

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2022

Special issue



RUBENIANUM FUND 2010–2024
The Final Push

THE RUBENIANUM FUND



The Rubenianum Fund was created twelve years ago in order to secure the much-needed financial means for the completion of the publication of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*. This massive art-historical endeavour, which was initiated in 1968 with the publication of the first volume, in 2010 was in danger of being stranded in midstream for lack of funds. Indeed, fewer than half of the more than fifty originally planned volumes had by then been published.

Created under the auspices of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Rubenianum Fund set out to gather the necessary funds to pay for a central editorial staff and to bear the other related expenses, such as image rights and translations, for the ensuing years. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of a number of foundations, corporations and individual art lovers, some 3.2 million euros were raised between 2010 and now, which allowed the operation quickly to kick into high gear. Many new important volumes have been published since, and the remaining volumes are now all in various stages of preparation, with a clear path to publication by 2024.

As one can see in the picture above, under the impetus of the Rubenianum Fund, the pace of publication of the *Corpus Rubenianum* has picked up significantly since 2010.

The Rubenianum Fund and the whole 'Rubens community' of scholars, curators, students, collectors and art lovers are extremely grateful to the more than hundred generous donors who made this possible. It also would give us a small reserve of funds to start conceptualizing a digital *Corpus Rubenianum 2.0*.

Nevertheless, the present financial means are only sufficient to cover expenses till the beginning of 2023. Therefore, a renewed fundraising appeal, setting out to collect another 0.7 million euros in the next twelve months, is hereby launched. This should allow us to attain our goal of finalizing this enormously challenging project before 2025.

This special edition of the Rubenianum Quarterly aims to give an overview of the project and what has been accomplished so far, but also looks ahead at the last stretch of the road. We hope we can count once more on the generosity of many, both existing and new supporters, to help us get there!

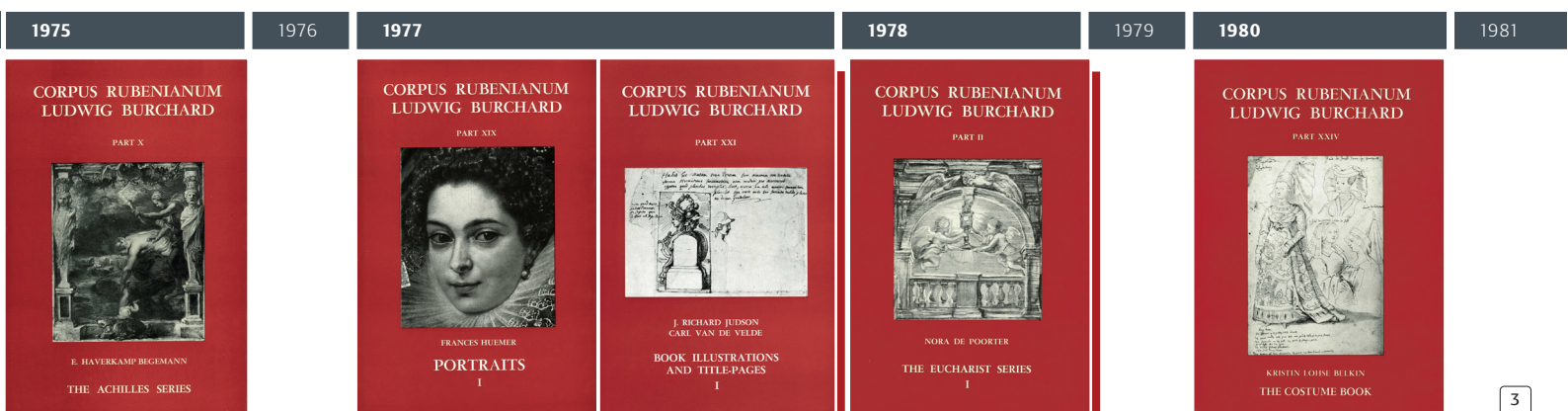
Thomas Leysen
Chairman Rubenianum Fund



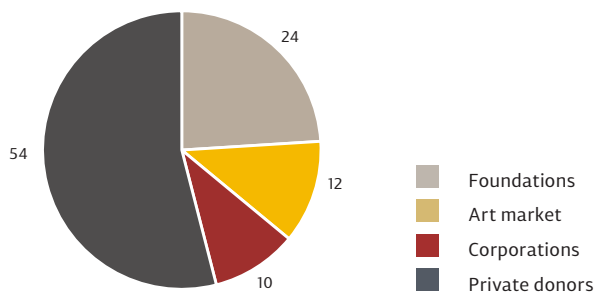
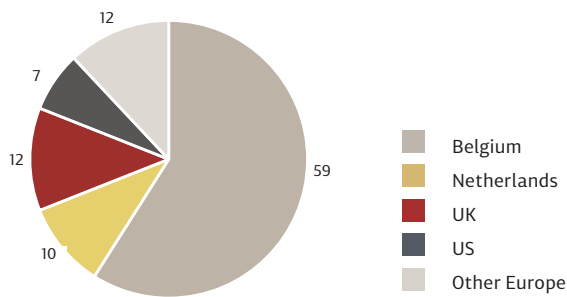
CORPUS RUBENIANUM LUDWIG BURCHARD

