immigrant painters who continued to flock to the Madrid court in the seventeenth century, the Flemish paintings that flowed to Spain via the machinations of enterprising workshops and dealers in the period, and the Spanish collectors, writers and painters who responded to these arrivals. Flemish painting, I argue, played a fundamental role in the critical evolutions in Spanish Golden Age taste, collecting and art production.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, I spent a year in Madrid, supported by Princeton’s Donald and Mary Hyde Academic-Year Fellowship for Research Abroad in the Humanities. While in Madrid, I conducted research in such archives and libraries as the Archivo General del Palacio, the Archivo de Protocolos, the Museo del Prado’s library, and the Biblioteca Nacional. My Madrid research focused on Flemish immigrant painters who settled in seventeenth-century Madrid, seeking to escape not only the turmoil that had affected their homes but also the intense professional competition and guild regulations they faced in Antwerp. Yet as my research on the professional circumstances and visual production of Madrid’s seventeenth-

century Flemish immigrant painters reveals, these artists’ careers were not consistently successful. While some immigrant painters garnered royal commissions and saw their paintings decorate the walls of courtiers’ homes, others struggled to eke out a living. In addressing the varied professional experiences and oeuvres of these painters, I seek to contextualize them within the larger picture of artistic production and consumption in seventeenth-century Madrid.

Following my year in Madrid, I moved to Antwerp in September of 2013, where my first nine months of research are being supported by a Fulbright grant, with additional support from the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton. An additional six months of work, beginning this coming June, will be funded by a fellowship from the Belgian American Educational Foundation. In Antwerp, I have benefited tremendously from the excellent resources of the Rubenianum. Settling into the office I share with other visiting researchers on the top floor of the Rubenianum, I spent my days this past fall going through the Rubenianum’s rich visual and bibliographic files organized by artist. This research has been critical, among other things, in ensuring that my dissertation covers the relevant Belgian historiography as thoroughly as the Spanish; it has also proved fruitful in various cases

in leading me to additional paintings by the artists in my study.

Since January, I have continued to pursue important aspects of my research within the deep holdings of the Rubenianum’s library. In addition, I have spent time in the history department at the Universiteit Antwerpen and in Antwerp’s city archive, the FelixArchief, where I am searching for documents that shed light on the lives and careers of various Flemish immigrant painters before they left for Madrid. I am interested in these painters’ motives for travelling to or settling in Madrid and what professional structures or sources of information facilitated their decisions. By mapping information networks linking Madrid and Antwerp, I am interested in determining how Flemish painters would have heard about opportunities in Madrid and who might have aided their immigration process. I am also investigating how painters maintained contact with colleagues in Flanders, whether they continued to move between these regions, and, if so, how such trips aided in the transfer of artistic skills and motifs.

Critical to the success of my time in Antwerp has been the warm welcome I have received from the Rubenianum’s staff and affiliated researchers. It has been a pleasure to attend the lectures and symposia hosted by the Rubenianum, and I have also relished the daily interactions with my colleagues there. In January, I gave an overview of my research to the staff – my first academic presentation delivered in Dutch – and I look forward to giving a longer public lecture at the Rubenianum in September about my work. In the meantime, I will present a paper entitled “‘Netherlandish’ Exchanges Outside the Low Countries: Immigrant Artists Meet in Madrid” at the conference, ‘Art on the Move: Artistic Exchange and Innovation in the Low Countries, 1572–1700’, which will take place on 10–11 April 2014 at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. My Rubenianum colleague, Lieneke Nijkamp, Curator of Research Collections at the Rubenianum, will also give a presentation there.

Following my archival research, I expect to devote my time principally to completing the writing of my dissertation. At this stage in that process, the Rubenianum will once again become my primary work base, and I look forward to benefiting yet again from the accessibility and abundance of the Rubenianum’s invaluable collection. Indeed, it is my hope that, following the end of my second grant in December 2014, I will secure additional funding to support the final revising of my dissertation in Antwerp at the Rubenianum.

