

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2022
2

'uit den hoff' – from the garden

On her return from Cologne in March 1589 Maria Pypelinx settled in the *Cleynen Sint-Arnold*, a house on the Meir. Facing Antwerp's main commercial thoroughfare to the north, the house backed onto sun-drenched bleaching grounds to the south – a symbolic blank canvas from which the city had effectively erased part of its turbulent recent past. Not a trace was left of a Calvinist temple previously erected on the site. A blank canvas, too, for Maria's fresh start after the scandal of her husband's affair with Anna of Saxony and the resulting banishment to Siegen, where Rubens was born. This was the first corner of Antwerp that the 11-year-old boy would get to know intimately. Innocently. A blank canvas on which to romp in between washerwomen and swathes of bleached linen. Could he have imagined at that point that one of the most colourful careers of European art history was to unfold on this very spot?

When Rubens acquired the plot in 1610, he built a house and studio on the site of his childhood playground. A magnificent portico gave access to the former bleaching grounds, transformed into a garden with a jewel-like pavilion. His library testifies to his interest in the subject, with volumes on garden design and the most expensive publication in his extensive collection – a book on botany. In portraits, Rubens presented himself and his wives and children in the setting of the garden. Gardener Guilliam Donckers earned the highest wage of all the servants in the household, and he was assisted by Jasper, who took care of the orange trees. Rubens sourced plants from the apothecary-gardener Peeter van den Broeck. Just around the corner, from his inn 'The Swan' on the *Korenmarkt*, the family brewer Herman Stockmans was deeply involved in the tulip trade.

Driven by new archival research, designed by *Ars Horti*, conceived in close collaboration with the Flanders Heritage Agency, and with colour and planting advice from Dries Van Noten, the new museum garden will be planted starting in October. According to Olivier de Serres, who published an influential treatise on gardening in 1600, there are two ways of designing a *bouquetier*, or flower garden. The first is to reveal its entire layout to visitors upon entry. The second – preferable to De Serres – is more circuitous, inviting slow discovery. De Serres compares such a garden to the secret room in which a cloth merchant presents his most precious fabrics to a delighted clientele. The new garden of the Rubens House will be such a garden, a *hortus conclusus*, a museum gallery under an open sky in the very heart of the city. Watch this space and support us via: www.hofleveranciervanrubens.be



'The Final Push'

This is the title of the special edition of the Rubenianum Quarterly we have just published, and which is destined to assist in the raising of funds for the last stage of the publication of the Corpus Rubenianum.

Indeed, after the recent publication of Michael Kwakkelstein's Anatomical Studies at the beginning of this summer, nine volumes remain to be published. Two of those are already scheduled for publication this fall. This compares to the thirty-seven volumes published so far (of which seventeen were published since the launch of the Rubenianum Fund in 2010). It appears that the final stretch for our gigantic endeavour is finally in sight!

The financial means raised so far by the Rubenianum Fund, some 3.2 million euros in total, will allow us to support the editorial effort till the beginning of 2023. To see us through to the final publication, a further 700,000 euros need to be found. Every effort will be made to secure these as soon as possible – in order to provide visibility and security to our fantastic editorial team.

But when the last volume of the Corpus is off to the printers by the end of 2024, this should not be the end of the Corpus. We are presently starting to conceptualize a Corpus Rubenianum 2.0, in a digital format, and which will be able to be updated systematically. It is very much hoped that public funding can be secured for this project. Thus, the new Rubenianum building, which is being erected next to the Rubenshuis, will continue to be a hub of scholarly activity also in the years and decades to come.

