Rubens was well placed to take advantage of the increasing demand for scenes of Christ’s Passion in the Southern Netherlands at the beginning of the 17th century. He had developed a reputation for his religious paintings in Italy, and his return to Antwerp coincided with the efforts of the Catholic Church to restore and replace altarpieces damaged by the Calvinists.

The experience of Italy had fostered Rubens’s interest in both the historical and the human aspects of Christ’s Passion. The strong influence of classical sculpture and of Titian, Michelangelo and Caravaggio is evident in the monumental quality of his compositions; but he also valued the emotional intensity of Northern masters like Rogier van der Weyden and Quentin Massys. He made many innovations to traditional representations in his concern for accuracy, especially in disputed subjects like the *Elévation of the Cross*. Rubens’s success in transforming all these diverse influences to his own distinctive style is a tribute to his deeply held religious beliefs and his determination to give his viewers the sense of witnessing a moment in history. The images that Rubens created were appropriated throughout Europe.
CORPUS RUBENIANUM
LUDWIG BURCHARD

AN ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ
OF THE WORK OF PETER PAUL RUBENS
BASED ON THE MATERIAL ASSEMBLED
BY THE LATE DR LUDWIG BURCHARD
IN TWENTY-SEVEN PARTS

SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF ANTWERP
AND EDITED BY THE NATIONAAL CENTRUM VOOR DE PLASTISCHE KUNSTEN
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RUBENS
THE PASSION
OF CHRIST

BY J. RICHARD JUDSON

HARVEY MILLER PUBLISHERS
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This manuscript has been a long time in preparation and many individuals and institutions have been exceptionally helpful. I have thanked the late Professor Roger d'Hulst for inviting me to work on this most challenging subject and for his constant encouragement and sound advice. I also owe a great debt to the staffs of the Nationaal Centrum voor de Plastische Kunsten van de 16de en de 17de eeuw and the Rubenianum in Antwerp. It is there that the vast documentation formed by the late Dr Ludwig Burchard is housed, and my study is based upon a segment of this remarkable archive. I am most thankful to Professor Carl van de Velde who spent numerous hours reading, making suggestions and corrections to the manuscript, and his patient and efficient assistant Christine van Mulders. During the last three years she has been of tremendous assistance in bringing this manuscript up to date. I am grateful to my colleagues at the Rubenianum who have freely given of their time and expertise: Frans Baudouin, Hans Vlieghe, Nora de Poorter, Paul Huvenne, Marc Vandeven and Arnout Balis.

Numerous other art historians have helped me over the years with my study of Rubens, but unfortunately I cannot thank them all by name. Two, however, have been of exceptional help: Professor Egbert Haverkamp Beegemann and Dr Anne-Marie Logan. The William Rand Kenan Jr Charitable Trust, Chapel Hill, NC, was most generous in financing my research from 1974 to 1993. The American Academy in Rome and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar each magnanimously gave me a free year to complete the writing of this manuscript.

I am extremely thankful to Brenda B. Turner for her patience and good sense in editing the text. I am also grateful to my wife Carolyn who has read and reread this manuscript and whose astute comments and reasoning have been most valuable. Catherine Stribling and Nelly Verreydt have spent many hours carefully typing the text.

Etna, New Hampshire
ABBREVIATIONS

Literature:

Alpers, Torre, 1971


Antal, Flämische Bilder, 1923


Aust, Entwurf, 1958


Balis, Hunting Scenes, 1986


Baudouin, Altaartuinen, 1984

F. Baudouin, 'Rubens en de altaartuinen van metaal', Rubens and his World; bijdragen, études, studies, Beiträge; aangeboden aan R.-A. d'Hulst naar aanleiding van het vijftigjarig bestaan van het Nationaal Centrum voor de Plastische Kunsten van de 16de en de 17de eeuw, Antwerp, 1984.

Baudouin, Altars, 1972


Baudouin, Rubens, 1972


Belkin, Downes, 1983


Bellori, Vite, 1672


Beschryvinge, 1765

Beschryvinge der Besonderste Werken van de Schilder-Konst, ende Beeldhouwere, nu ter tyd zynde in de Kerken, Kloosters, ende Openbaere Plaetsen der Stad Antwerpen, in 't licht gegeven tot profyt der Reyzers, Antwerp, 1765.

Bialostocki, Descent, 1964


Bodart, Incisione, 1977


Bodart, Rubens, 1985


Bode, Kritik, 1905


Brown, Van Dyck, 1982


Bruyn, Kruisdraging, 1959


Burchard, Cat. Wildenstein, 1950


Burchard, Skizzen, 1926

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ABBREVIATIONS


Cat. Munich, Alte Pinakothek, 1983  Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen; Alte Pinakothek München; Erläuterungen zu den ausgestellten Gemälden, Munich, 1983.


Clément de Ris, Musées, 1861  L. Clément de Ris, Les Musées de Province, II, Paris, 1861.


Denucé, Konstkamers, 1932  J. Denucé, De Antwerpsche 'Konstkamers'. Inventarissen van de kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16de en 17de eeuwen (Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Vlaamsche kunst, II), Antwerp, 1932.

ABBREVIATIONS

Gerson—ter Kuile, 1960

Glen, Rubens, 1977

Glück, Gemäldegalerie, 1923

Glück, Kreuzaufrichtungs-Altar, 1933

Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933

Glück—Haberditzl, Handzeichnungen, 1928

Goris—Held, America, 1947

Graeve, Stone of Unction, 1958

Grossman, Dulwich, 1948

Gurewich, 1957

Haberditzl, Handzeichnungen, 1912

Haverkamp Begemann, Oil Sketches, 1967

Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953
E. Haverkamp Begemann [Cat. Exh.] *Olieverfschetsen van Rubens* (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1953-54), Rotterdam, 1953.

Haverkamp Begemann, Schetsen, 1954

Heiland, Rubens Paintings, 1969

Heinen, Kreuztragung, 1993

Held, Drawings, 1959

Held, Drawings, 1986

Held, Pen Drawings, 1951

Held, Rubens Drawings, 1974
Held, Sketches, 1980


Held, Studies, 1982


Hildebrand, Capucins, 1935


Hind, Rubens, 1923


Hoet, Catalogus, 1752


Hollstein (Dutch and Flemish)


Hollstein (German)


Hubala, Kreuzabnahme, 1971


Hubala, Kruzifixus, 1967


d'Hulst, Jordaens, 1982


d'Hulst, Jordaens Drawings, 1974


d'Hulst, Olieverfschetsen, 1968


d'Hulst—Vandenven, Old Testament, 1989


d'Hulst­Vey, 1960


I.R.P.A., Elévation, 1992


Jaffé, Chef-d’œuvre, 1958


Jaffé, Christ à la Paille, 1972


Jaffé, Christ on the Cross, 1958


Jaffé, Draughtsman, 1965


Jaffé, Oil Sketches, 1982

Jaffé, Rubens, 1989  

Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977  

Jaffé, Rubens at Rotterdam, 1954  

Jaffé, Rubens in Italy, 1958  

Jaffé, Rubens in Italy, 1968  

Jaffé, Rubens Year, 1978  

Johnson, Delacroix, 1981  

Judson, Christ on the Cross, 1984  

Judson, Coup de Lance, 1997  

Judson—Van de Velde, Title-pages, 1978  

Kauffmann, Begegnung, 1981  

K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921  


K.d.K. Van Dyck, 1931  

Kelch, Rubens, 1978  

Knackfuss, Rubens, 1898  

Knackfuss, Rubens, 1904  

Knackfuss, Rubens, 1907  

Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40  

Knipping, Iconography, 1974  

Kuznetsov, Risunki, 1974  


H. Knackfuss, Rubens (Künstler-Monographien, II), Bielefeld/Leipzig, 1898.  

H. Knackfuss, Rubens (Monographs on Artists, IX), trans. L.M. Richter, Bielefeld/Leipzig/London, 1904.  


J.I. Kuznetsov, Risunki Rubensa, Moscow, 1974.
ABBREVIATIONS

L. Larsen, P.P. Rubens, 1952
Larsen, Van Dyck, 1988
Liedtke, Cat. Metropolitan Museum, 1984
Logan, Rubens Exhibitions, 1977
Logan, Rubens Exhibitions, 1978
Logan, Held, 1983
Logan, Held, 1987
Lugt, Cat. Louvre, 1949
Lugt, Répertoire, 1987
Magurn, Letters, 1955
Mâle, Art Religieux, 1951
Mariette, Abécédario, 1851-60
Marquet de Vasselot, Louvre, 1927
Martin, Altarpieces, 1969
Martin, Ceiling Paintings, 1968
Martin, Pompa, 1972
Martin, Raising of the Cross, 1985
Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82


J.R. Martin, Rubens; the Ceiling Paintings for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, 1), Brussels/London/New York, 1968.
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<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mireur, 1911</td>
<td>H. Mireur, <em>Dictionnaire des ventes d'art faites en France et à l'étranger pendant les XVIIIme et XIXme siècles</em>, VI, Paris, 1911.</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS


Piot, Rapport, 1883    C. Piot, Rapport à Mr. le Ministre de l’Intérieur sur les tableaux enlevés à la Belgique en 1794 et restitués en 1815, Brussels, 1883.


Robaut—Chesneau, 1885    A. Robaut and E. Chesneau, L'Oeuvre complet d'Eugène Delacroix; peintures, dessins, gravures, lithographies, Paris, 1885.


Rooses, Vie, 1903    M. Rooses, Rubens, sa vie et ses œuvres, Paris, [1903].
ABBREVIATIONS

Van Gelder, Rubens Marginalia, 1978
Van Puyvelde, Esquisses, 1940
Van Puyvelde, Rubens, 1952
Van Puyvelde, Rubens, 1964
Van Puyvelde, Sketches, 1947
Varshavskaya, Rubens, 1975
Verhaegen, Iconographie, 1962
Vey, Van Dyck, 1962
Vey—Kesting, 1967
Vlieghe, Auftraggeber, 1981
Vlieghe, Portraits, 1987
Vlieghe, Rubens, 1977
Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73
von Frimmel, Lexikon, 1914
von Mechel—de Pigage, 1778
Voss, Malerei, 1920
V.S.
Waagen, Treasures, 1854
Warnke, Rubens, 1977
Wescher, Prima Idea, 1960
Wurzbach
Zarnowski, Esquisses, 1938

L. Van Puyvelde, Les esquisses de Rubens, Basle, 1940.
M. Varshavskaya, Rubens’ Paintings in the Hermitage Museum [in Russian], St Petersburg, 1975.
C. von Mechel and N. de Pigage, La Galerie Electorale de Düsseldorf, Basle, 1778.
C.G. Voorhelm Schneevogt, Catalogue des estampes gravées d’après Rubens, avec l’indication des collections où se trouvent les tableaux et les gravures, Haarlem, 1873.
P. Wescher, La Prima Idea; die Entwicklung der Ölskizze von Tintoretto bis Picasso, Munich, 1960.
Exhibitions:

Amsterdam, 1933  Rubens-tentoonstelling, Gallery J. Goudstikker, Amsterdam, August–September 1933.
Amsterdam/Rotterdam, 1946  Van Jan van Eyck tot Rubens; tentoonstelling van meesterwerken uit de Belgische musea en kerken, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1946.
Antwerp, 1899  Van Dijck tentoonstelling ter gelegenheid der 300e verjaardag der geboorte van den meester, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, August–October 1899.
King’s Lynn, 1960  Oil Sketches and Smaller Pictures by Sir Peter Paul Rubens, Guildhall of St George, King’s Lynn, July–August 1960.
London, 1927
Exhibition of Flemish and Belgian Art 1300-1900, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1927.

London, 1947

London, 1950

London, 1961

London, 1977

Manchester, 1982

New York, 1980

New York, 1981

New York, 1985-86

New York, 1992-93

Ottawa, 1968-69

Padua etc., 1990

Paris, 1936-37

Paris, 1977

Paris, 1977-78

Paris, 1990

Rotterdam, 1939
Tekeningen van Petrus Paulus Rubens, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, February–March 1939.

Rotterdam, 1948-49
Tekeningen van Jan van Eyck tot Rubens, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, December 1948—February 1949.

Rotterdam 1953-54
Olieverfschetsen van Rubens, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, December 1953—March 1954.

Rotterdam, 1990
Rubens en zijn tijd; schilderijen en tekeningen uit eigen collectie, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1990.

Schaffhausen, 1955


INTRODUCTION

Throughout his life Peter Paul Rubens was a devout Catholic, and his strong belief in Christ is reflected in his many poignant representations of the Passion. Rubens painted several large altarpieces in Italy during the early years of his career, and his interpretations of subjects from Christ's Passion contributed to his growing reputation. When he returned to Antwerp in 1608, he was well placed to benefit from the increased demand for altarpieces in the city. During the iconoclast outburst of 1566 in Antwerp, many of the altarpieces in the churches had been destroyed. The disturbances in Antwerp lasted until 1585, when Alexander Farnese recaptured the city and the Catholic religion was restored. The lost altarpieces urgently needed replacement, and on 9 September 1585 the guilds and trade associations were ordered by the Antwerp magistrates not only to restore but also to commission new altarpieces for their chapels. This resulted in the granting of many commissions to artists well into the seventeenth century. Around 1600 the Church required that all altarpieces commissioned by the guilds should bear on the central panel a depiction of Christ or scenes from the Bible, especially from the New Testament. The patron saints of the guild were allowed to be shown on the wings. Many of the guilds obeyed this order, others combined representations from the life of Christ with those of their patron saints. Rubens followed this practice in his first great altarpieces, the Elévation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61) and the Descent from the Cross (Nos. 43-46; Fig. 132). However in the Elévation, the saints on the outer panels are not patron saints of a guild but of the church for which the work was executed.

Rubens was an ideal candidate to profit from this massive restoration programme. From around 1610 until 1621-22, Rubens and his atelier were busy painting representations of single episodes from Christ's Passion; but from then on until around 1632, he does not appear to have painted any subjects from the Passion. It was the period when he was undoubtedly busy

1. See Nos. 58 (Fig. 182) and 59 (Fig. 185), and the ensemble of 1602 for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, II, pp. 58-68, nos. 110-112, figs. 31, 34, 35).
2. I am very grateful to Frans Baudouin who has generously shared with me his extensive knowledge of this period in Antwerp's history.
3. This was codified in 1610 at the Synod of Antwerp where it was decided that in the future the central panel of a triptych should contain the figure of Christ or a subject from the New Testament (F. Baudouin, 'Iconografie en stijlontwikkeling in de godsdienstige schilderkunst te Antwerpen in de zeventiende eeuw', Antwerpen in de XVIIde eeuw, Antwerp, 1989, pp. 338, 339, 361). It would seem, however, that this rule was not always observed strictly (D. Freedberg, 'Painting and the Counter Reformation in the Age of Rubens' in Cat. Exh. Boston—Toledo, 1993-94, p. 139).
with large commissions such as the decorations for Maria de Medici's Luxembourg Gallery in Paris and the tapestry cartoons for the Triumph of the Eucharist and the Life of Achilles. During these years, Rubens was also sent on two important diplomatic missions: in 1628 he went to Spain, and in 1629-30 he stayed in England. Two years later, while he was occupied with the designs for the ceiling decorations in the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall, Rubens managed to paint the large and expensive Institution of the Eucharist for the Church of St Rombouts in Mechlin.4

Just who Rubens's benefactors were, and why they commissioned him to depict scenes from Christ's Passion, allows us an insight into the variety of patronage enjoyed by one of the great artists of the seventeenth century. Rubens's most important patron after his return from Italy, especially during the second decade of the seventeenth century, was the famous Antwerp lawyer, magistrate and art collector, Nicolaas Rockox (1560-1640). His family had close personal connections with Rubens, and it was Rockox who was responsible for the major commissions the young painter received immediately after his return from Rome.5 This patronage was not limited to large public commissions for state and church but included themes of a more private nature. Around 1609 Rockox charged Rubens to paint the Samson and Delilah, now in the National Gallery, London. Some four years later, Rubens executed an epitaph for Rockox and his wife, Adriana Perez, which was placed above the altar of the Chapel of Our Lady in the Franciscan Church of the Recollects in Antwerp.6 Rockox also ordered several paintings from the Passion. It is probable that the initials N.R., inscribed beneath Christ's feet on the Crucifixion in Antwerp (No. 30; Fig. 96) are those of Nicolaas Rockox.7 This picture had been in the Church of the Recollects, to whom Rockox had given two other important works by Rubens: the epitaph, mentioned above, and the Coup de Lance (No. 37; Fig. 110). The latter was presented to the church in 1620 and placed on the high altar.8

Nicolaas Rockox's patronage of Rubens extended beyond the area of private church donations. Rockox played an important part in the decision to award to Rubens one of the most important public commissions in Antwerp, the Descent from the Cross (Nos. 43-46; Fig. 132). On 7 September 1611, the Council of the Guild of the Harquebusiers, with Rockox as their president, met Rubens and authorized him to paint their new altarpiece. Rockox

4. For details of this commission see No. 6.
5. For example, the Adoration of the Magi of 1609 (Madrid, Prado), which was the main decoration for the meeting room in the City Hall of Antwerp where the Twelve Years Truce was negotiated.
6. For a more detailed discussion of both of these pictures, see F. Baudouin, Nicolaas Rockox, 'vriend en patroon' van Peter Paul Rubens, Antwerp, 1977, pp. 17-19, 21, 22, ills. on pp. 8-10.
8. For details, see No. 37.
INTRODUCTION

had been president since 1602,⁹ and his role in influencing the Council in their choice of artist may well have been acknowledged by Rubens when he included Rockox's portrait behind Simeon in the Presentation in the Temple on the inner right wing of the altarpiece (No. 45; Fig. 151).

Rubens's other great Antwerp patron and long-time friend, Cornelis van der Geest,¹⁰ was certainly responsible for Rubens's commission to execute the Elevation of the Cross (Nos. 20-22; Fig. 61) for the Church of St Walburga in Antwerp. The contract for this costly and grand undertaking was agreed upon in June 1610 at a gathering in the Klein Zeeland Inn. The meeting included the Priest of St Walburga, the churchwardens and Cornelis van der Geest.¹¹ Van der Geest was an exceptionally wealthy spice merchant who lived close to the Church of St Walburga, and when he died on 10 May 1638 he was buried in the choir. He had a long history of supporting the arts in Antwerp,¹² and it seems most probable that not only would he have proposed his close friend Rubens to execute the St Walburga commission but would also have contributed a large sum of money for its undertaking.

Rockox and Van der Geest were Rubens's major benefactors in Antwerp. They were closely associated with his most important commissions for representations of the Passion, but two other patrons are known to have ordered works of significance. Louis Clarisse paid 150 florins for Rubens's Flagellation of c. 1614-15 (No. 11; Fig. 24); he presented it to the Dominican Order for their series of pictures commemorating the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary in the Church of St Paul in Antwerp. A few years earlier, in 1611, Clarisse had been one of the nine Wepelaars who each contributed an initial sum of four hundred guilders to the Guild of the Harquebusiers to help pay for Rubens's Descent from the Cross (Nos. 43-46; Fig. 132).¹³ The other known patron in Antwerp who was interested in scenes from the Passion was Marie Maes. She commissioned Rubens to make an epitaph for her husband, Jan Michielsen, a wealthy merchant who had died on 20 June 1617. Rubens painted a Lamentation (Nos. 64-68; Fig. 192), which was placed on a column in the left transept of the Cathedral in Antwerp.

From the beginning of his career, Rubens also had important patrons outside Antwerp who ordered episodes from the Passion as well as other subjects. His first major decorative ensemble included the Mocking of Christ and the Raising of the Cross, preserved in a copy, now in Grasse, in the Chapel of

⁹ F. Baudouin, op. cit., p. 20.
¹⁰ See the dedication on Witdoeck's engraving of 1638 after Rubens's Elevation (No. 20k; Fig. 77), where Van der Geest is described as 'the best of men and the oldest of friends, in whom ever since youth he [Rubens] found a constant patron...'.
¹¹ Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886–92, II, p. 80.
¹² For a discussion of Van der Geest as a patron, see J. S. Held, 'Artis Pictoriae Amator, an Antwerp Art Patron and his Collection', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, L, 1957, pp. 53-84.
¹³ Baudouin, Altars, 1972, p. 61.
the Municipal Hospital. These two works were part of a group of three paintings, the third showing *St Helen Discovering the Holy Cross*, commissioned by Archduke Albert of Austria for his titular church in Rome, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. In 1602, the Archduke, through his envoy to the Holy See, Jean Richardot, commissioned Rubens to decorate the Chapel of St Helen in Santa Croce. As Ruelens observed, Richardot himself was probably given the final say as to the choice of artist for this project. Richardot's decision in favour of Rubens may have been influenced by the fact that Philip Rubens, the artist's brother, was Richardot's secretary. Whatever the case, Rubens's first important work in Rome was made for one of the city's most frequently visited pilgrimage churches, and this must have brought him considerable recognition at such an early date in his career. Shortly thereafter, Cardinal Ascanio Colonna acquired Rubens's *Lamentation* (No. 58; Fig. 182), but whether he commissioned it or purchased it from Rubens's stock of pictures is not clear. Once again the artist's brother, Philip, may have played a role in this sale. He had become the cardinal's secretary and librarian in 1605 when the painting was probably purchased.

After his return from Italy in 1608, Rubens's commissions were not simply concentrated in the two main cities of the Southern Netherlands, Antwerp and Brussels; they extended as far west as the French border and as far east as Poland, attesting to his increasing fame. Rubens was particularly sought after by the Capuchin Order in spite of the fact that the General of the Order in Spain had protested against the elegant decorations of the abbeys in the Southern Netherlands. One of the earliest commissions was the *Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body* (No. 74; Fig. 216), ordered by Sébastien Briquet, Canon of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Cambrai, and presented by him in 1616 to the Church of the Capuchins in Cambrai at a cost of 400 ducats. A short time later, Prince Alexandre de Chimay, brother of Prince Charles d'Arenberg, invited Rubens to paint an altarpiece for one of the most important churches in the Netherlands, the Capuchin church in Brussels. The three altars were consecrated on 7 April 1620 in honour of St Francis, and Rubens included St Francis in his altarpiece, the *Lamentation* (No. 70; Fig. 204). It was completed sometime between 1617 and 1620.

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18. See the letter dated 10 March 1617, written by Father Paolo da Cesena, the General of the Capuchin Order in Madrid denouncing to the Supreme Authorities in Rome the overly luxurious decorations of the Order in the Provinces of Flanders (Hildebrand, *Capucins*, 1935, pp. 726–729).
19. See No. 70.
At the same time, 1617, Rubens and his workshop executed a large *Descent from the Cross* (No. 48; Fig. 166) for the Capuchin monks in Lille. Rubens created one more Passion scene for the Capuchins toward the end of his career: the monumental and moving *Christ on the Cross between the two Thieves*, originally painted for the Capuchin church of St Anthony in Antwerp (No. 36; Fig. 109).

The painting of *Christ Dead on the Cross* (No. 41; Fig. 125) was a commission from the Oratory of St Philip Neri in Mechlin for their altar dedicated to St Nicolas of Tolentino. But of even greater importance was Rubens’s only known scene of the Passion ordered by the Benedictines. In 1636, he agreed to decorate the main altar in the Abbey of Afflighem with a monumental representation of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, now in Brussels, Musées Royaux (No. 19; Fig. 55). The painting was installed on 8 April 1637, and Rubens received 1,600 florins for it.20

Among the private patrons interested in Passion scenes, Piotr Zeromski purchased an atelier piece, the *Descent from the Cross* (No. 53; Fig. 174), for the King of Poland around 1619.21 Canon Camicel presented the Church of Notre-Dame in St Omer with a *Déposition* from Rubens’s workshop in 1623 (No. 57; Fig. 181). And close to Antwerp, Rubens received one of his most notable private commissions, from Catherine Lescuyer for an epitaph honouring her father. The main panel contained the *Institution of the Eucharist* (No. 6; Fig. 11) and two predellas representing *Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem* (No. 7; Fig. 17) and *Christ Washing the Disciples’ Feet* (No. 8; Fig. 18). This epitaph was delivered on 29 November 1632, and installed in the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St Rombout’s, Mechlin, at a cost of 1,000 florins.22

Rubens made several innovations in his representations of the Passion, developing new images which were appropriated throughout Europe. His ideas were sometimes based upon the distant past as reflected in the religious writings of his contemporaries and at times upon earlier isolated examples. This is clear in Rubens’s concept of the *Elévation of the Cross* (No. 20; Fig. 61), painted for the Church of St Walburga in Antwerp. The subject had been depicted in art, but not described in the Gospels. By the year 1200, two accounts of the episodes on Golgotha, based upon the writings of the Pseudo-Anselm and the Pseudo-Bona Ventura, were generally known down to the close of the Middle Ages. The Pseudo-Anselm informs us that Christ was nailed to the Cross while it was still on the ground, whereas Pseudo-

20. For the documentation, see No. 19.
21. For details, see No. 53.
22. For details of the commission, see Nos. 6-8.
INTRODUCTION

Bonaventura claims that Christ was nailed to an upright Cross. There is no mention of the Elevation of the Cross by theologians: a representation of this subject did not appear until the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Germany and it then disappears again until the 1580s. In the Netherlands, the subject was found in engravings of the Passion, most frequently made in Antwerp at the end of the sixteenth century. However, the Elevation of the Cross did not become a popular theme in painting until Rubens treated it.

The major inspiration for Rubens's rendering of the Elevation of the Cross has long been attributed to Tintoretto's representation of the Good Thief in the Crucifixion in the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice. Yet Rubens may well have arrived at his dramatic representation of the Cross raised on a diagonal up and back into space through his close contact with the Jesuits who popularized the subject. Some ten years after the Antwerp Elevation, Rubens painted the same subject for the ceiling of the Jesuit church in Antwerp. This theme, as visualized by Rubens, became very popular in Catholic Europe, particularly with the Jesuits. Its popularity may derive from the close affinity between the Elevation of the Cross and the action of the priest offering the Host on high in the Mass.

At about the same time that Rubens completed his Elevation of the Cross for the Church of St Walburga in 1611, he began to paint single-figured representations of Christ on the Cross. In these images, Christ is portrayed either as still alive or as having died on the Cross. The former alludes to his victory over sin and the redemption of mankind, while the latter emphasizes his suffering for the sins of man. Many pictures of both types have been attributed to Rubens or to his atelier. However, on stylistic grounds, I believe that the Crucifixion in Antwerp (No. 30; Fig. 96) is the only representation of Christ victorious over sin that is entirely by Rubens. Those in Munich (No. 40; Fig. 124) and in Mechlin (No. 41; Fig. 125) are also originals by Rubens representing Christ's sacrifice for the sins of man. Sadly, his most completely

24. For details, see No. 20.
26. Several exceptions exist in South German art. Cf. woodcut of c. 1480 by a South German master illustrating the Seven Falls of Christ, ill. in J. Marrow, Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance, Courtrai, 1979, pl. VIII; Hans Baldung Grien and Albrecht Altdorfer woodcuts, paintings by Wolf Huber and by an unknown South German artist working c. 1485, Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum, on loan from French & Co., New York. Outside Germany, the only Elevation of the Cross known to me prior to c. 1585 was painted by Girolamo Treviso, formerly in London, Julius Weitzner Collection. See No. 20.
documented painting of the Crucifixion (No. 33), described in his letter of 28 April 1618 to Sir Dudley Carleton as 'perhaps the best thing I have ever done', is lost.31

The surviving versions of the Crucifixion by Rubens continue in the tradition of the late medieval Andachtsbild,32 but add realistic details of the sky and landscape to give the viewer a greater sense of witnessing a moment in history. This interpretation of the Crucifixion scene was introduced into Flemish art by Rubens, but it was based upon earlier Italian imagery.33 Since the establishment in the late fourteenth century of the church reform movement in the Netherlands by Geert Grote and the devotio moderna, meditation on the life and passion of Christ had played an important role in the religious life of the Netherlands.34 The leaders of this movement created elaborate methods of meditation which ultimately led to the 'Imitation of Christ'. This form of religious devotion was pursued and re-established with a similar intensity in Ignatius Loyola’s Spiritual Exercises of 1548, and it continued to be extremely popular in Antwerp during Rubens’s lifetime. Publications such as Loyola’s and the Introduction à la vie dévoté of 1608 by St Francis de Sales, as well as other works inspired by the devotio moderna, may have played a significant role in Rubens’s new and realistic interpretation of the Crucifixion and other scenes from the Passion.35 This type of imagery clearly helped the believer to imagine that he or she was actually witnessing the subject represented. Rubens accomplished this by the addition of a dramatic sky, a landscape with the Holy City in the distance and a powerfully emotional rendering of Saviour.

The innovations and variations that characterize the Crucifixion scenes made by Rubens and his workshop extend to every detail of the subject. For example, Christ is placed on a tree trunk. This medieval form survived into the early sixteenth century, but was replaced in popularity by a tree-shaped shaft which was planed down behind Christ's legs and feet.36 Rubens reintroduced the medieval tree form in its entirety, possibly because of his strong interest in history. Justus Lipsius had observed in his book De Cruce Libri Tres that the rounded tree trunk was the archaeologically correct shape.37 It is also likely that Rubens used this form of the Cross to emphasize the concept of the Cross as the Tree of Life. This configuration suggests the

31. See under No. 33 and note 4.
33. See No. 31.
34. For details, see J. Marrow, op. cit., pp. 20-27.
36. For details, see No. 30.
idea of continuous growth and the concept of eternal life made possible through Christ's death on the Cross.\textsuperscript{38}

With the exception of the Antwerp painting of \textit{Christ Expiring on the Cross} (No. 30; Fig. 96) and those atelier pièces based upon it, all the Crucifixions by Rubens show Christ's arms raised up sharply in a Y-form and not spread out. By doing this, Rubens continued the late medieval type of Crucifixion which has wrongly been described as the Jansenist Crucifixion, since it existed long before the Jansenist movement originated.\textsuperscript{39} In these works Rubens normally secures Christ's body to the Cross with four nails.\textsuperscript{40} Each hand is attached with a nail, while the feet overlap slightly and each is pierced by a spike. By utilizing four nails, Rubens returns to the formula employed in late Roman Antiquity which Justus Lipsius and his colleagues believed to be correct.\textsuperscript{41} Four nails were the accepted number until c. 1300, when artists began to cross the feet and use only three nails. This type of Crucifixion prevailed for about two hundred and fifty years until c. 1550, when the question of the number of nails was reconsidered. The scholarly community was unable to reach a decision and the problem was considered insoluble. The theologian Johannes Molanus (1533-1585) left it to the artist to decide how many nails should be used.\textsuperscript{42} St Bridget of Sweden (c. 1303-1373) had related in her \textit{Révélations} that Christ's feet were crossed one over the other and that two nails were used to secure them to the Cross.\textsuperscript{43} Given the resurgence of her popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it would not be surprising if she had been the determining factor in the positioning of the Saviour's feet and the use of two nails to secure them. Christ's hands were each attached to the Cross with one nail, usually driven through the middle of the palm. However, Rubens uses nails which penetrate between the palm and the wrist—an anatomically correct position for carrying such a weight. This attracted strong opposition from the clergy in their sermons and publications because it was thought to be against the text in Zachariah 13:6, which explicitly mentions wounds in the hands.\textsuperscript{44} Rubens's placement of the nail between the carpal bones might indicate some knowledge of the famous, but questionable, Turin shroud which was exhib-

\textsuperscript{40} The one exception is the three-nailed image from Rubens's workshop, formerly in the Cook Collection, Richmond (No. 31, Copy 6).
\textsuperscript{41} J. Lipsius, op. cit, chapter IX; Knipping, \textit{Iconography}, 1974, I, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{42} Mâle, \textit{Art Religieux}, 1951, pp. 270, 271.
\textsuperscript{43} Mâle, \textit{Art Religieux}, 1951, pp. 271, 272.
\textsuperscript{44} Knipping, \textit{Iconography}, 1974, I, p. 218.
Lipsius asserted that four nails were the historically correct number for the Crucifixion, but he was not entirely certain that they, alone, were used to attach the condemned to a cross in ancient times. In Chapter VIII of his *De Cruce Libri Tres*, Lipsius discusses the competing claims of nails and ropes, and notes that ropes were also needed. This might explain why ropes encircled Christ's waist in Rubens's *Coup de Lance* (No. 37; Fig. 110).

Rubens's interest in depicting the Crucifixion in an historically correct way is clearly shown in his inclusion of a text inscribed on the scroll above Christ's head. Lipsius had mentioned that in Antiquity it was customary to advertise the crime of the crucified by an inscription. Rubens not only does just that, but beginning with the *Elevation of the Cross* (No. 20; Fig. 61), as first noted by W.N. Sainsbury, he inserts the correct texts and moreover does so in the Hebrew characters used in the Aramaean dialect of Palestine at the time when Christ was crucified. The Greek and Latin lines are also accurately transcribed in the paintings that are generally accepted as by Rubens. The scrolls were normally curled up just above Christ's head, which was not always crowned with thorns. Seventeenth-century scholars were inclined to believe that Christ was crucified wearing the crown of thorns, but there were numerous medieval examples that depicted him bare-headed. There was no set rule about this, and Rubens very likely felt free to follow his aesthetic insights.

As with the crown of thorns, Rubens and his workshop did not always include Christ's side wound in a Crucifixion scene. Yet there is some consistency in its appearance. The wound is omitted in all the paintings representing Christ alive on the Cross and looking up toward heaven, except for the atelier piece in the Bob Jones University Collection in Greenville, South Carolina (Fig. 97). The wound is present on the Saviour's left side in the two pictures by Rubens of *Christ Dead on the Cross* (Nos. 40, 41; Figs. 124, 125). The inclusion of the wound has a long pictorial tradition, and its placement depended upon the theological meaning the artist wished to convey. Beginning with Albrecht Dürer and continuing throughout the sixteenth century, the laceration was consistently placed on the left side. This practice suggests that artists wished to depict it closer to Christ's heart.

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49. Cf. e.g. No. 30, Fig. 96.
51. For a detailed discussion, see Gurewich, 1957, pp. 358-362.
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By the time Rubens and his atelier executed their Crucifixions with the open wound on Christ's left side, theologians had decided that it did not matter where the wound was situated. By continuing the sixteenth-century tradition, although theologians considered it unnecessary, Rubens may have been acknowledging the enormous popularity in Antwerp of the devotion to the heart of Jesus as reflected in the literature and the engravings of the sixteenth and particularly the early seventeenth centuries.