The *Corpus Rubenianum* holds a unique place within art history. It is arguably the most ambitious cataloguing project ever set up and possibly also the longest running. Both the scale and the sheer duration of this project reflect the complexity of the oeuvre of Peter Paul Rubens himself. In every brushstroke he ever painted, the great Baroque master blended art with literature, art theory with theology, mythology with history, and allegory with contemporary life. Studying Rubens in this collaborative effort is much like studying the foundations of European civilisation, for Rubens's oeuvre is a treasure trove of the constituents that have shaped the society of today. Rubens's compositions are constantly fascinating combinations of ideas, from Kabbalah to Graeco-Roman myth, from optics to image theology, from linguistics to archaeology or from politics to ethics – and indeed aesthetics. Studying Rubens simply means that one has to master many fields of research in order to enter the mind of this Baroque genius and to try and unravel the complexities of his work. The fact that Rubens designed and made over 2,500 compositions, many of which were diffused in prints and most of which were copied intensively, gives some idea of the extent and intricacies of the study of his artistic output. One has to record and understand each individual work on various levels, while also investigating its provenance and, where possible, its original context. In this enterprise the many scholars and the editorial staff working on the *Corpus Rubenianum* have to familiarise themselves with the latest insights in many academic disciplines and gain new understanding through a combination of technical, stylistic and iconological examinations, as well as keeping up with the latest publications. Such an aim is daunting, even for highly experienced and distinguished scholars and specialists.

In the effort to bring this project to completion in 2024, the dedicated team of authors and the editorial staff bear a huge responsibility. We do that, not only for Rubens's own sake, or even for the sake of art history, but also on account of the simple fact that the project is too important to fail. Achieving our ambitious goal requires not only a great deal of commitment on the part of the individual authors, but also an enormous organisational effort. The drafts submitted by the authors for review have to be scrutinised in form and content so as to maintain the highest standards. The arguments have to be carefully checked and further elaborated when necessary, and the texts adapted to the editorial guidelines of the project. Of course the illustrations required must also be chosen, sorted out and purchased. The acquisition of, on average, 200 to 400 illustrations per volume and the obtaining of image rights alone is a huge (and costly) undertaking, but in addition a mock-up of the layout of illustrations and their captions is prepared in-house. For the many texts submitted in a language other than English, translations have to be commissioned and overseen. Added to this is the compilation of the bibliographies and multiple indexes which each volume contains and which cover all names and places, as well as all works by Rubens and other artists mentioned in the texts. These and other tasks have been taken on by Bert Schepers, Isabelle Van Tichelen and Brecht Vanoppen since the renewal of the organisational structure a few years ago. Without their indispensable experience and tireless efforts, the project would not still be viable. With only a few volumes still underway, our final goal is within reach, but in order to bring the *Corpus Rubenianum* to completion, the necessary funds for the positions of these three long-serving, devoted and deserving staff members need to be raised.



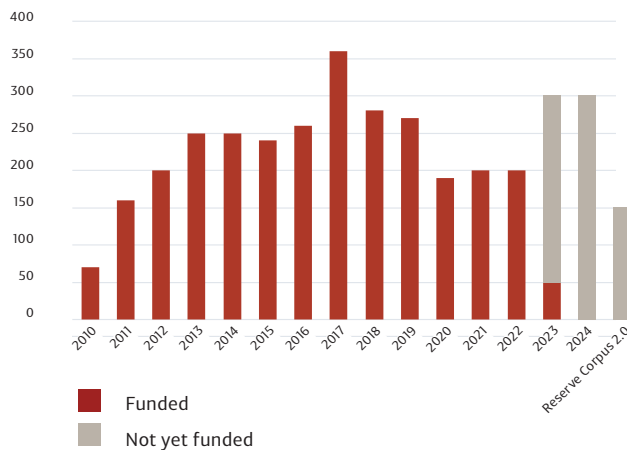
The Rubenianum Fund's Finances



The Rubenianum Fund has raised some 3.2 million euros to date. This has gone directly to the Centrum Rubenianum in the form of annual grants, determined on the basis of a detailed budget proposal. This has allowed the Centrum to hire the required professional staff to support the various Corpus authors in the preparation of their respective volumes, as well as pay for the costs of translations and photographic material. The balance has been used to fund the digitization of the already-published Corpus volumes, to establish a Rubenianum Fellowship for young American scholars (together with the Belgian American Educational Foundation), and for general administrative costs. The breakdown of the donors by country of origin and by type is shown in the graphs opposite.