Thomas Leysen
Chairman of the Rubenianum Fund

Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, Part XX:

Study Heads and Anatomical Studies. 1. Anatomical Studies by Michael W. Kwakkelstein



Rubens. *Three Studies of an Écorché Nude and a Flayed Left Arm*. Drawing. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program

The central theme of Rubens's paintings is the human figure, often represented nude or partially clothed and involved in dramatic action. As a history painter, Rubens's acclaimed skill in rendering the human body – whether male or female, lean or fleshy, mature in years or young, animated or lifeless, vigorous or diseased, heroic or cowering, sensuous or decrepit, idealized or blemished and imperfect – enabled him to vie with the greatest artists ever known, while creating increasing demand for his work among Europe's intellectual, cultural, religious and political elite. His mastery in depicting human figures and their dynamic movements suggests that he followed the example of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) and other Italian artists he admired, who made extensive studies of human anatomy. As pointed out by two recent perceptive scholars, however, the robust, muscular male nudes in action who appear in so many of Rubens's narrative paintings are often anatomically inaccurate.¹ In fact, Rubens's approach to anatomical study differed from that of Leonardo and other artists who are known to have studied human anatomy primarily to heighten the sense of naturalism of their figures. In many respects Rubens's ways of working are comparable to those of Michelangelo, who used the knowledge he acquired through dissection

not to pursue verisimilitude but to invent the anatomy of his figures according to his own idea of physical beauty, strength and expression. Yet, unlike Italian Renaissance artists such as Leonardo, Michelangelo and Alessandro Allori (1535–1607), Rubens did not perform or witness dissections and seems to have rarely studied from the live nude model.² What, then, was the nature and extent of Rubens's study of human anatomy? In this volume I have sought to offer an answer to that question by taking into account the chronology of the drawings, their dependence on visual sources, their anatomical accuracy and how they were kept and used by Rubens.

In their biographies of Rubens, Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1672) and Roger de Piles (1677) both claimed to have seen a notebook by the artist, containing his observations on anatomy and other subject matter relevant to his work as a painter. That notebook has not survived, but Rubens also compiled a separate collection of single sheets with anatomical drawings, which he kept in an album or portfolio. One of his pupils, Willem Panneels (c. 1600/05–1634), copied these drawings, occasionally adding a note to record that the original belonged to his master's 'annotomibock' (anatomy book). At some point after Rubens's death in 1640, his close associate Paulus Pontius (1603–1658) made engravings after eight anatomical drawings. These were published as part of a curious compilation of nineteen plates which, as the title page announced, all derived from Rubens's drawings ('Petrus Paulus Rubbens delineavit'). Following this publication all but one of the anatomical drawings were thought to have been lost.

Scholarly interest in Rubens's concern with human anatomy was heightened by the rediscovery of eleven sheets with anatomical drawings in 1987, followed by further identifications in 1999 and 2011. Today these sheets are held in public and private collections. Major exhibitions devoted to Rubens have included examples of his anatomical drawings since 1993, and the entire corpus was published for the first time in 2021, in the first volume of a catalogue of the complete drawings by Rubens.³ Nonetheless, it is with the present volume that the anatomical drawings receive their first monographic treatment. In it I have attempted to reconstruct the contents of the dismantled 'anatomy book' while clarifying its relationship to other evidence of Rubens's concern with human anatomy. Given the fact that his models



After Willem van Tetrode. *Écorché of a Man Falling Backwards* (the so-called 'Dancing Écorché' by Baccio Bandinelli). Plaster cast seen from multiple angles. Beaux-Arts de Paris. © Brecht Vanoppen

for the anatomical drawings were mostly sculptural, I have discussed Rubens's use of them in the context of the emergence of *écorché* statuettes as artists' models.⁴ By looking closely at the ways he used casts after this type of statuette as a painter and designer, while also considering the theoretical context for his inventive interpretation of human anatomy, I have sought to determine the purpose of these drawings. Other considerations include the use that Rubens made of them for his depictions of the human figure and the extent to which his use of small-scale sculpted *écorché* figures influenced the design process of the moving figure in his narrative paintings.

¹ S. J. Walker, 'Rubens' Victims: Images of the Assaulted Male Body', in C. van Wyhe (ed.), *Rubens and the Human Body* (Conference proceedings, University of York, 17–18 December 2010), Turnhout 2018, pp. 163–65; C. H. Lusbeck, *Rubens and the Eloquence of Drawing* (Visual Culture in Early Modernity, v), London 2017, p. 179.

² The anatomical drawings catalogued were all drawn after sculptural models and must be distinguished from Rubens's surprisingly few known studies of male nudes which could, conceivably, have been drawn after live models, although they may have been executed from memory.