Rubens did not consistently follow earlier traditions in the placement of Christ's lance wound, but he did so in the painting specifically titled Coup de Lance (No. 37; Fig. 110). This work is also historically correct in depicting the death blows administered to the thieves. In this picture a soldier, carrying a baton, stands on a ladder and is either about to break the bones of the Bad Thief or has already done so. In Chapter XIV of De Cruce Libri Tres, Lipsius describes a specific type of execution practised by the Jews in ancient times, according to which, in keeping with their religious rules, it was necessary for the victim to be lowered from the cross and buried before sunset. This custom required the breaking of the bones to insure death by dusk.

In all of the known Crucifixions by Rubens, and those that can be associated with his atelier, Jerusalem is shown on the horizon behind the foot of the Cross. Here the artist, the Church and several Church writers, stress the concept that Christ turns his back on the criminal city and looks toward the people who await the light.

Many examples of the Crucifixion theme were painted by Rubens's atelier and later followers, and they can be grouped into two types: Christ Dead on the Cross and Christ Expiring on the Cross. Of the first type, the paintings in Munich (No. 40; Fig. 124) and Mechlin (No. 41; Fig. 125) are by Rubens; of the second type, the picture in Antwerp (No. 30; Fig. 96) and the drawings in Rotterdam (Nos. 32, 37a; Figs. 101, 112) and London (No. 37e; Fig. 116) are by him. The studio works and the later copies depicting Christ Still Alive on the Cross usually included the eclipse of the sun, an indication of Jerusalem below, the skull, the scroll in three different languages, Christ's arms in the closed upright position, and his drapery either hanging down on the left side as in the Antwerp example or gently fluttering in the breeze. In the pictures that follow the Antwerp type of Christ, the position of Christ's arms in relation to the Cross has changed to the more medieval 'Y' shape and a landscape is included. Crucifixion scenes by Rubens's atelier and those painted by later followers containing the flying drapery are cited in many

52. Ibid., p. 361.
collections and sales. There are other variants on the Rubens types in a number of collections.

In his drawing of c. 1631 of Christ Victorious over Death and Sin in Rotterdam (No. 32; Fig. 101), Rubens combined two Crucifixion types into one composition, and thus created a new iconographic form. He incorporated the Y-shaped medieval configuration, usually reserved for Christ dead on the Cross, with a representation of the living Christ looking up toward heaven. Traditionally, this subject had been represented by a standing or seated image of Christ Resurrected with his feet suppressing the symbols of death, sin or the devil. Around 1613-18 and 1627-30, before he made the Rotterdam drawing, Rubens executed several such images, which continued the pictorial tradition of Martin de Vos' Christ Triumphant of 1590 (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten).

Rubens used the Y-shaped medieval pose of Christ to devise yet another innovative design. In the oil sketch of the Three Crosses of c. 1620 (No. 38; Fig. 123), Rubens broke with tradition by placing the thieves on their crosses in the same position reserved for Christ and eliminated all the other usual participants. The result is an intensely dramatic scene.

On three different occasions, Rubens, as far as one knows, painted Crucifixion scenes that included the Virgin, St John, St Mary Magdalen and others grouped around the foot of the Cross (Nos. 34, 36, 37; Figs. 104, 109, 110). In the pictures in Antwerp and Toulouse, Christ's mother is shown standing and not collapsing with sorrow. This dignified rendering of the Virgin illustrates John 19:25, a text of importance for Franciscan thinking: 'they were standing by the Cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sisters'. The text is also used by Rubens in his post-Italian scenes of the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61) and the Descent from the Cross (Nos. 43-45; Fig. 132), and marks a change from his earlier manner of rendering Mary where, in his only Italian painting of the former theme, she is presented in a state of complete collapse. After his return from Italy, Rubens probably incorporated this and other Franciscan ideas into his paintings. That Mary is depicted in a more dignified stance in scenes of Mount Golgotha is even more noticeable.

56. Cf. the oil sketch, whereabouts unknown, for the lost painting which was installed above the tomb of Jeremias Cock in the Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; the picture in Strasbourg; the one in Columbus, Ohio; the studio piece formerly in Potsdam and the modello in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For details, see D. Freedberg, 'Rubens as a Painter of Epitaphs, 1612-1618', Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis, XXIV, 1978, pp. 63, 65, figs. 9-12; Freedberg, Christ after the Passion, 1984, pp. 61-70, nos. 12-15, figs. 26-28, 31, 34.

57. My colleague Professor Jaroslav Folda has pointed out that the only comparable image of this subject can be found on the doors of c. 432-440 at Santa Sabina in Rome, which Rubens may well have seen during his stay there in the early years of the 17th century.

58. Cf. the copy after Rubens's lost Raising of the Cross, Grasse, Chapel of the Municipal Hospital (Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, II, pp. 65-68, no. 112, fig. 35).
in his representations of the *Descent from the Cross* (Nos. 47-57). The Virgin is here shown in a manner quite different from the iconography of the sixteenth century established by Daniele da Volterra's *Deposition* in Santa Trinità dei Monti, Rome, where she collapses and is supported by one of the Marys. In his early post-Italian *Descent from the Cross* (Nos. 43-45; Fig. 132) and contrary to sixteenth-century custom, Rubens presents the Virgin standing strong, upright and gently touching Christ. Rubens continues this representation of the Virgin in his later paintings of the *Descent from the Cross* (No. 48; Fig. 166) done for the Franciscan Order of the Capuchins in Lille. In his subsequent paintings of this theme, the Virgin becomes even more important in helping to lower Christ's body, and ultimately she supports almost the entire weight of her son in the Valenciennes *Descent from the Cross* (No. 52; Fig. 173). The prominence of the Virgin in this action emphasizes her importance to the concept of Redemption. In the *Deposition*, Christ's body is sustained by his most loyal followers, and the fact of his existence is reiterated by the grandeur of his body which is emphasized in the celebration of the Mass. Furthermore, the participants in Rubens's Depositions reach out toward Christ, and this, according to Bialostocki, symbolizes their participation in the action of 'communion' and service to Christ's body which is enacted in the Eucharist. This emphasis upon the Eucharist is evident not only in the *Descent from the Cross* but also in the paintings of the *Elevation* and the *Lamentation*.

In one of Rubens's earliest representations of the *Lamentation* (Rome, Borghese Gallery, No. 59; Fig. 185), the Saviour's body has not yet been anointed and he rests on a sarcophagus. Rubens equates the sarcophagus with the altar and the sarcophagus is seen as the Stone of Unction. Christ's body, in turn, is perceived as the Eucharist, which is the transubstantiation of Christ's flesh and blood into the consecrated bread and wine. After his return to Antwerp Rubens painted several Lamentations with Christ placed on the Stone of Unction, adding bundles and strands of wheat to make the reference to the Eucharist even more explicit.

Rubens was devoted to the doctrine of transubstantiation throughout his life. As early as c. 1609, he painted the *Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament* for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the Dominican church, Antwerp. This painting illustrates the acceptance of the doctrine of transubstitution.

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59. There is one exception in Rubens's oeuvre and that is the St Petersburg drawing (Fig. 136). For example of the *Deposition* executed in Antwerp around 1600 which depict the Virgin stricken by grief, see the Wierix prints illustrated in Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, i, pp. 17, 19, 20, 51, nos. 117, 136, 361, 362, pls. 14, 17, 45.
60. Evers, Rubens, 1942, p. 134.
63. See Nos. 61, 62, 64, 69; Figs. 187, 189, 192, 202.
throughout the history of the Church, its acceptance by theologians and stresses it as a document of religious belief established by the Council of Trent. Emphasis upon the worship of the Eucharist was adhered to and encouraged especially by the Hapsburgs and was practised throughout the Southern Netherlands, particularly in Brussels and Antwerp. Archduke Albert and Isabella of the Southern Netherlands, were deeply committed to this concept. Four years after Albert's death in 1621, Isabella commissioned Rubens to design the great tapestry series illustrating the Triumph of the Eucharist. In the Southern Netherlands, the custom of frequently taking communion was well established, even more than elsewhere in Europe. According to De Piles, Rubens rose everyday at four in the morning and made it a rule to begin his day by going to Mass. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of Rubens's post-Italian Lamentations were a glorification of the doctrine of transubstantiation. This concept was also paramount in his representations of the Descent from the Cross and Christ Carried to the Tomb.

In his representations of Christ's Passion, Rubens borrowed and absorbed motifs from the Antique, Italy and the North. He was educated in the humanist circle of Antwerp, and according to his nephew Philip, he went to Italy 'in order to study close at hand the most celebrated works of the ancient and modern artists and to improve himself by their example in painting.' During his stay in Italy, Rubens made a great number of drawings after the Antique (see Part XXIII of this Corpus) as well copies of the great Italian masters of the Renaissance and early Baroque. In his Passion paintings, Rubens was inspired by Hellenistic sculptures such as the Laocoön, the Hercules Farnese and the Belvedere Torso. He used these antique models to impart to his figures an ideal as well as a monumental quality which could only be found in ancient sculpture. In his Latin treatise De imitatione statuarum, written at an unknown date, he sums up the importance of studying ancient sculpture and indicates methods of adapting it for one's work. Rubens writes that

64. Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, 1, p. 75.
68. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, I, p. 54.
70. First published in Roger de Piles, Cours de peinture par principes, Paris, 1708, pp. 139-148.
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copying antique sculpture is 'for some most useful, for others detrimental to the extent of the very annihilation of their art. I am convinced that in order to achieve the highest perfection one needs a full understanding of the statues, nay a complete absorption in them; but one must make judicious use of them and above all avoid the effect of stone. For many neophytes and even some experts do not distinguish stuff from form, stone from figure, nor the exigencies of the marble from its artistic use... Whoever can make this distinction with wise discretion should indeed welcome the statues in a loving embrace; for what can we, decadent children of this erring century, accomplish?'71

Rubens's sensitive and penetrating analysis of the study and use of ancient sculpture in painting is translated into many of his Passion pictures and appears to best effect in the Descent from the Cross. The main figures, Christ in the interior (No. 43; Fig. 135) and St Christopher on the exterior (No. 46; Fig. 157), are magnificent examples of Rubens's adaptation of Hellenistic sculpture following the principles discussed in his De imitatione statuarum. These figures do 'achieve the highest perfection' and demonstrate the master's 'full understanding of the statues' as well as his ability to transform them into paintings without any sense of the stone.

Rubens's lifelong interest in the Antique was equalled by his strong devotion to the ideals of Titian, who was also deeply influenced by ancient art.72 Rubens's affinity with Titian can be seen in his use of colour, light, form and movement. At his death Rubens owned ten works by Titian and had made thirty copies after his paintings.73 The influence of Titian played an important role in several of Rubens's Passion scenes. Titian's Entombment of 1559 (Madrid, Prado)74 appears to have made the strongest impression upon Rubens. He borrowed motifs from this picture during his Italian period and continued to do so as late as the 1630s.75

During his years in Mantua, Rubens studied the works of many other North Italian painters, from whom he borrowed figural and compositional ideas. His drawings and paintings of the Passion abound with references to Tintoretto, Veronese, Mantegna, Federico Barocci, Leonardo da Vinci and others. In the case of Leonardo, it is known that Rubens visited Milan and studied the Last Supper. His impressions of this monumental work are recorded in his lost Latin text, published by Roger de Piles.76 Here Rubens

71. For the complete translation, see Stechow, Rubens, 1968, pp. 2, 27.
75. For details, see Nos. 72, 73; Figs. 214, 215.
77. This was first pointed out in A.K. Wheelock, op. cit.
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sums up his admiration for Leonardo's Last Supper: 'In short, by his profound speculations he arrived to such a degree of perfection, that it seems to me impossible to speak so well of him as he deserves and much more to imitate him'. Rubens followed his own advice in his only surviving painting of the Last Supper, the altarpiece of 1632 now in Milan (No. 6; Fig. 11). He did not 'imitate' the great Italian, but he established the same sense of agitated movement leading up to Christ from both sides by arranging the apostles, as in Leonardo, in groups of two and three.

Rubens's interests in Rome were not confined to the Antique; he was also attracted by paintings, drawings and prints made in the sixteenth century. Rubens's scenes from the Passion bear few traces of his study of Raphael and his circle. Michelangelo and Caravaggio, however, appear to have had the greatest impact on this area of Rubens's work. Michelangelo's huge forms inspired him, as we can see in the semi-nude figures in the foreground of the Elevation. In the Descent from the Cross in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135) and St Petersburg (No. 55; Fig. 180), the figures of Christ and St John bear a striking resemblance in their posture to Christ and St Mary Magdalen in Michelangelo's Pietà, which, though now in Florence, was in Rome in the seventeenth century.

The Michelangelesque elements in the Antwerp Elevation and Descent (Nos. 20, 43; Figs. 61, 132) are complimented by the strong use of chiaroscuro light effects which probe the picture surface and bring out the realistic details. Rubens studied Caravaggio with great care, borrowing details and compositional arrangements from him. His interest in Caravaggio was not limited to those borrowings, but in order to understand his innovations more fully, Rubens painted a faithful copy of his Entombment in the Vatican (No. 75; Fig. 223). Executed c. 1614, it illustrates his fascination with Caravaggio even after his return to Antwerp. He constantly referred to Caravaggio in his major representations of the Entombment, as well as in other subjects that required a combination of realistic figures placed relatively close to the foreground and dramatically enhanced by light coming into the picture from an unknown source. By adopting Caravaggio's aesthetic principles and those of other Italians, Rubens created an intense religious atmosphere in his scenes of the Passion.

In addition to the lessons he learnt from Italian art, Rubens also analyzed and incorporated elements from northern art in his work. He observed composi-

78. For details of Rubens's interest in Raphael and a more detailed bibliography, see Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, pp. 23-29 and passim.
80. See Nos. 2, 20, 45a, 74; Figs. 2, 61, 153, 216.
tional arrangements, subject matter and emotional aspects present in Netherlandish art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. His debt to Rogier van der Weyden is especially prominent in the supportive relationship between St John and the Virgin in the Rotterdam drawing of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215), and less obvious in the left panel of the Elevation (No. 20; Fig. 75). The Elevation of the Cross is a northern theme which goes back to early sixteenth-century German art, it was virtually unheard of in Italy. In scenes of the Passion, Christ was normally depicted as being nailed to the Cross while it was still on the ground. This was immediately followed by the Crucifixion. The raising was not rendered in Italy, nor do we find it after c. 1525 in the North. However, a few years before Rubens's departure for Italy in 1600, this subject was introduced into Antwerp in prints by Hieronymus Wierix and Jan Sadeler. Rubens began to paint this theme in Italy in his Elevation of the Cross of 1602 for the Chapel of St Helen in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. There are many other instances of Rubens's use of earlier Antwerp ideas, and this is particularly evident in his references to Otto van Veen.

Rubens's concern with the Gothic and Mannerist art of the Netherlands was complemented by his thorough examination of the past, including Gothic prototypes from Germany and Italy. This concern is especially strong in a group of pictures of the Descent from the Cross executed by Rubens and his studio around 1619. These altarpieces, now lost, formerly in Kalisz (No. 53; Fig. 174), Arras (No. 54; Fig. 176), St Omer (No. 57; Fig. 181) and Valenciennes (No. 52; Fig. 173), present the figure of Christ as it is found in Gothic art of both the North and the South. His torso is curved, his head falls to the side and his legs are stiff and perpendicular to the ground line. In one case—a lost composition by Rubens (No. 53) known only through a copy (Fig. 175) and an engraving by C. Waumans—the Saviour's hand is nailed to the arm of the Cross. In all these works, Rubens and his studio have successfully translated a Gothic prototype into a seventeenth-century image by uniting majestic and realistic figures with an idealized Christ ultimately based upon the 'beau idéal' of the Antique.

Rubens's Passion œuvre demonstrates his genius in successfully combining northern and southern concepts. A fine example is the Ecce Homo, which is

81. For Rubens's debt to Rogier van der Weyden's horizontal format in representations of the Descent, see the discussion of Rubens's atelier piece in St Petersburg (No. 55; Fig. 180).
82. For details, see No. 20.
83. For the one exception known to me and based upon a German prototype, see the painting by Giro-lamo Treviso formerly in London, Julius Weitzner Collection.
84. For details, see No. 20.
86. See Nos. 6, 70a; Figs. 11, 205.
known to us in numerous copies and engravings. Cornelis Galle's print (Fig. 36) is probably the most accurate reproduction of this painting and forcefully illustrates the artist's imaginative use of his study of the past. Rubens's presentation of the figures cut just beneath the waist and placed in the foreground with a large pier and wall directly behind Christ, and the figures to his right, is Flemish in origin. It goes back to a work such as Quinten Massys' Christ Shown to the People of c. 1525 (Venice, Palazzo Ducale). Unfortunately, the provenance of the Massys is unknown, but the compositional arrangement looks forward to Titian's oil sketch of c. 1575 (St Louis, City Art Museum). In these works no architectural structure, such as a balustrade, separates the viewer from the scene. This same relationship between the spectator and the picture exists in the painting by Rubens. This cannot be said for Correggio's Ecce Homo (London, National Gallery) or Cigoli's painting with the same subject (Florence, Uffizi), which Friedländer had proposed as the source for Rubens's picture.

Whether or not Rubens knew the works by Massys or Titian or both is impossible to say. Yet given the similarity in composition and the fact that Rubens studied and copied the work of both men, a connection is possible. Rubens has changed Christ's posture in order to give maximum attention to the nude section of the figure. The musculature has been idealized, and the general concept is that of a Hellenistic torso to which arms and head have been added.

As in all the subjects he painted, Rubens called upon the past as well as upon his contemporaries to create his magnificent and original works representing the Passion of Christ. He rarely imitated literally, but studied, changed and combined his sources as he established his own personal style. He possessed an uncanny ability to understand his models, whether from the Antique, the Gothic, the sixteenth or the early seventeenth centuries in Italy or the North. Rubens absorbed the past into his own manner of thinking and feeling, and in this way created an original and grand style of painting. His artistic ideals were carried on into later centuries by artists at home and abroad.

87. See No. 13.
88. For the dating, see L. Silver, The Paintings of Quinten Massys with Catalogue Raisonné, Montclair, NJ, 1984, pp. 228, 229, no. 46, pl. 87.
90. Friedländer, Early to Full Baroque, 1964, p. 82, figs. 19-21.
91. There was a strong revival of interest in artists like Quinten Massys during the early years of the 17th century in Antwerp. Rubens copied at least one painting by Massys, the supposed Portrait of Paracelsus, Brussels, Musées Royaux. For a detailed discussion of the renewed attention to Massys, see J.S. Held, 'Arts Pictorium Amator; An Antwerp Art Patron and his Collection', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, L, 1957, pp. 63, 64.
92. Cf. e.g. Rubens's importance for Eugène Delacroix discussed in Ehrlich White, Delacroix, 1967.
INTRODUCTION

Rubens died on 30 May 1640 and was interred in the Church of St James, Antwerp. As was befitting a man of his high rank, creative abilities and strong religious convictions, Mass was held in his honour for the next six weeks. It was said also at several other centres of worship in Antwerp: the Brothers of Our Lady celebrated one hundred and fifty masses, the Dominicans, the Augustinians, the Capuchins, the Discalced Carmelites and the Franciscans each performed one hundred masses, and the Beghards and Minimi held fifty masses each. Fifteen masses were said at the Chapel in the Keizerstraat, twenty-five at the parish church in Elewijt and ten at the Black Sisters of Mechlin.93

CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ

1. Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet: Oil Sketch

Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES:
(1) Engraving by A. Lommelin (Fig. 1); 417 × 331 mm. (V.S., p. 36, no. 217).
(2) Engraving by W. Baillie, 1787, after Copy 1; 387 × 500 mm. (V.S., p. 36, no. 218).

When compared with Rubens's predella of Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet (No. 8; Fig. 18), Adriaan Lommelin's engraving contains a number of important changes. This prompted Burchard to propose that the engraving was not made after the predella, now in Dijon, but after a lost oil sketch by Rubens. In the engraving, the figures are placed in a vertical rather than an almost square space. The altar, with the open book and candles, is absent, and the scene is lit by an oil lamp hanging from above. The candle in the centre of the Dijon panel has also been eliminated. In the predella, an apostle is seated behind and to the right of Christ, but in the engraving the apostle is placed between Christ and St Peter. In the engraving, one of the apostles in the left foreground is striding into the scene with his body twisting toward Christ. Two apostles are placed behind and to the left of the moving figure. These three apostles do not appear in the Dijon predella. In Lommelin's engraving another pair of apostles stands between the door and the niche in a manner very different from those in the predella. The three seated elders behind the table in the engraving are also not related to their counterparts in the predella. On the other hand, Christ, St Peter and the figure standing behind him are similar to the same group in the painting. Lommelin has changed the format of the Dijon composition as he often did when making an engraving after a work by Rubens.

Burchard also suggested that the design used by Lommelin for his engraving might originally have been made by Rubens for a book illustration that was never executed. The high format certainly resembles the type used by Rubens for his Last Supper of 1614 (Fig. 16) in the Breviarium Romanum.1 However, whether the original design was for a book illustration, a large painting or simply for the engraving, is not known.


2. The Traitor Announced at the Last Supper: Drawing (Fig. 2)

Pen and brown ink, light touches of brown wash; 283 × 444 mm.—Verso: two apostle heads and five sketches of St Sebastian secured to a tree (Fig. 3).

Chatsworth, the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement. Inv. no. 1007A.

PROVENANCE: ? N.A. Flinck (Rotterdam, 1646-1723); probably purchased c. 1723 by the second Duke of Devonshire.


LITERATURE: M. Rooses, in Rubens-Bulletijn, V, 3, 1900, p. 203; Held, Pen Drawings, 1951, pp. 288-289, fig. 6; Burchard—d'Hulst, Tekeningen, 1956, p. 42, no. 25, fig. VIII; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, p. 96, under no. 7; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 63-64, no. 35, II, pl. 35; Monhallieu, Nachtmaal, 1965, p. 191, fig. 3; Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 442; Rowlands, Rubens Drawings, 1977, p. 35, no. 24, repr.; Müller Hofstede, Rubens...
In the bottom right centre, Christ raises his right arm and supports himself with his left arm. The young St John rests on Christ's leg and looks back towards an apostle, possibly St Peter, while a third apostle on the left holds a wine glass (chalice). To the right, an apostle is pointing to himself. This figure is an adaptation of Caravaggio's St Matthew in The Calling of St Matthew in S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome. Above this group, in the centre, five apostles appear to be seated around a table, while on top of them there is a variation of the St John and St Peter group below. In this pair, St John is more frontal and both figures are more hastily drawn. The same can be said of Christ, who is seated to the right of St John and whose hand is placed across his chest. This image of Christ is worked out in more detail in the bottom right corner. Above, three apostles are placed to the right of Christ, the first two of whom repeat the pair in the upper centre of the Malibu sheet (No. 3; Fig. 4). The young apostle is also similar to the one in the bottom right of this second drawing, as is the seated figure on the left, perhaps Judas. The latter is based upon the boy in the centre foreground of Caravaggio's painting. The two apostles in the upper right reveal Rubens's study of the figures flanking Christ in Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper in Milan.

It is most likely that Rubens made this drawing before the sheet of studies now in Malibu (No. 3; Fig. 4). It is more hastily drawn and the figures not worked out in such detail. This is most evident in the reference to Caravaggio on the left in both drawings. In the earlier version, the figure is speedily rendered, with the right hand in two different positions. The problem of the hand is resolved in the second drawing, where it follows Caravaggio's almost exactly. Furthermore, the light patterns are carefully elaborated, as is the drapery, thereby accentuating the form beneath. The same difference in detailing appears in the man seated on the chair to the right. In the first design, he is also placed on the far right, but there is no chair, his beard and hair are lightly sketched in and the position of his hands and arms has been changed. At first, the hands were clasped beneath his chin; this appears to have been corrected, because the left arm and elbow are foreshortened as they will appear in the later sheet. To the left of this figure, Rubens has penned in a young man in profile looking to the left at an older, bearded person. This pair is drawn with more detail in the second drawing (No. 3; Fig. 4), and includes a clear indication of the old man's startled hand gestures. In the earlier drawing, Rubens fills the page with numerous heads, which overlap one another and clutter the sheet. In the second drawing, the heads are clearly rendered and executed in greater detail throughout.

The verso of this sheet (Fig. 3) contains two apostle heads and five different sketches of St Sebastian secured to a tree. These studies of St Sebastian have no connection with any known painting by Rubens, but they are closely related to the Hellenistic sculpture of Laocoön, which Rubens drew on several occasions while in Rome. Because the sketches on both sides of the sheet are connected with paintings and sculpture studied by Rubens during his Italian sojourn, it has been proposed that this drawing and the one in Malibu date from his Italian period, c. 1600-1604. Wheelock has also suggested that they might have been part of a lost sketchbook. The studies on the recto of this sheet and the one in Malibu are clearly concerned with figures for a Last Supper, but there is no evidence that Rubens painted this theme during his Italian years. It is possible, nevertheless, that both drawings were preliminary studies for just such a subject, which was to be painted shortly after Rubens's return from Italy. Monballieu has published a series of letters for a proposed Last Supper, written by Jan Le Grand in Antwerp and Lieven vuytten Eeckhoute from Dunkirk dated 9 March to 5 August 1611. This correspondence reveals the fact that the magistrate of Sint-Winoksbergen wanted to commission a Last Supper for the main altar of the church of the Benedictine abbey in that city. The painting was
to have an oblong format.\textsuperscript{7} By 5 August 1611, Rubens had sent to Sint-Winoksbergen a design which he proposed to execute for 4,000 guilders.\textsuperscript{8} This was considered too expensive, and the negotiations with Rubens ended. The commission was given ultimately to Lucas Floquet, a painter from Ghent. Although Rubens did not execute the \textit{Last Supper} for Sint-Winoksbergen,\textsuperscript{9} two important facts emerge from the documents: that he had made a design for the commission, and that the dimensions were to be wider than higher. For this reason, Monballieu has proposed that the Chatsworth and Malibu drawings may well be associated with the Sint-Winoksbergen altarpiece.\textsuperscript{10} Burchard and d'Hulst had already suggested\textsuperscript{11} that Rubens might have started a large \textit{Last Supper} and that a panel containing \textit{Two Apostles' Heads} (No. 4; Fig. 6) could have been either a fragment cut from an unfinished painting or a study for a lost work. Monballieu believes that the panel is a study and not a fragment. In any case, the apostles are very similar in style to Rubens's series of apostles in the Prado, Madrid, which date from c. 1612.\textsuperscript{12} The intense expression of the \textit{Two Apostles' Heads}, especially the one on the right, is also akin to those in Rubens's design for the \textit{Last Supper} in the \textit{Breviarium Romanum} of 1614 (Fig. 16).\textsuperscript{13} The apostles in the \textit{Breviarium} closely resemble those in the Chatsworth and Malibu designs; this might further help to date them around 1611. On the other hand, the figures in the drawings are based, in the main, upon Italian models, which strengthens the idea that they might come from a sketchbook made by Rubens during his years in Italy. However, the drawings are closer in style to Rubens's designs from the years after his return from Italy and not to those from his Italian period, as proposed by Held.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{3. Studies for a Last Supper: Drawing (Fig. 4)}

Pen and brown ink; 293 x 345 mm. Inscribed above, to the right of the centre: \textit{Gestus magis largi longiq[u]e} / \textit{brachii extensis} (pen).

Verso: sketches for a Medea (Fig. 5).

\textbf{PROVENANCE:} ? N.A. Flinck (Rotterdam, 1646-1723); probably purchased c. 1723 by the second Duke of Devonshire; Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, sale, London (Christie's), 3 July 1984, lot 53.


2. Ibid.
3. They do not resemble the picture he made in Italy of this subject, now in Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica; see G. Magnani, 'Indagini su un dipinto di Rubens', \textit{Ricerche di storia dell'arte}, 8, 1978-79, pp. 123-125.
5. For the Italian date, see Held, Drawings, 1986, pp. 72-73, and for the lost sketchbook idea, see A. Wheelock, op. cit., no. 12, n. 6.
7. Ibid., pp. 187, 197; eight feet high by eleven feet wide (Dunkirk measurements: c. 240 x 330 cm.).
8. Ibid., pp. 190, 201.
9. Duverger suggests that Rubens might have started the Sint-Winoksbergen painting after the commission was cancelled and later sold it to an unknown patron. We know that in 1646 Peter van Hecke the Younger owned a \textit{Last Supper} which could have been the picture originally meant for Sint-Winoksbergen; E. Duverger, 'De verzameling schilderijen van de Antwerpse zijde- en tapijthandelaar Peter van Hecke de Jonge, schoonbroer van PP. Rubens, naar een inventaris van 1646, \textit{Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen}, 1971, p. 160.
10. Monballieu's contention that this drawing might be connected with the \textit{Last Supper} for Sint-Winoksbergen had been denied by omission from the texts of Müller Hofstede, \textit{Rubens in Italien}, 1977, pp. 183-184, no. 25, and Rowlands, \textit{Rubens Drawings}, 1977, p. 35.
Rubens has divided this design into three separate groups and lightly sketched in three heads in the top centre. The entire sheet reflects Rubens's study of Italian art of the early 1500s and early 1600s. The young man seated in the left foreground with his back to the spectator and his head in profile looking to the right is taken from Caravaggio's The Calling of St Matthew. So too are the spectacles worn by the apostle to the left of the young man. Other Italian influences are evident, especially in the figure with his elbows back, who seems to rise from the folded chair on the far right. He resembles the apostle seated on the right of the bench in Raphael's Last Supper in the Vatican Loggie, yet he could just as easily have been derived from Caravaggio's disciple in the left foreground of The Supper at Emmaus (National Gallery, London), which is an adaptation of Raphael's figure. Held has rightly suggested that the gesture of the young apostle in the bottom right and top centre comes from the St John in Marcantonio's engraving after Raphael's Last Supper. Another possible reference to Italian art may be seen in the apostle in the top centre who raises his hands in a gesture of surprise like that of St Andrew in Leonardo's Last Supper. Held has also proposed that the standing figure in the upper right corner was modelled after the Ezechias spandrel of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, but in reverse.

1. In S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome; see Held, Pen Drawings, 1951, loc. cit.
7. Ibid.

4. Two Apostles' Heads: Oil Sketch (Fig. 6)

Oil on panel; 66.5 x 51.5 cm.
New York, G. Callimanopolus.


COPIES: (1) Oil sketch (Fig. 7), see No. 5.
(2) Oil sketch (Fig. 8), whereabouts unknown; panel, 67.5 x 52 cm. PROV. Mrs Agnes
Duncan Miller, sale, London (Christie's), 4 Dec. 1936, lot 52; L. Furst (Bad Vôslau, Vienna, 1937); sale, Vienna (Dorotheum), 21 Oct. 1937, lot 84, repr.; sale, Vienna (Dorotheum), 7-8 Feb. 1939, lot 214; Vienna, private collection (1939-1979); sale, London (Sotheby's), 13 Feb. 1985, lot 50, repr. (as after Rubens); sale, London (Christie's), 23 May 1986, lot 17.


Rubens has painted the two heads in close relationship to one another. The partially bald man on the left in profile, with deep lines on the forehead and face, clasps his hands just beneath the chin. The man on the right is painted with a full head of hair and flowing beard. The rich colour and the intensity of expression are similar to those in the Apostolado Lerma of c. 1610-12 (Prado, Madrid), or the head of St Christopher on the exterior of the Antwerp Descent from the Cross (No. 46; Fig. 157).2 The bald man was also used by Rubens in The Tribute Money (Fig. 10; M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco), and the earlier Disputa in St Paul's Church, Antwerp.3 The head on the right was, as suggested by Burchard, the model for Joseph in The Holy Family with the Dove (Fig. 9; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

Burchard was the first to propose that the two heads were possibly a study or a fragment of an unfinished Last Supper by Rubens. Since the discovery by Monballieu of documents concerning a Last Supper for Sint-Winoksbergen,4 it is possible that these heads were made with this commission in mind.5 Rubens may also have used the heads when he painted the second and third figures from the left in the Last Supper of 1631-32 (No. 6; Fig. 11). The apostles relate to one another in a similar manner and are depicted with the same intense expressions. The second figure clasps his hands beneath his chin.


2. For similar heads in the Prado series, see St Bartholomeus (Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 607) and St Paul (illustrated in Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, figs. 38, 62).


5. Held (Held, Drawings, 1986, p. 73) does not believe that these heads are in any way connected with the Last Supper.

5. Two Apostles' Heads: Oil Sketch (Fig. 7)

Oil on panel; 60 x 50.5 cm.
Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: London, Asscher, Koetser and Walker, 1925; Berlin, Gallery Van Diemen, 1926; Düsseldorf, Dilthey Collection, 1927; sale, Cologne (Lempertz), 17 May 1962, lot 196, repr.; New York, L. Sergold; sale, New York (Christie's), 1 Jan. 1989, lot 103 (as attributed to Sir Peter Paul Rubens).


In 1926, Burchard accepted this sketch as by Rubens and incorrectly identified it as the sketch reproduced by Oldenbourg in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (see under No. 4). When photographs of the Callimanopolus version were submitted to Burchard in 1937, he continued to hold this opinion because the execution seemed to him to be weaker. However, I agree with Held's view that the sketch in the Callimanopolus collection is the original, and the version from the Sergold collection a copy after it.
CATALOGUE NO. 6-8.

6–8. THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST: TRIPTYCH

6. The Institution of the Eucharist (Fig. 11)

Oil on panel; 304 x 250 cm.
Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera. Inv. no. 679.

PROVENANCE: Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St-Rombouts, Mechlin; seized by the French commissioners in 1794 and taken to the Musée Central, Paris; sent to the Milan museum in 1813.


(2) Painting after the head of the apostle on the right: whereabouts unknown; canvas, 45 x 32 cm. PROV. London, private collection, 1968. LIT. Müller Hofstede, Kopfstudie, 1968, pp. 245-246, fig. 176.