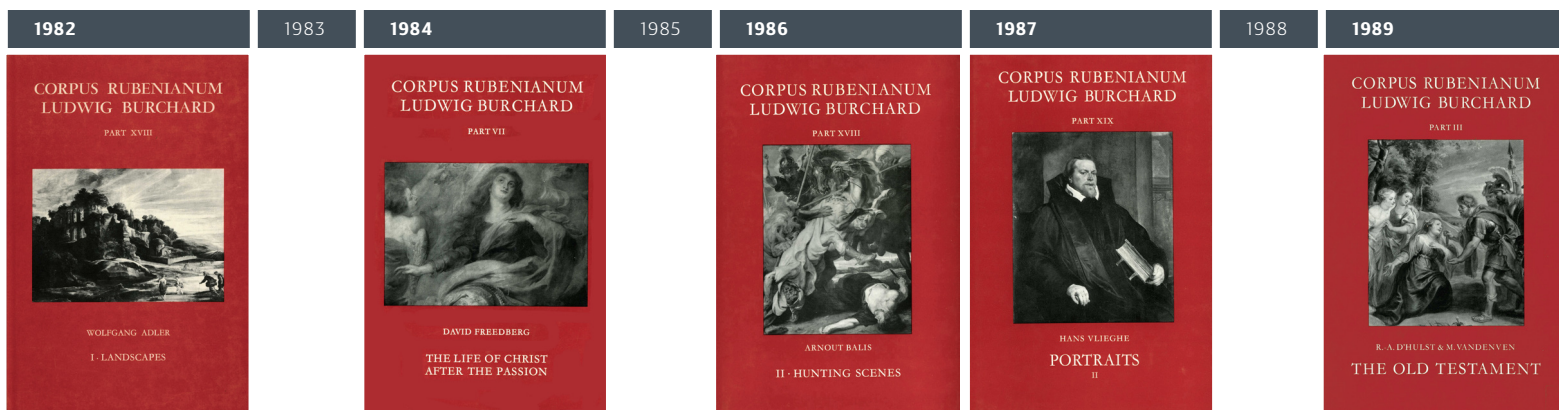
A budgeting exercise has been carried out for the remaining period. A contingency reserve is added for unforeseen costs, but also to support further digitization.

Contributions by the Rubenianum Fund to the Corpus



All this implies that another 0.7 million euros needs to be raised by the Rubenianum Fund. It is hoped that this remaining amount can be raised from corporations, individuals and public authorities before the end of 2022.

All donors will receive the highly appreciated *Rubenianum Quarterly* and will be given the opportunity to participate in an exclusive annual field trip in the company of Rubens scholars.





Peter Paul Rubens,
*Venus Lamenting
Adonis* (CRLB XI/3)
The British Museum,
London.

1990

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXIII



MARION VAN DER MEULEN

COPIES AFTER THE ANTIQUE
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIII



ELIZABETH McGRATH

1 - SUBJECTS FROM HISTORY
VOLUME ONE



Peter Paul Rubens,
The Victory at Jülich,
 from the Medici Series
 (CRLB XIV/1). Musée du
 Louvre, Paris

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

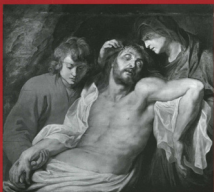
2006

2007

2008

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
 LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART VI



J. RICHARD JUDSON
 THE PASSION OF CHRIST

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
 LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXII



HERBERT W. ROTT
 PALAZZI DI GENOVA
 ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS AND ENGRAVINGS
 VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
 LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XV



GREGORY MARTIN
 THE CEILING DECORATION OF
 THE BANQUETING HALL
 VOLUME ONE

✦ *Fiona Healy*

CRLB IV THE HOLY TRINITY, LIFE OF THE VIRGIN, MADONNAS, HOLY FAMILY

Two volumes of the Corpus that are scheduled for publication in 2023 are dedicated to iconic and familiar works that hold a central place in the life and work of Rubens. Among them is the commission Rubens received from Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, for the Jesuit Church in Mantua. The three canvases, *The Gonzaga in Adoration of the Trinity* (see Fig.), flanked on the left by *The Baptism of Christ* and *The Transfiguration* on the right, each c. 420 × 680 cm, were completed between early 1604 and May 1605. Removed from the church by French forces around 1800, the *Baptism* (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten) and *Transfiguration* (Nancy, Musée des Beaux-Arts) have survived intact, but the *Adoration* (Mantua, Palazzo Ducale) was mutilated, with the portraits of the Gonzaga children and Rubens's self-portrait cut out, though fortunately many have since resurfaced (in various museums). One complex task this volume seeks to address is the reconstruction of this important canvas, which reveals Rubens's absorption following his arrival in Italy in 1600 of the wonders of ancient art and the achievements of the modern masters.

Among the other works discussed in CRLB IV are the dramatic, five-meter high *Apocalyptic Woman* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek) for the high altar of the Cathedral of Freising in Germany, and the many portrayals of the Virgin's early life, such as the much admired *Education of the Virgin* (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), copies of which adorn many of Belgium's provincial churches, and the equally popular *Marriage of the Virgin*, for which no version by Rubens himself has surfaced. On a more intimate scale, CRLB IV looks at works showing the Infant Christ, alone or with other infants, especially St John the Baptist. Rightly renowned for his portrayal of children, here Rubens's successfully merges childlike playfulness and sacrificial destiny.