³ A.-M. Logan and K. Belkin, *The Drawings of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue, I (1590–1608)* (Pictura Nova, xxii), 2 vols, Turnhout 2021.

⁴ My review of the evidence relating to the earliest known sculpted *écorché* figure has allowed me to reattribute a now-lost model that is known through two bronze casts – one in Minneapolis, the other in New York – to Michelangelo.

The Burchard Drawings (Re)discovery of seventeenth-century *Topstukken*

Lieneke Nijkamp

Rubens's enthusiasm for Italian Renaissance art is well known. In his ongoing search for new motifs and inspiration, he even employed other artists to copy works by Italian masters, not only in Italy but also in France. In 2020 a hitherto-unpublished group of seventeen drawings and counterproofs on fifteen folios from the Rubenianum collections (RH.T.009–023) was added to the list of Flemish Masterpieces. These drawings – here attributed to the master draughtsman Abraham van Diepenbeek (1596–1675) – were commissioned by Rubens as copies after the Fontainebleau decorations designed by Francesco Primaticcio (1504–1570) and Nicolò dell'Abate (1509/12–1571).¹ The sheets tell a fascinating story of long-lost designs, Rubens's working methods and the popularity of the School of Fontainebleau among early modern artists.

Rubens visited Paris in 1620 and found himself in awe of the decorations created a century earlier by Primaticcio and his assistant Nicolò dell'Abate in the chateau of Fontainebleau. Due to professional obligations, Rubens was left with little time to study the paintings, and so a decade later – still enthralled by the memories of what he had seen – he instructed a couple of young artists to make copies after Primaticcio's designs in Fontainebleau and in various *hôtels* in and around Paris. Two of Rubens's famed pupils are connected to the Fontainebleau copies: Abraham van Diepenbeek and Theodoor van Thulden (1606–1669). Both born in 's-Hertogenbosch, Van Thulden and Van Diepenbeek tried their luck in Antwerp in the 1620s, became connected with Rubens's workshop and spent some time in Paris during their careers.

Much remains unknown about the commission, but the output comprised hundreds of drawings. The surviving objects are now scattered among various collections, including eighty-two sheets in the Albertina in Vienna,² seven in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt-am-Main,³ and sixty-six in the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) in Brussels – the latter also known as 'the Brussels Album'.⁴ The attribution of the drawings and counterproofs has been a matter of some dispute.⁵ The fact that the Albertina drawings are connected to Van Thulden's etchings made after frescoes in the Ulysses Gallery of Fontainebleau has led to the attribution to him of some of these drawings. However, Jeremy Wood has convincingly ascribed the larger body of Fontainebleau copies to Van Diepenbeek on various grounds, including their stylistic resemblance to the artist's known oeuvre. The regular, heavy parallel hatching of the Rubenianum sheets leads us to the same conclusion.

Many of Primaticcio's original designs have long been lost. All that is left to piece together his intricate decorations are his own modellos and the drawn and engraved copies. The paintings in the famous Galerie d'Ulysse,



Fig. 1 Abraham van Diepenbeek (attributed). *Neptune on his Chariot*. Pencil and red chalk on paper, 230 × 350 mm. Rubenianum, inv. RH.T.023

for instance, were destroyed in 1738–39 when Louis XV ordered the transformation of the south wing of the chateau to provide him with more space. The Paris Hôtel du Faur, including a gallery decorated by Dell'Abate, was destroyed in 1830. The chalk drawings that have long been known proved to be of key importance in the reconstruction of these decorations.⁶ The Rubenianum sheets have not yet been thoroughly studied in

this context, but further investigation could definitely result in new insights regarding the Fontainebleau designs. What follows here is merely a brief discussion of a small selection of the copies in the Rubenianum.