Rubens goes Dutch

Cultural transmission and artistic exchanges in the Low Countries

Karolien De Clippel and Filip Vermeylen

Most of the researchers that come to the Rubenianum are interested in learning more about the great artists that roamed Flanders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Leading painters such as Bruegel, Rubens, Van Dyck, Teniers and dozens of their followers shaped the canon of Flemish art, and since the nineteenth century these artists have been heralded as icons of the newly founded Belgian nation. Quite similarly north of the border, the Dutch counterparts were busy promoting the likes of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Goyen, Hals and so many others as the bearers of their national identity.

Already when we were still working at the Rubenianum on our dissertations, now more than a decade ago, we (KDC and FV) were struck by the separate art-historical narratives that had been developed for Flemish and Dutch art, and which were solidified in the minds of generations of art historians and the public through the education system, scholarly literature and in art museums. Stimulated by Hans Vlieghe’s audacious questioning of the existence of Flemish art as a distinct category in a much-cited article in *Simiolus* in 1998 and Arnout Balis’s insistence on a contextual study of the art from this period, we started to wonder if there weren’t more similarities rather than differences in the artistic production of the Low Countries during the seventeenth century. And why had these not been properly researched?

Years went by until, in a curious case of serendipity in 2006, we both got jobs at Dutch universities – Karolien in Utrecht and Filip in Rotterdam – which put us in an interesting position to revisit these issues. Now Flemish *émigrés* in Holland, we became all the more aware of what it means to be a foreigner, but also experienced first hand that integration and assimilation takes place in various ways (academia not being so different from the art world). We soon teamed up with Professor Eric Jan Sluijter of the University of Amsterdam, an eminent scholar of the Dutch Golden Age, and someone who also believed that the artistic dialogue between the Northern and Southern Netherlands remained very lively throughout the seventeenth century.

After a meeting of the minds we turned this idea into a grant proposal which we submitted to nwo (The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research), and were generously rewarded with substantial funding in 2009. It allowed us to put together a team that would examine the mobility of artists, works of art and ideas in these fascinating, but turbulent times. The project currently employs PhD student Marloes Hemmer (based in Utrecht) and postdocs Claartje Rasterhoff and David van der Linden

(both in Rotterdam). The team members are trying to find out how, why and through which channels cultural transmission and artistic exchanges in the visual arts took place in the Low Countries during the ‘long’ seventeenth century, and what the impact was on the (shared) cultural heritage of the two regions. The research programme builds on recent advancements in the understanding of the cultural industries and creative cities, the role of artist guilds, and theories of knowledge transfer in science and art. By examining the artistic exchanges between the Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands, we are working to gain insight into the circulation of artistic knowledge and examine how culture was transferred (for detailed information on the project, see www.artistic-exchange.com).

This research is innovative not just because of its fresh outlook on cultural heritage in the early modern period, but also in its multi- and interdisciplinary approach. For even though these scholarly disciplines have far too long been barely on speaking terms with each other, both an art-historical and a socio-economic perspective are necessary to get a grasp on these phenomena.

As economic historians, Filip and Claartje are mapping the cross-border trade in luxury goods between Antwerp and the northern art cities. For instance, their investigations show that paintings, tapestries, musical instruments and books were imported into Holland in large numbers throughout the seventeenth century, even in times of war. David is trying to get a grasp of what motivated artists to pick up their belongings, move to a different town and set up a workshop there (was it religion, or were they economic refugees?), and how these migrations have impacted transfers of knowledge. People usually tend to believe that individuals are so much

more mobile now compared to past times, but the exodus of tens of thousands of Flemings to the northern provinces after the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt was of biblical proportions, with enormous ramifications for both regions – also in the arts. The art historians of our team are mapping the significance of personal contacts and mobility for artistic innovation on both sides of the border. As such, Marloes is investigating the reception of Rubens imagery in Holland among history painters such as Pieter de Grebber (1600–1652/3); Karolien is researching the importance of mobility, personal contacts and concomitant artistic exchanges between Jan Brueghel the Elder and Ambrosius Boschaert for the shared genesis of still-life painting in the Netherlands; and Eric Jan is tracking the movements of artists between the great artistic hubs of the time, Antwerp and Amsterdam.