The Institution of the Eucharist and the predellas painted for it, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem (No. 7; Fig. 17) and Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet (No. 8; Fig. 18) were commissioned by Catherine Lescuyer for the Church of St-Rombouts in Mechlin. This ensemble was to serve as the decoration for the altar of the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament. On 29 November 1632, Father Jan Silvorts presented the expenses for the altar-piece to the Confraternity. The large panel was made by the Mechlin joiner or carpenter An­toine du Flos for 850 florins, and Du Flos received another 15 florins for the transport of it to Antwerp. Upon the completion of the main panel in Antwerp, the Confraternity paid 13 florins for its return to Mechlin and 2 florins and 2 sous for the delivery of the predellas. It is clear that the Confraternity defrayed all the expenses, except for the 1,000 florins owed to Rubens, which Catherine Lescuyer paid.1

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Rubens's altarpiece is already mentioned in an inventory of the chapel dated 1631 and containing a number of epitaphs.2

In its completed form, the altarpiece contained the main panel, showing The Institution of the Eucharist or the Last Supper, the two predellas and several sculptures above the central image. In the top centre, the ensemble included Christ as Salvator Mundi, with an angel on either side. Sometime between 1632 and 1657, the predellas were removed from the Chapel. In a codicil of 25 July 1657 to her testament of 28 June of the same year, Catherine Lescuyer ordered her

executor to see that the predellas were returned to the Chapel or sold. If sold, the income was to be used to provide music for the Chapel. In her will, she had already bequeathed a sum of 200 florins, the interest of which was to pay for candles and for divine services in the Chapel. Obviously, the two panels found their way back into the Chapel, as they were still placed on the walls on either side of the altar a century later, when Mensaert and Descamps visited the church.

Christ, with his head and eyes raised toward heaven, is seated behind the table in the centre, flanked by Peter on the left and the young John on the right. The other nine apostles are in various states of agitation, while Judas occupies the right foreground. He rests his head on his hand and engages the spectator with his intense eyes. The table is covered with a white cloth, a partially filled wine glass and a candle obscured, in part, by Judas’s right hand. A sideboard is placed in the right background containing an open book with a large candle on either side. The text, by a later hand, reads: ‘Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum escam dédit. Ps. 110’. According to Knipping the book, placed on a type of altar and accompanied by candles, is a substitute for the Covenant Tablets. Because of this, he suggests, the dinner is being celebrated according to the rites of Jewish law. Behind the book and candles, Rubens has painted a curtain on a rod which is not present in the oil sketch (No. 6a; Fig. 12). A tabernacle stands in the right background, the pediment of which is supported by two antique columns entwined with vines, traditionally symbolic of Christ’s blood. The columns refer to the Temple of Solomon and are a type that Rubens could have seen in St Peter’s, Rome. The large cloth which hangs above the participants was also used by Rubens in earlier representations of the Last Supper. In the right foreground, Rubens has included a copper basin with a large decanter while in the centre, beneath Judas’s chair, there is a dog chewing on a bone. The pairing of Judas with a dog eating a bone can be found from the end of the fifteenth century in Netherlandish and Italian representations of the Last Supper. It is more than likely that the dog represents greed or covetousness, which echoes Judas’s actions.

Rubens’s painting sets the moment of Christ’s announcement that he will be betrayed alongside the Institution of the Eucharist. These subjects were often combined in Flemish art of the second half of the sixteenth century. However, Rubens has stressed the sacramental aspect of the scene by opening the centre of the table and prominently displaying the glass and the breaking of the bread. The emphasis upon the Eucharist in representations of The Last Supper became dominant in the second half of the sixteenth century during the Counter-Reformation. The subject was certainly appropriate for the location of Rubens’s altarpiece in the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St-Rombouts, Mechlin.

Rubens’s painting continues a long line of Last Supper representations beginning with the version by Dieric Bouts in Louvain’s collegiate church of St Peter, where Judas and an apostle are isolated from the other figures. They are seated front of the table and a space is opened up between them which directs the eye immediately back to Christ. The agitated movements of the apostles in groups of twos and threes leading up to the Saviour in the centre suggest that Rubens was thinking of Leonardo’s Last Supper in Milan. On the other hand, the additional Italian sources suggested by W. Friedländer are difficult to accept. What Rubens might have found in Lodovico Cigoli’s Last Supper was present in Otto van Veen’s painting of the subject in 1593-94 for the Altar of the Holy Sacrament in Antwerp Cathedral (Fig. 14). Rubens’s general arrangement and a number of motifs can be connected with Otto van Veen, but the youth seated in the left foreground is Italian in style. He is a close variation of Caravaggio’s young man in the centre foreground of The Calling of St Matthew. Since Rubens returned from Italy this Caravaggesque figure had been on his mind for inclusion in a Last Supper. The boy is present in the two studies for a Last Supper in Chatsworth and Malibu.
The studies contain many groups of heads in various emotional states that resemble, with slight changes, those found in the Brera painting of some twenty years later. The young St John is echoed in both of the above-mentioned sheets, as are the heads of the older apostles.

The major light source is unknown. It enters the painting from the upper right, striking the figures with uneven intensity and emphasizing the expressions and gestures in the Caravagesque manner which Rubens had been using since his early days in Italy. Candles also help to light the scene—a typical Caravagesque motif. The painting was largely executed by Rubens's shop. According to one eighteenth-century author, it was painted by Justus van Egmont after an oil sketch by Rubens. Jordaeens's Last Supper of c. 1654 in the Antwerp museum was dependent upon Rubens's composition.

1. "Rekeninghe ende bewys die midts desen is doende H. Jan Silvorts, plebaen deser kerken van S. Rombouts aengaende de altaer tafel inde capelle vant eerweerdich H. Sacrament die den voorscreven H. plebaen by laste van de prouiseuren benersticht heeft.

Inden eersten brincht in ontfant de schilderye van het Avontmael ende de twee onderste belckens, deens de voetwassinghe, dander den intree ons Heeren op Palmsondach, gheschildert bij Sin- jor Petro Paulo Rubens voer den prijs van een dusent guldens die J. Catharina, dochter wijlent M. Pauwels Lescuyer, dese capelle ghesconken heeft. Dus hier memorie.

In the margin: Wort in danck geaccepteert.

Item brincht in ontfant twee jaeren verloops van renten competerende de voerscreven capelle opde stat Mechelen, blickende bijde rekeninghe der capellen vanden jaere 1627 ende 1628 f. 18 verso, ter somme van

iiij' xliij gul. xij st. 1 bl. v'un

In the margin: Blickende bij de rekeningen inde tecz geroert.

Item het legaet van J. Frais ghementioneert in de rekeninghe der capelle de anno 1625 ende 1626 f. 12 i' vij gul. xij 1/2 st.
Item betaelt aen Hans van Balen, meeter xij gul. iiij st.
Item betaelt den steenhauer xij gul. iiij st.
Item den seluen steenhauer als het tafereel werd opgheuvert 1 gul. x st.
Item den smet betaelt xxxij gul.
Item noch den seluen smet 1 gul. viij st.
Item den seluen smet iiij gul. xij st.
Item voer het witten van de Capelle iiij gul. xvj st.
Item voer een tonne biers voer de werklieden vij gul.
Item noch bier ghehaelt met den pot iij gul.
Item betaelt voer het panneel tAntwerpen te besicken met de rysse van Antoen du Flos xv gul.
Item voer het permueren betaelt ix gul.
Item voor de 2 klyn panneelen tAntwerpen te draghen xvij st.
Item voer donkosten van het tafereel tuys te bringhen xiiij gul.
Item voer donkosten vande twee belckens inden voet vande tafereel tuys te bringhen ende cassen daer sy in ghesloten waeren iij gul. ij st.
Item voerden salvator ende 2 ingelen ghesneden ende ghstoffeert boven het tafereel i' gul.
Item voer het belt op de credentie tafel scoen te maeken ende te lymen iiij gul. x st.
Item voer het stofferen vande tafereel betaelt iiij' gul.
Item de stoffeerder besconken iij gul.
Item aen Hans van Balen voer de stellinghe om het tafereel te stofferen vij gul.
Item Antoen Fiderbe voer het snyen van den pelicaen ende eenige ingelen op tafereel xvij gul.

Somma van dvuijtgeuen xiiij' lxiiij gul. ix st.
Ende den ontfanck beloopt als voorscreeën xiiij' liij gul. v. st. i bl. v"\nErgo meer vuytgegeven dan ontfangen x gul.iiij st. xij'"\n
In the margin: Nota dat dit slot gepurgerd is met aelmoessen.
Aldus gerekent ende gesloten ten dage, jaere als inde voerangaende rekening.
P. Uselincx, Jan Looff. 1632.

De post betaelt somma veertigh gul. voer dinghe-lenn boven het tabernakel. Jan Siluorts' (Mechlin, Archives of the Archbishopry, no. 260, fols. 23-24 verso, published by Rooses, II, pp. 50-51. I am very grateful to Alois Jans for locating this and the following texts and to Carl Van de Velde for checking the transcriptions).

Inden eersten een scou tafereel vande avontmael opden Itaer der voerscreeuen capellen, ghescildert doer Petro Paulo Rubens.
Item twee belden inden voet vande selue tafereel, deen de voetwasschinghe, dander dinkomste Christi in Hierusalem
Item neffens den altaer het epitaphie van Maria Bocx, de dry koninghe.
Item bouen den biechtstoel vanden plebaen het epitaphie van H. Peeter Jaex, Plebaen, den noet gods.
Item voer den voerscreeuen choir het epitaphie van Mr. Jan van Passerode, ons L. Heere int hofken.
Item het epitaphie van Mr. Conraet van Haelen, de verrysenisse ons heeren.
Item het epitaphie van Mr. de Wasteel vande Moeder gods. 
Item het epitaphie van Mr. Carpentier inde capelle onder de venster van Salomon vande Moeder gods.
Item het vaen van het broederschap' (Mechlin, Archives of the Archbishopry, Kapittelarchief oud, box 342, no. 4, fol. 1).

3. 'Item legaterre ende maecke tot onderhoudt vande brandende keerssen ende goddelrycke diensten van den outhaer van hoochweerdich H. Sacrament inde voorscreeuen Sint Rombouts kerke, eene rente van twee honderd guldens kapitaal mette verkoopen, gereduceert ten penninge vijftiene, gehypothecqueert op een huys staet alhier achter de Halle, toebehoordende de weduwe vanden Procureur Ghijis met haere consitten, waer mede extinct sullen syn de drije guldens erfelyck dien wylen mynen vader welck epitaphium is het beeld van den voorscreeuen Outhaer.
Gecollationneert dit extract tegen syn originael, ende is dese daer mede beuonden te concordere. Actum te Mechelen den 28en Augusti 1657.
Ita testor. J. Vreuen, Notarius. 1657.

In the margin: staet onbetaelt. het jaer verschenen lanss. 1654.
Alsoo ick Catharina L’Escuyer hebben doen maeken voor den Outhaer van het hoogweerdich H. Sacrament in St. Rombouts kerke alhier, de groote schilderye representeringe het leste Avontmael van ons Salichmaker metingaders twee schilderyckens, d’een representeringe de voetwassinghe synder Apostelen ende dander
6a. The Institution of the Eucharist: Oil Sketch (Fig. 12)

Oil on panel; 46 × 41 cm.  
*Moscow, Pushkin Museum. No. 653.*

**PROVENANCE:** On loan from the Hermitage, St Petersburg, since 1924; ? sale, Berlin (Lepke), 4–5 June 1929 (bought in).


(2) **Painting,** Lons-le-Saulnier, Dr Chantron; grisaille on canvas, 57 × 46 cm. **PROV.** G. Pit-schaft, sale, Paris (Elie), 11 August 1811, lot 148.

(3) **Painting,** whereabouts unknown; measurements unknown. **PROV.** ? Stockholm, Nationalmuseum (before 1887); photograph in Rubenianum, Antwerp; after Copy 7.

(4) **Painting,** whereabouts unknown; panel, 62 × 45.5 cm. **PROV.** Sale, London (Christie’s), 4 June 1965, lot 31.
(5) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 89 x 80 cm. PROV. SALE, Cologne (Kunsthaus am Museum), 13 March 1970, lot 1526, repr.; after Copy 7.

(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 73 x 93 cm. PROV. A. Glitza, Hamburg (1928); after Copy 7.

(7) Engraving by Boetius à Bolswert (Fig. 15); 636 x 490 mm. V.S., p. 37, no. 220.

(8) Engraving by F. Ragot; V.S., p. 37, no. 221, after Copy 7.

(9) Anonymous English engraving; V.S., p. 37, no. 222, after Copy 7.

(10) Engraving by Surugue; V.S., p. 37, no. 223, after Copy 7.


(12) Engraving by P. Deveaux; V.S., p. 37, no. 225, after Copy 7.

(13) Anonymous engraving; V.S., p. 37, no. 226, after Copy 7.


Rubens's Last Supper simultaneously depicts two moments from Matthew 26:20ff.: the Announcement of the Betrayal and the Institution of the Eucharist. However, as was customary in Counter-Reformation art of the Netherlands, Rubens has emphasized the blessing of the bread and the chalice. The apostles are completely absorbed in this action, except for one who points to Judas in the right foreground.1 Rubens has seated the apostles around a rectangular table placed diagonally back into space with the bottom right corner in the centre foreground. Christ, with his head raised, is in the centre behind the table flanked by St Peter on the left and John on the right. Judas, in the right foreground, stares out at the viewer with wild eyes. His right hand supports his chin and partially obscures the candle's flame. The young apostle in the left foreground with his back to the spectator is in a position strongly reminiscent of the young soldier in the centre foreground of Caravaggio's The Calling of St Matthew (S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome).3 The highly expressive heads and the extraordinary variety of types bring to mind Rubens's Apostles of c. 1610-11 (Prado, Madrid),4 while some of the figures are close variations on those found in the studies of c. 1611-12 in Chatsworth and Malibu for a Last Supper (Nos. 2-3; Figs. 2, 4).5 St John's head is similar in type and position to the heads of the young man and St John in the two above-mentioned sheets. The Caravaggesque apostle also appears in these studies while the partially rising apostle on Judas's right is comparable in profile and bodily movement to the one in a similar position in Raphael's Last Supper for the Vatican Loggie.6 In the right background, Rubens has placed an open book lit by a candle on a sideboard.7 Left of the sideboard is a portal, probably the tabernacle, supported by columns; above the apostles' heads is a large hanging. In the right foreground, lies a basin with a decanter. Beneath Judas's feet is his attribute, the dog, symbol of greed and the devil.8

This modello was not accurately reproduced in the large altarpiece for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St-Rombouts, Mechlin (No. 6; Fig. 11). In the oil sketch, the left hand of the young apostle in the left foreground holds some drapery and is resting on the table. In the modello, St Peter's head is in three-quarter profile and Christ's blessing fingers are straight and not curving. In the altarpiece, the positions of the apostles' heads have been slightly changed and the intensity of expression reduced. John is in profile in the sketch, but in three-quarter profile in the painting. The arm resting on the back of an apostle to the right of Judas is visible above the elbow in the study, while it is covered
to just above the wrist in the painting. The fingers of this same apostle touch the shoulder, while in the finished painting they only reach the shoulder blade. The apostle behind John rests his fingers on the latter's shoulder in the modello and not in the painting. A pair of hands appears to the left of Peter, but they are not in the final composition. These hands in the modello reinforce the passionate facial expressions and add a sense of drama not present in the finished work. In the background, the columns are decorated with vines, perhaps an allusion to the blood of Christ, while the sideboard, the almecmar, is lit by the two candles and the architecture has become more clearly defined.

The grisaille oil sketch in the Taubmann collection (Fig. 13) is a perfect reverse image of the engraving (Fig. 15) and was evidently used by Boetius à Bolswert when cutting the plate. In this sketch, the positions of Saints Peter and John were exchanged, so that they would appear in the same place in the engraving as in the Brera composition: St Peter at Christ's right side, St John at his left. Furthermore, the grisaille and the engraving include beside the decanter a pitcher which is not present in the Brera or Moscow versions. There are also several differences between the final altarpiece, the Moscow sketch and the engraving by Bolswert. The young apostle in the foreground of the two modelli and the engraving holds a piece of drapery in his left hand which rests upon the edge of the table. In the Brera painting, the young man's left hand is invisible. In both modelli, the figure at the extreme right has a bare forearm which is reminiscent, in reverse, of the arm of the apostle at the left side of one of Rubens's drawings of c. 1611—12 (No. 3; Fig. 4). This is also incorporated in the print, on the left side, but not in the final composition. In the completed altarpiece the head next to St Peter is in profile. This is not the case in the Moscow sketch, where it is almost full face, nor in the grisaille or the print where St Peter is placed at the other side of Christ. The bald St Peter of the Moscow sketch has more hair on his head in the other three versions of the composition. On the other hand, the shape of St John's head and its inclination and expression are very different in the engraving and the Taubmann modello from those in the Moscow and Brera works. They are closer to the young man's head in the bottom and top groups of the Chatsworth Studies for a Last Supper (No. 2; Fig. 2).

The modello for the engraving is accounted for at least until 1722 when the comte de Caylus saw it together with a companion piece, The Raising of Lazarus, formerly in the collection of A. Schloss. They have been most often attributed to Rubens, but when Burchard saw this panel in 1932, he had the impression that the paint was too dense and the execution too careful and too cautious to be by Rubens. Consequently he proposed an attribution to Erasmus Quellinus.

Rubens's modello for the Mechlin altarpiece was painted c. 1631—32. Because Boetius à Bolswert died in Brussels on 25 March 1633, we can assume that this modello was finished at the latest in 1632. Furthermore, this oil sketch contains details which also appear in Rubens's sketch in Moscow. This makes it more likely that the grisaille was done after the Moscow picture, rather than from the completed altarpiece.

There are several versions of this subject attributed to Rubens which cannot be connected with any of the known versions discussed above. A picture in the inventory of Hans van Mildert's widow (who died in 1657) was described as 'Een schilderue naer Rubens ende gertocqueert door Rubens van een Avontuure' ("a painting copied after Rubens and retouched by Rubens of a Last Supper"). In 1662, Simon de Vos traded six paintings with the Antwerp merchant Guillaume I Forchondt for a sketch of a Last Supper by Rubens and 246 guilders. A similar sketch was in the Royal Palace at Berlin in 1786, together with one representing The Baptism of Christ. In 1836, D'Haens (or d'Huens), the priest of St Blasius at Dendermonde also owned a sketch for a Last Supper attributed to Rubens.

2. For the possible connection with Gerrit van Honthorst, see Müller Hofstede, Abendmahlstich, 1970, pp. 114-115.
4. C. Norris, "La peinture flamande à Rome", by Leo...
The Last Supper

Oil on panel; 79 × 82 cm. Inscribed on the back of the panel with the mark of the panel maker Michiel Vriendt.


Christ is seated on a donkey in the centre foreground and blesses the multitude while riding toward the Holy City. Just in front of the donkey and under its front feet, a man spreads a piece of drapery, while another man to his right prepares to unroll more. A large crowd, holding palm branches, walks before and behind the Saviour. The gates of Jerusalem can be seen in the left background. In this image, Rubens appears to follow the text of Matthew 21:5-10 as prophesied by Isaiah. The panel was originally oblong, but late in the eighteenth century it was cut along the sides and made into a square.\(^1\)

According to the documents, Rubens was paid 1,000 guilders for the delivery of The Last Supper.
SUPPER (No. 6; Fig. 11) and he painted the two predellas. In general, however, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem is weakly executed, and the anatomy does not have the sense of structure that one associates with Rubens. It is likely that Rubens touched up the white drapery of the figure holding the cloth in the left foreground and Christ's red robe. The heads do not contain Rubens's intensity of expression, and the structure of the faces is weak. The entire panel lacks the force and power that characterize Rubens's panels and oil sketches.

Burchard has suggested that Erasmus Quellinus may have helped Rubens to paint this panel along with the other predella (No. 8; Fig. 18).

Christ's entry into the Holy City has long been associated with the idea of the triumph over death.

1. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 49.
2. See above, under No. 6.
3. See M. Rooses, in Rubens-Bulletijn, V, 1910, p. 293, who was the first to write that the predellas are not by Rubens.

8. Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet
(Fig. 18)

Oil on panel; 79 × 82 cm.

Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts. No. 164.

PROVENANCE: Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in St-Rombouts, Mechlin; seized by the French commissioners in 1794 and taken to the Musée Central des Arts, Paris; sent to the Dijon museum in 1803.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 74 × 78 cm. PROV. Mechlin, L.J. Fayd'herbe, sale, Mechlin, 10-11 Sept. 1840, lot 54; Abbaye of Bornhem. LIT. Neefs, Oeuvre, 1876, p. 208.

(2) Etching by P. Spruyt; 210 × 270 mm. (V.S., p. 37, no. 219).

eval imagery where the symbolic content, humility, is underlined in a quiet and contemplative manner. Originally, the panel was oblong, but sometime around the end of the eighteenth century it was cut down along the sides and made into more of a square.

From the documents it is clear that Rubens designed this predella, but it is difficult to see much of his hand in the completed work. The highlights on the faces are dull and heavy and not the rich and reflective light that one associates with Rubens. The rough, red-brown colour in the faces of the background apostles recalls Jordaens. This is especially evident in the handling of the paint in the apostle's head to the right of the candle. For a similar type in Jordaens, see the boy poling in the centre of the boat in *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*. The style of this predella is also similar to *Jonah Cast over the Side* (Fig. 19) and *Christ Walking on the Water* (Fig. 20), both of which are difficult to attribute to Rubens. Burchard suggested that the Dijon predellas were possibly painted by Erasmus Quellin and retouched by Rubens.

4. M. Rooses, in *Rubens-Bulletijn*, loc. cit., was the first to doubt Rubens as the author of the predellas.

9. Christ on the Mount of Olives: Oil Sketch (?)

Technique and measurements unknown.

Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

**COPIES:**

1. Engraving by Pieter de Bailliu (Fig. 21); 311 × 265 mm. (V.S., p. 38, no. 234).
2. Engraving, published by A. Huberti; 405 × 324 mm. (V.S., p. 38, no. 235; after Copy 1).
3. Engraving by A. Melar; (V.S., p. 38, no. 237, after Copy 1).
4. Engraving by A. Coget; 412 × 336 mm. (V.S., p. 39, no. 238; after Copy 1).
5. Lithograph by G.H. Hodges; (V.S., p. 38, no. 236; after Copy 1).

**LITERATURE:**


The painting or oil sketch of this subject executed by Rubens is lost, but we know of its existence through the engraving by Pieter de Bailliu, which is inscribed as being made after a composition by Rubens. The print was dedicated to Jacob Roose, Provost of the Chapter of the Cathedral in Ghent. This suggests that the lost work may originally have been in Ghent and perhaps in St Bavon. The dedication makes it clear, however, that Pieter de Bailliu executed this engraving after Rubens's death and not before 1642, the year in which Roose was appointed to the position of provost.

In the Bailliu engraving, Christ is kneeling on a raised piece of ground to the right of centre. His tense right arm is placed across his chest, while his left arm is stretched out expressively behind him. In the right background, directly beneath Christ's hand, Rubens has placed the three sleeping apostles and behind them the advancing soldiers. Just behind Christ there are trees, and above is a full moon. To the left of the Saviour, the angel carries a chalice over its head in its left hand and walks toward Christ. A strong shaft of holy light descends on a diagonal behind the chalice and strikes Christ's haloed head.

The placement of the figures on rocky terrain close to the picture plane imparts a sense of looking up at the scene. It is an arrangement that Rubens favoured during the 1630s. During the last decade of his life Rubens might have made an oil sketch, now lost, of this subject which de Bailliu used for his rather insipid adaptation.

Paintings and drawings of this subject by Rubens are listed in several late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century auction catalogues. But the descriptions offer no clues as to which,
if any, were executed by the master. A sketch of this subject, attributed to Rubens, was seen by Hofstede de Groot in the collection of Lord Wimborne at Cranford Manor.

3. See e.g. Christ Carrying the Cross, Berkeley, University of California (No. 18; Fig. 53).
4. Pictures: collection Van Merstraeten, sale, Brussels, 22 May 1760, lot 20 ("un tableau représentant le Christ au jardin des Oliviers, par Pierre Paul Rubens"); collection P. Wouters, sale, Brussels, 1 April 1794, lot 148 ("Jesu Christ au jardin des Oliviers, d'après P.P. Rubens. Bois 12 pouces de haut, 10 pouces de large"); collection P. J. Doncker, sale, Brussels, 5 June 1798, lot 31 ("P. P. Rubbens. Jesus-Christ en prière au jardin des oliviers, à côté de lui se voit un ange debout, plus loin quelques figures d'un stile vigoureux. h. 11 p. l. 9 p. sur Bo."); collection Robert, sale, Paris, 19 Dec. 1808, lot 55 ("Pierre-Paul Rubens. Le Christ au jardin des oliviers: ce Tableau n'est qu'une esquisse, mais nous ne pouvons dire qu'il n'en est jamais sorti de plus parfaite de la main du prince de l'école flamande"); sale, Paris, 2 Jan. 1810, lot 295 ("P. P. Rubbens. Jesus-Christ au jardin des Oliviers. belle esquisse du meilleur temps du maître"); collection R. F. Reinagle, sale, London (E. Foster), 6 May 1831, lot 89 ("Our Saviour, meditating in the Garden. This picture was painted for the Beguin Convent at Brussels; the background is by Breughel. The picture was sold by the Monks on the Invasion of the Low Countries in the late War by the French—there is great simplicity in the figure and the countenance is full of thought"); collection Thomas Emmerson, sale, London, 7 June 1834, lot 100 ("Rubens. Our Saviour in the Garden; very richly coloured").

Drawings: collection Renier Vinkeles, sale, Amsterdam, 23 April 1816, Kunstboek B, lot 1 ("Christus in den Hof Gethsemané; zeer fraai met roet; door P.P. Rubbens...benevens den prent naar denselven"); bought for fl. 30 by Engelberts); collection Frans Munnikhuyzen, sale, Amsterdam, 27 Nov. 1820, Kunstboek E, lot 7 ("P.P. Rubbens. Jesus in Gethsemané, door den Engel getroost. Breed met sepia gewassen"); bought for fl. 20 by De Vries); collection Johan Herman Molkenbœr, sale, Amsterdam, 17 Oct. 1825, Kunstboek G, lot 1 ("P.P. Rubbens. Jesus in Gethsemané, door den Engel getroost; breed en meesterlijk met sepia gewassen"); bought for fl. 73 by Jolles).


10. The Taking of Christ: Oil Sketch (Fig. 22)

Oil on panel, 59 x 74.5 cm.

The Hague, Schilderijenzaal Prins Willem V.


The scene, following John 18:3-12, takes place at night on the Mount of Olives. Rubens has placed Christ and Judas to the left of centre. Judas has his arms around Christ and is about to kiss him. In the bottom left, Peter has thrown to the ground Malchus, who carries a lantern. On the right side there is movement and action, in opposition to the more static group of Christ...
and Judas surrounded by soldiers. Many analogies with Michelangelo’s figures can be seen. There is a clear connection between Judas’s posture and that of Adam in Michelangelo’s Last Judgement, as well as a number of borrowings from Michelangelo’s Conversion of St Paul in the Cappella Paolina, his Cartoon of the Bathers and the Medici Chapel in Florence. The sketch also bears a close affinity with compositions created by Rubens during his Italian years, such as The Baptism of Christ (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), and The Transfiguration (Nancy, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

The attribution of this sketch to Rubens is not universally accepted. It was first ascribed to Van Dyck, until Oldenbourg gave it to Rubens. In 1935, the work was shown to Burchard and he thought that it could be a grisaille by Rubens which had been later reworked with colours by an artist like Jacob de Wit. The sketch would have had the character of a pasticcio after Michelangelo. In 1940, J.G. van Gelder, having seen the sketch, suggested in a letter to Burchard that it was not by Rubens, but possibly a pasticcio of c. 1640-50. Stechow was hesitant about the attribution to Rubens. In 1962, Müller Hofstede gave it back to Rubens, because of the supposed relationship between the sketch and a drawing in the collection of Professor J.Q. van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam (Fig. 23). On the back of the Altena drawing, there is a fragment of a letter assumed to have been written by Rubens to Chieppio in the summer of 1606. This reasoning was accepted, with caution by d’Hulst in 1968. He found the condition of the oil sketch was so poor that Rubens’s hand could only be recognized with difficulty. It may be, as first suggested by Burchard, that Rubens executed the brush drawing in grisaille and that a later hand added the colours. Jaffé accepted the sketch entirely as a work by Rubens in 1977, but Müller Hofstede now argued that the incomplete state of the sketch made it hard to judge. Held has rejected both the sketch and the drawing in the van Regteren Altena collection, an opinion with which I would agree.

The drawing has been called a preparatory design for the oil sketch. Yet apart from the position of Christ and Judas, it is markedly different in composition. The style is not characteristic of Rubens and the handwriting on the verso is not by Rubens.

Van Dyck appears to have used the gesture of Christ’s right hand in his drawing of the same subject in the Albertina, Vienna.1

1. For these sources, see Oldenbourg, Rubens, 1922, p. 40.
4. ‘...attributed to the early Rubens’ (W. Stechow, op. cit., p. 8).

11. The Flagellation (Fig. 24)

Oil on panel; 219 × 161 cm. Antwerp, St Paul’s Church.

PROVENANCE: Presented to the church of the Dominican convent, Antwerp, by Louis Clarisse; seized by the French commissioners in 1794 and taken to the Musée Central des Arts, Paris; returned to Antwerp in 1815.

EXHIBITED: Brussels, 1910, no. 327.

CATALOGUE NO. 11.

Rubens's Flagellation is one of a series of fifteen paintings executed by different Antwerp artists for the Church of the Dominicans. The series consists of the following works: The Annunciation by Hendrik van Balen, The Visitation by Frans Francken the Younger, The Nativity by Cornelis de Vos, The Presentation in the Temple by Cornelis de Vos, Christ Among the Doctors by Mathys Voet, Christ on Gethsemane by David Teniers the Elder, The Flagellation by Rubens, Christ Crowned with Thorns by Artus de Bruyn, Christ Carrying the Cross by Anthony van Dyck (Fig. 26), The Crucifixion by Jacob Jordaens (Fig. 27), The Descent of the Holy Spirit by Mathys Voet, The Assumption of the Virgin by Jan Aertsen, and The Résurrection by Giuseppe Viggiani, Naples; Giuseppe Viggiani, Naples, 1943. Lit. Il Mattino Illustrato, XVII, 13, 25 March—1 April 1940.


(4) Painting by Marco Antonio Garibaldó, signed, whereabouts unknown; copper, 70 x 87 cm. Prov. Sale, Monaco (Sotheby's), 17-18 June 1988, lot 967.

(5) Painting, Lyon, J. Gey; canvas, 70 x 41 cm.

(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 59 x 45 cm. Prov. Van Roey; Varewyck; sale, Brussels (G. Giroux), 21-22 Feb. 1927, lot 61, repr. (as Van Dyck).


(9) Drawing, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen, no. 5; black and red chalk, white highlights on grey-brown paper, 246 x 186 mm. Lit. Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverschieten, 1953, p. 46; Held, Oil Sketches, 1980, I, p. 470 (as after Rubens).

(10) Engraving by P. Pontius (Fig. 28), 387 x 291 mm.; V.S., p. 39, no. 245.


Rubens's Flagellation is one of a series of fifteen paintings executed by different Antwerp artists for the Church of the Dominicans. The series consists of the following works: The Annunciation by Hendrik van Balen, The Visitation by Frans Francken the Younger, The Nativity by Cornelis de Vos, The Presentation in the Temple by Cornelis de Vos, Christ Among the Doctors by Mathys Voet, Christ on Gethsemane by David Teniers the Elder, The Flagellation by Rubens, Christ Crowned with Thorns by Artus de Bruyn, Christ Carrying the Cross by Anthony van Dyck (Fig. 26), The Crucifixion by Jacob Jordaens (Fig. 27), The Resurrection by Arnout Vinckenborgh, The Ascension by Arnout Vinckenborgh, The Descent of the Holy Spirit by Mathys Voet, The Assumption of the Virgin by Jan Aertsen, and The Crowning of the Virgin by Arnout Vinckenborgh.1 Louis Clarisse paid Rubens 150 florins for his painting and gave it to the Dominican convent of Antwerp.2
Christ is bound to a low column, following the example of the venerated image in San Prassede, Rome. His torso is bent over to the left and a small halo outlines the top of his head. As Jaffé pointed out, Christ's posture was probably modelled after Jacopo Sansovino's bronze of c. 1550 representing Christ in Limbo. A brutish, Michelangelesque figure stands to the left and is about to strike the Saviour with a knotted rope. According to Held, his pose may have developed out of the kneeling young shepherd in the Fermo Adoration and the young man in the right half of the Conversion of St Paul (London, Courtauld Institute Galleries). To the right and behind Christ, a muscular figure shades his eyes with his left hand and watches the violent figures to the right. The first of these wears a helmet and is about to hit Christ with one hand while the other unravels his victim's drapery. A large vengeful black soldier closes off the scene on the right. His arms are raised, and he is about to strike Christ with faggots, while at the same time forcefully pushing his foot against Christ's calf. A barking dog stands between the raised leg of the black soldier and the edge of the composition. The entire scene takes place in a prison-like structure, with a large column in the background just to the right of centre, which is in front of a flat wall with broken up masonry and a curtain to the left. When Rubens's painting was taken out of the series and replaced by Van Ysendyck's copy, the date of 1617 was inscribed on its new frame. This date seems to agree stylistically with the series. The emphasis upon the musculature and intense action of the monumental figures, however, suggests an earlier date. The participants are closer in spirit to those in the Elevation of the Cross of 1610-11 (No. 20; Fig. 61); but they are more restrained within the confines of the picture structure, as in the Descent from the Cross (No. 43; Fig. 132). The black soldier in the right foreground with his arms raised above his head and left leg kicking Christ is also found in Rubens's Martyrdom of St Stephen of c. 1615 (Fig. 29). The combination of figure types from c. 1611 and c. 1615 and the more classical, relief-like picture structure suggests a date of c. 1614-15. On the other hand, the style of the paintings by Van Dyck, Jordaens and the others suggest a date of c. 1617. Is it possible that Rubens had originally painted his Flagellation for another purpose and not for the series in the Dominican church?