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Gonzaga in Adoration of the Trinity* (CRLB IV). Palazzo Ducale, Mantua

✦ *Nils Büttner*

CRLB XIV/1 THE MEDICI SERIES

The coming year will also see the publication of the volume on the Medici Series (Paris, Musée du Louvre), the largest cycle of paintings ever commissioned from Rubens. On 26 February 1622, he signed the contract for twenty-four paintings for a gallery in the Palais du Luxembourg, the new residence of Maria de' Medici, widow of the French king Henri IV, who had just returned from years of exile due to differences with her son, Louis XIII. Beginning with Maria's birth, each painting depicts an important event or achievement in her life. It was no easy task to chronicle the life of a woman, let alone one who was politically controversial, but Rubens, through his unique ability to combine historical fact and allegorical allusion, succeeded in elevating her life to a hitherto

unprecedented form of visual apotheosis. The proportions of the individual paintings are precisely matched to one another and to their intended location, but above all to the viewers standing in front of them. There is probably no other work by Rubens for which the literature is so extensive, starting with the more than 200 catalogues and guides which have been published since the Louvre Museum opened to the public in 1793. For the work on this Corpus volume, not only has the literature been evaluated, but also all sources and documents were subjected to a thorough revision. This provides the opportunity to correct some widespread factual errors, such as the assumption that the equestrian portrait of the Queen illustrates the Battle of Les Ponts-de-Cé (1620) when in fact it shows the siege of the German town of Jülich in 1610 (see Fig.). The volume will feature a number of new assessments of the paintings as well as the publication of a previously overlooked preparatory drawing.

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXVI

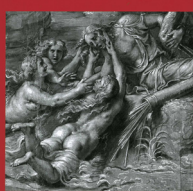


KRISTIN LOISE BELIN

COPIES AND ADAPTATIONS FROM
RENAISSANCE AND LATER ARTISTS
GERMAN AND NETHERLANDISH ARTISTS
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXVI

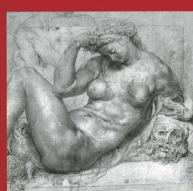


JEREMY WOOD

COPIES AND ADAPTATIONS FROM
RENAISSANCE AND LATER ARTISTS
ITALIAN ARTISTS
J. RAPHAEL AND HIS SCHOOL
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXVI



JEREMY WOOD

COPIES AND ADAPTATIONS FROM
RENAISSANCE AND LATER ARTISTS
ITALIAN ARTISTS
RE ARTISTS WORKING IN CENTRAL ITALY AND FRANCE
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIII

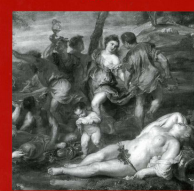


KOENRAAD BROSENS

SUBJECTS FROM HISTORY
3 - THE CONSTANTINE SERIES

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXVI



JEREMY WOOD

COPIES AND ADAPTATIONS FROM
RENAISSANCE AND LATER ARTISTS
ITALIAN ARTISTS
R. TITIAN AND NORTH ITALIAN ART
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXII



FRANS BAUDOUIIN AND NORA DE POORTER

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE
2. THE RUBENS HOUSE

VOLUME ONE

✦ Nora De Poorter and Frans Baudouin

CRLB XXII/2 ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE: RUBENS'S HOUSE

A few years after Rubens returned to Antwerp from Italy in 1608 he built a house on the Wapper, which soon became one of the city's most famous sights and a destination for visiting dignitaries. Comparatively unassuming from the outside, visitors entering into the courtyard found themselves facing a magnificent portico leading to an equally stunning garden. To the left was the family home, a sixteenth-century house to which Rubens added a semi-circular domed structure based on the Pantheon in Rome as a space in which to display his much admired collection of ancient and modern painting and sculpture, including some of his own works. On the right stood the artist's studio, newly constructed according to Rubens's own designs and built in the grand 'Italian' style, its façade richly decorated with sculptures and *trompe l'oeil* paintings. Of this magnificent ensemble, very little is left. Following Rubens's death in 1640, the house was first let and later sold. Time and a multitude of alterations, especially from the

mid-eighteenth century on, destroyed much of the external fabric and internal layout of house and studio. Sadly, only two original parts survive, the portico and the garden pavilion. Equally unfortunate is the loss of the many preliminary drawings and plans Rubens must have made in the design phase. It was nevertheless possible to undertake a reconstruction of the house between 1938 and 1946 using surviving documents, descriptions and visual material, especially prints, in conjunction with excavations and structural examinations of the buildings. Naturally, there were many issues that needed to be addressed, some of which could be resolved, others not. As a result, not all elements of the reconstruction are historically correct, though this does not deter the multitude of visitors flocking to visit the house and garden each year.

The present volume, one of four dedicated to Rubens's designs for architecture and sculpture, was begun by Frans Baudouin (1920–2005), longtime director of the Rubenshuis, and following his death continued by Nora De Poorter, author of the Corpus volume on Rubens's *Eucharist Series* (CRLB II). It brings together and critically assesses all authentic architectural elements as well as the many written, visual and archaeological sources. This makes it possible to acquire an even greater understanding of the original appearance of this unique ensemble and in addition gain important insights into the function of its various public and private spaces. An important part of the volume is devoted to a detailed examination of the many sources Rubens, a true *pictor doctus*, drew on for inspiration, including architectural treatises, examples of ancient art and architecture as well as the many Renaissance buildings he encountered during the years he spent in Italy.