Overall, this project studies how changes and innovation in the visual arts occurred as a result of ‘foreign’ influences caused by the movement of artists, the art trade, and exchanges of artistic knowledge. Apart from the many instances where assimilation did take place, it is equally important to get a sense of the resistance against ‘foreign’ cultural intrusions. The stance that guilds in various Dutch cities took in the early seventeenth century against the importation of Flemish paintings is very revealing in this respect. After all, the institutional context can either facilitate or, by the same token, obstruct the exchange and sharing of skills and expertise. The fact is that cultural transmission took place in various guises and directions during the seventeenth century, and that it eventually and significantly impacted the (common) heritage of the Netherlands and what is present-day Flanders. It provided building blocks for the shaping and reshaping of the



The Artistic Exchange Team. Left to right: Claartje Rasterhoff, Eric Jan Sluijter, David van der Linden, Filip Vermeylen, Marloes Hemmer and Karolien De Clippel.

canon of Netherlandish art, most noticeably in painting.

The first results of the project seem to illustrate this rather eloquently. For instance, the Haarlem school of painting is considered to be an archetype of the Dutch Golden Age and a quintessential *Dutchness* is said to emanate from its famous landscapes and genre paintings. In a recent article in *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, Karolien and Filip challenged this perceived autonomy by taking stock of the artistic exchanges which took place between Haarlem and Antwerp during the first decades of the seventeenth century. A telling example of this cross-fertilization occurred between the so-called Haarlem classicists and Rubens in the 1610s. Rubens's trip to Leiden and Haarlem in the spring of 1612, among other things to visit his great example Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), is well documented. The artistic dialogue that ensued between both masters underscores the lasting impact of travelling artists and personal contacts. Examples demonstrating that Goltzius was clearly inspired by compositions of the great Antwerp master go to show that the influence was by no means one-sided. For instance, Rubens's *Jupiter and Callisto* of 1613 (now in Kassel) clearly acted as a model for the *Fall of Man* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) that Goltzius painted in 1616. Cultural transmission thus took place in both directions: from Antwerp to Haarlem and vice versa. In the end, case studies like these can point to the origins of the shared artistic heritage of the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and perhaps more importantly, shed light on the complicated but fascinating process of cultural transmission in European history. It is in this context that Filip felt very fortunate that he was able to spend part of his sabbatical in 2012–13 at the Rubenianum for research on the project. Besides reconnecting with old friends and meeting new colleagues, it once more offered him the luxury of being able to peruse the best art-historical library south of the Moerdijk.

Now that the project has entered its final year, a conference has been scheduled in April in Rotterdam where more results will be presented. Moreover, a select company of invited speakers has been asked to share their insights on artistic exchanges in the Low Countries and beyond (see the adjoining announcement). A final synthesis of the project will address the seemingly different structure and organization of the Southern and Northern art markets respectively, and the problem of innovation in the arts, whether it was market-driven or inspired solely by artistic processes. In the end, our quest is to identify and put into context the similarities and differences in the visual arts in the Southern Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. In doing so, the artistic exchange team strives to answer this ultimate question: can we truly speak of a unified Netherlandish style and an integrated art market in the Low Countries during the seventeenth century?



Peter Paul Rubens, *Jupiter and Callisto*, 1613. Oil on canvas, 202 x 305 cm. Staatliche Museen, Kassel.



Hendrick Goltzius, *The Fall of Man*, 1616. Oil on canvas, 104 x 138 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Conference Art on the Move: Artistic Exchange and Innovation in the Low Countries, 1572–1700

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 10–11 April 2014

During the seventeenth century the market for visual arts flourished in the Low Countries. Dutch artists produced an extraordinary array of works of art ranging from cheap prints to the finest paintings to satisfy the seemingly insatiable demand for images in the newly founded Republic. Simultaneously, Antwerp and, by extension, the Southern Netherlands enjoyed a veritable Indian summer whereby artists were in a position to export paintings and other luxury goods across Europe and to the New World. Both the Dutch and Flemish schools have been studied extensively, mostly from a strictly local or national perspective. The aim of this conference, by contrast, is to explore the shared cultural heritage of the Southern Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. Leading international scholars examine the differences and commonalities in the artistic output in both regions, and attempt to map the mobility of artists, works of art and ideas in the Low Countries and beyond. In this way 'Art on the Move' assesses the impact of cross-border knowledge exchanges and the resulting artistic dialogue on growth and innovation in the creative industries of the Golden Age.