The practice of saying the rosary came into fashion during the late Middle Ages. It continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was particularly popular with the Dominicans. During the Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits joined them in celebrating the rosary, and the 'mysteries' were reduced in number to fifteen. In many cases, Mary, holding or surrounded by the rosary, was enframed by fifteen medallions each depicting one of the mysteries represented as scenes from her life. In the case of engravings, the representations were often divided into a suite containing several prints, each with the appropriate number of 'mysteries'. For example, A. Wierix designed and published a suite entitled The Rosary which included three separate prints each with an image of Mary superimposed upon a tree trunk, branches, five medallions illustrating one of the 'mysteries' and encircled by the Rosary. There are also single prints with Mary in the centre encircled by scenes of the fifteen 'mysteries' as one finds in the engraving designed by Antoine Wierix and published by E. Hoeswinkel. Earlier, in Italy, this type of imagery was used by Marcello Venusti in his decoration for the ceiling of the Cappella Rosario in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome. There are also several examples of this theme painted by Flemish artists working in Italy. Denys Calvaert painted the Presentation in the Temple as part of a series of the fifteen 'mysteries' for the Chapel of the Rosary in Bologna, Church of St. Domenico. It is also known that Cornelis De Smet painted this subject in 1579 for the Mercato San Severino (Prov. of Salerno) as did Aert Mytens in 1584 for the Chapel of the Rosary in S. Severino al Pendino. The two figures on the right side of Rubens's composition and the engraving by Pontius were used, with slight changes, by Abraham van Diepenbeeck for his Flagellation (now in the Aartsbischoppelijk Museum, Haarlem).
2. 'De Geeselinge gegeven van mijnheer Lewies Clarisse gemaackt van mijnheer Pieter Rubbens...150 gulden' (M. Rooses, op. cit., pp. 10, 11).
4. In Modena, Este Collection; see Jaffé, Rubens in Italy, 1968, p. 180; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 21, pl. 27.
8. See No. 11a for further discussion of this possibility.
10. For examples, see Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40, II, pp. 278, 279.
11. For the documentation, see Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, II, pp. 239, 240, nos. 1338-1340, pl. 177. For variations on this type by Hendrick Goltzius and Jan Galle after Stradanus containing beads, a rose tree or bush or a wreath of flowers and an episode from the 'mysteries', see Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40, II, pp. 278, 279.
12. For the documentation, see Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, II, p. 240, no. 1341, pl. 177.
15. Ibid., pp. 54, 92.
16. Ibid., p. 102.

11a. The Flagellation: Oil Sketch (Fig. 25)

Oil on panel; 37.5 × 35.5 cm.

Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 1910-Z.

PROVENANCE: Gaston Ritter von Mallmann, Berlin; acquired from the latter by the Ghent museum in 1910.


The composition of the modello is, in general, similar to the finished painting in St Paul's, Antwerp, but there are several differences. In the sketch, Christ's torso is bent over more markedly and so his head is lower. The tormentor on the left, swinging the knotted rope, is bare-headed, as opposed to his counterpart in the large painting whose head is covered. In the sketch, the scourger behind and to the right of Christ beats him with faggots, which he does not do in the painting. His colleague to the right has a cloth headpiece and strikes Christ with a whip, while the same figure in the painting wears a helmet and hits the Saviour with twigs. The figures in the modello are not as closely grouped as in the painting, nor are they as close
to the foreground plane. All of this, as Held points out, diminishes the dramatic content of the finished work in St Paul's and makes it more symbolic than dramatic.1 There are also slight changes in the architecture. In the sketch, two niches flank a column, whereas in the painting the wall is flat, with broken masonry.

Stylistically the modello resembles Rubens's oil sketch of c. 1615 for The Martyrdom of St Ursula (Fig. 30; Brussels, Musées Royaux).2 In each, the brushwork, with careful white highlights, is similar, especially in the drapery of Christ and St Ursula. The two works contain faces with intense expressions and violent movements emanating from the sides toward the central figure. The pose of the soldier in the right foreground of The Flagellation was also used by Rubens in his Martyrdom of St Stephen of c. 1615 (Fig. 29; Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts), and the oil sketch for it.3 The man standing to the left and striking Christ with a rope is found also to the right of centre in Rubens's Conversion of St Paul (London, Courtauld Institute Galleries).4

The date and physical condition of the modello are problematic. Stylistically, the modello appears to have been executed at least two years before the other pictures for St Paul's. We also know that the panel was reduced by 2 cm. on the right side in order to make it comply with Rubens's finished painting for the Dominicans. Is it possible that Rubens did not make the sketch as a study for the Madonna of the Rosary ensemble but for another commission which was not completed? This might explain the changes in the size of the panel and the early date of the modello. The provenance of the modello is also problematic. Several sketches cited in old inventories and catalogues may refer to it, but the dimensions, or lack of them, present us with difficulties. In 1830, for example, John Smith remarked that The Flagellation ('A finished sketch for the picture in the Church of the Dominicans at Antwerp') was in the Escorial.5 Max Rooses found the work listed in the 1700 inventory of the King of Spain, with a value of 30 doublons.6 The sketch was also cited in the Spanish inventories of 1734, 1748, 1772 and 1794. Yet after 1794 it seems to have disappeared from the Royal Collection;7 it may have found its way into Von Mallmann's possession in Berlin and thence to Ghent. Another modello was referred to by Guillaume-Jacques-Joseph Bosschaert8 as being in the Musée Napoleon, Paris, painted on panel, measuring 50 × 40 cm. and having been made for The Flagellation in St Paul's. The same sketch is also described in the Brussels museum catalogue of 1814, but not that of 1806, nor in those published after 1814. Because of the discrepancy in size between this sketch and the one in Ghent, it is unlikely that they are the same picture. However, it is possible that the measurements were wrong or that the size of the frame might have been included. The Brussels painting is probably the same one that appeared in the P.J. Snyers sale, Antwerp, 23 May 1758, lot 15; panel, 50.8 × 40.4 cm. (19¼ duim × 15½ duim).9 A drawing of this subject attributed to Rubens is cited in C. Schuchardt, Goethe's Kunstsammlungen, I, Jena, 1848, p. 309, no. 878, as being in black chalk and an oblong folio.


12. Christ as the Man of Sorrows (Fig. 31)

Oil on panel; 67 × 51.5 cm.
Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: Count Louis Cavens, sale, Brussels (Le Roy), 23 May 1923; Ludwig Burchard, Berlin; London, Wolfgang Burchard, Farnham

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 69 × 54 cm. PROV. Sale, Berlin (Lepke), 6-7 Dec. 1904, lot 107, repr.
(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel,
63.5 x 48 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 25 April 1958, lot 139.


(4) Painting whereabouts unknown; panel, 65 x 49 cm. PROV. dealer C. Benedict, Paris, 1951.


(6) Etching by Spruyt (V.S., p. 71, no. 56).

(7) Engraving by A. Melar (V.S., p. 71, no. 57).

Rubens depicts Christ as a half-length figure with his head turned upwards, crowned with thorns and encircled by holy light. The Saviour wears loosely hanging drapery which flows around his back and covers his arms. He holds a broken palm stick in his right hand, while the left grasps the right.1 The intensity of the facial expression, with its open mouth and upturned eyes, and the free application of the paint bear a close resemblance to Christ's head in the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Figs. 64, 68). This would suggest a date of 1610-12.

1. For the iconography of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, see G. von der Osten, 'Job and Christ', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XVI, 1953, pp. 153-158.

13. Ecce Homo

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES: (1) Painting (Fig. 32), P.R. Schmidt, Trier; canvas pasted on panel, 84 x 66 cm.


(3) Painting (Fig. 34), Schleissheim Castle, Gemäldegalerie, on loan from the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, inv. no. 1922; panel, 120 x 97 cm. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 60; K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, pp. 50, 456; Antal, Flämische Bilder, 1923, p. 63; Zarnowski, Esquisse, 1938, p. 165, n. 2; E. Kieser, 'Rubens' Münchner Silen und seine Vorstufen', Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst, N.F., XIII, 1938-39, pp. 185-202, fig. 2; Friedländer, Early to Full Baroque, 1964, p. 82, n. 40, fig. 21; Müller Hofstede, Janssens, 1971, p. 261, n. 160; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 51; Renger, Grafik, 1977, p. 48; Held, Sketches, 1980, p. 602; Bodart, Rubens, 1985, p. 157, no. 115a.

(5) **Painting**, Brussels, Art dealer Defordt, 1927; panel, 65 x 51 cm.


(7) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown, presumably lost; panel, 152.7 x 129.4 cm. (5 pieds 1 pouce x 4 pieds 3 pouces). **PROV.** Duke of Orleans; upon his death sold to a brother of the comtesse de Scoraille de Fontagne; after her death sold to the Hospital at Remirement (Lotharingen); 1772 offered for sale by the Hospital. **LIT.** F. Donnet, ‘Van Dyck inconnu, An­vers, Oct. 8, 1899’, Bulletin de l’Académie Royale d’Archéologie de Belgique, 1898-1901, pp. 398-399.


(9) **Painting**, after Copy 10, Abbey of St Bede, Perw, Illinois; panel, 28.5 x 37.2 cm. **PROV.** Kryl, Chicago, Ill.

(10) **Engraving** by Cornelis Galle; 373 x 285 mm. (Fig. 36). **LIT.** V.S., p. 40, no. 250.


(12) **Engraving** by unknown artist, after Copy 10. **LIT.** V.S., p. 40, no. 252.

(13) **Engraving** by unknown artist, after Copy 10. **LIT.** V.S., p. 40, no. 253.

Most of the paintings listed above were probably executed in Rubens's workshop. The picture formerly in the collection of the Duke of Orleans as Van Dyck (Copy 7) has not come to light, so one cannot be certain of its authenticity. But the ancient attribution to Van Dyck and the description, which indicates a composition similar to the other copies cited, suggest that it too was made after a lost work by Rubens. All these works render the figures cut off just below the waist with Christ in the centre, crowned with thorns, hands bound behind his back and covered with drapery just below the waist. There are traces of blood on Christ's shoulders in the Trier (Fig. 32), St Petersburg (Fig. 33), Koblenz, Rijksmuseum and Defordt paintings, while this is not the case in the Schleissheim painting (Fig. 34). The descriptions of Copy 7 do not mention blood on Christ's shoulders. The paintings also contain a bearded figure standing to the left and pointing at Christ with his right hand, while to the right of Christ a hel­meted soldier holds up the Saviour's drapery behind his body and above his head. The picture in Trier (Fig. 32) is closest in the composition and details to the Galle print (Fig. 36), which was presumably copied directly from the original Rubens. Because of this and the fact that the painting would not have been copied in reverse of the Galle engraving, it is possible that the Trier version is the most accurate studio representation of the lost work by Rubens.

All the copies suggest that Rubens's original composition combined Flemish and North Italian ideas. As early as 1528, Quentin Massys painted his *Christ Shown to the People*. This configuration looks forward to Titian's oil sketch of c. 1575 of the same subject. In neither work is there any structural separation between the spectator and the scene—which is also the case in Rubens's composition. By contrast, there is a clear physical separation between the viewer and the participants in Correggio's *Ecce Homo* (London, National Gallery) and Cigoli's *Ecce Homo* (Florence, Uffizi). Hymans and Friedländer have proposed the works by Correggio and Cigoli as the source for Rubens, yet they present a completely different compositional arrangement. By eliminating the balustrade in the foreground, Rubens makes the viewer part of the scene, which is what Quentin Massys did early in the sixteenth century. In addition to the composition, other details suggest sixteenth-century Flemish sources. The soldier raising the drapery on the right appears to be a type used by Rubens's teacher Otto van Veen in his *Christ
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Carrying the Cross (Brussels, Musées Royaux). This figure, with his intense expression, black beard and shining helmet complete with ostrich feather, is just to the left of the Cross in Van Veen's painting.5

Alongside the Flemish elements in these workshop versions of the Ecce Homo, the use of chiaroscuro light effects to emphasize facial expressions and gestures, and the placement of the figures in the spectator's space suggest that Rubens's study of Caravaggio had passed on to the atelier. Caravaggio of course had been influenced by the compositional ideals of Titian and sixteenth-century Flemish artists. However, the pure and idealized beauty of Christ's body also brings to mind Rubens's study of the Antique and his ability to pass this knowledge on to his assistants. Linnik has proposed, with good reason, that the antique source for Christ's strongly curved-back torso with arms behind his back is based upon the famous antique sculpture, the Centaur, which Rubens had drawn on several occasions.6

In the treatment of the figures, the Caravagesque light and the general composition, Kiezer7 has convincingly related the St Petersburg and Schleissheim Ecce Homo compositions (Copies 2, 3; Figs. 33, 34) to Rubens's Drunken Silenus of c. 1612 (Fig. 35; Genoa, Palazzo Durazzo-Pallavicini). The date of c. 1612 for Rubens's composition is given further credence if one compares the handling of Christ's body in these workshop pieces with Rubens's Doubting Thomas of c. 1613-15 (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), which also displays a purity of form reminiscent of antique sculpture.8 Rubens's composition was taken up by Abraham Janssens in his work Ecce Homo of c. 1612-13.9

The copies listed above appear to have been made after a lost composition by Rubens dating from shortly after his return from Italy. But it is possible that he had already painted this theme during his years in Italy. A picture described as 'Un quadro dipintovi Nostro Signore Ecce Homo di mano di Pietro Paolo Fumitto [sic] con cornice' (A picture painted of our Lord, Ecce Homo, from the hand of Peter Paul Fleming with thorns) was cited in the 1627 inventory of the collection in Mantua of the deceased Ferdinando Gonzaga (d. 29 October 1626).10 The painting was valued at 120 florins.11 Whether or not this was only the head of Christ crowned with thorns or a three-quarter length composition with three figures is open to question. Several other wills and inventories mention an Ecce Homo by Rubens. In two successive wills dated 10 May 1625 and 29 November 1625, Clara van de Wouwere states that a painting described as 'even Ecce Homo gemaect by Petro Paolo Rubens' (an Ecce Homo made by Peter Paul Rubens) was owned by herself and her first husband, Jan-Baptist Vriendts. Her second husband, Mr Willem van den Poele, exchanged it with Pieter de Jode for a mythological painting. The Ecce Homo was later sold at public auction in Mechelen for sixty gulden to her heiress.12 An Ecce Homo was in the inventory of Herman de Neyt, art dealer, Antwerp, 15-21 October 1642;13 another was mentioned in the inventory of J.H. Gobelinus, Brussels, 1681, no. 278, valued at 150 florins.14 Mariette writes about Cornelis Galle's engraving of Christ Between Pilate and a Roman Soldier, and says that he saw the painting in Paris at M. de Julienne's. Mariette also thought that the picture was executed in Italy by Rubens and that the colour was a little hard and the touch a little heavy. From the description, this Paris picture could be either the St Petersburg or Schleissheim painting or even the lost original. The latter possibility is unlikely given Mariette's description as 'un peu dur de couleur et d'une touche un peu pesante.'15 In 1657, the year of his death, Frans Snijders is known to have owned an Ecce Homo by Rubens.16

1. This head is based upon Rubens's Head of an Old Man with Curly Hair, St Petersburg, Hermitage; see Held, Sketches, 1980, I, pp. 601, 602, no. 435, pl. 422.
2. In Venice, Palazzo Ducale. For the date, see L. Silver, The Paintings of Quentin Massys, Montclair, NJ, 1984, pp. 228, 229, no. 46, pl. 87.
4. H. Hymans, Histoire de la gravure dans l'école de Rubens, Brussels, 1879, p. 45, was the first to propose a connection with Cigoli. For Friedländer's comments see Friedländer, Early to Full Baroque, 1964, p. 82, figs. 19-21.
5. I. Linnik, 'On the Genesis of two Paintings by
Rubens from the Hermitage Collection', Zapadnoe europe Iskoesstvo, XVII. weka, St Petersburg, 1981, p. 224.

6. Van der Meulen, Antique, 1994, III, fig. 128.


9. In Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe; see Müller Hofstede, Janssens, 1971, pp. 260-261, fig. 29.


13. Ibid., pp. 386, 441.

14. Information from the late Professor J.G. van Gelder.


13a. Ecce Homo: Retouched Engraving (Fig. 37)

Brown and grey-white body colour; 372 × 281 mm.

PROVENANCE: P.-J. Mariette (Paris, 1694-1774); purchased from the latter's estate by Hugues-Adrian Joly, Keeper of the Cabinet des Estampes.


The proof has been retouched with brown ink in the shadows, in the topmost thorn of the crown, in the hair of Christ and in the soldier's helmet. Grey-white body colour is seen on the right side of the helmet, in Christ's hair, in part of his beard and on the right side of his torso. Pilate's hair and drapery were also retouched with grey-white body colour.

Since Mariette's publication, it has always been thought that the additions to the print were made by Rubens. However, in 1977 Konrad Renger wrote that the retouched areas were not typical of Rubens's hand, and were probably done by Cornelis Galle or by his brother Theodore.

14. Christ Shown to the People

Oil on panel or canvas. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: ? Nivelles, Church of St Gertrude.

COPIES: (1) Painting, 18th or 19th century, whereabouts unknown. PROV. Nivelles, Church of St Gertrude, canvas. LIT. M. Rooses, in Rubens-Bulletijn, V, p. 187.

(2) Oil sketch (Fig. 39), St Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. 517; canvas, 48 × 32 cm., transferred from panel in 1850. PROV. Acquired by Catherine II, 1763-1774. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 62; A.A. Néoustroïeff, 'Rubens l'ego kartiny v galerie imperatorskago Ermitazja', Staryé Gody, 1, 1909, repr. after p. 14; Leningrad, Hermitage, Catalogue of Paintings [in Russian], II, Leningrad/Moscow, 1958, p. 79, no. 517, c. 1612; Fritz, Becker, 1967, under no. 78; Varshavskaya, Rubens, 1975, pp. 241, 242, no. 1 (as Rubens' studio); Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 471, under no. 343.


(4) Drawing, as A. van Diepenbeeck, Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 1910 Ac; black chalk, grey wash, white body colour, pen and brown ink, 475 × 348 mm. PROV. Sale, Amsterdam (F. Muller), 22 June 1910, lot 186; acquired by the Museum in 1910.

LITERATURE: M. Rooses, in Rubens-Bulletijn, V, p. 187.

Rooses believed that the Nivelles copy was probably made in the nineteenth century. This copy is missing and we only have a partial de-
scription, so it is not certain that it replaced the original work by Rubens. We do know that the Nivelles copy contained one figure on either side of Pilate and a plain doorway at the back. This is precisely what we have in the Cramer sketch (No. 14b; Fig. 40), but not in Lauwers' engraving (No. 14b, Copy 6; Fig. 43), where Pilate stands alone and the door at the back is an elaborate piece of architecture. The very same details and changes in Lauwers' engraving are also present in the grisaille sketch in the Von Negri collection (No. 14c, Copy 1; Fig. 41). The Von Negri picture was, in all likelihood, executed in Rubens's atelier as a modello for Lauwers' engraving. The Cramer oil sketch, on the other hand, was probably made for Rubens's lost original. It is also possible that Rubens never painted this altarpiece. Rooses proposed that the composition for Christ before Pilate, with the figures cut off along the bottom, was similar to Rubens's Christ Carrying the Cross (No. 19; Fig. 55) and, therefore, should date from around the same time, c. 1634. The close relationship between these two compositions is further substantiated by the fact that Rubens made a drawing which contains both of these themes on one sheet (No. 14a; Fig. 38). These designs may well have been preliminary ideas for their respective subjects.

2. Ibid.

14a. Christ Shown to the People:
Drawing (Fig. 38)

Red and black chalk, heightened with white body-colour; 310 × 466 mm. Marks of PH. Lankrink (L. 2090), J. Richardson Senior (L. 2184) and T. Hudson (L. 2432).—Verso: designs for Hippodamia Abducted by the Centaur Eurytus and Hercules and the Bull Achelous. Whereabouts unknown.


EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 99, repr.; Antwerp, 1956, no. 139.


This subject is drawn on the right side of a sheet that depicts Christ Carrying the Cross on the left. On the other side of the sheet are designs for Hippodamia Abducted by the Centaur Eurytus and Hercules and the Bull Achelous. Rubens's Christ Shown to the People is a full-length image with Christ in the centre on the lowest of three steps, flanked by Pilate on the right and a soldier on the left. Christ is nude except for the drapery placed on his shoulders and his loin cloth, and he faces the spectator with bound wrists. On the Saviour's left is a helmeted soldier who grasps the Christ's drapery. Pilate is in profile to the right with arms outstretched. Between Christ and Pilate, there is a man carrying fasces. In the bottom right corner of the drawing and much smaller in size, Pilate is enthroned. Slightly to the left, the heads and shoulders of several figures are seen from behind. Beneath the helmeted figure in the upper left is the torso of a man with arms lifted as if he were raising a stone.

The three main participants in the Ecce Homo segment of the drawing are repeated, with changes, in Rubens's oil sketch (No. 14b; Fig. 40) and Lauwers' engraving (No. 14b, Copy 6; Fig. 43). The figures in the drawing are in the same direction as in the print, so it is more than likely that the design was made with the engraving in mind. The drawing was later worked out in reverse in a modello executed in Rubens's studio and now in the Von Negri collection, Frelenburg (No. 14c, Copy 1; Fig. 41). Because of the similarity in style with Christ Carrying the Cross on the left side of the sheet, which is a study for the 1634-37 Afflighem altarpiece, one can propose a date of c. 1634 for the drawing of Christ Shown to the People.1

14b. Christ Shown to the People: Oil Sketch (Fig. 40)

Oil on panel; 47.5 × 35.5 cm. Mark of the City of Antwerp burned in on back and red wax seal of King of Prussia.

The Hague, G. Cramer.


3 Grisaille sketch. whereabouts unknown. PROV. Sale, London (Sotheby's), 9 May 1981, lot 141.

4 Drawing, by A. Van Diepenbeeck. (?) Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 1910 AC; black chalk, grey wash, white body colour, pen and brown ink, 475 × 348 mm. PROV. Sale, Amsterdam (F. Muller), 22 June 1910, lot 186; acquired by the Museum in 1910.


6 Engraving by N. Lauwers (Fig. 43); see No. 14c, Copy 2. LIT. V.S., p. 40, no. 256.

7 Budapest, Museum, after Copy 6; copper, 88 × 70 cm. LIT. Budapest, Museum. Catalogue, Budapest, 1910, no. 603; Fritz, Becker, 1967, under no. 78.

8 Engraving, after Copy 6, 445 × 328 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 257.

9 Engraving, after Copy 6. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 258.

10 Engraving by M. Aubert, after Copy 6. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 259.


Christ stands on a flight of steps with his wrists bound, holding a reed in his left hand and wearing a crown of thorns. Pilate stands in front of his throne on the left and gestures toward the Saviour with both hands. Two councillors are behind and flank Pilate, while a pair of Roman soldiers stand at Christ's left and hold his draperies. Beneath them and on the right side of the composition is the thief Barrabas, with drapery around his waist, his arms chained behind his back, guarded by a Roman soldier. The golden brown colour is part of the main panel and goes down through the Roman soldier to the bottom margin. The lictor above on the left is shown in profile; he is beardless and supports a shield with his left hand. Just below, Rubens has stationed a seated soldier with one leg stretched out parallel to the steps and the other curled back under his body. The lower section of the composition is closed off by four half-length fig-
asures — priests and senators — who raise their arms asking for Christ’s death.

The first idea for this oil sketch may be found on the verso of a drawing formerly in the collection of Wolfgang Burchard, representing Christ Shown to the People and Christ Carrying the Cross (No. 14a; Fig. 38). The Burchard sheet depicts the figures in reverse of the oil sketch, but the three principal participants in the drawing are very close to those in the modello. In the drawing, as in the sketch, Christ stands with hands bound, crowned with thorns and his drapery held by a helmeted soldier who looks down and away from the Saviour. Pilate’s arm gestures are also similar in both, although his stance and drapery are different. As in the oil sketch, a bearded figure is placed between Christ and Pilate, but in the drawing he is in profile and carries fasces. Below on the right in the drawing, one can barely discern Pilate enthroned; to the left are several figures with their heads and shoulders hardly visible. They may represent a rudimentary idea for the lower foreground figures in the oil sketch.

If the Burchard design is related to the Cramer oil sketch, a possible date for the latter can be proposed. To the left of the Christ before Pilate in the drawing, Rubens has included a sketch for Christ Carrying the Cross. Because these two scenes must have been drawn at the same time, and because the Christ Carrying the Cross can be connected with the c. 1634 grisaille oil sketch of the same subject in the Musées Royaux, Brussels (No. 19b; Fig. 58), there can be little doubt that the Cramer oil sketch was executed at this time. Rubens’s inclusion of half-length figures placed in the bottom foreground also helps to date this oil sketch from the early 1630s, as he also used this convention in 1633-35, in St Teresa of Avila Interceding for Bernardino de Mendoza (Fig. 42; Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten).

The placing of the scene within an architectural setting with figures in front of and on a staircase might be a distant recollection of Venetian prototypes. The gentle, curving figure of Christ, on the other hand, resembles Lodovico Carracci’s Ecce Homo in the Oratory of S. Filippo Neri, Bologna. Burchard believed that the Cramer modello was the original design for Lauwers’ engraving (Copy 6; Fig. 43). However, there are a number of differences between the two, which suggests that this was not the case. In the engraving, the architecture is much more elaborate, with decorative arches, columns, capitals and sculpture. The steps leading up to Pilate’s throne have become rounded while the throne itself is now decorated with a large peckton shell and sculptured heads. Pilate’s drapery has many more folds and his right leg is no longer parallel to the picture surface. The consuls flanking Pilate are eliminated and an elaborate plume has been added to the helmet of the Roman soldier to the left of Christ. Barrabas no longer stands on the second and third steps but on the third and fourth. His head is now in a position that allows his eye to engage the viewer forcefully.

There are also differences in the figures in the bottom foreground who are cut off more in the oil sketch than in the engraving. The third figure from the left, whose drapery covers his head and all but a small bit of his nose and beard, has his hands rendered differently in the engraving, where all of his fingers are clearly articulated. The second protestor on the left in the modello is anatomically different in the engraving. In the sketch, his left hand is seen from the side, while in the engraving it is completely visible and the fingers are spread out in front of the steps. In the modello, his right hand and forearm are cut off along the edge and set parallel to the picture plane while in the engraving, this arm, now the left one, is well above the margin and on an upward slant. The seated Roman soldier on the left is not cut off by the frame as in the engraving, his legs are clearly discernible and in different positions in the modello. The soldier above has one hand on his shield in the sketch, while two are evident in the engraving. He is also beardless in the modello.

The numerous changes between the Cramer oil sketch and Lauwers’ engraving suggest that the sketch was not made for the engraving. It is possible that the Cramer composition was a study for a lost altarpiece known from a copy formerly in the Cathedral at Nivelles (No. 14, Copy 1). The latter was discovered by Rooses, who observes that it is not the same composition as the
engraving. The notion that the Cramer oil sketch was not intended to be the *modello* for Lauwers' engraving is further substantiated by the existence of an oil sketch in the Von Negri collection (No. 14c, Copy 1; Fig. 41). The Von Negri *modello* is precisely rendered and lacks the bold painterly quality of Rubens. Furthermore, every detail in this oil sketch is repeated, in reverse, in Lauwers' engraving. The Von Negri *modello* was most likely the engraver's copy or one made by someone in the workshop of Lauwers or Rubens, because it fully described the composition as it was to be engraved.

6. V.S., p. 41, no. 258.
7. V.S., p. 41, no. 259.

The Von Negri oil sketch contains a number of significant changes when compared with the Cramer composition (No. 14b; Fig. 40). It depicts Pilate on the steps in the upper left but without the two councillors on either side. Christ is to the right and holds the reed in his right hand. As in the Cramer oil sketch, there are two helmeted soldiers to Christ's right, and below, along the right margin, Barrabas is held by a third helmeted Roman. In the bottom foreground, the mob also repeats what we find in the Cramer scene, as do the Roman soldiers along the left side. The architecture, however, is no longer plain and simple; it is decorative, with detailed capitols, arches, doorways, sculpture and a Roman portrait bust which has been inserted in the doorway. This working out of the architectural members and the decorative motifs is repeated in Lauwers' engraving and in the second state by Schelte à Bolswert.

The changes in the Von Negri grisaille and Lauwers' engraving may well have been prescribed by Rubens. The Von Negri composition may be a copy after a lost oil sketch by Rubens, or perhaps a studio piece executed under Rubens's supervision and made for Lauwers' engraving.

14c. Christ Shown to the People

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

**Copies:**
1. *Oil sketch* (Fig. 41), Frelenburg (Rhineland), F. von Negri-Zweibrüggen; panel, 62 x 44 cm. EXH. Flämische und holländische Gemälde aus Privatbesitz, Suermondt Museum, Aachen, 1955, no. 80, repr.
2. *Engraving* (Fig. 43) by N. Lauwers; see No. 14b, Copy 6. LIT. V.S., p. 40, no. 256.

14d. Christ Shown to the People; Retouched Engraving (Fig. 44)

Grey and white body or oil colour; 338 x 281 mm., margin. 

**Provenance:** P.-J. Mariette (Paris, 1694-1774);
purchased from the latter's estate by Hugues-Adrian Joly, the Keeper of the Cabinet des Estampes.


The majority of the figures have been touched up by Rubens with light brown ochre-coloured body colour or oil colour. He also retouched the clothes and the architecture with grey body colour.

15. Christ Carrying the Cross

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES: (1) Painting (Fig. 45), Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. N. 1496; panel, 102 x 88.5 cm. PROV. Given to the Museum in 1841 by Metzler. EXH. Ein Grosses Jahrhundert der Malerei, Historisches Museum, Speyer, 1957, no. 89, repr. LIT. Th. Esser, 'Ein neues Jugendwerk von P.P. Rubens', Weltkunst, XXVII, 9, 1957, p. 10, repr. (as Rubens); Müller Hofstede, Rubens in Rom, 1970, p. 62 (as Rubens); Jaffé, Rubens, 1989, p. 149, no. 20.

(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 125 x 97 cm., enlarged at four sides, originally 103 x 89 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 26 Oct. 1945, lot 152 (as Otto Venius); S.E. Sevelius, Malmo, 1981, sale, London (Christie's), 23 July 1982, lot 16.

(3) Painting, private collection, Florence; panel, 51 x 39 cm. LIT. Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, p. 61, n. 19.

(4) Engraving by N. Lauwers (Fig. 46), 449 x 315 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 266.


Rubens's composition contains six figures with three of them in the foreground shown in three-quarter length. In the original painting, Veronica stood in the right foreground raising the sudarium to wipe Christ's face. He looks out intensely at the viewer. His head is crowned with thorns and a bright halo. The Saviour's right hand is visible grasping the Cross. Behind him on the left, Rubens has placed in profile a large soldier dressed in armour, whose right hand pulls a cord around Christ's waist. The soldier's profile is similar to the commander on horseback in the foreground of the right wing of the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 76), which Held has compared with the head of the Hercules Farnese.1

Burchard believed that Rubens used an Italian prototype such as Palmezzano's in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art,2 and that Rubens's lost original was executed around 1612. Evers, on the other hand, suggested a date from early in Rubens's Italian sojourn. He compared the composition by Rubens preserved in Lauwers' engraving (Fig. 46) with Rubens's paintings for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome.3 Esser and Müller Hofstede also dated Lauwers' composition from Rubens's Italian period and thought that the Mainz painting (Fig. 45) was the original by Rubens.4 Antal has suggested that the modello for the engraving was made c. 1614 because of the similarity in composition to the Schleissheim Ecce Homo. Antal considered the Ecce Homo to be by Rubens because the figures recall those in the Drunken Hercules (Fig. 47) in Dresden.

I would date the work around 1613, because of the similarities with the Drunken Hercules and with the profile of the horseman in the foreground of the right wing of the Elevation of the Cross in Antwerp (No. 20; Fig. 76). The Caravaggesque composition with the figures placed close to the foreground and cut off just below the waist also suggest a date of a few years after Rubens's return from Italy. Burchard has observed that the soldier behind Christ holds his head in a position akin to Rubens's Hercules (formerly Coll. W. Burchard), and to that of the soldier to the left of Theodosius in St Ambrose and Theodosius of c. 1619 in Vienna.6

3. Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, p. 99, fig. 5; Bodart, Incisione, 1977, p. 159; Vliegh, Saints, 1972-73, II, pp. 58-60, nos. 110-112, figs. 31-34.

16. Christ Carrying the Cross

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Manfrotti Collection, S. Samuele, Venice, c. 1763.

COPIES: (1) Engraving by Pietro Monaco (Fig. 48), 508 × 361 mm. Lit. V.S., p. 41, no. 267.


(4) Painting. Collection Mr & Mrs Frank Buttram, Oklahoma City, Okla; panel, 58 × 44 cm. Prov. General Félicien Blanpain, Brussels, sale, Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts), 27 Jan. 1947, lot 52, pl. XIV (as School of Rubens), sold for 31,000 fr. Lit. Van Puyvelde, Sketches, 1947, p. 91 (as doubtful); Larsen, Rubens, 1952, pp. 164, 216, no. 49, pl. 92.


Pietro Monaco's engraving after Rubens's lost composition formerly in the Manfrotti collection depicts Christ fallen on his knees in the centre of the scene. The Cross weighs heavily on his back and a muscular half-nude figure on the right attempts to raise the Cross by pushing up on the left arm. Simon of Cyrene is to the right of this muscular figure and also helps to support the Cross while Veronica, kneeling on the opposite side, wipes Christ's brow. The Virgin stands behind Veronica and leans down toward her son. Directly behind the Saviour and behind the Cross, Rubens has placed the thieves. They are pulled along by two helmeted soldiers, one of whom grasps the head of the thief on the right. This gesture, as Burchard observes, may have its source in the Gemma Augustae, which Rubens knew before 1621. All of these figures were repeated, with the slightest of changes, in the Berkeley oil sketch of 1632 (No. 18; Fig. 53). The large male in the right foreground heaving up the arm of the Cross was retained in all of Rubens's subsequent representations of this subject. Another figure that reappears, with slight changes, is the mounted Roman dressed in full armour and pointing his baton diagonally up the slope. Rubens included him in his final study for Christ Carrying the Cross (No. 19d; Fig. 60), now in Copenhagen. He leads the eye back into space and up a distant hill. The trumpet player in the upper right appears once more in the Copenhagen modello.
The procession winding back into space is more gradual in the Manfrotti composition than in Rubens's later representations of the subject. Antal has suggested that the build up in space is similar to that found in Rubens's Stigmatization of St Francis of c. 1614-15.² He has also pointed out more analogies with Rubens's works from c. 1614-17.³ The rider blowing the trumpet in the right background is a type also found in The Funeral from the Decius Mus series of 1617 (Fig. 51).⁴ The dog moving into the scene on a diagonal with its head turned toward the main action is also present in Rubens's hunting pictures from this time⁵ as well as in the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 64) and in the Flagellation (No. 11; Fig. 24).