✦ Nils Büttner, Elizabeth McGrath et al.

CRLB XXV THE THEORETICAL NOTEBOOK

Rubens's *Theoretical Notebook*, to which a separate volume of the Corpus is dedicated, no longer exists. The manuscript was burnt in 1720 in a fire in the studio of the royal ebonist André-Charles Boulle (1642–1732).

The *Notebook* consisted of a collection of the artist's observations and drawings, and the first reference to it occurred in 1672 when Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) published his *Life of Rubens*. As no complete copy of the *Notebook* is known, our knowledge of its content is fragmentary, gathered from a range of different sources: the few loose sheets from Rubens's original that miraculously escaped the fire, brief references in texts, extracts published by Roger de Piles (1635–1709), and four manuscripts, each containing copies after sections of Rubens's texts and drawings. According to current research, only two manuscripts appear to be based directly on Rubens's original. Both are very distinct in type and testify to the different interests of the copyists, but as they overlap in many places, it is certain that both go back to the Rubens manuscript described by Bellori and de Piles. One is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth and was attributed by Michael Jaffé (1923–1997) to Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), though not all specialists agree with this, the other is in the Prado in Madrid and is known (after its recent owner) as MS Bordes. The two other seventeenth-century copies, MS Johnson (London, The Courtauld Gallery) and MS de Ganay (Antwerp, Rubenshuis), were copied from the Chatsworth manuscript, though confusingly, both contain additional text and drawings. Using this material, Arnout Balis (1952–2021) spent over three decades working on a reconstruction of the original *Notebook*. Though not large, the book was very thick, with about 250 pages, most of them used on both sides. It was not a sketchbook – or *Pocketbook*, as it has sometimes been called – Rubens carried with him to record a work of art or motif that caught his eye, but was clearly more suited to a study, where, close at hand, were all necessary drawings and engravings, which he often copied even when he himself had made drawings of the works they reproduced, and of course a library for the many citations from texts. Tragically, Arnout Balis died before he could complete his research, leaving behind an extensive collection of notes and drafts. It has been decided that his work will be continued by a team of authors, who will collaborate on this Corpus volume so as to ensure its publication within the set deadline for the project.

2015

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART V



HANS DEYSSCHER
HANS VLECHTE

THE LIFE OF CHRIST BEFORE THE PASSION
1 · THE YOUTH OF CHRIST
VOLUME ONE

2016

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XI



Elizabeth McGrath · Gregory Martin · Fiona Husby
Bert Scheper · Carl Van de Velde
Keesje De Cuyper

MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS
1 · Achilles to The Graces
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXVII



CHRISTINE VAN MULDER

WORKS IN COLLABORATION:
JAN BRUEGHEL I & II

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIX



KOENRAAD JONCKHEERE

PORTRAITS AFTER
EXISTING PROTOTYPES

2017

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART V



KOEN BULCKENS
WILHELM BIRBAUMER
BY PAUL BRUSSE

THE LIFE OF CHRIST BEFORE THE PASSION
2 · THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIV (2)



ALEXIS MERLE DU BOURG

THE HENRI IV SERIES

CRLB XI/2 MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS H-O

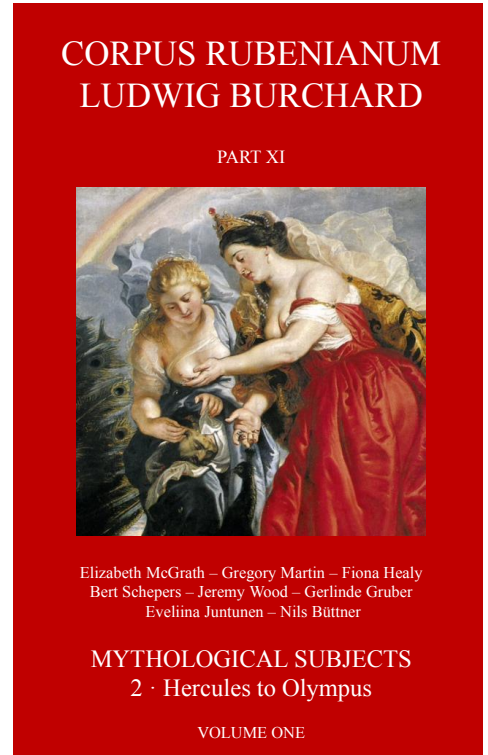
Rubens was one of the greatest of storytellers, and he was the supreme interpreter of the stories of classical myth. No artist was so at home in the literature of the Greeks and Romans. When he painted for pleasure, which, increasingly in the course of his life, he felt able to do, he used pagan mythology to express and celebrate themes of love, beauty and the creative forces of nature, often in wonderfully idiosyncratic ways. At the same time, as a Christian committed to the ideals of the Catholic Reformation, Rubens respected the restrictions generally placed on the depiction of pagan tales. Most of his mythological paintings were made for private settings, for display within houses (including his own) or in the galleries of princes, noblemen and prelates. It is a happy accident of history that these splendid paintings are now widely visible in the great museums of the world. More than 150 compositions by Rubens, some in several variations, and involving extensive preparatory work, are presented in the three volumes of Part XI (*Mythological Subjects*). The works are arranged alphabetically by theme, or rather by the name of the principal character involved, for classical myths are usually stories about individuals, whether gods or mortals. The first volume of Part XI, from A to G (Achilles to the Graces), published in 2016, featured such masterworks as *Perseus and Andromeda* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), *The Three Graces* and *Diana and Callisto* (Madrid, Prado). Volume Two, just going to press, will take us from Hercules to the Olympian gods – as assembled in the ambitious early painting made in Mantua (Prague, Castle Picture Gallery). The third and final volume, scheduled to appear in 2023, will include Pan, the satyrs and Silenus, and culminate in the many illustrations of Venus, goddess of love.