To attend, please register at <http://eshcc.eur.nl/artonthemove>. The conference fee is €30, students pay €15. This fee covers lunch, drinks and entry to the museum exhibitions.

Rubeniana

Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard

All 22 volumes of the CRLB published prior to 2000 have been made available as downloadable and searchable PDF files on the Rubenianum website. Rubenianum staff are steadily creating links within these files to new and existing records in the RKD*Images* database. During the first phase of the project (November 2013–April 2014) nearly a thousand RKD*Images* records were created and/or linked to the PDF files for the first three parts of the CRLB. The RKD*Images* records provide updated bibliographic references and provenance information that were not available at the time of print publication. These online records also allow us to publish colour images, improving on the black and white illustrations used in the CRLB. Moreover, they also provide images of copies referred to but not illustrated in the printed volumes and of copies which have surfaced since print publication.

Response from Rubens scholars, students and fans to these important new online resources has been enthusiastic and encouraging. In the years to come additional volumes will be digitized and Rubenianum staff will progressively work through the series to update all volumes online. Project progress will be reported in the *Rubenianum Quarterly*.

This project was made possible by a grant from the Digital Resources Grants Program of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.
<http://www.rubenianum.be>

The Rubenianum Lectures

Next lecture: Sunday, 29 June 2014, 11 am:

DR LEEN KELCHTERMANS
KU Leuven

*Between remembrance and glorification.
The seventeenth-century wars through the eyes
of Rubens's contemporary Peter Snayers.*

Seventeenth-century topographical battle paintings did not receive much scholarly attention. This lecture will examine this underestimated genre by focusing on the oeuvre of Rubens's contemporary and co-worker on the Medici commission, Peter Snayers. The Antwerp-born and in his time well-known artist is one of the genre's best representatives but has hardly been studied. Central to this lecture are the sources Snayers used to depict conflicts without being an eyewitness, the balance between fact and fiction in his paintings and their glorifying function for his military patrons.

*The lecture is in Dutch and will take place
at the Rubenianum.*

(Un)dressing Rubens. Fashion and Painting in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp

Conference 8–9 May 2014

The theme of this two-day symposium, jointly organized by the Rubenianum and the KU Leuven Early Modern Art History Research Team, is the depiction of dress and fashion in the work of Peter Paul Rubens and his Flemish contemporaries and successors, often active at foreign courts (1580–1700). In addition to paintings, extant garments, archaeological finds, contemporary texts on dress and fashion prints will be considered as subjects of study to generate a comprehensive view of historical dress, its representation and its perception in the Southern Netherlands. The symposium aims to generate new insights into the history of dress in the Southern Netherlands, as well as to explore and uncover the complex historical interactions between fashion and art. An explicitly interdisciplinary approach will bring together leading figures and fresh voices from the fields of the history of dress and the history of art.

Programme and registration:
<http://colloquium.rubenianum.be>



Peter Paul Rubens, *Hélène Fourment*, c. 1630–31. Black, red and white chalk on laid paper, 61.2 x 55 cm. © The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Recent Acquisition of the Rubens House



Justus van Egmont, *The Reconciliation between Romans and Sabines*. Rubens House, Antwerp

This oil sketch by Justus van Egmont (1602–1674) depicting the reconciliation between Romans and Sabines is a preparatory work for a tapestry in a Romulus series. Van Egmont's sketch echoes Rubens's *Reconciliation* in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. Hence, this recent acquisition is a nice complement to the collection of the Rubens House, as it emphasizes the

relation between Rubens and his workshop. Prisca Valkeneers is preparing a doctoral dissertation on the life and work of Justus van Egmont. In the next issue of the *Rubenianum Quarterly* you can read more about this Rubens pupil who was the subject of the latest Rubenianum lecture. On that occasion this new acquisition was presented in preview to the public.

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