Several other connections with Rubens's œuvre from the second decade of the seventeenth century help to establish a date for the lost Manfrotti painting. The Virgin's pose echoes that used by Rubens on the left wing of the Antwerp Elevation. He also appears to have turned back to the Elevation for the motif of the soldier pulling one of the thieves forward by placing his hand on the latter's head. Rubens first experimented with this action in the right background of the centre panel in the Louvre modello for the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20a; Fig. 62). This manner of treating captives may have its source in the Gemma Augustea, as Burchard suggested. But Rubens's adaptation is more closely related to Raphael's in the right centre of the Battle of Ostia, Vatican, Stanza dell'Incendio.⁶ Another connection with Rubens's work of c. 1614 is the depiction of Simon of Cyrene, who recalls Peter in Pacce Oves (London, Wallace Collection).⁷

Zarnowski has observed that the Warsaw sketch (Copy 2, Fig. 49) contains elements reminiscent of Italian art and that the modello can be compared with Muziano's Road to Calvary of 1557.⁸ Zarnowski did not elaborate on this comparison, but a vague similarity can be detected in the treatment of space and the inclusion of a Roman calvary officer urging the procession forward before a hill with trees silhouetted against the sky. Muziano made a preparatory sketch for the lower portion of the painting (Fig. 50);⁹ this sketch, as first proposed by F. Reiset in 1866, was retouched by Rubens. If this is true, and there is little doubt to the contrary, Zarnowski's suggestion that Rubens might have known Muziano's Orvieto painting becomes all the more plausible. The arrangement of the figures is totally different, but it is possible that Rubens was attracted by Muziano's use of space, the large figures aiding the Saviour as well as the prominent placement of Veronica on her knees in the foreground.¹⁰

Vey and d'Hulst have suggested, with reason, that the original composition preserved in the Monaco and Warsaw copies meant to have been included in the series of fifteen paintings representing the Mysteries of the Rosary. This group of works was painted in the second decade of the seventeenth century for the Church of St Paul's in Antwerp.¹¹ They have proposed that after Rubens completed this design, the commission was given to Van Dyck. Although the painting (Fig. 26) was intended to have a high format, Van Dyck continued the Rubens composition as preserved in the Monaco and Warsaw copies.¹² By eliminating Veronica, Van Dyck emphasized the Virgin's role which when combined with the fallen Christ, accentuated the idea of the Seven Sorrows of Mary.¹³

In 1624, Chrysostomus van Immersel, on orders from the Spanish minister of religion in Seville, commissioned Rubens to paint a large altarpiece representing Christ Carrying the Cross.¹⁴ There is, unfortunately, no trace of this work and whether or not Rubens ever executed it is open to question.

1. Stechow, Rubens, 1968, pp. 16, 19, fig. 3
9. Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. no. 5101;
red chalk, red wash, pastel, heightened with oil; 470 × 587 mm.; inscribed by Rubens in bottom centre with pen: Hieronymo Muciano; [Cat. Exh.] Rubens, ses maîtres, ses élèves; dessins du Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1978, p. 113, no. 118, repr.

10. Much the same might be said about Raphael's Christ Bearing the Cross, Madrid, Prado; H. Dussler, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 44-45, fig. 96.

11. See above, under No. 11.

12. Cf. especially the Van Dyck study in the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; ill. in Vey, Van Dyck, 1962, no. 7, fig. 10.


In contrast to the other representations of this subject that Rubens painted before the version of 1634-37 for the Abbey of Afflighem, Christ does not carry the Cross in this image. He is on his knees in the centre of the composition, leaning heavily on both hands. He looks up toward Mary on the left while a half-nude tormentor pulls him forward by the hair. This action is a variation of that of the Louvre modello for the Antwerp Elévation of the Cross (No. 20a; Fig. 62). Another connection with the Antwerp Elévation is the group of three figures directly behind Christ who support the Cross. They are similar to those figures who help to raise the Cross in the Antwerp painting. The figure directly behind Christ, very likely Simon of Cyrene, assumes an exceptionally original position as the person who supports the full weight of the Cross. Behind him two semi-nude monumental helpers strive to lessen the weight of the Cross and push it forward.

Directly behind this group are three helmeted soldiers dressed in armour and carrying lances. The uppermost warrior rides a horse and thrusts the blunt end of a lance into Christ's back. This action was to be repeated in the grisaille (No. 18; Fig. 53) and the engraving after it by Pontius (Fig. 54) as well as the Copenhagen modello where the soldier is no longer on a horse (No. 19d; Fig. 60). At the top of the scene are two soldiers on horseback. One carries a flag and rides back towards the main figures while his turbaned companion to the left moves in the opposite direction. However, he turns his head back toward the viewer and in this way he is
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drawn into the scene. These two horsemen recall their counterparts in the distant background of the centre panel in Rubens's sketch in the Louvre for the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20a; Fig. 62). The turbaned horseman was to appear again in Pontius' engraving. To the right of the horseman in Vienna is a high ledge with two men working at the top, which serves to enframe one side of the scene as in the Berkeley modello (No. 18; Fig. 53), where trees and foliage have been added. To the left of centre is the Virgin, gazing at her son and reaching out to him. Above her and to the left, a bareheaded soldier threatens Christ with a cudgel. This figure is also included in the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58), but placed in the centre above Christ, and later in Amsterdam (No. 19c; Fig. 59), where he is once again to the left and above the Virgin. Veronica, holding the sudarium with the image of Christ, kneels just beneath Mary. Two women accompanied by two children are placed below the female saint. Along the bottom margin, the thieves are pushed along by soldiers. The pair to the left where the soldier urges the thief forward with one arm and pulls his hair back with the other is a close variation on the treatment of the thief in the Louvre modello for the Elevation of the Cross and in the right wing of the latter. The composition is closed off on the far right by a dog seen from above the neck and looking up to the left. The dog serves much the same function, although on the opposite side, as the one in the Antwerp Elevation who closes off the composition and leads one's eye back toward the centre of the scene.

The Vienna oil sketch has long been associated with Rubens and Van Dyck. Antal first proposed that Van Dyck painted it around 1617 after a lost Rubens sketch and that it served as an early study for Van Dyck's Road to Calvary (Fig. 26) made for the Church of St Paul's in Antwerp. Burchard, on the other hand, believed that the Vienna sketch was a copy after a lost original by Rubens, which may have been the work that was last seen at the 1859 sale in Brussels. Contrary to Antal and Burchard, Held has suggested, as did Margarethe Poch-Kalous, that Rubens left the panel in an incomplete state and that it was quickly completed by a member of Rubens's workshop. Held further observes that the areas executed by Rubens have a 'lightness' in technique which suggests a date of c. 1614-16. He believes that the extraordinary iconography points to a young artist attempting to create a new interpretation of this subject. D'Hulst, by contrast, believes that the Vienna modello is a copy made after a lost sketch by Rubens for the Afflighem altarpiece of 1634-37. He further suggests that it was made after the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58), and that the Vienna sketch has firmly established the movement for the procession. The hypothesis is attractive for the evolution of the Afflighem commission, but it is difficult to maintain when one considers the composition and the similarity of the figure types with Rubens's work done shortly after his return from Italy. As Bruyn has pointed out, the space rises steeply, which stresses the surface character of the scene. The Vienna modello lacks the sense of movement back and up into the distance that one finds in the 1630 sketches in Amsterdam and Copenhagen (Nos. 19c, 19d; Figs. 59, 60). Furthermore, the figures establish fragmented scenes that fit uneasily within the pyramidal structure. This arrangement, combined with the figure types and the reuse of motifs closely akin to those found in Rubens's 1611 Elevation of the Cross and the modello in the Louvre (No. 20a; Fig. 62), suggest a date of c. 1615 for the Vienna oil sketch. It is difficult to see Rubens's hand in this sketch, although he was certainly responsible for the innovative composition. One cannot, moreover, disregard the idea proposed by Poch-Kalous and Held that Rubens began the sketch and that it was later finished in the workshop.

1. Antal, Flämische Bilder, 1923, p. 70.
3. For the date and a detailed study of the iconography see Held, Sketches, 1980, p. 475.
5. Ibid., p. 108.
7. For example, the semi-nude monumental Michelangelesque figures struggling with the Cross. See Bruyn, Kruisdraging, 1959, p. 5, and Antal,
18. Christ Carrying the Cross: Oil Sketch (Fig. 53)

Oil (in grisaille) on panel; 60 × 46 cm.
Berkeley, University of California Art Museum.

PROVENANCE: ? Coll. Johann van der Marck, Leyden, sale, Amsterdam (H. de Winter & J. Yver), 25 August 1773, lot 275, panel, c. 66 × 53 cm., sold to Heer van Leyden for 250 florins; ? Van Schorel, Antwerp, sale, Antwerp, 7 June 1774, lot 3, purchased by Van Merlen for 360 florins; Isaak L. de Thelusson, Paris (before 1777); ? Coll. I.-L. de Thelusson, 1784, sale, Paris (Le Brun), 23 March 1784, lot 7; Duke d'Alberg, sale, London (Christie's), 13-14 June 1817, lot 20, 89 pounds 15 shillings; acquired by Lord Belper in 1829; Lord Belper, Nottingham, sale, London (Sotheby's), 23 May 1951, lot 99, sold for 5,000 pounds; Mrs M.Q. Morris, London, 1953, sale London (Sotheby's), 29 Nov. 1961, lot 44 (bought in); Mrs Gerald Lyndall, Alesbury, sale, London (Sotheby's), 24 March 1965, lot 75, sold for 18,000 pounds; acquired by the Museum in 1967.


COPIES: (1) Painting, Frans van Vloten, Zeist, seen in 1951 by Professor J.G. van Gelder.
(2) Painting, M.V. van Ghysseghem, Aalst; omits rider in background.
(3) Painting, Graf, Westphalia; panel.
(4) Painting, L. Janssens, Stockholm, 1938; canvas, 105 × 82 cm., omits riders in background.
(5) Painting, J. Van der Planken, Antwerp, 1978; panel, 100 × 78 cm.
(6) Painting, E. della Faille de Leverghem, Brussels; canvas, 135 × 110 cm. PROV Peeters, Ostend, sale, Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts), 26 March 1974, no. 73, repr.
(7) Painting, Lima, Casa de Ejercicios-San Francesca.
(8) Painting, after Copy 11. L.W. Robinson, London; canvas, 108 × 114.5 cm.
(9) Painting, Abbé Thuélín, Paris, 1927; horizontal format.
(10) ? Oil sketch, Basle, Kunsthalle, inv. no. 118; panel, 62 × 46 cm.
(11) Engraving (Fig. 54) by P. Pontius, 610 × 455 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 262.
(13) Engraving by F. Ragot, after Copy 11; 585 × 430 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 41, no. 264.
(14) Engraving by unknown artist and published by C. Dankerts, horizontal format, after Copy 11.
(15) Sculptured relief, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid; copper, 67 × 80 cm. EXH. Exposition Commemorativa del IV Centenario del Nacimiento de Rubens, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid, 1978, no. 7, repr.


The Berkeley oil sketch appears to be a development of the lost Manfrotti composition preserved in Pietro Monaco's engraving (No. 16, Copy 1; Fig. 48). The main figures in both images are basically the same and move dia-
gonally up the hill. However, the composition of 1632 rises up considerably more abruptly, causing the background figures to appear closer to the foreground. This steeper grouping of the participants brings them nearer to the viewer and makes their expressions and actions more easily readable than in the Manfrotti image. Christ, crawling on the ground, still bears the weight of the Cross while the giant in the right foreground tries to raise the Cross. Simon of Cyrene, in the bottom right, also strains to relieve the pressure. As in the earlier composition, Veronica kneels before the Saviour and wipes his forehead. Above and behind her, the Virgin leans down toward her son as she did in the Manfrotti picture. For the first time in his representation of this subject, Rubens has included St John who stands behind Mary and supports her.

Rubens has changed the space in the Berkeley scene by opening up the centre. He eliminated the dog in favour of a clump of flowers that serves as a repoussoir. He further expands the sense of space in the foreground by adding more earth and two children in the bottom left who look up toward Christ. The children initiate a visual line from the bottom left, which culminates in the Saviour and then moves to the upper left through the action of the figure who raises his left arm diagonally back into depth while pulling Christ along by the hair. This was to be repeated in the Rubens workshop modello in Vienna (No. 17, Copy; Fig. 52) and in the earliest known design for the Afflighem altarpiece (Nos. 14a and 19a; Fig. 38). A close variation of this figure is also present in Monaco's engraving but he does not pull Christ's hair and is placed behind the soldiers with left arm raised to strike one of the thieves.

The Berkeley grisaille repeats the position of the thieves and the two soldiers pulling them along in Monaco's engraving, Rubens also places a Roman cavalry officer to the right. However, his horse is turned up the hill and the soldier's diagonally positioned arm holds a spear the bottom of which is thrust into Christ's back. This action is also found earlier in the oil sketch by Rubens's workshop, now in Vienna (No. 17, Copy; Fig. 52); it was to be repeated later by an unmounted Roman in the Copenhagen modello and the Afflighem altarpiece. In the Berkeley modello, Rubens also refers back to the Vienna composition by placing the land mass along the right margin of the scene and by including a turbaned horseman at the top of the composition, who looks down and back toward Christ. The rider in the Berkeley modello is accompanied by two other dramatically foreshortened horsemen who are about to turn right as they follow a distant figure carrying a ladder on his right shoulder. The walking figure subtly suggests that the road winds between the softly painted and steeply raised Barocci-like hills on the right. This sense of the cortège in continuous movement back into depth is not present in the Vienna composition. In fact, the Berkeley and Vienna oil sketches share little in common. The grisaille of 1632 looks to the past; the Vienna sketch was probably executed considerably earlier after a lost composition by Rubens, but it has more in common with the preparatory studies for the Afflighem altarpiece.

There are certainly connections between the Berkeley modello and Monaco's engraving, but these appear to be only in the repetition of figure types. By 1632, the dynamic movement and the interpretation of the space have become freer and more open, in keeping with Rubens's later style. Because of this, and the fluid, rich rendering of the grisaille, Antal's proposed date of c. 1615-18 for the Berkeley modello cannot be accepted. It must have been executed in 1632, as stated on Pontius' engraving.

Jordaens' Christ Carrying the Cross (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, formerly in the Church of St Francis Xavier in Amsterdam) was painted in the late 1650s and borrowed several motifs from Pontius' print: the thief and the soldier behind the Cross, Simon of Cyrene supporting the foot of the Cross, the standing Virgin and the turbaned horseman in the background.

1. Veronica's position resembles the Magdalen's at the foot of the Cross. For example, see K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, pp. 52, 77, 88, 89.
2. Bruyn, Kruisdraging, 1959, p. 5, n. 1, points out the similarity between Mary and St John with their counterparts on the left wing of Rubens's 1611 Elevation of the Cross in Antwerp (No. 20; Fig. 75).
3. Rubens had used a variation on this motif of a figure being pulled along by the hair in his oil sketch of The Martyrdom of St Ursula and her Companions, Brussels, Musées Royaux, dated 1614 or earlier by Burchard—d’Hulst, Drawings, 1963, p. 263 or 1620 by Held, Sketches, 1980, p. 590.


5. Antal, Flämische Bilder, 1923, p. 66.


19. Christ Carrying the Cross (Fig. 55)

Oil on canvas; 569 x 355 cm.
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 163.

PROVENANCE: Commissioned in 1634 for the main altar of the Abbey of Afflighem and installed on 8 April 1637. Removed by the French on 18 August 1794, and taken to Paris where it was exhibited in the Louvre. After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the altarpiece was returned and in 1816 was given to the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.


(2) Anonymous, painting, M. Giacobbo Erminio, Rome (1978), 59 x 110 cm.; free copy set in landscape.

(3) Eugène Delacroix, painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 58 x 40 cm. Prov. Isambert; Dollfus. Lit. Robaut—Chesneau, 1885, p. 474, no. 1941; Ehrlich White, Delacroix, 1967, pp. 42, 46.

(4) Painting, Brasschaat, Cauwenbergh; panel, 63 x 48 cm.


Rubens's commission for the main altar of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in the Benedictine abbey at Afflighem is well documented in the Monasterii SS. Petri et Pauli Affligemensis Chronicum by the provost, Hubert Phalesius. There are four versions of this chronicle, two in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, and two in the archives of the Abbey of Afflighem. Of these, the second account at Afflighem (MS I A 2) is the
most reliable text, written by Phalesius himself and completed in 1637.

We know that the church of the abbey was severely damaged during the 1570s and 1580s and that it was rebuilt in 1623-25. At the time of the reconstruction an old painting was placed on the high altar. This picture represented the Passion and was described by a visitor in 1627 as 'une ancienne peinture de la Passion'. This may have been the Triptych of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin by the Master of Affligem.

The 1637 version of the Chronicum in Affligem informs us that in 1634 Jacques Francart designed a new wooden altar. It was executed between October 1634 and May 1636 by Jan du Can, who on his own initiative, but with the approval of Provost Jacob (monastic name Benedictus) Van Haeften, added four spiral (Solomonic) columns. Jan du Can was paid 2,100 guilders for this work. The payments to du Can and for the materials brought the cost of the new altar to approximately 3,000 guilders. At this time, the older painting was considered inadequate. Jacob Boonen, Archbishop of Malines and consequently Abbot of Affligem, commissioned Rubens during a meeting at the Church in 1634 to paint a new altarpiece, Christ Carrying the Cross. It was not, as has been thought since Rooses, commissioned by Van Haeften. On 8 April 1637, Rubens's painting was installed on the high altar, and he received 1,600 guilders. His assistants, who made the support for the canvas and placed it on the altar, were paid 50 guilders.

During the years after his return from Italy, Rubens painted several versions of this subject and he has used motifs from them in the Affligem altarpiece. These earlier ideas were further expanded upon in the drawing and three oil sketches that are directly related to the Affligem altarpiece. The earliest known studies appear to be on the drawing in the Burchard collection (Nos. 14a and 19a; Fig. 38). This sheet does contain some details that are present in his previous representations of the theme, such as Christ looking out directly at the viewer, the Cross resting on his back in the upper left, Veronica wiping his face in the sketch below and in the upper left corner Christ being towed along by his hair as in the Vienna workshop and the Berkeley oil sketches (No. 17, Copy and No. 18; Figs. 52, 53). This motif is altered in the bottom drawing where Christ's hair is pulled from behind. Rubens repeated this idea in the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58). However, he dropped it in the subsequent modelli and altarpiece, perhaps because it impeded the diagonal movement of the scene. Burchard and d’Hulst have observed that the two sketches on the left of the Burchard drawing are closest to the Brussels grisaille, the earliest preserved oil sketch for the Affligem commission. Along with the above-cited borrowings from the past, Rubens's drawing incorporates important changes which are further expanded upon in the Brussels grisaille. Most significant is the placement of the Cross, which is no longer supported by Christ's back. A variation on this first occurred in the composition by Rubens's workshop, now in Vienna, but in an extremely radical manner. Here the Cross is held up entirely by another figure, Simon of Cyrene, who is placed between Christ and the Cross. In the 1632 Berkeley oil sketch and Pontius' engraved copy the Cross once again rests on Christ's back. In the bottom left drawing on the Burchard sheet the Cross is lifted from Christ's back by two men standing behind it. This new position for the Cross was to be repeated in all the succeeding studies and in the altarpiece itself. The Burchard drawing also introduces a new configuration for the women and children of Jerusalem. In the Vienna and Berkeley versions women and children are present, but not in coherent groups. In the Burchard drawing, the women embrace the children and surround the Virgin and St John. This was to be further developed in every one of the later compositions.

Shortly after completing the studies on the Burchard sheet, Rubens probably executed the grisaille sketch in Brussels. It is the first detailed study for the Affligem altarpiece and combines elements from Rubens's previous representations of the theme. This is especially evident in his use of motifs found in his earlier workshop sketch in Vienna. Of paramount importance is the reintroduction of the thieves in the foreground and the inclusion of St Veronica, who does not wipe Christ's face with the
sudarium. Rubens also included details introduced in the Burchard drawing, where the Cross is lifted from Christ's back by a figure who grasps the top and where the women of Jerusalem carry their children in the upper right. On the other hand, he repeats the Michelangelesque foreground figure who pushes up the arm of the Cross and who is found in every rendering of this theme, except in the Burchard drawing, beginning with Pietro Monaco's engraving after the lost painting in the Manfrotti collection (No. 16, Copy I; Fig. 48).

The Brussels grisaille certainly reveals borrowings from earlier studies, but important alterations demonstrate a clear departure from Rubens's previous versions of this subject. The central group has been changed markedly in the positioning and types of figures, in the reintroduction of the good and bad thieves in the foreground and in the placement of the forms closer to the frontal plane to stress the steepness of the hill. Rubens has included the three-quarter length figures of the thieves and soldiers along the bottom as in the workshop copy in Vienna (Fig. 52), but their position and postures have been altered. These changes give a greater sense of movement to the scene which is very different from the earlier works (No. 16; Figs. 48, 49). There the procession appears to stop momentarily in the centre where Veronica wipes Christ's brow. In the drawing, she is behind Christ who appears to crawl past her. The stress upon movement is made even clearer in the Brussels grisaille, where the Saviour now appears to drag himself toward the sudarium held in Veronica's outstretched arms.

The sense of continuous motion originates in the Burchard drawing (No. 19a; Fig. 38), where the changes in the central group are already beginning to become evident. In the Brussels grisaille, the foreground figure who pushes Christ forward by grasping his hair has been moved to a position behind the Cross and Rubens has raised his arm. This helps to focus our attention more on Christ by placing him alone in the centre and by moving the Cross back and away from his body. Rubens does repeat the standing group to the right in the drawing, but in the grisaille they are placed diagonally up on the slope, which further emphasizes his upward crawling movement. Veronica is also important in establishing the sense of movement. In the drawing, Christ creeps past her; in the grisaille she is not close to Christ, but is placed back and away from him to the right and holds the sudarium out toward him. Veronica and the woman behind her look up toward the Virgin and St John, thus connecting the two levels and intensifying the upward movement. The Virgin and St John are parted in the grisaille and their gestures help to reinforce the upward action. This is very different from two of the earlier compositions preserved in the engravings by Monaco and Pontius (Figs. 48, 54), where the procession is halted by the upright posture of Veronica who wipes Christ's brow. The strong emphasis upon movement is reduced in the later versions, where Christ once again stops before Veronica. In the Burchard drawing, Rubens has included a man who raises the top of the Cross from Christ's back and another man who pushes up one of the arms. This was to be repeated with slight alterations in the Brussels grisaille.

Rubens's ideas for the Afflighem altarpiece were further developed in his more detailed oil sketch now in Amsterdam (No. 19c; Fig. 59). As the earlier studies reveal (Figs. 38, 58), this later work also combined elements from his previous designs as well as introducing several important changes. These ideas, old and new, were incorporated in the Amsterdam sketch and later in a third modello, now in Copenhagen (No. 19d; Fig. 60), culminating in the altarpiece. Two of the more important innovations in the Burchard drawing and the Brussels grisaille focus upon the changes in the position of Christ's body and its relationship to the Cross. In these two designs Christ's left leg is drawn up just above his right knee and in the grisaille his foot becomes more prominent. In the Amsterdam oil sketch, Rubens continues this positioning of the legs and feet in reverse, but now Christ's foot and its sole are more visible. The Saviour's body appears to be suspended in a delicate balance on one side which imparts a greater sense of the monumental effort he is making to move forward. This is further enhanced by the position
of the Cross: as in the Burchard and Brussels preparatory designs, it is held above the Saviour's back.

Another innovation in the Brussels grisaille, the horseman in profile carrying a flag in the upper left corner, is repeated in the Amsterdam composition but eliminated in subsequent representations. Rubens not only continued to use motifs from his earlier designs for the Afflighem commission, but he made several changes in the Amsterdam oil sketch. For example, the soldier holding a mace just above Christ's head in the Brussels grisaille now wears a full suit of armour, but in the later Copenhagen modello and the final version, the mace is replaced by a lance which is thrust into Christ's back. The soldiers and thieves were present in the foreground of the earlier Vienna workshop piece (No. 17, Copy; Fig. 52), but their grouping and postures have been changed in the Brussels grisaille. They were also further modified in the later versions, where they do not occupy the entire frontal plane. In the Amsterdam sketch, the Roman soldier is placed to the left of centre and no longer carries a spear as he does in the Brussels grisaille but a staff, while the thief on his right is more upright and does not overlap the Saviour's knee. This tends to open up the space in the centre and relieves the cluttered character of the earlier designs. These foreground figures, except for a slight modification in the position of the second thief's shoulder, are retained in the Copenhagen modello and in the altarpiece itself. One can only surmise that the soldier cut off by the frame on the right must have assumed a position similar to that found in the later modello and altarpiece.9

The Amsterdam oil sketch (No. 19c; Fig. 59) also repeats the monumental, Herculean figure helping to alleviate the weight of the Cross from Christ's back; he is present in all of Rubens's previous compositions of this subject. But in contrast to the figure in Monaco's print, in the Berkeley oil sketch (No. 18; Fig. 53) and the engraving after it by Pontius, the bearded giant in the Amsterdam sketch wears a head band and is naked from just above the waist.10 The inclined figure of the Virgin in the Amsterdam sketch, with her head more firmly lowered and her arms extended so that her left hand touches the top of Christ's head, is first evident in the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58). The manner in which St John supports the Virgin, placing his right arm around her waist is also similar to the Brussels grisaille.

In the Amsterdam oil sketch, Rubens has radically changed the position of the women and children of Jerusalem. In his previous designs, they were located close to St Veronica, the Virgin and St John. Now they are placed on either side of the composition. The mother and child to the right of the white horse closely resemble those in the Burchard drawing and the Brussels grisaille. The Virgin and St John, on the other hand, appear to be a further refinement of their counterparts in the Brussels grisaille. The profiled position of St Veronica is similar to the versions in Monaco's engraving (No. 16, Copy 1; Fig. 48) and the Berkeley oil sketch (No. 18; Fig. 53). In the Amsterdam sketch Veronica is on the same level as Christ and farther away from him. Consequently, her arms are now fully extended imparting a sense of a more expanded space in the centre. The soldier on the white horse performs the function of leading the procession back into depth; the same function is fulfilled by the turbaned rider in the 1632 modello (No. 18; Fig. 53) for the Pontius print, and in the earlier panel from Rubens's workshop, now in Vienna (No. 17, Copy; Fig. 52). In the workshop piece, there is also a similarity in the horse's position. However, in the Amsterdam sketch, the horse's rump is partially overlapped by the Cross and the figures between them are eliminated. This relieves the crowding of the earlier scenes and suggests an easier movement back into space. Rubens may have been pursuing the same aim when he eliminated the Roman horseman in profile who carries a flag in the upper left corner of the Afflighem altarpiece. The Amsterdam sketch leads directly to the final work. It is here that Rubens has made the essential changes in the composition, spacing and placement of the figures which were to be further refined in the Copenhagen modello. The Amsterdam sketch was probably Rubens's final plan for the altarpiece which he submitted to Archbishop Jacob Boonen and the President of
The Council of Brabant, Pieter Roose at their meeting in 1634 at the Abbey of Afflighem. In this case it would have been the Amsterdam sketch which was criticized at the meeting for not being a picture of 'better shape'. As a consequence, Rubens agreed to execute another design—more than likely the Copenhagen modello (No. 19d; Fig. 60). This reconstruction of the sequence of events is prompted by the obvious differences between the Amsterdam and Copenhagen modelli that lead directly to the final composition of the Afflighem altarpiece.

The major change between the Amsterdam and Copenhagen compositions is the new stress upon a vertical accent with Christ in the centre. This was clearly not the case in the Amsterdam version, especially in view of the fact that it has lost approximately two to three inches along the right-hand side. The original Amsterdam composition would therefore have placed Christ further to the left, thereby stressing the horizontal format. This is very different from the Copenhagen design and that of the completed altarpiece. By placing Christ in the centre of the composition, Rubens has established a greater sense of space and separated the foreground figures from the focal point of the struggling Saviour. In order to achieve this, he has made a number of important changes in the grouping of the figures and the area in which they move. Once again, Veronica has been placed above Christ, set further back to the left, reduced in size and situated below the brow of the hill. These changes help to stress the significance of the continuous flow of the procession on a diagonal back into depth. Such movement is contrary to that in the Amsterdam sketch (Fig. 59), where the main group has halted before St Veronica whose head is on the same level as Christ's. The action of the middle-ground group in the Copenhagen modello (Fig. 60) is maintained in the next plane by the addition of the cavalry officer on the right directing the procession up the hill with his baton. Rubens has taken this figure from his earlier composition preserved in Monaco's engraving (Fig. 48). Now the rider is closer to the centre; by glancing down to the right and pointing up to the left he connects these two areas.

The alterations made by Rubens in the Copenhagen modello and their adaptation in the completed altarpiece make it clear that the Copenhagen modello was his final study for the Afflighem altarpiece.

The main participants in the altarpiece appear to be entirely by Rubens while the background figures have been done by his assistants and touched up by the master. The stiff and linear treatment of the brown horse behind the Cross suggests that this too was executed by a member of the workshop. The muscular figures helping Christ to carry the Cross display a rhythmical movement in their legs that is remarkably similar to that in the Elevation of the Cross of 1610-11 (Fig. 64). Veronica, on the other hand, is a typical late Rubens type of female akin to those in The Garden of Love (Prado, Madrid). As Vlieghe observes, the composition of the Afflighem altarpiece resembles Rubens's modello (whereabouts unknown) for the lost Martyrdom of St Paul. The soldier just behind the Virgin in the Afflighem altarpiece leans forward and stabs Christ in the back with the shaft of his spear. This soldier is similar in pose and action to the warrior on the left side of the Martyrdom of St Paul. R.-A. d'Hulst has pointed out that Rubens's placement of one of the thieves in the foreground was imitated in the late 1650s by Jacob Jordaens in his Christ Carrying the Cross.

1. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 63-66, quoted from the fourth version written in 1645, seven years after Phalesius' death. The relevant excerpts of the 1637 text are given in Heinen, Kreuztragung, 1993, pp. 161-162, appendix II.
3. This was the same Van Haeften who had recently published his Regia via Crucis, 1635, with a title-page by Rubens (Judson—Van de Velde, Title-pages, 1978, I, pp. 294-296, no. 71, II, fig. 242).
4. Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 472, has suggested earlier that the words 'meliori forma' quoted from the Chronicle meant that Rubens's painting was to replace an older one.
6. There are two representations of this subject which appear to be copies after Rubens, but which I am unable, due to lack of photographs, to
place in the proper catalogue entries: (i) oil sketch, Coll. Lord Yarborough, Brocklesby Hall. LIT. Hofstede de Groot, Rubens-Bulletijn, V, p. 275, no. 15, as a sketch but not certain about attribution; (ii) painting, New York Historical Society; panel, 150 x 62 cm. LIT. New York Historical Society, Cat., 1925, p. 76, no. B-195.

8. Veronica's turning head in the bottom centre of the Burchard drawing is, perhaps, a first thought for the Brussels grisaille.
9. It is clear that the Amsterdam panel was cut along the right side at a later date. For details, see Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953, p. 99; Bruyn, Kruisdraging, 1959, p. 7.
10. The horse is similar to the one on the left side above Neptune in The Meeting of Ferdinand, King of Hungary, and the Cardinal-Infante at Nördlingen, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. For an illustration, see Martin, Pompa, 1972, fig. 13.
11. This sheet bears studies for two different subjects. On the left half, Rubens has sketched his preliminary ideas for the Christ Carrying the Cross commissioned by the Benedictine abbey at Afflighem. The right side depicts several of his thoughts for the representation of Christ Shown to the People (No. 14a). On the other side of the sheet are designs for Hippodamia Abducted by the Centaur Eurytus and Hercules and the Bull Achelous, which were to be included as part of the decoration for the Torre de la Parada.1 On the upper left of the recto, Christ is struggling along on the ground with the Cross supported above him by two men placed behind it. He is pulled forward by a soldier who grasps his hair, as in the Vienna and Berkeley oil sketches (Figs. 52, 53). Behind the Saviour, another antagonist pushes him forward. Beneath this group, Rubens has enlarged the scene to include twelve figures. Christ, exhausted by the ordeal, stumbles forward and braces himself with his right arm. In the left foreground, a figure holding a mace in his right hand and Christ's hair in the other urges him forward. Two men are behind the Cross and support it in an effort to reduce Christ's burden. Veronica kneels to the right and behind Christ. She raises her right hand and holds the sudarium with the other. To her right, Rubens has introduced two of the daughters of Jerusalem holding children. Behind them one finds the Virgin wringing her hands in anguish and St John wiping away his tears with his drapery. A second study of a half-length Veronica may be found in the bottom centre of the sheet. She is in three-quarter profile, with her head strongly turned to the left.

19a. Christ Carrying the Cross: Drawing (Figs. 38, 57)

Red and black chalk; 310 x 466 mm.—Verso: designs for Hippodamia Abducted by the Centaur Eurytus and Hercules and the Bull Achelous. Whereabouts unknown.


EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 99, repr.; Antwerp, 1956, no. 139 verso.


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the Cross, which no longer rests on Christ's back. The positions of the men supporting the Cross have also been altered. They have been moved to the left and the top section. Although Christ is dragged forward by the hair, as in the earlier Vienna workshop piece and the 1632 modello in Berkeley (Figs. 52, 53), the position of the antagonist has been changed. He no longer looks back with a turning and twisting pose but walks ahead in a straight line with his body leaning forward. In the larger sketch, Rubens has enlarged the group in front of Christ by adding the daughters of Jerusalem with their children. The position of St Veronica's head in the bottom centre is entirely different, with its dramatic turning in three-quarter profile from the pure profile or frontal renderings in the earlier scenes. In fact, Rubens did not use this posture in his later studies and final composition for Afflighem.

1. Alpers, Torre. 1971, pp. 230-231, no. 37a, fig. 137.

19b. Christ Carrying the Cross: Oil Sketch (Fig. 58)

Oil (in grisaille) on panel; 58 x 46.5 cm. Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 5057.

PROVENANCE: Sale, Leipzig, 7 Oct. 1801, lot 24; Dr Ignaz Kuranda, Vienna, c. 1861–c. 1873; Felix Kuranda, Vienna, 1908; Dr F. Mondschein, St Lucas Gallery, Vienna, 1934; dealer P. de Boer, Amsterdam, 1935; acquired by the Museum in 1935.