Rubens produced several coloured adaptations of Primaticcio's designs that attest to his specific interest in the Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau.⁷ The fifty-eight ceiling decorations of this impressive gallery



Fig. 2 Abraham van Diepenbeek (attributed). *The Chariot of Apollo*. Pencil and red chalk on paper, 408 × 325 mm. Rubenianum, inv. no. RH.T.021

were divided into fourteen bays with a central panel surrounded by stuccowork and grotesques, and presented compositions taken from the *Odyssey*. Most of the Rubenianum drawings/counterproofs relate to this gallery: for instance, *Venus and Amor Asleep with a Little Cupid* (RH.T.014) is a copy after an oval painting in the second compartment;⁸ *Hylas and the Nymphs* (RH.T.017) is after a painting in the thirteenth compartment;⁹ and *Neptune on his Chariot* (fig.1) after a central panel thus far only known through a drawing by Jacques Belly (Louvre, RF 4753.45).¹⁰

Most impressive of all the Rubenianum sheets is the *Chariot of Apollo* (fig.2): a large (322 × 403 mm) copy after a central painting in the tenth compartment of the Ulysses Gallery.¹¹ Due to its sheer size, it is the only sheet to bear two different watermarks. In fact, this counterproof also relates to one of Rubens's largest oil sketches, which resurfaced on the art market in 2016.¹² Wood (2011) suggested that the painting may have been made once Rubens was back in Antwerp and tentatively dated it to the early 1630s. He further argued that Rubens probably based his sketch on Primaticcio's modello (Louvre), a drawing that Rubens may have owned himself. This dating coincides with the period in which Van Diepenbeek produced his chalk copies commissioned by Rubens. Maybe it was the large-sized copy – of which we own the counterproof – that spurred Rubens to sketch this specific Primaticcio design?

At least two of the Rubenianum sheets were made after decorations in the Royal Dining Room of the Fontainebleau palace. *Helen Honoured by Paris* (fig. 3), a scene from Homer's *Iliad*, is a counterproof of a drawing now in Vienna (inv. 9003). The Albertina holds two other drawings after the Dining Room decorations (inv. 9001–02), but since neither of them match the Rubenianum copy illustrating a group of men (RH.T.020) – which is similar in design (yet larger in size) – it could be a missing piece of the puzzle of this specific decorative cycle.

Two other drawings (RH.T.009 and RH.T.012) – depicting scenes from the Life of Christ – are connected to frescoes designed by Dell'Abate of the sixteenth-century castle of Fleury-en-Bière,¹³ which is located about 47 km south of Paris. Both sheets are annotated with references to the castle, which confirms their location. These inscriptions are similar (in handwriting as well as topographic reference) to those on Folio 51 of the Brussels Album (inv. 76851), and were most likely added by a later hand than the artist's.¹⁴

The provenance history of the drawings and counterproofs remains obscure. Rubens probably kept the original chalk copies in his so-called *Cantoor*, a cupboard that he used to stock his large collection of drawings, including copies he made himself. Unfortunately, no written inventory of his collection of drawings has survived. We do know that they stayed in his studio until his death and were sold en bloc in 1657 to Canon Jan Philip Happaert.¹⁵ The Fontainebleau drawings, however, may already have left Rubens's studio before the 1657 sale. According to the Italian connoisseur and collector Padre Sebastiano Resta, Rubens had left the drawings to a pupil of Van Dyck (possibly Maximiliaen Labbé, d. 1675), who bequeathed his possessions to another Fleming in Rome, whose heirs sold them to Resta sometime before 1684.¹⁶ The counterproofs probably stayed with Van



Fig. 3 Abraham van Diepenbeek (attributed). *Helen Honoured by Paris*. Pencil and red chalk on paper, 265 × 140 mm. Rubenianum, inv. RH.T.010

Diepenbeek himself, who reused figures and groups for his published book illustrations and also provided French printmakers and publishers with some of the models.¹⁷

The fifteen Rubenianum sheets were previously owned by the Rubens scholar Ludwig Burchard (1886–1960). Burchard had classified them as: 'Französis. 16. / Primaticcio. Kontredrucke von Zeichnungen eines Niederländers (Th. Van Thulden? Diepenbeek?) nach Gemälden des Primaticcio'. It puzzles me why he kept them in a folder separated from his collection of drawings (which is probably the reason why they ended up in the Rubenianum, since his art collection stayed with his heirs). Did he acquire them late in his life and were they waiting to be mounted? His note in German suggests the opposite, since Burchard acquired a habit of writing in English once he had emigrated to Britain in 1935. Did he perhaps consider counterproofs to be documentary material rather than works of art in their own right?