No fewer than eight authors have combined forces to produce the forthcoming Volume II: *Hercules to Olympus*. Hercules alone needed three of us, so extensive and varied was Rubens's treatment of that substantial hero. Rubens's fascination with Hercules goes back to the artist's youth, and the muscular

ancient figure in the Farnese collection in Rome which he knew from prints before he saw and copied the original. Rubens was intrigued by the character as well as the physique of this strong man and exemplar of *Virtus*, who could be brought low by wine or women or simply loss of self-control. The hero's subjection to his lover Omphale is manifested in the astonishing picture in the Louvre which captures the paradoxical predicament of this so human of demi-gods. *Hercules and Omphale* was painted while Rubens was still in Italy and is inspired by ancient imagery as well as ancient texts. Hercules was also the subject of the very last of Rubens's works, on which the artist laboured through the pain of increasingly frequent episodes of gout, for the Alcázar in Madrid, the palace of the Spanish King, Philip IV. These included a whole series on the deeds of the hero which was lost when the palace went up in flames in 1734 and can be reimagined only partially through surviving designs and copies.

Happily, despite other losses, such as a *Leda and the Swan*, mentioned briefly in documents, there is still a great deal of Rubens's mythological output that has survived relatively unscathed. Among those in our Volume II is Mercury piping to sleep the hundred-eyed Argus (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), a pastoral scene the calm of which will evidently soon be shattered, as the god is drawing the sword which will sever Argus's head from his neck. Rubens had already made in *Juno and Argus* (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum), a grandly sumptuous illustration of the immediate aftermath to this story, when the goddess Juno sets Argus's hundred eyes in the tails of her peacocks, a showpiece of learning and artistry on the theme of colour and sight that, astonishingly, Rubens seems to have painted without a commission. Perhaps the same was true of the celebrated *Abduction of the Daughters of Leucippus* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek). This work, so often held up as a model Baroque composition, can be seen almost as an art-theoretical manifesto on the part of Rubens. At the same time, it is inspired by the ancient poet Ovid, who, in his *Art of Love*, particularly commends the forcible seizure of the Leucippides by the Dioscuri as an example to hesitant lovers. Many more of the themes in this book derive from Ovid's poetry, especially his *Metamorphoses*, and Rubens often found

ingenious ways to represent in visual terms poignant psychological details which Ovid had captured in words. For example, the nymph Callisto's wary look, stiffening posture and chastely crossed legs in *Jupiter and Callisto* (Kassel, Gemäldegalerie) reveal her growing sense that she is approached not by her goddess Diana but by a threatening imposter (Jupiter in disguise).



Elizabeth McGrath – Gregory Martin – Fiona Healy
Bert Schepers – Jeremy Wood – Gerlinde Gruber
Eveliina Juntunen – Nils Büttner

Nymphs abound in this volume in more relaxed situations, however: often resting, or sleeping, when they can be spied on by satyrs, but at times busy collecting the fruits of the earth to keep filled to eternal overflow the cornucopia that signifies well-being and fecundity in the natural world, a topic to which Rubens was constantly drawn. The magnificent *Nymphs and Satyrs gathering Fruit* (Madrid, Prado), which the artist kept for himself and expanded and reworked in the last decade of his life, is surely the most joyous of Rubens's celebrations of earthly fertility. It seems to express joy in its very making, the intense pleasure that Rubens found in creating the masterpieces collected in our volumes.

2018

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIII



RIA FABRI and PIET LOMBAERDE
On the basis of a manuscript by F. Raedewijck
ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE
3. THE JESUIT CHURCH OF ANTWERP
VOLUME ONE

2019

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIII



VALERIE HERREMANS
ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE
4. ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XIII



REINHOLD BAUMSTARK and GUY DELMARCEL
SUBJECTS FROM HISTORY
2. THE DECIUS MUS SERIES
VOLUME I

2020

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XVII



NILS BÜTTNER
GENRE SCENES
VOLUME ONE

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XX



NICO VAN HOUT
STUDY HEADS AND ANATOMICAL STUDIES
2 · STUDY HEADS
VOLUME ONE

**CRLB XXVIII
DRAWINGS NOT RELATED
TO THE ABOVE SUBJECTS**

Veronika Korbei holds a doctorate in art history and lives in Vienna. After completing her dissertation on 'Inscriptions on the Drawings of Peter Paul Rubens' with Martin Warnke in Hamburg, she worked as archivist of the Ernst H. Gombrich Archive at the Warburg Institute London (2008–10), then as assistant at the Warburg Institute Archives (2010–11); she now works as a freelance art historian.