COPY: Drawing. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings; black chalk, 385 x 252 mm., signed below De Mijn. PROV. Presented to the Museum by the Revd C.M. Cracherode in 1799. Lit. Hind, Rubens, 1923, p. 45, no. 121, as perhaps by Herman van der Mijn (1684-1741).


Christ, on his knees and sustaining himself with his arms, crawls up the hill of Golgotha. To his right, Veronica holds out the sudarium towards him and turns her head back to the right in the direction of Mary, who reaches out to help her son. She is supported by St John. Above them and to the right, Rubens has placed the weeping 'daughters of Jerusalem'. Moving back toward the centre and just above Christ's head, a tormenter looks menacingly down at him and carries a mace in his right hand, the end of which strikes Christ's forehead. Another tormenter is behind the Saviour and grabs his hair with his left hand and is about to strike him with the other. To the left, two figures raise the Cross from Christ's back. The older one, struggling with the top of the Cross, is probably Simon of Cyrene. Above the main group, two mounted Roman soldiers, one carrying a flag, move up the hill. Still further up and to the right, one can vaguely discern another rider turning around the corner to the left and also holding a banner. In the bottom centre and moving parallel to Christ, the two thieves are
pushed and pulled forward by two Roman soldiers.¹

¹ See No. 19 above for the similarities and differences between the Brussels grisaille and Rubens's other representations of this subject.

19c. Christ Carrying the Cross: Oil Sketch (Fig. 59)

Oil on panel; 74 x 55 cm. 
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Inv. no. A 344.

PROVENANCE: Jacques Meyers, Rotterdam, acquired sometime between 1714-1722; Jacques Meyers, sale, Rotterdam (M. Bohm), 9 Sept. 1722, lot 76; 74.5 x 55 cm. (22 1/2 x 19 1/2" Rhine-landish feet); Therese van Halen, sale, Antwerp, 19 August 1749, no. 65; Adriaan Leonard van Heteren, The Hague, 1752 (Hoet, Catalogus, 1752, II, p. 458); Van Heteren-Gevers, The Hague-Rotterdam, as early as 1781 where it was seen by Reynolds; purchased by the Museum from Van Heteren-Gevers in 1809.

COPY: Oil sketch, whereabouts unknown; panel, 75 x 56 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 2 March 1945, lot 89; Humphrey R. Tomalin, sale, London (Sotheby's), 14 May 1958, lot 51 (as school of Rubens).


In contrast to the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58), the Amsterdam composition moves from the lower right to the upper left. The action begins in the bottom foreground where a Roman soldier pulls one of the thieves along, while the second thief is pushed by an arm grasping his shoulder. Above, to the right of centre, a Herculean figure struggles to raise the Cross from Christ's back. On the left Veronica reaches out to wipe the Saviour's brow and behind her a woman embraces a child, while two others stand below. Just above this group, the weeping St John wipes the tears away with his left hand and supports the Virgin with his right arm. She, in turn, extends her arms toward her son. Above Mary, a Roman officer on horseback holds a mace in his right hand and reaches
down toward Christ. This movement is counterbalanced by his horse which turns up the hill. Behind him to the left and right, two riders, one carrying a flag and the other a lance, proceed upwards while looking down at Christ. These figures serve to enhance the movement into the distance while at the same time connecting the main action with the background. Still farther back in the scene, one can barely distinguish a mounted trumpeter riding around the hill on the left. The perpendicular movement of the riders is accentuated by the diagonal thrust from the right created by the figures struggling with the Cross and the liveliness of the daughters of Jerusalem carrying their children.

It is possible that the Amsterdam sketch was the painting cited in the 1639-49 catalogue of paintings in the Lunden collection, Antwerp. It is not simply an elaboration of Rubens's first idea for the Afflighem commission which was quickly rendered in the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58).


19d. Christ Carrying the Cross:
Oil Sketch (Fig. 60)

Oil on panel; 104.5 x 74 cm.

Copenhagen, Statens Museums for Kunst. Inv. no. 1856, cat. no. 616.

PROVENANCE: J.B. Horion, sale, Brussels, 1 Sept. 1788, lot 15; panel, 100 x 70.5 cm. (37 pouces x 26½ pouces), sold for 165 florins; J-D. Lempereur, sale, Paris (Chariot, Boileau, Joulain), 24 May 1773, lot 31 (as Van Dyck); bought by Le Brun for 582 fr.; dealer J. Defordt, Brussels; acquired from him by the Museum in 1905.

EXHIBITED: Rotterdam, 1953-54, no. 93, fig. 82.


The main changes in the Copenhagen modello have been discussed in No. 19 above, but there are a number of lesser modifications that also lead directly to the completed altarpiece. These help to free the participants and instill a greater sense of a vertical movement. The posture of the figure at the foot of the Cross with his back toward the viewer is parallel to the picture plane, thereby helping to establish a smooth continuous upward movement from the lower right to the upper left. He is a distant recollection of the figure in the bottom right of the Antwerp Elevation (No. 20; Fig. 64). A little further along, just behind the arm of the Cross and in front of the rider, Rubens has inserted a brutish tormentor, who leans forward with his right arm raised to strike Christ. This action continues, in reverse, that of the figure in a similar position in the Brussels grisaille (No. 19b; Fig. 58) and offsets the background curve of the monumental figure raising the left arm of the Cross. Rubens slows down the diagonal thrust of the group surrounding Christ by counterbalancing it with Veronica, the Virgin, St John and the others. Rubens also inserts a figure in front of St John who leans down toward the Saviour and threatens him with his fist. Through his action, this tormentor directs our eye back toward the centre of the scene. Above the Virgin, Rubens has retained the Roman soldier present in the Amsterdam sketch (No. 19c; Fig. 59); now he
does not threaten Christ with a mace but thrusts the blunt end of a spear into his back. The lance is placed on a diagonal and parallel to the mounted procession riding up and into the background. This helps to reinforce the composition's vertical emphasis as well as connecting the main group with the background. The Roman's downward glance toward Christ and the positioning of his pike is subtly reinforced by the horseman on the right. He, too, looks down while pointing to the top of the hill with his baton. His action also serves as a connecting link between the middle ground and the background. The Roman's horse also plays an important role in the composition. The horse's head makes direct eye contact with the spectator, thereby drawing the viewer into the scene.

The sense of space has become more ample along the right-hand side in the Copenhagen modello. Compared with the Amsterdam sketch, the number of women and children has been reduced along the right margin, although they do reiterate the postures of the groups in the Amsterdam sketch. The soldiers and thieves in the immediate foreground of the Copenhagen modello appear to repeat those worked out in Rubens's earlier designs, but small alterations help to change the emphasis in the composition. The soldier in the bottom right places his hand lower down on the thief's back, and leans farther forward than his half-length companion in the Amsterdam sketch. This helps to establish a greater sense of movement beginning in the lower right corner which parallels the group above. Rubens has also created an increased feeling of space between the groups in the foreground and middle ground which, among other things, makes more of the individual figures visible. The soldier and thief in the bottom centre are taller and straighter, and the thief's head is now in front of Christ's foot. This change places the thief in a direct line with Christ and the horseman above; as a consequence, all three figures reinforce the central vertical axis of the composition.

It is more than likely that the Copenhagen modello was Rubens's response to the meeting of 1634 at Afflighem with Archbishop Jacob Boonen and the President of the Council of Brabant, Pieter Roose. One can only surmise that the more horizontal composition of the sketches now in Brussels (No. 19b; Fig. 58) and Amsterdam (No. 19c; Fig. 59) was criticized at the above meeting. Rubens's response to this demand for a picture of 'better shape' was the more vertical arrangement of the Copenhagen modello, which served as the final study for the altarpiece.


20. The Elevation of the Cross (Figs. 61, 64)

Oil on panel; centre panel: 460 x 340 cm., side panels: 460 x 150 cm.
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of St Walburga (1610-1794); removed to the Abbey of St Michiels, Antwerp (1 August 1794) and shipped to Paris (11 August 1794); Paris, Louvre, no. 703 (19 Sept. 1794—20/21 Sept. 1815); shipped from Paris to Brussels (31 Oct.—20 Nov. 1815); Antwerp, Academy (former Cloister of Franciscan Minorites (15 Dec. 1815—31 May 1816); in the Church since 31 May 1816.

COPIES: (1) Painting; whereabouts unknown.
PROV. Tournai, Church of the Abbey of St Martin, refectory. LIT. Mensaert, Peintre, 1763, II, pp. 75-82.

(2) Painting; whereabouts unknown. PROV. D.S. Ker Esq., MP. EXH. Ancient and Modern Paintings at the Royal Hibernian Academy, The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, 1855, no. 91.

(3) Painting by Jacob Beschey. Madrid, Prado, inv. no. 2364; panel, 46 x 36 cm., signed J. Beschey.

(4) Painting: Tours, Musée des Beaux-Arts; canvas, 195 x 165 cm. LIT. Réunion des Sociétés des Beaux-Arts, XXI, 1897, pp. 559-560.

(5) Painting of the open triptych; Pellenberg, Church of St Pieters; canvas, 167 x 123 cm. LIT. De Brabantse Folklore, 177, March 1968, p. 27, no. S/2 (as Southern Netherlands last quarter of the 17th century).
(6) Painting: Mechlin, cloister of the Mari- 
collines. LIT. E. Neefs and H. Coninckx, Les tab- 
leaux, sculptures et objets d'art conservés dans les 
édifices religieux et civils de Malines, Mechlin, 
1891, p. 249.

(7) Painting by Van der Sanden, 1701; where- 
abouts unknown. LIT. G. Gepts-Buytsaert, 'G.I. 
Kerricx', Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis 
en de Oudheidkunde, XIV, 1953, p. 235.

(8) Painting of the open triptych: Coll. G. Sie- 
bers, Nütterden, Cleve; canvas, 150 x 180 cm.

(9) Painting: Valence, Musée; canvas, 
130 x 230 cm.

(10) Painting: Seville, Archbishop's Palace; 
canvas, 104 x 165 cm. LIT. G. Valdivieso and 
J.M. Serrera, Catálogo de los pinturas del Palacio 
Arzobispal de Sevilla, Seville, 1979, p. 57, no. 132.

(11) Painting, c. 1835-39; Hartford, Wads- 
worth Athenaeum; canvas, 151 x 108 cm.

(12) Painting, centre panel, possibly 18th 
century, Kilnamartyra (Ireland), Parish church.

(13) Partial copy of left interior panel; where- 
abouts unknown; canvas, 150 x 66 cm. PROV. 
Sale, Vienna (Dorotheum), 16-22 April 1985, no. 
416, repr. (as Flemish c. 1700).

(14) Drawing (Fig. 79): Paris, Louvre, Cabinet 
des Dessins, inv. no. 20.188; black and red chalk, 
black and brown ink, watercolour, white chalk 
highlights on two pieces of paper, 387 x 428 
mm., inscribed in pen by later hand in bottom 
left: Rubens. PROV. Coll. Antoine Triest, Bishop 
of Ghent; Coll. P. Crozat, sale, Paris, 10 
April—13 May 1741, lot 816, bought by Lemp- 
ereur; Coll. J.D. Lempereur, sale, Paris (Char- 
bourg, 1921, pp. 36, 37, 455, 456; De Wit, Kerken, 
1910, pp. 135-137; E. Lambert, 'Delacroix et Ru­ 
bens; la "Justice de Trajan" et l'"Elévation de la 
Croix" d'Anvers', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1921, 
p. 36, 37, 455, 456; De Wit, Kerken, 
1910, p. 83; J. Van den Nieu­ 
wert, 1840, pp. 3-5; Reynolds, Journey, 1852, pp. 
164-167; Riegel, Rubens, 1882, p. 284; Piot, Rap- 
port, 1883, pp. 24, 25, 302, 398, 410, 418; Rooses, 
Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 68-77, nos. 275-285; 
Rooses, Vie, 1903, pp. 127-135; K.d.K. ed. Olden­ 
bourg, 1921, pp. 36, 37, 455, 456; De Wit, Kerken, 
1910, pp. 135-137; E. Lambert, 'Delacroix et Ru­ 
bens; la "Justice de Trajan" et l'"Elévation de la 
Croix" d'Anvers', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, VIII, 
1932, pp. 245-248; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, 
pp. 27, 56-81, 381, figs. 35-38, 43; A. von Schnei- 
der, Caravaggio und die Niederländer, Marburg 
a.d. Lahn, 1933, pp. 91, 92, 96; C. Janson, 'L'Influ­ 
ence de Véronèse sur Rubens', Gazette des Beaux- 
Arts, XVII, 1937, p. 35; Evers, Rubens, 1942, 
pp. 127-132, figs. 66, 67; Evers, Neue Forschungen, 
1943, pp. 101, 102, 104, 129, 130, 132, 145, 147, 
149, 230, 312; Grossman, Dulwich, 1948, pp. 48-50; 
Mâle, Art Religieux, 1951, p. 270, fig. 154; Seilern, 
Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 27; J. Van den Nieu- 
wenhuizen, 'Historiek van de restauraties van 
Rubens' Kruisoprichting en Kruisafdoening in 
de Kathedraal', Antwerpen, III, 2, 1957, pp. 63-71; 
Aust, Entwurf, 1958, pp. 65-70, figs. 105a, 105b; 
Held, Drawings, 1959, I, pp. 65, 69, 95, 114, 119, 
126, 129, 131; Van den Nieuwenhuizen, Antwerpse 
schilderijen, 1962, pp. 66-83, repr.; Emile-Mâle, 
Séjour, 1964, pp. 159, 160-162, 166, 167, 170, 171,
In the centre panel of Rubens's *Elevation of the Cross*, seven muscular Michelangelesque executioners aided by two Roman soldiers struggle to raise the Cross. These crude monumental figures strongly contrast with the quiet idealized representation of Christ, who looks up and out of the confines of the picture plane. The scene takes place on a hill with foliage in the background and a view into the distance on the far right. In the bottom left, a panting dog looks toward the centre of the action. The landscape continues into the panels on either side. In the left wing, Rubens has created two separate groups. The quiet contemplative St John the Evangelist and the Virgin are placed in contrast with the more agitated women and children below. The panel on the right includes a column of mounted Roman soldiers led by an officer on a beautiful dapple gray horse. He orders the soldiers in the background to place the two thieves on their crosses. One is on the ground with his left arm nailed to the cross and his right being prepared by a kneeling soldier. Behind them, two soldiers disrobe the second thief. The scene continues below a clouded sky where the moon is about to pass over the sun in the upper left corner. Because of the interrelationship of the figures in the three inside panels and the continuation of the landscape between the parts, it is clear that the interior is to be read as a whole.

The present ensemble is considerably different from the one which surmounted the main altar of St Walburga from 1610-1733. As we know from Anton Gheringh's painting of 1661, *The Interior of St Walburga's* (Fig. 63; Antwerp, St Paul's Church), the top of the altar was originally crowned in the centre by a niche containing a painted image of God the Father (No. 27) with a pelican, symbol of Christ's sacrifice, in gilded wood above. This was flanked by angels dressed in billowing drapery (see Nos. 26, 28;
Fig. 91). Beneath the triptych Rubens included three predellas. The centre panel contained Christ on the Cross (No. 24), the one on the left, The Angels Carrying away the Body of St Catherine (No. 25) and the other, The Miracle of St Walburga (No. 23; Fig. 88). This type of altar follows sixteenth-century Flemish prototypes such as the Triptych of the Seven Wounds of Christ of c. 1555 by Frans Floris, and his triptych of c. 1559 representing The Baptism of Christ, which also has a niche above the centre panel containing an image of God the Father. This type survived into the 1590s in Ambrosius Francken's altarpiece for Antwerp's Guild of Barbers and Surgeons. As in Rubens's triptych, there is an iconographic connection between the middle panel and the decoration above. However, Rubens introduced a new unification of the top and middle zones of the altarpiece, and the fluttering movements of the angels above stress the sense of action beyond the confines of the actual picture structure. This is the first display of a fully Baroque interpretation of space in a northern altarpiece; it was to become even more pronounced in Rubens's subsequent commissions. Unfortunately, Rubens's arrangement was broken up in 1733 in order to help finance the rebuilding of the altar. The predellas, the angels and God the Father were sold in 1737 at the Antwerp Bourse to a painter and art dealer from The Hague, Jacobus de Roore. Willem Kerrickx designed and constructed the new altar in 1734. He placed an arcaded structure on top and decorated the bottom area with his own paintings. He also created a white marble relief representing The Brazen Serpent. The relief and other Kerrickx embellishments were dispersed in 1794 and were not returned when the architect J. Blom reinstalled the altarpiece in 1824 in Antwerp Cathedral.

The centre panel of Rubens's altarpiece emphasizes the concept of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. This notion is accentuated by Christ's gaze up and out of the confines of the picture. By doing this, the Saviour makes direct contact with the niche containing God the Father and the pelican above, symbol of Christ's sacrifice. During the Counter-Reformation, Christ's body was interpreted as both a corpse and the focal point for the Mass. When the priest raises the host he symbolically elevates Christ's body. The subject of the Elevation of the Cross does not seem to have been written about in fifteenth and sixteenth-century church literature, other than by mystics. The church doctors were divided on the matter of the Crucifixion. Some believed that Christ was gently laid down upon the Cross which was on the ground and then nailed to it; others believed that Christ was attached to the Cross while it was standing. In general, sixteenth-century artists depicted Christ nailed to the Cross while it was still lying on the ground, and if it was part of a series of the Passion, the next scene represented was the Crucifixion. It was not until the years around 1600 that the Elevation of the Cross became an established subject in representations of the Passion of Christ. The Elevation was popularized particularly by the Jesuits, in illustrated books and paintings commissioned by them. Rubens's connection with the Jesuits is further clarified by the placement of Christ on the Cross. His arms are raised, he is lying back, blood spurts forth from his wounds and the Cross is in the process of being raised on a diagonal. Rubens worked closely with the Jesuits in Antwerp and was responsible for the spread of this type of Crucifixion throughout Northern Europe.

Rubens's Elevation of the Cross is a highly original combination of Northern European, Italian and Antique ideas. The composition itself, with its diagonal placement of the Cross and men in a variety of positions attempting to raise it, is not an innovation. This had already been established in late fifteenth-century German art and was carried over into the early sixteenth century by Hans Baldung Grien, as can be seen in his 1507 woodcut of the subject, which included relatively few figures. Some six years later, the composition was expanded to include a multitude of figures in Albrecht Altdorfer's woodcut of c. 1513, which also changed the position of Christ's head. Now, as it was later in Rubens's work, the Saviour's head looks up and out of the scene. This format for the Elevation of the Cross does not appear again in
Germany, as far as I know, until the last third of the sixteenth century, in an enamel by Abraham Berner in Strasbourg Cathedral and in Christoph Schwartz's painting of 1583.18

From the evidence cited above, it is clear that the Elevation of the Cross was introduced into illustrations of the Passion by German artists working in the late fifteenth century. It did not, on the other hand, appear in Netherlandish art until around 1525—for example, in a drawing attributed to Bernard van Orley.19 This design is a variation on Hans Baldung Grien's woodcut of 1507, except that the Van Orley workshop piece depicts Christ looking up and out of the composition. This interpretation, with figures below struggling to push and pull up the Cross, looks forward to Rubens and was not used again until later in the century in the Netherlands, specifically in Antwerp.20 Several years prior to Rubens, Hieronymus Wierix, under the influence of the Jesuit Order, executed three engravings of this subject. In one, the Cross is almost erect21 while in the other two, it is halfway up, moving from the lower right to the upper left as in Rubens's composition.22 In the second engraving by Wierix, one executioner encircles his arms around the foot of the Cross in a strikingly similar way to his counterpart in Rubens. Wierix's third print also contains figures struggling at the foot of the Cross and a single muscular man standing to the left, pulling on a rope attached to the arm of the Cross. Wierix, Rubens and their German forerunners show Christ lying back on the Cross. While other representations of this theme done around 1600 also depict the Cross rising on a diagonal, the Saviour appears to be hanging forward from the Cross, only secured to it by the nails. This is clear in Jan Sadeler's print of 1589,23 which was the prototype for Rubens's lost Elevation of 1602, originally painted for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, but preserved in the copy in Grasse.24

These sixteenth-century examples from the North, especially those plates cut in Antwerp by Hieronymus Wierix, must have been known to Rubens before he painted the Elevation for St Walburga. There appears to be no Italian representation of this theme before the seventeenth century except for the one by Girolamo da Treviso, yet other subjects with crosses being raised and placed on a diagonal were painted in Italy. This arrangement was used in such famous works as Michelangelo's Martyrdom of St Peter (Vatican, Capella Paolina), Tintoretto's Penitent Thief (Venice, Scuola di San Rocco, Sala dell'Albergo) and Caravaggio's Martyrdom of St Peter (Rome, Sta Maria del Popolo).25 Antique compositions bear even more striking resemblances to Rubens's Elevation than those of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Held has proposed that the basic arrangement follows that of The Raising of a Herm of Dionysus, a Roman sarcophagus of the second century AD.26

Rubens's interest in the Antique is revealed in both the general composition of the panel and its main figure, Christ. Christ's torso is an idealized antique type and seems to combine elements from the Belvedere Torso and the Laocoön, which Rubens studied and drew in Rome.27 The Saviour's head, on the other hand, with his eyes sorrowfully looking up toward God the Father, his open mouth and crown of thorns are strikingly similar to Guido Reni's paintings of the head of Christ which were done around this time or slightly later.28 In contrast to the pure beauty of Christ's body, toiling, straining, knotted, muscular figures reminiscent of Michelangelo surround him. The prototypes for several of these figures are found earlier in Rubens's Elevation of 1602 for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, but by 1610 they are executed more in the spirit of Michelangelo and are clearly integrated into the main action. The bald-headed giant on Christ's left is most obviously based on Michelangelo's work and is a further development of the figure in a similar position in the Santa Croce painting. Although the body is Michelangelesque, the stance is strikingly close to Tintoretto's Hercules and Antaeus.29 Rubens's giant, in another pose, attained his Michelangelesque stature about one year before the Elevation in the Adoration of the Magi of 1609-10.30 He reappeared later as the man raising the tombstone in the centre foreground of the Last Judgement of 1615.31 Several other participants also clearly reflect the Elevation of 1602: the semi-nude man placed just above
Christ and to the left and the soldier in armour just beneath him. The Roman warrior, perhaps a self-portrait, is posed in a manner similar to the woman on the right in the second-century relief on the sarcophagus of The Raising of a Herm of Dionysus. The same process of development can be seen in the soldier helping to raise the Cross with his back. Rubens first used him in the Elevation of 1602, but ultimately this type also goes back to the Antique. The straining figure is clearly related to the bound prisoner seated beneath the trophy in the Gemma Augustea. Two figures in the centre panel recall Tintoretto’s Elevation of the Penitent Thief: the old man grasping the foot of the cross and the young person pulling on the line.

The right wing of the altarpiece is dominated by references to the Antique. The soldiers are dressed in Roman armour and the profiled head of the horseman in the right foreground quotes the Hercules Farnese. However, several figures are a further refinement of designs found in Rubens’s earlier paintings. The posture and upper torso of the standing thief is similar to the figure with drapery over his head, on the right side of the Baptism of Christ (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten). The thief being nailed to the cross continues the strongly foreshortened position of the man in the centre foreground of the Brazen Serpent of c. 1610, and is Michelangelesque in form.

The left wing of the altarpiece, on the other hand, makes no reference to ancient art nor to Michelangelo. The old woman with her left hand raised is found continuously in Rubens from the Fermo Adoration of 1608 and is based on a type popularized by Caravaggio early in the seventeenth century. The kneeling woman supporting a child at her breast in the bottom centre is also present earlier in Rubens’s œuvre. She assumes the same position, but in reverse, as the startled lady in the foreground of the Transfiguration of 1604, and she will be repeated, although standing, in the Funeral of Decius Mus of 1617 (Fig. 51).

In spite of Rubens’s extraordinary originality in rendering the forms, colours and composition, numerous details indicate how carefully he studied the past. The inscription ‘Jesus Christ, King of the Jews’, written above Christ’s head, is in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and they have all been carefully transcribed. Rubens’s attention to archaeological precision can be seen in the Hebraic characters which are in the Aramaean dialect of Palestine, a dialect in use when Christ was crucified. Rubens was also the first to place the text on a large paper curled up on the bottom and secured to the Cross by a nail. By securing Christ to the Cross with three nails, Rubens demonstrates his debt to Byzantine art. On the other hand, his use of disguised symbolism, as pointed out by Glen, makes the painter very much a part of his native tradition. Glen has rightly suggested that the plant life behind Christ serves more than just a compositional purpose. The oak was often thought to have been the wood from which the Cross was fashioned and consequently seen as the Tree of the New Faith. Oak is symbolic of the endurance of the Christian martyr under adverse conditions. The fern refers to Christ’s humility and sincerity, while the grape vine suggests the Eucharist and Christ’s statement that ‘I am the True Vine’. The thorny rose branch is a familiar emblem of martyrdom and the dog of faithfulness. The foliage continues into the left wing, where the Virgin and St John are quietly viewing the bustling scene of the Elevation. St John supports the Virgin spiritually and acts as her guardian and chaplain. The Virgin’s pose is Franciscan in spirit: she is a dignified mourner rather than the collapsing, grief-stricken mother so often portrayed. This concept of grief spread throughout Europe during the first half of the seventeenth century. It has been suggested that the woman with the child at her breast symbolizes Roman Charity.

Rubens’s dedication on Hans Witdoeck’s engraving of 1638 (No. 20k, Copy 18; Fig. 78) of the Elevation makes it clear that Cornelis van der Geest, the famous Antwerp collector and merchant, was the main force behind the commission of this work for his parish church. Other documents, no longer preserved but copied in the eighteenth century, substantiate the important role played by Van der Geest in the negotiations and financial arrangements for the altarpiece. On 17 May 1610, the priest and the
church wardens made a collection in the parish for the construction and painting of the high altar. Sometime later in 1610, a payment of 1 guilder and 5 stuivers was made to the admiral's workers who were needed to stretch the sail loaned by the captain. The canvas was hung up to shield the choir while Rubens worked on the high altar. This makes it clear that Rubens was already at work in 1610, and that he painted the *Elevation* in St Walburga and not in his studio. At the beginning of June 1610, the priest of St Walburga, the church wardens and Cornelis Van der Geest met with Rubens at an inn, the Klein Zeeland, to draw up the contract for the high altar. The cost of the gathering was 9 guilders, 10 stuivers. On 17 June 1610, Rubens was paid 1,000 guilders on account toward the 2,600 guilders which was the total amount agreed upon for the commission. Rubens received 500 guilders on 12 August 1611; between 1 October 1611 and 1 October 1613, two payments were made of 250 guilders each and one of 600 guilders. After acquiring his final installment, Rubens donated 10 guilders to the church. Sometime in October 1627, in the presence of Cornelis van der Geest, Jan Baptist Bruno was paid 24 guilders for cleaning the altarpiece before it was retouched by Rubens. The altarpiece was restored and cleaned on several occasions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It has recently undergone a thorough restoration (1983-1991).

In a letter written by Rubens to Peter Van Veen on 23 January 1619, an engraving by Lucas Vorsterman of the *Elévation* is referred to but was never cut. Burchard has suggested that the drawing in the Louvre (Fig. 79) may be Vorsterman's design for the aforementioned print and that Rubens reinforced the design with pen. Burchard also proposed that the sheet could be by Van Dyck who, according to Bellori, made designs for Rubens which were transferred into engravings. However, I think the Louvre sheet is by neither Vorsterman nor Van Dyck, but a pastiche executed late in the seventeenth century.

1. For the source of the young woman on the left panel above the old woman, see Held, *Drawings*, 1986, p. 51.
2. Held, *Drawings*, 1986, p. 105, suggests that an idea of what the centre predella looked like can be seen in Rubens's *Cru cifixion*, Mechlin, Stedelijk Museum (No. 41; Fig. 125).
4. Although only the outer wings are preserved, Nora de Poorter has reconstructed the altarpiece from two paintings of the interior of Antwerp Cathedral (N. De Poorter, 'De Kunstwerken van het Antwerpse Barbiers- en Chirurgienambacht, Liber Memorialis: 350 jaar Collegium Medicum Antverpense; 25 jaar Geneeskundige Dagen van Antwerpen, Antwerp, 1970, pp. 124-128, figs. 4-10).
6. See Nos. 23-28 for details.
7. Internationale Commissie: Kruisoprichting Rubens, *Verslag van de Vergaderingen op 10 en 11 December 1979*. In the minutes dated 10 December 1979, I.82, Frans Baudouin discussed the original installation of the altar and the paint samples taken from the area around the hinges for the panels. He believed that they were added at a later date, and that the brown layer served as the first paint layer for the pilasters and columns. Baudouin went on to say that the vertical parts were filled in when the columns were removed in 1733. Around this time, W.J. Kerricks added a new Corinthian portico above the altar. The side panels of the altar were hung on the wall.
12. For examples of this type, see the prints by the Wierix family in *Mainay-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82*, I, nos. 134, 202, pls. 16, 24.
14. Ibid.
15. Cf. Hans Leonhard Schaufelein's panel (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 920a), where the Cross is raised by two figures at the foot and a panel by an unknown Nuremberg master working at the close of the 15th century (Frankfurt am Main, Städelisches Kunstinstitut, inv. no. SG 448); this panel depicts the *Elevation of the Cross* raised by ropes and, at the foot, two figures pushing it up and another pulling it up. This arrangement was also used in a woodcut of c. 1480 by a South German master illustrating the *Seven Falls of Christ* (for an illustration, see J. H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, Courtaul, 1979, pl. VIII).
20. Carel van Mander described a small oval painting on copper, now lost, by Bartholomeus Spranger in the collection of Emperor Maximilian II which depicted the Elévation on a diagonal going back into space (C. Van Mander, Het leven der Doorluchtige Nederlandse en Hooghduynsche Schilders, ed. H. Floerke, II, Munich—Leipzig, 1906, p. 150; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, p. 59).
27. Ibid., II, pp. 93-104, nos. 76-93, III, figs. 178, 179, no. 291, II, pl. 203, fig. 6.
30. Madrid, Prado; Rooses, Vie, 1903, p. 131.
31. Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 890; Martin, Altarpieces, 1969, p. 51. For Rubens's use of this figure for St John in the Descent from the Cross, Antwerp Cathedral, see Martin, loc. cit.
32. Rooses, Vie, 1903, p. 131.
33. This very same figure was to appear again, but dressed in a different costume, on the right side of the Martyrdom of St Peter of c. 1638 (Cologne, Church of St Peter's).
34. Stechow, Rubens, 1968, p. 60.
35. Venice, Scuola di San Rocco, Sala dell’Albergo; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 60.
37. London, Courtauld Institute Galleries; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, pp. 27, 75.
41. See Glen, Rubens, 1977, pp. 43, 44, for details.
44. Glen, Rubens, 1977, p. 45.
45. Ibid.
48. Knipping, Iconography, 1974, II, pp. 50-51. This notion of restraint and dignity was also propagated at the same time by the Jesuits. See Mâle, Art Religieux, 1951, p. 8, and Glen, Rubens, 1977, p. 37.
50. See No. 20k for complete a transcription of Rubens's words.
51. For transcription of documents see Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 79, 80, 81.
54. Lagt, Cat. Louvre, 1949, II, pp. 50-51, no. 1201, pl. LXXI.
55. For more details concerning this drawing see above, No. 20, Copy 14.

20a. The Elevation of the Cross; Oil Sketch (Fig. 62)

Oil on panel; centre panel: 67 x 51 cm., right wing: 67 x 25 cm., left wing: 67 x 27 cm.
Paris, Musée du Louvre. Inv. no. MNR 411.

PROVENANCE: J.T. Batts, 1818; Colonel Buckley, by 1844; Alfred Buckley, sale, London (Christian's), 4 May 1901, lot 37, purchased by Pottier for 3,360 pounds sterling; Léon Gauchez, sale, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 16 Dec. 1907, lot 34, purchased by Pottier for 175,000 French francs; Mme Joseph Hessel, Paris; taken by the Germans in the Second World War; returned to France at the end of the War; acquired by the Louvre in 1950-51 (as Van Dyck).

COPIES: (1) Painting; Chinon, Church of St Maurice; canvas, c. 100 x 115 cm. (compressed into one scene); PROV. Presented between 1842 and 1846 to the Church of St Maurice, Chinon, by Isaac-Moise Crémieux.
CATALOGUE NO. 20a.

(2) Painting. whereabouts unknown; left and right panels: 66.5 × 25 cm., centre panel: 66.5 × 50 cm. prov. B.M. Pearson, Saxonhurst, North Bank, Hassocks, Sussex, 1959.


The wings of the Louvre oil sketch correspond, with slight changes, to those of the completed altarpiece installed in the Church of St Walburga, Antwerp, but the centre panel does not.

In the modello, seven men struggle to raise the Cross while in the finished work there are nine. Of even greater significance is the change in the position of Christ's body. In the preliminary design, he lies flat on the Cross which is placed on a diagonal that rises gently toward the outer margin. In the altarpiece, the Cross is raised much higher and Christ's torso and head curve dramatically up and to the right. This leads the viewer's eyes out of the actual picture space and suggests that sometime after completing the modello, Rubens altered the structure of the altarpiece to include imagery above the centre panel. In order to further enhance the sense of a unified action, Rubens also modified the positions of the figures surrounding the Saviour. The partially nude executioner in the left foreground of the oil sketch, who raises both arms to push up the right arm of the Cross, is moved behind and above the soldier. His arms create a diagonal movement from the left to right as he struggles against the trunk of the Cross. This change subtly reinforces the movement up and to the left. The Roman soldier is placed farther back and lower down in the modello and his right leg is blocked. The dog which helps to focus our eyes on the centre of the scene in the altarpiece is not present in the sketch. In the finished work, the giant in the centre is more monumental and Michelangelesque in stature. His legs are not parallel to the Cross; they are turned in toward the centre of the scene, as in the figure of Hercules in Tintoretto's Hercules and Antaeus. The partially nude figure wearing a turban in the right foreground of the modello pulls on a rope with his left arm which extends back into depth. Rubens changed this and created a greater sense of unity and action by extending the left arm, which now follows the Cross. The figure's right elbow is more strongly foreshortened; the forearm and hand disappear in shadow. Rubens also eliminated the decorative head band, thereby emphasizing the Herculean-like head, which is so appropriate for the body. The Caravagesque figure who embraces the foot of the Cross has become an old man in the finished altarpiece and his head turns more strongly down to the right. In the altarpiece the figure hauling on the line behind
and to the right of the foot of the Cross is more clearly articulated, and the position of his body has been changed to emphasize the upward diagonal movement. The bearded man in the centre and behind Christ has also been altered. Originally his right arm was stretched parallel to Christ's body and gradually disappeared. In the altarpiece, this man wears a turban, his left shoulder is strongly foreshortened and his hand forcefully grasps Christ's hip. These changes further help to stress a sense of upward action and movement which is not present in the \textit{modello}. Rubens also added a bearded, muscular figure in the upper right, who seizes an arm of the Cross in a mighty effort to help raise it.