Burchard must have known the *Chariot of Apollo* oil sketch by Rubens quite intimately. August Neuerburg, one of the leading industrialists of the early twentieth century and an avid collector of Rubens paintings, acquired it on 29 November 1930. Neuerburg collected most of his pictures between 1927 and 1930, which in fact coincides with the period in which Burchard advised him on his acquisitions. It was through Burchard's mediation that Neuerburg bought the *Samson and Delilah* in 1929, and so he also advised him on the *Chariot of Apollo* around the same time.¹⁸ Whether Burchard already owned the Van Diepenbeek counterproofs, including the impressively sized *Chariot of Apollo* by that time, remains unclear. According to David Steadman, Burchard's appraisal of Van

Diepenbeek had changed over the course of his career. While he was still somewhat dismissive of the artist's work in 1913, his opinion had changed significantly in favour of Van Diepenbeek by the 1950s.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the article he was preparing on Van Diepenbeek remained unpublished.

The 'Burchard drawings', once overlooked and secretly tucked away between other odds and ends in the Burchard collection, are so far the only surviving Fontainebleau group drawings in Flanders and have now found their way onto the *Topstukkenlijst*. The high-resolution digital images – including detailed images of watermarks and inscriptions – are available at dams.antwerpen.be and through search.rubenshuis.be. We hope that making these works more widely available will instigate researchers and collectors to help us further identify the drawings, keep an eye open for related objects and lost Primaticcio designs, and further delve into this intriguing Rubens commission.

* I'd like to thank Abigail D. Newman for her comments on an earlier draft of this contribution.

- I am very much indebted to publications by Jeremy Wood on the Fontainebleau School drawings, most notably his article 'Padre Resta's Flemish Drawings. Van Diepenbeek, Van Thulden, Rubens and the School of Fontainebleau', *Master Drawings* 28.1 (spring 1990), pp. 3–53, and his Corpus volume, *Rubens: Copies and adaptations from Renaissance and later artists, Italian Artists, III, Artists working in central Italy and France*, CRLB, XXVI, London 2011, I, esp. pp. 268–69. The Rubenianum drawings were unknown to Jeremy until recently.
- Inv. 8922–9003; currently attributed by the Albertina to Theodoor van Thulden.
- Inv. 4292–98.
- Inv. 76801–64. These 66 drawings on 64 folios were bound into an album in the nineteenth century but were separated again at a later date. The KBR acquired an additional drawing (F-2007-812) in December 2007.
- See Saskia van Altena, 'Rubens's most truthful follower': Abraham van Diepenbeek as a Draftsman', *Master Drawings* 58.4 (2020), pp. 493–516, for the most recent summary of the attribution history as well as an overview of Van Diepenbeek's graphic oeuvre.
- Sylvie Béguin, Jean Guillaume and Alain Roy, *La Galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau*, Paris 1985; Sylvie Béguin and Bella Bessard, 'L'hôtel du Faur dit Torpanne', *Revue de l'Art* 1–2 (1968), pp. 38–56.
- Wood 2011, nos. 209, 210, 213–15, 218, 220.
- Béguin et al. 1985 (see note 6 above), p. 120, pl. II; for a preparatory drawing by Primaticcio in the Albertina, Vienna (inv. 1973), *ibid.* p. 134, fig. 8.
- Béguin et al. 1985, p. 124, pl. XIII; modello by Primaticcio in the Louvre, Paris, inv. 8523, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/clo20005517>.
- Béguin et al. 1985, p. 123, pl. XI. For the Belly copy: <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/clo20018548>.
- Béguin et al. 1985, p. 123, pl. X; modello by Primaticcio in the Louvre, inv. 8519, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/clo20005513>.
- Wood 2011, no. 217; sale London (Sotheby's), 6 July 2016, lot 7; <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2016/old-master-british-paintings-evening-116033/lot.7.html>.
- Marie-Hélène Babelon, Roseline Bacou, Nicole Barbier et al., *L'École de Fontainebleau*, exh. cat. Paris (Grand Palais) 1972–73, p. 484.
- Jeremy Wood, in Alain Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden: Een Zuidnederlandse barokschilder / Theodoor van Thulden: Un peintre baroque du cercle de Rubens*, exh. cat. 's-Hertogenbosch (Noordbrabant Museum) / Strasbourg (Musée des Beaux-Arts), 1991–92, p. 119.
- Kristin Lohse Belkin and Fiona Healy, *A House of Art: Rubens as Collector*, exh. cat. Antwerp (Rubenshuis), 2004, pp. 310–13.
- Wood 1990, pp. 7–9.
- Wood 1990, pp. 9–10, n. 48, p. 22.
- Burchard's files on collectors in the Rubenianum contain two boxes with neatly filed documentation on the Neuerburg collection – presumably preparatory material for a collection catalogue. I thank Tom Eerkens for this observation.
- David W. Steadman, *Abraham van Diepenbeek: Seventeenth-Century Flemish Painter*, Ann Arbor 1982, p. xiv.