When did Rubens cross your path for the first time?

As a graduate student in Vienna I attended a colloquium on Rubens's house in Antwerp. Quite unexpectedly, I found myself curious to learn more about him, about his career, the art he produced and his life in general – I must admit that until then I was not a great fan, but from that moment I was hooked! My PhD supervisor at Hamburg University, Martin Warnke, suggested I stick with Rubens for my dissertation and so I continued my research, focusing in particular on the inscriptions on his drawings. I never regretted that decision since it is a very specific aspect of his work and one that turned out to be a very fruitful line of research.

You are a specialist on Rubens's drawings. What makes them so interesting for you?

I still much prefer Rubens's drawings over his paintings. He is a very versatile draughtsman, working in pen, brush or crayons equally well and I truly admire his eye-to-hand coordination. By tracing his lines and forms, one gets a good understanding of how his mind worked, how his designs evolved. No matter how sloppy or unfinished a sketch seems, it was often enough for him to capture the basic idea for a picture, so that he then just stopped drawing, took the idea and turned it into a painting. Simply phenomenal.

How did you follow up your Rubens research after your PhD?

In the past five years my research had slowed down somewhat, but I always try to keep up with the literature and see as many shows as

I can. Assisting Anne-Marie Logan with the acquisition of images for her enormously important study on Rubens's Drawings (in three volumes, the first of which was published last year [2021]) also keeps me in the loop. Now, of course, becoming the author of the *Drawings not Related* volume of the Corpus has given me the fantastic opportunity to sharpen my senses on a new aspect of Rubens's creativity.

The *Drawings not Related* are also mostly drawings. Can you give an example?

The drawings included in this volume have been known to the Rubens community for a long time and illustrate the wide range of Rubens's skill as a draughtsman who uses pen or chalks equally well. However, he appears not to have used the subjects of these drawings for paintings, or at least related paintings have not yet been identified.

A good example is the well-known *Saddled Horse* in the Albertina in Vienna (inv. 8252, Black and red chalk, heightened with white chalk [?], 413 × 428 mm). This drawing can be reliably dated on stylistic grounds to the years between 1615 and 1618. It seems likely Rubens first drew the horse from life using black chalk and then completed the study in his studio by applying red chalk and white for heightening. This is the only study of a horse that Rubens drew in such detail, which is surprising since he was an enthusiastic horseman who we know liked to ride out every day. He had his own stable of horses, some of which were brought

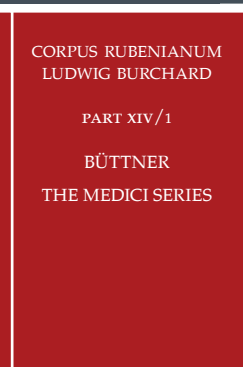
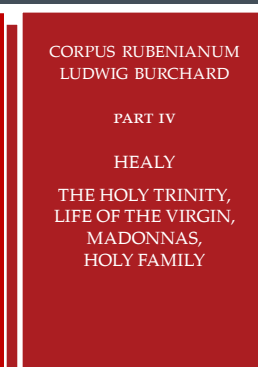
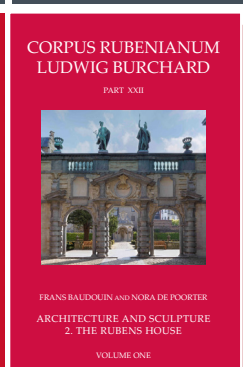
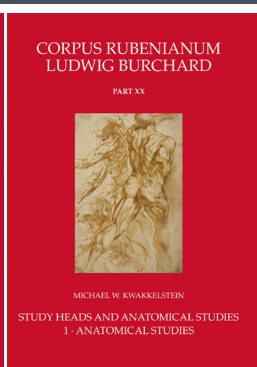
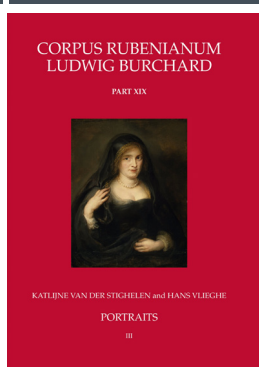
to Antwerp at considerable expense and with great difficulty. However, these were purebred animals, unlike the working horse documented in the drawing.

Also for a painting?

Paintings are more difficult. For example, Burchard had assigned the oil sketch of *Two Sleeping Children* in the National Museum of Tokyo to the group of non-related works. However, it was decided that this very intimate and loving depiction was better suited to the volume on Head Studies (*tronies*) and has since been published by Nico van Hout as two studies of the same child (CRLB XX, no. 41). Burchard assigned all those compositions to the 'not related' group whose subject matter did not fit into a specific category, such as Mythology, the Old Testament etc. It is also the case that none of the paintings Burchard included in the group is today considered to be by Rubens himself, and many are simply partial copies of his paintings. However, there are also works such as the allegorical composition recorded in an etching of 1767 by George Bickham the Younger (c. 1706–1771) which claims to be after an 'Emblematical picture' painted by Rubens. Recent research has shown this composition was certainly not by Rubens, even though in keeping with the rules of the Corpus, it will be discussed in this volume. But fortunately, the main focus will be on drawings, some of which are quite magnificent.