One of the most important changes in the centre panel was the elimination of the thieves and the soldiers. In his early plan for the altarpiece, Rubens placed one of the thieves on a cross while the second thief is seen struggling with two Roman soldiers. In the centre background, the artist also included a military procession led by two horsemen. Because the centre panel of the oil sketch contains the thieves, it has been correctly suggested that Rubens's altarpiece was originally intended to have one panel. This type was not an innovation by Rubens but occurs in sixteenth-century Flemish art. Frans Floris' \textit{Assumption of the Virgin}, painted in 1560 for the main altar in Antwerp Cathedral and now lost, originally consisted of one panel with the wings added in 1564. Otto van Veen continued to employ the wingless altarpiece late in the sixteenth century as, for example, in the \textit{Martyrdom of St Andrew} of 1594-99. Rubens used this form while in Italy, but why he decided against it for the \textit{Elevation} is not clear. It has been suggested that the more modern type of altarpiece in a single panel with monumental sculptural decoration was too radical for his conservative Antwerp patrons. It may be for this reason that Rubens altered the structure of the sketch by creating separate panels flanking the central scene. This would explain why the thieves were repeated on the right wing of the oil sketch. In the sketch, the soldiers struggle with both men, while in the finished altarpiece the foreground figure is not standing but lying on the ground and being nailed to the Cross. In the left wing, the figure groupings were repeated in the altarpiece but their positions were changed. In the \textit{modello}, the Virgin and St John look down upon Christ; in the altarpiece, they are on the same level with him. The women below Mary and St John all look above Christ's head, whereas in the altarpiece their glances focus upon his head. Held has pointed out that originally the middle panel of the \textit{modello} contained a central arch and two short lateral sections. This almost semicircular arch in the style of Palladio was, however, excluded when Rubens executed the sketches for the wings (Nos. 21a, 22a; Figs. 83, 84). It is evident, as Held writes, that the Dulwich \textit{modelli} were made with the shape of the centre panel in mind. This makes it clear that Rubens, almost from the beginning, had decided to use the triptych. Held also suggested that perhaps Rubens had painted or drawn a plan, now lost, for the interior wings as they would appear with the centre panel.

After a blow of some sort, the dark foliage in the upper left corner of the oil sketch has been hastily retouched by someone other than Rubens. The centre panel of Rubens's \textit{modello} was not an entirely new creation. It is clearly indebted to his earlier painting for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (preserved in the copy in Grasse). Rubens did not reuse the composition but adapted several of the figures— particularly the semi-nude pushing up on one arm of the Cross in the left foreground, although more of his torso is visible, and the head moves up and back. Other adaptations from the Grasse painting are evident in the soldier to the right and the executioner in the centre foreground, whose trunk is similar from the waist up. However, the position of his legs is more parallel to the picture plane and not as strongly foreshortened as in the Grasse or Antwerp paintings, where the debt to Tintoretto's \textit{Hercules} is most evident in the stance. The \textit{Elevation} in Grasse also includes a crucified thief in the right background, but in the Louvre sketch he faces out of the scene to the right. Immediately in front and below the thief, a man hauls on a rope in the Louvre and Grasse compositions. Both works also
include men who help to raise the Cross with their backs and executioners who grasp and pull the foot of the Cross. In the Louvre design the participants have more space to work in, and so their actions are more easily read.

The Louvre modello was probably executed just before the signing of the contract for the decoration of the main altar in St Walburga by Rubens and the church authorities in June 1610.18

The oil sketch was reproduced in Edouard Vuillard’s painting of the Salon of Madame Joseph Hessel, E.& A. Silberman Galleries, Inc., New York, c. 1949.19

1. For a discussion of the implications of the emphasis upon the elevated position of Christ’s body in the altarpiece and its connection with the Mass where the Saviour’s body is raised by the Priest in the form of the Host see Hubala, Kruzifixus, 1967, pp. 7-12.

2. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum; see Müller Hofstede, Rubens in Rom, 1970, XII, p. 99, fig. 22.


4. This group, especially the strongly foreshortened leaders, is similar to those that Rubens would later include in the background of his composition representing The Road to Calvary, especially the Vienna copy (Fig. 52).


7. Antwerp, Church of St Andrew; see C. Norris, ‘Rubens before Italy’, The Burlington Magazine, LXXVI, 1940, p. 190, pl. I, A.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


16. Held (Held, Drawings, 1959, I, p. 129) has suggested that the drawing of A Nude Man Turned to the Right (The Hague, Coll. of H.R.H. Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands), was executed before the oil sketch, because the placement of the left leg was not defined in the drawing whereas it is in the oil sketch.

20b. Nude Man Attached to a Cross: Drawing (Fig. 65)

Black chalk, heightened with white, reinforced with brush and ink; 447 x 355 mm. Inscribed below in black chalk: V Dijck.


PROVENANCE: Dirk Versteegh (Amsterdam, 1823), sale, Amsterdam, 3 Nov. 1823, Portfolio 2L, lot 35, sold to Woodburn for 56 florins; Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); Grenville L. Winthrop, New York; presented by him to the Fogg Art Museum in 1943.

EXHIBITED: London, 1835, no. 28.


This drawing, from the collection of Grenville Winthrop, contains a number of studies that can be related to the Louvre modello (No. 20a; Fig. 62) and the completed altarpiece of the Elevation (No. 20; Figs. 61, 81, 82). Christ dominates the sheet: he is in three-quarter profile and wears a loin cloth. He looks up to the right, his torso is curved to the right, his arms are erect and are
attached to the Cross. This stress upon the vertical positioning of Christ's arms is a medieval form which Rubens uses here for the first time. He would often repeat this type, which is an obvious revival of a Gothic form espoused by the Counter-Reformation.\(^1\) In the upper right corner is a study of part of a left hand which corresponds in its foreshortening and arrangement of the fingers to that of Christ in Rubens's *modello* for the *Elevation of the Cross* in the Louvre (No. 20a; Fig. 62). In the bottom left, Rubens has drawn in the outline of a torso and muscular arm that disappears beneath the wash along Christ's side. This shape is similar to that of the bald Michelangelesque man in the finished altarpiece; it might be a further enlargement of the figure in a similar position in the Louvre sketch. The wash that indicates this form is the same as that used to establish the outline of Christ's torso, shoulder, elbow and forearm.\(^2\)

Jerry Cohn has observed that the wash is beautifully laid on and that the contrasts in the media can be explained by the fading of the chalk. On close examination the wash appears to be the same throughout. Burchard has suggested that all of the wash and the Cross were added by Jacob de Wit, who might possibly have owned the drawing.\(^3\) The *V. Dijck* inscription cannot be seen without the use of a scanner.

Christ's pose is similar to the Sachs drawing of the same subject (No. 20c; Fig. 66), but the body does not twist so strongly and is set farther back in space. The Winthrop sheet is not nearly so idealized as the Sachs design. It appears to have been made after life, and there are pentimenti along Christ's right forearm and the bottom of his upper right arm and shoulder. The corrections correspond to those found in the Sachs sheet and the altarpiece.

The Winthrop drawing marks a clear change in Rubens's thinking from the Louvre *modello*, where Christ is placed on a diagonal moving from bottom right to upper left. Now Christ begins on a diagonal but curves up to the right. This movement was to become stronger in the Sachs design, which was translated directly to the painting. I would suggest then that the Winthrop sheet was the first idea for the Crucified Christ,\(^4\) which was then made into a more dramatic, immediate and idealized image in the Sachs drawing. These two designs were executed on the same type of thin 'oatmeal' paper and both have a watermark in the shape of a posthorn. They were probably done sometime shortly after the *modello* was shown to the officials of St Walburga in June 1610 and Rubens received the commission.

2. I am grateful to Jerry Cohn of the Fogg Art Museum for her help in determining the media used in this sheet and for her comments concerning the physical state of the drawing.

**20c. Torso of a Nude Man: Drawing (Fig. 66)**

Black chalk, heightened with white on buff paper; 400 x 298 mm.


PROVENANCE: ? Jacob de Wit (1696-1754); Werner Weisbach, Berlin; Paul J. Sachs, Cambridge, Mass., acquired in 1927; presented to the Fogg Art Museum by Mr and Mrs Sachs in 1949.

A young man is seen from just below the waist, his nude torso turned toward the left with arms upraised. His head moves upwards towards the right. In the upper right-hand corner, Rubens has executed a sketch of the thumb and part of the palm of the left hand. This beautifully sensitive chalk drawing, made after a living model, renders Christ's body in an entirely different position from the one in the Louvre oil sketch (No. 20a; Fig. 62). The curving torso and Christ's passionate gaze up and out of the confines of the picture structure is precisely what one finds in the finished altarpiece. The drawing takes into consideration the final plan of the centre panel, which was crowned in the top centre with an image of God the Father with whom Christ makes visual contact. This design must have been made sometime after June 1610, when the modello was presented to the officials of St Walburga and the commission awarded to Rubens.

20d. Nude Man Turned to the Right with Raised Arms: Drawing (Fig. 67)

Trimmed on the diagonal from the right corners and mounted on another sheet of paper; black chalk with white highlights in white chalk on grey-brown paper; 489 mm. left margin and 255 mm. upper margin, 166 mm. lower edge and 113 mm. right margin. Inscribed with pen in bottom right of supporting sheet: Rubens. The Hague, Collection of H.M. The Queen of The Netherlands.

PROVENANCE: Versteegh (1823); Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); King William II of Holland, sale, The Hague, 12 August 1850, lot 303, bought in by Jean Albert Brongeest for 35 florins; King William III of Holland; Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962).


A young muscular youth, naked except for the drapery around his waist, is turned to the right and in profile. He raises his left arm above his head while his right is stretched out before him. He is pushing up the Cross, which is sketchily indicated in the upper right corner. His left leg is above and in front of the right leg. The left leg was originally farther forward and higher up, while the right leg was slightly further forward with foot and toes parallel to the picture plane.

Frits Lugt was the first to attribute this study after life to Rubens. Since then the study has been connected with the armoured figure helping to raise the Cross in Rubens’s Elevation for St Walburga in Antwerp (No. 20; Figs. 64, 68).
However, its position in the evolution of the composition is still debated. Held believes that this drawing was made before the Louvre modello (No. 20a; Fig. 62). He reasons that the position of the left leg in the drawing was still in doubt, while in the oil sketch it has been defined. Burchard-d'Hulst, on the other hand, argues that the drawing is a study for the altarpiece. They conclude that the posture of the figure study is very close to that of the soldier on the left helping to raise the Cross in the Antwerp altarpiece. Müller Hofstede proposes that the drawing is similar to a figure in a second, but now lost, bozzetto which Rubens executed sometime after the Louvre oil sketch. Müller Hofstede takes this view because the Cross is more upright in the Hague drawing. Yet whether or not Rubens made a second modello is open to question.

In the drawing at The Hague and the finished altarpiece in Antwerp, the figure of the youth is much straighter and taller and not as close to the ground as in the Louvre modello. The Cross in the drawing is higher in relation to the figure than in the modello, and in this way it is closer to the design of the altarpiece. Rubens has also changed the position of the soldier's left arm. In the modello it extends straight up and above his head; in the drawing the arm is further forward and passes behind the profiled face. Because Rubens changed the position of the semi-nude figure in the left corner of the oil sketch to the upper left in the painting, he had to solve the problem of the soldier's right leg. The solution worked out in the drawing is used in the altarpiece. These differences between the modello and the drawing clearly indicate Rubens's change of plan from a less extreme diagonal upward movement of the Cross to the dynamic and powerful raising of the Cross in the finished altarpiece.

Held has suggested that the youth's pose closely resembles that of the woman pushing up the herm in the second-century relief on the Roman sarcophagus of The Raising of a Herm of Dionysus. It has also been proposed that the figure is an adaptation of the position of the Roman soldier helping to raise a trophaeum in the Gemma Augustea. This action has always been seen as a pagan parallel to the Elevation of the Cross and is probably the more likely source.

20e. Man Holding the Shaft of the Cross: Drawing (Fig. 69)

Black chalk, partly reworked with greyish-brown watercolour; 238 × 242 mm.

London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 56.

PROVENANCE: P. Langerhuizen, Lzn (Crailoo near Bussum, The Netherlands, 1839-1918), sale, Amsterdam (F. Muller & Co.), 29 April–1 May 1919; V. Koch, London (as Van Dyck ?); Count A. Seilern (London, 1901-1978); bequeathed by him to the Courtauld Institute Galleries.

EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 71, repr.

LITERATURE: Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, p. 382; Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, pp. 102, 103, fig. 10; Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, pp. 90, 91, pl. CX; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, p. 126, under no. 70, II, fig. 49; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 102, 103, no. 60v; Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 445; Müller Hofstede, Rubens in Rom, 1970, p. 69, n. 30; L. B. Freeman, On the Origins of the Oil Sketch: Form and Function in Cinquecento Preparatory Techniques (Diss. New York, 1975), Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983, p. 179, fig. 94; Held, Drawings, 1986, p. 70, under no. 14, fig. 8.

This study is on the verso of a preparatory drawing (No. 45a; Fig. 153) for the Presentation in the Temple on the right wing of Rubens's Descent from the Cross in Antwerp Cathedral (No. 45; Fig. 151). It shows a man grasping a shaft of...
wood. His head, shoulders, the upper part of his left arm and his right arm are visible. Above and to the right, a second shaft is seen and part of a hand, while the shape in the upper left is not possible to discern. This drawing, as first recognized by Evers,1 is a fragment of a larger sheet, another part of which bears a drawing of the same subject (Bayonne, Musée Bonnat, No. 20f; Fig. 71), and comprises the right section of the original sheet. The bottom left of this sheet is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (No. 20g; Fig. 70). A small part of the centre of the drawing has been lost, but it is clear from the fragments that the original contained studies of two men struggling to raise the Cross.

Evers, Seilern, Held, Müller Hofstede and Logan believe that these fragments were studies for the *Elévation of the Cross* for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (a copy of which is preserved in Grasse). If this is the case, the drawings must have been made in 1601, just before the execution of the ensemble for Santa Croce. Burchard and d'Hulst, on the other hand, think that these designs were studies for the old man in the bottom right corner of the *Elévation of the Cross* now in Antwerp Cathedral. I find that the positions of the heads and left arms of the men in the fragments are more akin to the executioner in the bottom right of the Louvre modello (No. 20a; Fig. 62) and the finished altarpiece in Antwerp than to their counterpart in the Grasse copy. Rubens appears to use the chalk in a similar manner in his early post-Italian drawings such as the *Study of a Nude Man* of c. 1612,2 or the *Study for a Tormenting Devil* of c. 1612-14 and the *Adult Angel* of c. 1616.3

1. Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, p. 102, fig. 10; for a reconstruction of the sheet, see Cat. Exh. Wellesley, Mass., 1993, p. 186, figs. XII-XIII.


**20f. Man Holding the Shaft of the Cross: Drawing (Fig. 71)**

Black chalk, partly reworked with greyish brown watercolour; 360 × 265 mm.

Bayonne, Musée Bonnat. Inv. no. 1438V.

**PROVENANCE:** Collection L. Bonnat (Paris, 1833-1922); bequeathed by him to the City of Bayonne.

**LITERATURE:** Les Dessins de la Collection Léon Bonnat au Musée de Bayonne, Paris, 1926, III, pl. 22; Glück—Haberditzl, Handzeichnungen, 1928, no. 75; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, p. 382; Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, p. 102, fig. 11; Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 90, fig. 52; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, p. 126, no. 70, pl. 81; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 105, no. 61v; Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 445; Müller Hofstede, Rubens in Rom, 1970, pp. 69, n. 30, 97, fig. 21; L. B. Freeman, On the Origins of the Oil Sketch: Form and Function in Cinquecento Preparatory Techniques (Diss. New York, 1975), Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983, p. 179, fig. 94; Held, Drawings, 1986, p. 70, no. 14, fig. 8.

Rubens made this drawing on the verso of his sketches for the *Visitation* (No. 44b; Fig. 146) on the left wing of the Antwerp *Descent from the Cross* (No. 44; Fig. 144). The Bayonne drawing is the right half of a sheet, cut at an unknown date. The fragments of the left side are preserved in the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London, and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For further information see No. 20e.

Müller Hofstede has suggested that the Bayonne figure is an echo of Caravaggio's in the upper left of the Crucifixion of St Peter.1

1. Rome, Santa Maria del Popolo, Cerasi Chapel; see Müller Hofstede, Rubens in Rom, 1970, p. 97, fig. 20.

**20g. Fragment of a Figure: Drawing (Fig. 70)**

Black chalk, partly reworked with greyish-brown watercolour; 217 × 150 mm.

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Inv. no. 52.214.3 verso.

**PROVENANCE:** Mr and Mrs J. Scholz, New York; presented by them to the Museum in 1952.


This drawing is on the back of a sheet containing studies for the Presentation in the Temple (No. 45b; Fig. 154) made by Rubens prior to his execution of the right wing of the triptych of the Descent from the Cross. It is a fragment of a larger sheet containing studies for an Elevation of the Cross. The original drawing was cut at an unknown date, and other fragments can now be found at the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London (No. 20e; Fig. 69) and the Musée Bonnat, Bayonne (No. 20f; Fig. 71).

20h. Nude Man partially seen from the back: Drawing (Fig. 72)

Black chalk with white highlights; 315 × 367 mm. Below left, mark of Chambers Hall (L. 551) and of the University Galleries, Oxford (L. 2003); below right, mark of P.H. Lankrink (L. 2090).


PROVENANCE: P.H. Lankrink (London, 1628-1692); Chambers Hall (Southampton and London, 1786-1855); presented by him to Oxford University in 1855.


A naked youth, drawn after life, is seen from the back, with his head in profile; only the upper part of his upstretched left arm is visible. His right arm and hand are extended back toward the lower right margin while part of the front of his muscular torso is visible. The figure, with tense muscles, leans back at the waist as if straining to raise a heavy object. There is a slight indication of drapery covering the buttocks.
CATALOGUE NO. 20h.

The dating of this study has been subject to much controversy because it corresponds closely to one of the executioners in both the Elevation of the Cross of 1602 in Grasse and the version of 1610-11 in Antwerp (No. 20; Figs. 64, 68). Colvin was the first to link the sheet with the Antwerp altarpiece, while Haberditzl linked it with the painting in Grasse. Stylistically, the sensitive rendering of the musculature, the robust quality of the forms and the loose handling of the chalk to create shadows seem to resemble that found in the drawing of a Crouching Man Seen from the Back (Fig. 73) and one of the studies for the figure of Christ in the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20c; Fig. 66). Furthermore, the Oxford figure does not lean back as far as the one in Grasse and compares favourably in posture to his counterpart in the Louvre modello (No. 20a; Fig. 62) and the finished altarpiece (No. 20; Figs. 64, 68). The careful articulation of the back muscles in the drawing appears to be done after the oil sketch and is very close to the massive musculature found in the completed painting. In fact the arm, chest and back muscles are almost precisely the same in the drawing and in the altarpiece. The Oxford sheet must, therefore, be placed between the Louvre modello and the altarpiece. It serves the same function as the other chalk drawings made by Rubens for the final version of the Elevation.

The same figure seems to have been repeated in Rubens’s Last Judgement (in Munich), The Marriage of Constantine of 1627 (collection of Mrs R.E.K. Leatham), and St Teresa of Avila Interceding for Bernardino de Mendoza (Fig. 42; Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten). The drawing is also closely related to a sheet in the Boymans—van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam (No. 48b; Fig. 168) which, as Burchard suggested, may be a study for St John in the Lille Deposition.


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**20i. Crouching Man seen from the back: Drawing (Fig. 73)**

Black chalk with white highlights, retouched with brush in India ink; 465 x 320 mm. Below left, mark of Sir T. Lawrence (L. 2445).

Amsterdam, Chr. P. van Eeghen.

PROVENANCE: Dirk Versteegh (Amsterdam, 1823), sale, Amsterdam, 3 Nov. 1823 (?); Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830) (Inventory of the Collection of Drawings by Old Master Formed by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., Drawn up while the Collection was still in his House, MS in the Burckhardt documentation, Rubenianum, Antwerp, fol. 83, no. [43]); De Kat, sale, Rotterdam, 4 March 1867, lot 104 (as Van Dyck); J. de Clercq, Amsterdam, 1867.

EXHIBITED: London, 1835, no. 27; Teekeningen van Oude Meesters behorende tot de verzameling van Mr. Chr. P. van Eeghen, Fodor Museum, Amsterdam, 1935, no. 79, repr; Brussels, 1938-39, no. 34, repr; Rotterdam, 1939, no. 33, repr; Teekeningen uit het bezit van de leden van de Amsterdamse Prentkabinet, Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam, 1955, no. 54; Antwerp, 1956, no. 36, repr; Antwerp, 1977, no. 132, repr.


A squatting, muscular figure, naked except for the drapery around his waist, is seen from the back. His head is in profile and looks up to the left. This upward movement is supplemented by his left arm, which is raised and placed parallel to the Cross. His right arm is pressed close to his right side, the elbow is strongly foreshortened and the hand pushes up on the Cross.

This drawing is probably Rubens’s final design for the figure in the bottom right foreground of the Antwerp Elevation (No. 20; Figs. 64, 68). When it is compared with its counter-
part in the Louvre *modello* (No. 20a; Fig. 62), it can be seen that Rubens has altered the figure considerably. In the drawing, the executioner no longer pulls on a rope with his left arm overlapping the Cross and going back into space. Now the arm is parallel to the trunk and grips the wood. In the Louvre *modello*, his right arm hangs down, while in the drawing it is tucked up between the leg and torso and the hand heaves up the Cross. By making these changes, Rubens imparts to the figure a sense of power that is on the verge of being released. The turban, worn in the *modello*, is omitted in the drawing and the altarpiece, and the head falls back more abruptly, giving a clearer image of the profile. The design also arranges the legs in a more parallel position to the picture plane. In the altarpiece, however, Rubens made some slight but important adjustments. The left arm curves a little more under the Cross and is not placed along the top edge. Rubens also extended the left leg and right foot back into space, as it was in the *modello*. He added more drapery in the final version. All these changes help to give a greater sense of the physical effort exerted by the executioner in the process of raising the Cross.

Professor J.Q. van Regteren Altena, in a letter to Burchard dated August 1938, first suggested that the drawing was worked over with the brush by Jacob de Wit. This possibility was accepted by Burchard and d'Hulst.1


20j. Studies of Folded Hands and Heads of a Woman and a Man:
Drawing (Fig. 74)

Black chalk with white highlights; 389 x 269 mm. Inscribed by a later hand with pen in the bottom right corner *P.P. Rubens*. Vienna, Albertina. Inv. no. 8306.


The two pairs of hands in the bottom portion of the sheet are studies for those of the Virgin in the left panel of Rubens's *Elevation of the Cross* in Antwerp Cathedral (No. 20; Fig. 75). As Held pointed out, the pair to the left is closest to the final version.2

2. For a detailed discussion of the heads, which have nothing to do with the Antwerp altarpiece, see *Cat. Exh. Vienna*, 1977, p. 16.

20k. The Elevation of the Cross:
Oil Sketch (Fig. 77)

Oil on paper pasted on panel and transferred to canvas; 60 x 127 cm.; paint was added on all four sides with a strip on top from the 18th century; 72.5 x 132 cm.

Toronto, Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario. Inv. no. 906.

PROVENANCE: H. Rigaud (Paris, 1659-1743), sold to Drouin for the prince de Conti for 3810 livres; prince de Conti, sale, Paris, 8 April—6 June 1777, lot 240; Martin de Brouwer (Brussels), sale, Brussels, 31 July 1788, lot 24, purchased by Edouard Walkiers for 720 florins; J. Harman (London, 1815), sale, London, 1844, bought by
Holford (Dorchester House) for 787 livres and 10 shillings; Sir George L. Holford, sale, London (Christie’s), 17-18 May 1928, lot 37, sold for 5,460 guineas to A. Martin for Art Gallery of Ontario.

COPIES:

(1) Painting; Tournai Cathedral; canvas, c. 200 x 450 cm.; inscribed in bottom right corner M. HANNEKAERT; below left, a coat-of-arms (of Catherine Fourment’s husband?); inscribed on the frame Th. Delmotte 1784. LIT. Mensaert, Peintre, 1763, II, p. 80; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 83a.

(2) Painting by Mateo Cerezo (?); Madrid, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando; 167 x 311 cm. LIT. A.F. Perez Sanchez, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Inventario de las Pinturas, Madrid, 1964, no. 574.


(4) Tapestry; Cathedral of St John, Valletta, Malta; 609 x 670 cm., inscribed with coat-of-arms of the Grand Master Raimond de Perellos de Roccafell (reigned from 1697-1720). PROV. Ordered in 1697 (?) by Jodocus Vos; 1701 in Malta and presented to de Perellos. LIT. R. Paribeni, Malta; Italia Artistica, Bergamo, 1930, no. 101, p. 86, repr.

(5) Painting; Coll. G. Siebers, Nutterden, Kleve; 150 x 180 cm.

(6) Painting; whereabouts unknown; copper, 84 x 109 cm. PROV. German private collection.

(7) Painting; Valence, Musée; panel, 115 x 241 cm. PROV. Presented to the Museum in 1835 by Veyrenc.

(8) Painting of centre and part of right half; private collection, Lima, Peru. LIT. Funal, no. 33, 1952, repr.

(9) Painting; whereabouts unknown; canvas, 73.5 x 125 cm. PROV. Sale, Diessen am Ammersee, 1-3 Oct. 1983. LIT. Weltkunst, LIII, 1983, p. 2443, no. 18, repr.

(10) Painting of centre; whereabouts unknown; canvas, 106 x 89 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie’s), 31 Oct. 1952, lot 82.

(11) Painting attributed to Melchior Bocksberger, omits Virgin and St John in left background, figures in trees and in central part of landscape; Grzimek family, Friedrichshafen; canvas, 73.5 x 125 cm. LIT. Katalog der Sammlung der Familie Grzimek, I, Europäische Gemälde von 1520 bis 1600, Ravensberg, 1965, p. 12, no. 1, repr.

(12) Painting; after Copy 18; whereabouts unknown; grisaille, 84 x 170 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie’s), 29 Jan. 1960, lot 104.

(13) Painting, centre part; whereabouts unknown; 107 x 89 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie’s), 31 Oct. 1952, lot 82.

(14) Painting; after Copy 18; R. Nicolson, Preston, England.

(15) Painting; Roman horseman in foreground; whereabouts unknown; oil on paper pasted on canvas, 40 x 30 cm. PROV. Sale, Lucerne (Gallery Fischer), 25-26 June 1976, lot 449. (16) Painting, probably painted c. 1733; Sanctuary, El Triunfo, Cuzco, Peru.

(17) Painting; after Copy 18, 18th century; Grimbergen, St Servatius.

(18) Engraving by Hans Witdoeck (Fig. 78), 1638; 618 x 1255 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 42, no. 274.

(19) Engraving by F. Ragot, after Copy 18; 605 x 1235 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 42, no. 275.

(20) Engraving, after Copy 18; 594 x 1188 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 42, no. 274.


(22) Engraving by E. Corr, after Copy 18; 810 x 621 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 42, no. 277.

(23) Engraving published by A. Voet, after Copy 18. LIT. V.S., p. 43, no. 279.

(24) Engraving by C.L. Masquellier, after Copy 18. LIT. V.S., p. 43, no. 278. (25), (26), (27), (28), (29)

EXHIBITED: British Institution for promoting the fine arts in the United Kingdom, British Institution, London, 1815, no. 21; The Art Treasures of the United Kingdom, Manchester, 1857, no. 566; Exhibition of Works by Van Dyck; 1599-1641, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1900, no. 134 (as Van Dyck); London, 1927, no. 279; Sixty paintings and
some drawings by Peter Paul Rubens, Institute of Arts, Detroit, 1936, no. 38, repr.; Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Rubens and Van Dyck, Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, 1946, no. 10, repr.


In his large modello for Hans Witdoeck's engraving of 1638 of the Elevation of the Cross, Rubens basically repeats the figures used in his Elevation of the Cross of 1610-11 painted for the Church of St Walburga, Antwerp (No. 20; Fig. 61). A major change, however, is in the placement of the figures in one large continuous space. Rubens has also made minor alterations in the number of figures and in the details. For example, he used four nails rather than three to secure Christ to the Cross. This additional nail follows the contemporary understanding of how people were crucified in antiquity. Further changes in the central section of the Elevation include the omission of the figure in the upper right pushing up the left arm of the Cross, the addition of a group of spectators on the rocks as well as in the trees and on the ground, and the suggestion of the Holy City in the distance. On the far right, Rubens has added more soldiers and horsemen and opened up the landscape. On the left of the Toronto oil sketch, the Virgin and St John are repeated, except for the position of John's left hand, which now grasps Mary's left shoulder. The group beneath them is the same as in the composition of 1610-11, except for the change in the woman at the top; she is now three-quarter length, turns more dramatically toward the centre and is accompanied by a child. The dog is farther to the left and overlapped by the bare-breasted woman.

All these changes broaden the scene and place it in a larger spatial area, although still dividing the action into three separate parts connected by gestures and the positioning of the heads. The space is no longer cramped but open, with the figures placed in a wide area and a clear progression into depth. This opening up of the space and the easy and clear movement of the figures within the picture structure are characteristic of Rubens's oil sketches dating from the 1630s. He does much the same in the modello of the early 1630s in St Petersburg for the Triptych of St Ildefonso. Rubens's technique in the Toronto sketch also suggests a date from the 1630s. The broadly brushed in anatomy and drapery with strongly contoured shadows, and the precisely drawn highlights recall Rubens's modello of 1635 for Neptune Calming the Tempest. The colours of the Toronto oil sketch are laid on similarly to those in Rubens's oil sketch of c. 1635-38 for the Miraculous Draught of the Fishes (Fig. 80).

The text in the engraving of 1638 by Hans Witdoeck (Fig. 78) says that the print was dedicated to Rubens's great patron Cornelis van der Geest who had died on 10 March 1638:
'D. CORNELIO VANDER GEEST VIRORVM OPTIMO ET AMICORVM VETVSTISSIMO SVOQVE AB ADOLESCENTIA FAVORI ARTISQVE PICTORIAE SVMMO VIXIT ADMIRATORI MONVMENTVM HOC AETERNAE AMICITIAE QVOD SUPERSTITI DESTINABAT DEFVNCTO L.M.D.D.D. EX TABULA WALBURGENSIS ECCLESIAE CUIUS IPSE PRAECIPUUS AUTHOR ET PROMOTOR FUIT' (To Mr Cornelis van der Geest, the best of men and the oldest of friends, in whom ever since youth he [Rubens] found a constant patron, and who all his life was an admirer of paintings, this souvenir of eternal friendship is dedicated, intended to be presented in his lifetime. Engraved after the picture in the Church of St Walburga, the idea of which he was the first to conceive and which he supported so zealously). This makes it clear that the Witdoeck engraving was executed after the altarpiece in St Walburga and consequently so was the modello.

The Toronto oil sketch served as the design for the Witdoeck engraving, but the addition of colour to the grisaille suggests the possibility that Rubens might have conceived of it as an independent painting. This, along with the text on the print which states that the engraving is a 'souvenir of eternal friendship', intimates that the work was a personal gift to his long-time patron and friend.

Witdoeck's print appeared some twenty-seven years after the altarpiece, but we do know that Rubens intended to have an engraving made of this subject around 1619. In a letter dated 23 January 1619, from Rubens in Antwerp to Pieter van Veen in The Hague, the artist enclosed a list of prints to be cut after his work. It included an Elevation of the Cross to be engraved in Antwerp by a 'young artist'. This 'young artist' was most likely Lucas Vorsterman. Unfortunately this engraving was not made, as there is no extant example of this theme after Rubens until Witdoeck's print in 1638. However, Burchard identified a pen and brush drawing in the Louvre (Fig. 79), as possibly the preparatory drawing for Vorsterman's engraving of c. 1619 which was never cut. The tight arrangement of the figures on the surface of the Louvre design follows that of the St Walburga Elevation rather than the decidedly more open and readable space in the later Toronto modello. The Louvre drawing repeats with slight changes, but in reverse, the arrangement and figures in the altarpiece. The artist omits the two men pushing up the arms of the Cross and the soldier just above the bald Michelangelesque figure. The position of the dog has been altered as he now stands in front of the mounted Roman on the right. There are also slight changes in the figures in the right background of the drawing. One might add that the entire left side of the drawing is completely different from the Antwerp and Toronto pictures.

Because of the similarities in the treatment of the space in the central and right portions of the drawing and the altarpiece, it is more than likely that the Louvre sheet was made after the triptych of 1610-11 and not from the Witdoeck engraving of 1638. Stylistically, the Louvre sheet is difficult to connect with Lucas Vorsterman. He draws with careful and precise lines that create clearly articulated forms. His pen lines are continuous and do not break up as in the Louvre sheet. Vorsterman's faces are very cautiously rendered and strongly built by the lines. This is not the case in the Louvre drawing, where the faces of the Virgin and St John are especially weak. When Vorsterman combines pen and wash as in the Martyrdom of a Saint, the lines are sharp, the wash crisp and precise and bounded by strong contours—which is not the case in the Paris sheet. Consequently, the Louvre design was probably executed late in the seventeenth century by an unknown artist, Flemish in origin, who had studied the St Walburga painting.

Burchard did not believe that the Toronto oil sketch was executed by Rubens. He thought that Rubens might have retouched it and that it could have been made by Van Dyck for the never executed Vorsterman engraving, or that it was done by the latter and retouched by Rubens. Because Burchard did not accept the Toronto modello, he proposed that the Witdoeck engraving (Fig. 78) was made after a lost altarpiece by Rubens. Burchard thought that the copy in Tournai, signed T. Delmotte and dated 1784, was an imitation of a painting by Rubens dating around 1630-40. Such a picture was in
the refectory of St Martin's Abbey, Tournai, as late as 1763. Mensaert described it as a copy after Rubens on the main altar in the Church of St Walburga, Antwerp. According to Burchard, Mensaert could have confused the Tournai painting with the altarpiece in Antwerp. Moreover, the painting in St Martin's Abbey might have been an original by Rubens after which Witdoeck made his engraving. This painting, mentioned by Mensaert in 1763 as in Tournai, was not referred to by either Descamps or Michæl when they visited Tournai.