Rubeniana

Rubens research in nineteenth-century Antwerp: Ro(o)ses all the way

by Elise Gacoms

In past editions of this *Quarterly* we have covered the start of the project on mapping the scattered archives of Max Rooses (1839–1914). The collaborative project between Rubenianum, Letterenhuis, Plantin-Moretus Museum and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Antwerp was finished last year. Its results and conclusions are presented in an online exhibition on the Rubenianum website (for now, only in Dutch). Rooses's former residence, serves as your guide through his life and work. For those interested: two articles, respectively on the rambles through the archive and on Rooses's travel notebooks, were published in our partners' magazines *Zuurvrij* (Letterenhuis) and *Zaal Z* (KMKSA). We surely are closer to a thorough biography of this fascinating figure!

For the digitization part of the project a selection of important documents had to be made. The chosen focus of this selection is Rooses's Rubens research. As Emmanuel De Bom – at the time head librarian of the city of Antwerp – noted in *Het Boek* magazine (1915, p. 189): 'Along with Plantin, Rubens was the beacon of Rooses's life. On all five continents they will always mention the name Max Rooses in any discussion relating to Rubens.' The many letters with requests for art-historical advice in his archive, from all over Europe and even Russia and the USA, also attest to Rooses's reputation. Many art dealers, such as Franz Kleinberger in Paris, relied on his expertise. In addition to the international importance of these archival pieces, art history was the common factor of all four institutions. And with the Rubenianum as initiator of the project, the argumentation was sound. The result is a collection of 23,308 images now available online allowing researchers across the globe to consult Rooses's findings. Contacts with the Marquand Library in Princeton led to a contribution from their part, adding their seven volumes of the periodical *De Vlaamsche School* containing all kinds of archival documents of Rooses, to the list of digitized items.

The selected documents provide us with a profound view on Rooses's pioneering role in scientific art-historical research on Rubens in nineteenth-century Antwerp. He took his first steps as an art historian in the early 1870s. In 1876 – the year of his appointment as the first curator of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, he participated in a competition of the City of Antwerp to write a history of the Antwerp School of Painting. The year 1877 marked a turning point in his career, with the 300th anniversary of Rubens's birth giving cause for several Rubens festivities and exhibitions in the city. Rooses was a member of the general committee of the exhibition 'L'Œuvre de

P.P. Rubens' and of the 'Commission du Catalogue'. His personal, annotated copy of the catalogue includes descriptions and appraisals of the quality of (some of) the works on display. This marked the start of his long and distinguished career as a Rubens researcher.