2021

2022–24



CRLB XXII/5
ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE:
SCULPTURE AND DESIGNS FOR
DECORATIVE ART

Ben van Beneden studied art history at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. He began his career at the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp, afterwards working at the Rubenianum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp. From 2009 until 2021 he was director of the Rubenshuis, where he organized numerous international exhibitions on seventeenth-century art, including 'Rooms Full of Art in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp' (2009), 'Palazzo Rubens: The Master as Architect' (2011), 'Rubens in Private: The Master Portrays his Family' (2015) and 'Michaelina Wautier (1604–1689): Glorifying a Forgotten Talent' (2018).

When and how did Rubens cross your path?

When I was at primary school, my grandmother took me to Antwerp Cathedral at least two or three times a year. On each occasion I stood, transfixed, in front of Rubens's *Raising of the Cross*. The light, the colours, the sheer size of the triptych! The sight of it summoned up a feeling that can best be described as a mixture of rapture and fear. Somewhat later, in my early teens, we spent several family holidays in Desenzano on Lake Garda. These holidays invariably included visits to Verona and, of course, Venice: the Frari Church (Bellini and Titian), the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (Tintoretto) and the Church of San Sebastiano (Veronese). It was there, I think, that I fell in love with the Old Masters and Rubens. (Answering this question, I cannot help thinking of Arnout Balis, who said, more than once, that Rubens was an Italian artist.)

How does your volume fit into the CRLB series?

Volume xxii of the series deals with Rubens's endeavours in the fields of architecture and sculpture, and is divided into five parts, three of which have already been published – *Palazzi di Genova*, xxii/1, *The Jesuit Church of Antwerp*, xxii/3, and *Architectural Sculpture*, xxii/4 – while xxii/2, which examines Rubens's designs for his house in Antwerp, will appear this autumn, and xxii/5, on which I am currently working, is devoted mainly to Rubens's designs for ivory statuettes and decorative objects in ivory and silver.

What prompted Rubens to create sculptural designs?

This question has several possible answers. For the sake of brevity, I shall confine myself to the ivory statuettes. One of the things that must have fascinated Rubens is what you might call the fleshiness of ivory sculpture, and how successful ivory can be at conveying this tactile quality. Another very important property of ivory (the same applies to bronze) is that it enables the sculptor to show lightness and movement in a way not usually possible in terracotta or stone. But Rubens's choice of this material was also a matter of coincidence: in the 1620s he suddenly had at his disposal the services of a brilliant ivory carver of Bavaria. Another stimulus might have been the idea that as a 'designer' of decorative objects, such as the exquisite ivory salt cellar with a silver mount in the Swedish Royal Collection, he was following in the footsteps of such illustrious predecessors as Michelangelo, Raphael and Giulio Romano (who preceded him at the court of Mantua), whose designs Rubens was possibly trying to emulate.

What fascinates you about this subject?

One of the most exciting things about working on this book is the opportunity to introduce not only truly great but little-known works of art, but also some superb artists who are not exactly household names. And there is another extremely fascinating aspect: the collaboration between the painter-designer and the sculptor-ivory carver, though I must admit it is not always easy to reconstruct the creative process that gave rise to the finished work of art.

Who were the sculptors who executed Rubens's designs?

Rubens's studio acted like a magnet, attracting not only painters but also sculptors who sought to learn the art of *disegno*. In the 1620s Rubens could make use of the services of an exceptionally talented young sculptor, the German Georg Petel (1601/02–c. 1634). Petel worked in wood, stone and bronze, but excelled mainly in ivory carving. Of all the sculptors active in the first half of the seventeenth century, he is the one who most consistently 'thought' in ivory, by envisioning how he could exploit the special properties and waxiness, so to speak, of the material. A small number of ivories of superior quality, after designs by Rubens, survive by his hand. A decade later



Rubens collaborated with the gifted Artus Quellinus I (1609–1668) and at the end of his life with Lucas Faydherbe (1617–1697), a young sculptor from Mechelen who went on to practise architecture.

Did Rubens create these sculptural objects for himself or for others?

As far as we know, the ivories were intended for his own collection. The inventory drawn up after Rubens's death in 1640, which listed the works from his collection that were to be sold, included at least seven masterpieces, most of them portraying mythological subjects, by the above-mentioned sculptors.

Were Rubens's designs made on his own initiative?

I think we may assume so, even though it is tempting to speculate, certainly in the case of Petel, that the sculptor not only executed the design but also contributed to its conception. What makes this area of study particularly interesting is the fact that not all of these sculptures seem to have been produced to a special design but were sometimes based on existing compositions by Rubens.

Where can aficionados see some examples?

True enthusiasts must take a tour of Europe – Antwerp, Oxford, Cambridge, Stockholm, Vienna, Munich, St Petersburg... But I can guarantee that they will not be disappointed.

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

PART XXV

BÜTTNER,
MCGRATH ET AL.
THE
THEORETICAL
NOTEBOOK

CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

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KORBEI
DRAWINGS
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TO THE ABOVE
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PART XXIX

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