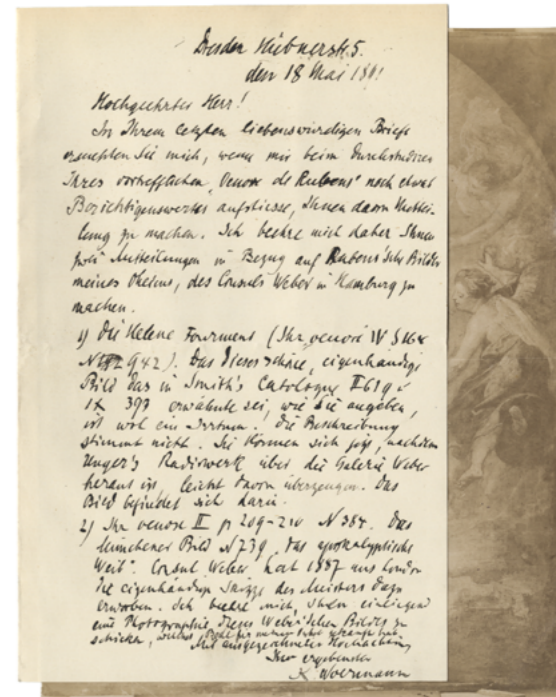
Shortly afterwards, two Rubens committees were created. The first one (1877–1909) was tasked with establishing a collection of photographs or engravings of Rubens's works. The other committee (1879–1910) would publish a *Codex Diplomaticus Rubenianus*, that is, a record of all historical documents pertaining to Rubens. Both committees received grants from the City of Antwerp and from the Belgian Government. As the secretary and treasurer of these respective committees, Rooses played a crucial part in their activities. He documented the work of both committees in extensive detail. Most of the files, which Rooses grouped in bundles, are preserved in the Letterenhuis. A small part is kept in the Plantin-Moretus Museum.

The photo documentation that was created by the first committee was used in the first scientific oeuvre catalogue on Rubens, *L'Œuvre de P.P. Rubens*. Rooses was entrusted with this task, publishing a five-volume catalogue on the artist's work from 1886 until 1892. He travelled all over Europe to see the works up close for himself and do research in archives and libraries. A large portion of Rooses's preparatory documentation, comprised of correspondence for the most part, is held in the Rubenianum.

The original plan to publish a catalogue of all documents relating to Rubens soon proved too ambitious, which is why the committee limited the scope to his correspondence. The Brussels-based librarian Charles Ruelens published the first volume in the series (1887) but died soon after. His preparatory documentation was handed over to – can you guess? – Rooses, who continued to work on the catalogue until its completion in 1909. In addition, the supervisory committee decided to publish a periodical, the *Rubens Bulletin*, with updates about recent developments and discoveries in Rubens research.

Besides several articles in magazines, Rooses also published *Rubens' leven en werken* in 1903. He received the quinquennial prize for historic sciences from the Belgian State for this comprehensive overview of the artist's life and work.

Max Rooses is widely considered the founding father of art history in Belgium. In the *Nieuwe encyclopedie van de Vlaamse*



Letter (dated 18 May 1891) from the German art historian and museum director Karl Woermann (1844–1933) from Dresden to Rooses, with accompanying photograph, in the bundles of correspondence that Rooses collected in preparation of his *L'Œuvre de P.P. Rubens*. Archival reference: Documentation on Rubens (bundle I), RA 006/002, Collection of the City of Antwerp, Rubenianum.

Bewegung (1998, p. 2661), Marc Somers and Wim van Rooy noted: 'Rooses was one of the first to apply modern methods to art history, elevating it to a science.' Various sources corroborate this, asserting that the works of this pioneer are still considered a reference work today. The documents in Rooses's dispersed archive confirm his scientific approach, which was founded on a thorough study of the artworks themselves and contemporary documents.

One of the relics of Rubens's own time is of course his house and workshop. Throughout his life Rooses made several efforts to bring about the official purchase and reconstruction of the Rubens House and its making into a museum. In 1910 he was involved in the construction of the facsimile at the World's Fair in Brussels. His efforts would contribute to the re-establishment of the house, unfortunately for Rooses only years after his death. This was reported by Ary Delen – at the time curator at the Print Cabinet of the Plantin-Moretus Museum – in 1939. He added that Rooses's archives, stored in the attic of the museum, should get a place in the archive of the Rubens House, the future 'Rubenaem'. As far as we know, this was the first mention of the Rubenianum!

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