2. The Roman officer on the left leading one of the thieves looks back toward him while the soldier's body leans forward in a pose similar to the centurion pulling along a thief in the engraving by Pietro Monaco after Rubens's lost Christ Carrying the Cross (Fig. 48; formerly in the Manfrotti collection, Venice) and Rubens's modello in Berkeley for the later engraving by Pontius of this same subject (No. 18; Fig. 53).
3. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; see Vliege, Saints, 1972-73, II, figs. 48, 49.
7. For a long time the Toronto oil sketch was thought to be the final study for the altarpiece in St Walburga (Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 2, no. 2; Waagen, Treasures, p. 102; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, pp. 68-70). Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 78, was the first to connect the Toronto modello with the Witdoeck print.
8. Magurn, Letters, pp. 69, 70, no. 36.
9. Paris, Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins (as school of Rubens); see Lugt, Cat. Louvre, 1949, II, pp. 50, 51, no. 1201, pl. LXXI. Renger, Grafik, 1977, p. 117, asks if the Louvre drawing is not after a lost sketch by Rubens.
10. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings; see Hind, Rubens, 1923, p. 145, no. 2, and for other Vorsterman drawings, ibid., pp. 146-148, nos. 3-14, pls. LXXVI-LXXVII.

21. Saints Amandus and Walburga (Fig. 81)

Oil on panel; 462 x 150 cm.
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

PROVENANCE: See No. 20.

COPIES: (1) Engraving by Hebert. LIT. V.S., p. 43, under no. 281.
(2) Drawing: Head of St Amandus; Austria, ecclesiastical collection; black chalk, red and white chalk, washed with brown ink, highlighted with brush and white gouache on violet paper, 326 x 202 mm. LIT. J. Müller Hofstede, 'Eine Kreidestudie von Rubens für den Kreuzaufrichtungsaltar', Pantheon, XXV, 1967, pp. 35-43, fig. 2.


Rubens placed these two saints on the outer left wing of the closed Antwerp altarpiece of the Elation of the Cross. The bald, bearded St Amandus reading dominates the panel. He stands in the left foreground, dressed in a richly decorated gold brocaded bishop's robe, holding a book in his hands and a crozier under his left arm. St Walburga, the patron saint of the church, stands to the right, partly concealed by a book in his hands and a crozier under his left arm. St Walburga, the patron saint of the church, stands to the right, partly concealed by a crozier under his left arm. Two angels fly above the saints. One carries St Amandus' mitre over his head while the other holds a crown of roses and laurel above St Walburga.

These two saints had a long association with the religious life of Antwerp. St Amandus (d. 6 February 676) was the first bishop to preach the Gospel in Antwerp. He arrived there between 650 and 660, and built the Borchtkerk (castle church) in 660, which was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. In 835, the Borchtkerk was
destroyed by the Normans. It was rebuilt by the end of the ninth century, and at this time St Amandus became one of the patron saints and St Eligius the other.2

St Walburga (d. 25 February 779) came from Wessex, England to Antwerp sometime after the year 726 when her brother, Bishop Willibald, left his position as head of the Borchtkerk to work in Germany. Soon after she joined him at St Boniface’s mission at Bishofsheim near Mainz and remained there for two years. However, when her other brother, Winebald, founded the double monastery of Heidenheim, she was called upon to be the head of the nunnery. Upon Winebald’s death on 18 December 761, she was appointed abess of both houses at Heidenheim. She retained the position of superior over both the men and women until she died on 25 February 779. St Walburga was buried in Heidenheim, but because she was greatly venerated in Flanders, parts of her remains were later distributed throughout that area—to Brussels, Antwerp (Borchtkerk), Thiel, Zutphen and even as far north as Groningen.3 The relics probably arrived in Antwerp at the beginning of the tenth century, shortly after the rebuilding of the Borchtkerk, and it was at this time that the church assumed her name.4 In 838, Pope Lucius III issued a bull placing the Borchtkerk under St Walburga’s patronage.5

The construction of the triptych was discussed at a meeting of the Internationale Commissie Kruisoprichting Rubens on 10 December 1979. Baudouin observed that the saints and their pedestals were eccentrically placed, and that there are darker unpainted strips on either side of the wings. He suggested that the reason for this may lie in the actual structure of the altarpiece. In order to carry the weight of Rubens’s heavy triptych, the solid wooden structure contained two strong vertical beams which supported the centre panel and also extended beyond into the side panels. This extension created a small vertical strip on the outside of the exterior wings when the triptych was open. Rubens executed the commission in the church itself and he worked standing on a platform that was built before the altar. The documents also inform us that a sail was hung in front of the choir in order to hide it from the worshippers as the artist worked.6 During the execution of the altarpiece, the side panels could not be moved. Consequently, it was impossible to paint the two covered strips on the exterior of the wings. Because of this, the pedestals were placed in a rather odd position. Only the parts that were not covered could be completely painted. The covered strips were summarily painted after the altar was completed. This may have occurred in 1627 when Rubens, as promised, retouched the altarpiece.7

As Glück observes,8 the presentation of the saints is similar to those in the side panels in Rubens’s altarpiece for the Chiesa Nuova (Sta Maria in Vallicella) executed during his last months in Rome. This is especially evident in the heavy and richly decorated robes of St Amandus and St Gregory.9 The treatment of St Amandus’ head, face and beard appears for the first time in Rubens’s Melchior in his Adoration of the Magi of 1610.10 This type is continued in his St Thomas (Madrid, Prado) from the Apostolado Lerma series,11 which was painted shortly after the Elévation. St Amandus’ pose is also repeated in another work of about this time, the Tribute Money.12 Burchard observed a resemblance between Rubens’s angel carrying the mitre and Paolo Veronese’s angel in the upper section of St Nicholas Elected Bishop of Myra.13 Burchard also pointed out a strong likeness between Rubens’s angel on the right and the angel in the same location in Titian’s Madonna with Six Saints.14

The outer wings were probably finished sometime shortly before 12 August 1611, when Rubens received a second payment of 500 guilders. This sum was very likely paid upon the completion of the altarpiece, although it was not the final payment.15

21a. Saints Amandus and Walburga: Oil Sketch (Fig. 83)

Oil on panel; 66.5 x 25.5 cm.
Dulwich, Dulwich College Picture Gallery. Inv. no. 40.

PROVENANCE: Jacques de Roore, sale, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1747, lot 56, sold to Van Spangen for 102 guilden; ? Desenfans, sale, London (Pall Mall), 8ff. April 1786, no. 384; Desenfans (1804, insurance list, no. 101); Consul Smith; Bourgeois bequest, 1811.


(2) Drawing. Vienna, Albertina, inv. no. 15.103; brush with brown wash over chalk preliminary sketch, 363 x 498 mm. LIT. Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953, p. 41; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972–73, I, pp. 78, 79, fig. 103; Mitsch, Rubenszeichnungen, 1977, p. 204, no. 102; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 482.


This panel containing Saints Amandus and Walburga was originally joined together with a second, also in Dulwich (No. 22a; Fig. 84), containing Saints Catherine and Eligius. The saints were separated by Dr H. Hell during their restoration in the 1940s. Saints Amandus and Walburga originally occupied the left side of the panel, and they stand on a ledge in front of a niche-like structure. An angel carrying a wreath flies above them. This panel was the modello for the outer left wing of the Elevation of the Cross (No. 21; Fig. 81), painted for the Church of St Walburga in Antwerp and now in Antwerp Cathedral. When comparing the modello with the completed altarpiece, however, it becomes apparent that Rubens made several important changes. St Amandus wears a mitre and an unadorned, rich golden chasuble in the modello, while in the altarpiece he is bareheaded and his robes are abundantly decorated. In the altarpiece, the book hangs down on one side and the
saint's right hand is placed between the folios in a more raised position. St Walburga's right arm is no longer extended down at her side holding the crozier but is raised. In the altarpiece she stands closer to St Amandus, making him appear larger and more dominating. Rubens also added a second angel flying above the saints in the altarpiece. One holds the mitre and the other, as in the modello, carries a crown of flowers.

Held has pointed out that the Dulwich panels were executed at the same time as the central scene in the Louvre modello for the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20a; Fig. 62). Originally, the Elevation panel contained a semicircular arch rising from two horizontals at the top of the composition. This is precisely what is found in the Dulwich oil sketches. If they were placed on top of the Elevation in the Louvre oil sketch, they would correspond in the use of the arch. There is, moreover, no relationship between the wings on the interior of the Louvre modello and the centre panel. Held goes on to suggest that Rubens must have altered his plans before painting the inside wings of the modello or perhaps first rendered the saints on panels that are now lost.

The Dulwich panels have been linked with the lost modello for the Disputa of c. 1609, in the Church of St Paul's, Antwerp. Burchard made the proposal that they were originally conceived as part of the lost modello on the basis of two seventeenth-century drawings which appear to be copies of the lost oil sketch for the altarpiece. In these sheets, the Disputa is bordered on either side by copies of the Dulwich pictures. However, in the Jacques de Roore sale of 4 September 1747, the Dulwich sketches were sold without the centre panel. Because the modelli were originally joined together and because their sizes correspond so closely with the Louvre modello for the interior of the Elevation, it seems most likely that they were originally conceived as preliminary designs for the Elevation and not for the Disputa. As Vlieghe observes, it is conceivable that the Dulwich panels and the lost modello for the Disputa were originally in Cornelis van der Geest's collection and that he assembled them as a triptych. This idea becomes all the more plausible when we realize that Van der Geest was closely connected with the commission for St Walburga and that he provided the money for the marble balustrade for the refurbished Chapel of the Holy Sacrament where the Disputa was installed.

The drawing in the Princes Gate Collection representing Saints Amandus and Walburga (No. 21b; Fig. 86) is a further working out of the ideas present in the Dulwich sketches. The Dulwich panels must have been completed shortly before June 1610, when the contract for the commission was signed by Rubens, the priest of St Walburga, Cornelis van der Geest and the churchwardens.

Pen and brown ink; 244 × 147 mm. Inscribed below left along the margin P.P. Rubens F. by an unknown hand.—Verso: inscribed by Rubens along the right edge of the two sides of a vertical cube: Campani liber de circulis nunc editus a Cardano sylycoftana een achterelixzen bedrieger enen heer trefijenants fame benempt / Cubitus vel Cubitum velut ellenboge. Item een maet van onderhalven. Voirt 't vierendeel van dese menschen langer/ Cubus eenen terlinck. Item eelek dingen, dat vier hoecken heufft / Aequinoctium den tijt als dach ende nach even lang [sijin]; in centre and vertically inscribed: αμμετρια id est commensuratio.

London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 54.

PROVENANCE: Earl of Pembroke, Wilton House; Victor Koch (London); Count Antoine Seilern (London, 1901-1978), who bequeathed the drawing to the Courtauld Institute Galleries.
The Seilern drawing of Saints Amandus and Walburga is said to be an intermediary idea executed after the Dulwich oil sketch and before the completed altarpiece. In this sketch, Rubens has made several alterations not found in the Dulwich modello, but which do appear in the altarpiece. For example, St Amandus no longer wears a mitre; it is now carried by a second flying angel above. The saint standing to the right in the drawing wears drapery that is fuller and more flowing than that worn by the saint on the left, who continues the Dulwich type. This new and elaborate rendering of St Amandus' robes and the placement of the book with its pages hanging down was to be further developed in the altarpiece. St Walburga has also been slightly altered. In the drawing, contrary to the oil sketch, her right arm is raised, and she firmly grasps the crozier as she does in the altarpiece.

This sheet has been generally accepted as by Rubens, yet there is a certain heaviness in the pen strokes which appear to lack the spontaneity found in his other predominantly pen drawings such as his Victory and Woman Standing (Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum), Adonis Dying in the Arms of Venus (London, British Museum), and David Slaying Goliath (Rotterdam, Boymans—van Beuningen Museum). Because of these weaknesses, it is possible that the Seilern drawing is a copy of the altarpiece by an unknown hand. Doubts concerning this sheet have been justifiably raised by Held and seconded by Logan. If the Seilern drawing is by Rubens, and I have doubts about this, it was obviously executed after the completion of the Dulwich modello prior to 10 June and before the completion of the altarpiece in 1611.

Burchard and d'Hulst suggest that the vertical inscription on the centre verso could be by a later hand and might refer to Pomponius Gauricus, De Sculptura (Florence, 1504). The second chapter in the table of contents of the 1609 Antwerp edition reads: De symmetria seu commensuratione. De totius hominis, per singula membrum, mensura & proportione, etc.


22. Saints Catherine and Eligius
(Fig. 82)

Oil on panel; 462 x 150 cm.
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

PROVENANCE: See No. 20.

COPIES: (1) Engraving by Hebert. LIT. V.S., p. 43, under no. 281.
(2) Engraving, St Augustine, after St Eligius. LIT. V.S., p. 96, no. 13.
(3) Engraving, St Catherine. LIT. V.S., p. 113, no. 28.

EXHIBITED: See No. 20.
On the right exterior panel of the altarpiece Rubens has placed St Catherine of Alexandria to the right in three-quarter view. She holds the martyr’s palm in her left hand and with the other supports her sword of martyrdom. St Catherine is dressed in a richly painted white robe and a mantle of white with golden floral designs. Her blond hair is capped by a gold diadem decorated with precious stones. Just behind her and to the left is St Eligius, whose body is partially blocked by St Catherine. He wears the bishop’s robes and red gloves, and carries a crozier in his right hand and his attribute, the mallet, in his left hand.¹

As with the saints in the exterior left panel, Saints Catherine and Eligius were closely connected with the Borchtkerk and the City of Antwerp. After the Borchtkerk was rebuilt around 1249, St Catherine² became the patron saint. St Eligius, on the other hand, had been closely associated with the Borchtkerk since its founding in the seventh century. When it was rebuilt at the end of the ninth century, St Eligius became one of the patron saints.³ During his appointment as Bishop of Noyon and Tournai, he spent much time preaching to and converting infidels. A large section of Flanders was indebted to St Eligius for receiving the Gospels. He appeared in Antwerp around 645 and preached for six consecutive days in the Borchtkerk. Because Antwerp was not included in his bishopric, he left the city. Yet since those six days he has been honoured as a patron saint of the Borchtkerk.⁴

St Eligius became extremely popular in Northern France and the Netherlands from the fifteenth century. His most famous portrayal as a goldsmith is in the panel of 1449 by Petrus Christus (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). His role as a preacher in St Walburga is best known in Ambrosius Francken’s altarpiece, painted in 1588 for the Guild of the Forgers for St Walburga’s.⁵

St Catherine is modelled after St Domitilla in Rubens’s altarpiece for the Chiesa Nuova (Sta Maria in Vallicella), painted at the end of his stay in Rome.⁶ Rubens used this type later for the lost painting of St Catherine of Alexandria preserved in an engraving by Schelte à Bolswert⁷ and for his figure of the saint in the north aisle of the Jesuit church in Antwerp.⁸

Burchard has pointed out the similarity in the placement of Rubens’s saints to Giovanni Bellini’s on the right wing of his Triptych with Madonna and Saints (Venice, Church of Sta Maria dei Frari). This was copied in a drawing that was probably reworked by Rubens.⁹ Rubens also reused the angel above St Catherine’s head in his Nature and the Graces of c. 1613-14 (Fig. 87; Glasgow, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum), where it is placed above and to the right of Nature.

1. For a list of his creations as a goldsmith see H. Leclercq, Dictionnaire d’archéologie et de liturgie, IV, 2674-2687.
6. Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, p. 72. J. Müller Hofstede, ‘Zu Rubens Zweiten Altarwerk für Sta. Maria in Vallicella’, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, XVII, 1966, pp. 72-73, fig. 31, attributed to Rubens a Study of a Female Head, Zurich, private collection, oil on paper, mounted on wood, 65 x 52 cm. Müller Hofstede proposed that it was a study for St Domitilla, Rome, Sta Maria in Vallicella. Held, Sketches, 1980, p. 545, rightly believed that the Zurich head was more closely connected with St Catherine on the outer wing of the Antwerp Altarpiece. However, the attribution of this Study of a Female Head to Rubens is doubtful. It was sold as School of Rubens in the sale, Amsterdam, 1 Dec. 1953, lot 244.
7. V.S., p. 114, no. 29; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 238, 239, no. 402, pl. 140; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 100,101, no. 69, fig. 120.
8. Martin, Ceiling Paintings, 1968, p. 145, figs. 139-143.
22a. Saints Catherine and Eligius: Oil Sketch (Fig. 84)

Oil on panel; 65.5 x 24.5 cm.
Dulwich, Dulwich College Picture Gallery. Inv. no. 40a.

PROVENANCE: Jacques de Roore, sale, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1747, lot 56, sold to Van Spangen for 102 gulden; ? Desenfans, sale, London (Pall Mall), 8ff. April 1786, no. 384; Desenfans (1804, insurance list, no. 101); Consul Smith; Bourgeois bequest, 1811.

COPIES: (1) Drawing (Fig. 85), attributed to Jan de Bisschop by L. Burchard; whereabouts unknown; c. 730 x 498 mm. LIT. Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953, p. 41; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 78, 79, fig. 103; Mitsch, Rubenszeichnungen, 1977, p. 204; Van Gelder, Rubens Marginalia, 1978, p. 456; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 482.


This panel was originally joined to a second one, also in Dulwich, representing Saints Amandus and Walburga (No. 21a; Fig. 83). Here St Catherine stands in the right foreground and St Eligius just behind her and to the left. Both saints, as in the other panel, stand before a niche-like structure with its peak in the top left margin. When the two separate images are placed next to each other, the two semicircles connect above to form a completed niche while the ledges join at the bottom.

Saints Catherine and Eligius originally formed the right section of this oil sketch, and, as in the separated portion, they too have a flying angel carrying a wreath above the female saint’s head. This panel also served as the modello for the outer right wing of the Elevation of the Cross (No. 22; Fig. 82), now in Antwerp Cathedral, but several changes have been made between the preliminary idea and the completed work. For example, St Catherine’s plain white satin garment is decorated on the altarpiece, her foot is visible in the latter, she is placed closer to Eligius which tends to push him farther into the background and her right forearm is uncovered.1 In the oil sketch, St Eligius wears a mitre, is beardless and his attribute, the mallet, is more easily visible. In the altarpiece, one of the angels carries his headpiece and the bareheaded saint has a rich beard. The crozier is no longer in a vertical position but is more on a diagonal touching the top of the saint’s head.2 Rubens added a second angel on the outer wings, and both are in different positions from the one in the oil sketch.3

For the possible connection between this oil sketch and the lost modello for the Disputa of c. 1609 (Antwerp, Church of St Paul), see No. 21a.
1. St Catherine is repeated in reverse in Schelte à Bolswert's engraving of St Catherine of Alexandrin (Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 100-101, no. 69, fig. 120).

2. One might add that the heads and faces of Saints Amandus and Eligius in the altarpiece resemble those of St Thomas and St Paul (both in Madrid, Prado), in the Apostolado Lerma, painted about the same time. Also similar in countenance and in the handling of the paint is the oil sketch of c. 1610 representing St Augustine (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum). See Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 96-97, no. 65, figs. 110, 116.


23. The Miracle of St Walburga (Fig. 88)

Oil on panel; 75.5 x 98.5 cm.
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste. Inv. no. 1589.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737 to the painter and art dealer Jacobus de Roore in The Hague, who purchased the three predellas for 993 florins and 7 sous; Jacques de Roore, sale, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1747, lot 28 ('St Walburga in Noot met een Schip in Zee, door P.P. Rubbens, h. 2 en een half v., br. 3 v. 2 d.' [79 x 99.5 cm.]), purchased by Jacob de Wit; Jacob de Wit, sale, Amsterdam (Hendrick de Leth and Dirk van Schorrenberg), 10 March 1755, lot 3, 2½ v. x 3 v. 3 d. (71 x 92.5 cm.), purchased by H. de Leth, possibly for Johann Zacharias Richter (Leipzig); inherited in 1764 by the latter's son Johann Thomas Richter (Leipzig, 1728-1773); Johann Friedrich Richter (Leipzig, c. 1773-1810); Johann Friedrich Richter, sale, Leipzig, 1810, lot 165, purchased by Fischer; J. F. Fischer, sale, Leipzig, 8 May 1820, lot 69; Speck von Sternburg, Lützschena, 1827; acquired by the Leipzig Museum in 1945.

COPIES: (1) Painting; whereabouts unknown; canvas, 59.5 x 71 cm. PROV. F.E. van Erbort (Antwerp, d. 1807), sale, Antwerp (N.F. Beeckmans), 18 August 1807, lot 1; J. Schamp d'Aveschoot, sale, Ghent, 14 Sept. 1840, lot 125, purchased by Fumière for 330 florins; J.B. Fucart, sale, Valenciennes, 12 Oct. 1898, lot 92. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 76, 77, no. 285; Heiland, Rubens Paintings, 1969, p. 425.

(2) Drawing; Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, inv. no. 8.235; black and red chalk, pen and brown ink, grey wash, 305 x 380 mm.

(3) Drawing; Antwerp, Stedelijke Musea, Fonds Jozef Linnig; pen, brown ink, brown wash, red and black chalk, 270 x 303 mm.

EXHIBITED: Antwerp, 1977, no. 21, repr.

The Miracle of St Walburga takes place in a raging sea with enormous waves surrounding the small boat. The sails have come loose and swirl dramatically around the mast. St Walburga is the focal point of the composition, but placed on the left side of the boat with her head and arms raised toward heaven. A nun is seen just to the left with head lowered and hands clasped in prayer. The two women are surrounded by thirteen men struggling to keep the boat afloat and to save themselves. The oarsmen in the foreground and the helmsman aft are large muscular figures that repeat the types in the Elévation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61). As Heiland has shown, the early chronicles of the life of St Walburga (written by Wolfhard von Hernedes in 895/896 and by Bishop Adelbod of Utrecht sometime around the end of the tenth century) describe the crossing from England to the Continent by St Walburga, St Lioba and the other nuns as taking place without any difficulties.2 The earliest known description of the storm and the subsequent miracle is found in the Life of St Walburga by Philipp von Rathsamhausen, who was Bishop of Eichstatt between 1306 and 1322. Von Rathsamhausen wrote that St Walburga, St Lioba and the nuns started their voyage from England in gentle weather when suddenly a violent storm struck them. The crew had all but given up when St Walburga knelt down to pray to God for deliverance. The storm ended as abruptly as it began, and the travellers landed on the Continent with thankfulness in their hearts. This episode from St Walburga's life is known in only one image, which was executed at the start of the sixteenth century and does not show the ship in distress.3 Rubens too did not closely follow Von Rathsamhausen's text, which was published around 1601-1604 in the Lectiones Antiquae and edited by Heinrich Can-sius in Ingolstadt; it may well have arrived in Antwerp shortly after 1604. According to the text, thirty people sailed to the Continent with
St Walburga, and the sailors did not leave their navigational instruments. Yet Rubens depicts the sailors rowing with great strength while St Walburga has only one companion.4

Because St Walburga was the patron saint of the church and of the seamen of Antwerp, it was logical for Rubens to include this stormy episode from her life.5 In so doing, he continued a tradition that developed out of early sixteenth-century book illustrations representing scenes of salvation at sea.6 By the end of the century, two of the more popular subjects, Jonah Cast over the Side and Christ on the Sea of Galilee, were often depicted by Antwerp's most important artist, Martin de Vos.7 It is this imagery that Rubens appears to follow when creating The Miracle of St Walburga.

The De Vos drawings and prints after them are in the maniera style; however, they bear a close similarity to Rubens's predella in the placement of a similar ship on a diagonal and surrounded by swirling water, the dramatic movement of the Michelangelesque figures, and the rays of holy light breaking through the threatening sky. The same can be said for Rubens's Christ on the Sea of Galilee (Fig. 89), which dates from about the same time as the St Walburga predella and contains a similar setting and oarsmen of the Michelangelesque type.8 Martin de Vos' Christ on the Sea of Galilee also appears to have inspired Rembrandt.9

24. **Christ on the Cross**

Oil on panel; c. 80 x ? cm. Whereabouts unknown, presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737 to the painter and art dealer Jacobus de Roore in The Hague, who purchased the three predellas for 993 florins and 7 sous; Jacques de Roore, sale, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1747, lot 30 ("Een doode Christus aan 't Kruys, door ditto, h. 12 en een half d., br. lv. 7d. [32.70 x 49.71 cm."]), bought by J. van Spangen for 280 guilders; J. van Spangen, sale, London, 11 Feb. 1748, lot 70, purchased by Bouverie for 10 pounds and 10 shillings.

COPY: ? Engraving by P. van Sompelen (Fig. 90).


There are no detailed descriptions of this lost composition, but we do have an idea of its shape from the reproduction of the entire altarpiece in Anton Gheringh's 1661 painting of the Interior of St Walburga's Church (Fig. 63; Antwerp, St Paul's Church). In this picture, the lost predella is semicircular and slightly higher than the other two. On the basis of this, Heiland has rightly suggested that the Crucifixion was probably around 80 cm. high. Burchard believed that the engraving of the Crucifixion by P. Van Sompelen may have been made after this lost predella. Held has suggested that the composition was similar to Rubens's Christ on the Cross in Mechlin, Stedelijk Museum (No. 41; Fig. 125), where the Saviour's head falls down to the right.

1. Hoet, Catalogus, 1752, II, p. 202, gave the dimensions as 12 1/2 duim high x 1 voet 7 duim wide (32.5 x 49.5 cm.). These measurements were taken over, with slight changes, by Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 172 (30.5 x 48 cm.), and by Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 75 (32.5 x 50 cm.). In all these cases, width precedes height. This would make them too small because The Miracle of St Walburga (No. 23; Fig. 88) is 75.5 cm. high.

2. V.S., p. 43, no. 287.


25. Angels Carrying the Dead Body of St Catherine of Alexandria

Oil on panel; c. 75.5 x 98.5 cm. 
Whereabouts unknown, presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737 to the painter and art dealer Jacobus de Roore in The Hague, who purchased the three predellas from the Church of St Walburga for 993 florins and 7 sous; Jacques de Roore, sale, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1747, lot 29 ('De Begravenissen van St Walburgia, door dito, h. en br. als boven'), 2 1/2 v. x 3 v. 2 d. (79 x 99.5 cm.), purchased by Jacob de Wit for 250 gulden; Jacob de Wit, sale, Amsterdam (Hendrick de Leth and Dirk van Schorrenberg), 10 March 1755, lot 4, 2 1/2 v. x 3 v. 3 d. [71 x 92.5 cm.], purchased by H. de Leth; Coll. Johann Zacharias Richter, Leipzig, by c. 1755; inherited in 1764 by the latter's son Johann Thomas Richter (1728-1773), Leipzig; Johann Friedrich Richter, Leipzig, from c. 1773-1810; J.F. Richter, sale, Leipzig, 1810, lot 166, bought by Fischer; J.F. Fischer, sale, Leipzig, 8 May 1820, lot 70; Wiegand, Leipzig; Heinrich Wilhelm Campe, sale, Leipzig, Sept. 1827, lot 123, bought in by C.G. Boerner for Campe.


This predella has been lost since 1827, but we know what the composition was like from the description in the auction catalogue of the
Heinrich Wilhelm Campe sale in September 1827, first published by Heiland in 1969. The painting is described in the following way: 'Die Heilige Catharina in ein weisses Gewand gehüllt, welches noch die blutigen Spuren ihres erlittenen Martyrerlodes zeigt, wird von sechs Engeln auf einem roten Tuche zur Gruft getragen. Der Ausdruck einer hohen, frommen Seele zueilt noch in den erblassten Zügen der Dulderin, und tiefe teilnehmende Trauer spricht aus den Köpfen der sie emporhebenden Himmelsboten. Die Fackel, welche einer der Engel trägt, beleuchtet wirksam die erhabene Szene, welche durch grossgedachte Anordnung und geistreiche Ausführung dieses Gemälde zum klassischen Kunstwerk stempelt' ('St Catherine, enclosed in a white robe which still shows bloody traces of her martyrdom, is carried to the tomb on a red cloth by six angels. The expression of a lofty, devout soul still lingers in the bleak features of the sufferer, and deep compassionate grief is expressed in the heads of the heavenly messengers who carry her. The torch, which one of the angels holds, effectively lights the sublime scene which through a grandly conceived arrangement and spirited execution gives the stamp of a classical work of art to this painting'). The story comes from the Golden Legend, where it is written that angels carried Catherine's body to Mount Sinai. The trip took twenty days. It is interesting to note that when Catherine's head was severed from her body milk and not blood gushed forth. In this case, it appears that Rubens did not remain faithful to the text.

Heiland has convincingly clarified the provenance of the predella. It cannot be identified with the Burial of St Catherine known to have been in the collection of Désiré van den Schriek in 1831 and later in the 1898 sale of the Jean Baptiste Foucart collection at Valenciennes. Rooses, Burchard and Evers believed that this panel was originally the one painted for the Elevation of the Cross. However, it is obvious from the illustration published in the catalogue of the Foucart collection and the description in the Campe catalogue of 1827, that the Van den Schriek—Foucart predella was not executed for the Elevation of the Cross. Heiland is probably correct in suggesting that the Burial of St Catherine may have resembled Christ Carried to the Tomb, known from several copies and the engraving by Witdoeck (No. 71; Figs. 210-213).

3. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 76; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, notes by L. Burchard, p. 381; Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, p. 132, fig. 38; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 123-125, no. 79.
4. For an illustration see Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, fig. 137.
5. See L., no. 11539.

26. Angel (Fig. 91)

Oil on canvas, transferred from panel; 204.5 × 145 cm.

Flint, Michigan, Flint Institute of Arts.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737, to Canon Engelgrave and still in his possession in 1775; Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun, sale, Paris, 11 April 1791, lot 68, sold for 600 livres; King of Poland (died 12 Feb. 1798); A.L. Nicholson, London (1939); private collection, New York (c. 1952); French and Co., New York, 1953; presented to the Flint Institute of Arts by Mrs Viola Bray, 1961.


CATALOGUE NO. 27.


The angel was placed to the left of the image of God the Father in the centre above the frame in the upper zone of Rubens's Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61). It was originally painted on a panel that was cut out along the contours and gave the impression of a figure hovering in the air next to the central niche. The angel’s right arm is raised, and the hand appears to hold the stem of a palm branch, while the other, extended on a diagonal to the left, carries the crown of thorns. The figure is enveloped in a rich flowing drapery animated by an imaginary wind. In the eighteenth century, the panel was transferred to canvas and a sky was added as a background foil for the figure.

This type of angel crowning the upper zone of an altarpiece was present in the sixteenth century, but the figures were usually static.1 Rubens, however, activates the drapery and imparts to it a fluttering movement and a suggestion that the angel lingers momentarily above the pedestal. This new sense of illusionistic motion looks forward to the type of angels poised above the architectural members of Rubens's later altarpieces.2


27. God the Father

Oil on panel; c. 157 x 124 cm.

Whereabouts unknown, presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737, to Canon Engelgrave and still in his possession in 1775; Baron de Vinck van Westwezel, Antwerp; sale, Brussels (Galerie St Luc), 11-13 April 1881, lot 21; purchased by Count A. du Chastel.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 65 × 62 cm. PROV. A. Fonson, sale, Oudenaarde, 5 Sept. 1821, lot 153, sold for 32 francs. LIT. Mireur, VI, p. 353.

(2) Engraving (Fig. 94) by J.J. van den Berghe (1762-1824), Vienna, Albertina, Rubens-Stiche, IX-29; dedicated to Baron de Vinck van Westwezel. LIT. V.S., p. 69, no. 38; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 74, 75, 83; Martin, Raising of the Cross, 1985, pp. 1, 142, fig. 2.

LITERATURE: Descamps, Vie, 1753-63, I, p. 320; Michel, Histoire, 1771, p. 78; Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 18, no. 13; IX, p. 245, no. 8; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, pp. 74, 75, 83, no. 280; V, p. 325; De Wit, Kerken, 1910, p. 137; Glück, Rubens, Van Dyck, 1933, pp. 58, 64; K. Fremantle, The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam, Utrecht, 1959, pp. 126-127; Heiland, Rubens Paintings, 1969, p. 422; Martin, Altarpieces, 1969, pp. 40, 95; Baudouin, Altars, 1972, pp. 73, 75, 82; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, pp. 60, 61; Martin, Raising of the Cross, 1985, pp. 141, 142, fig. 2; Jaffé, Rubens, 1989, p. 174, no. 135L.

Anton Gheringh's Interior of St Walburga's (Fig. 63) shows that Rubens's altarpiece bore God the Father at the top. Following tradition, he is an old man with long hair and an abundant beard. He is seated frontally but looking to the right with his chin resting on his right hand and holding a globe in the other. The inclusion of the globe began in the tenth century1 and the tradition persisted in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century representations in Antwerp of the Lord as a single figure or part of the Trinity.2
Originally, Rubens placed God the Father in a frame that was arched at the top and crowned by a wooden pelican, the long-standing symbol of resurrection. The inclusion of God the Father above the *Elevation of the Cross* (No. 20; Fig. 61) is of utmost importance for the composition because it is with him that Christ makes visual contact. This expands the sense of space beyond the confines of the enframed areas. The visual interrelationship between the upper and middle zones of the altar gives, for the first time, a sense of the unification of the whole in a truly dramatic Baroque manner. This connection between father and son also emphasizes the concept of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.

2. Cf. e.g. the prints by the Wierix family illustrated in Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, pls. 52, 53, II, pls. 190, 203, III, pl. 311. In the latter print by Anton Wierix representing *Christ Teaching in the Temple*, God the Father is alone in the clouds supporting a globe. Anton Wierix also portrayed a single image of God the Father in his print entitled *PATER DE CAELIS DEVS* (Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, pl. 53).

28. **Angel**

Oil on panel; c. 204.5 × 145 cm.

Whereabouts unknown, presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Church of St Walburga, Antwerp; sold at the Bourse, Antwerp, 1737, to Canon Engelgrave and still in his possession in 1775.


Rubens painted this angel on a panel which was cut along the contours and placed to the right of God the Father in the topmost zone of Rubens's *Elevation of the Cross* (No. 20; Fig. 61). Judging from the preserved panel on the left (No. 26; Fig. 91), the figure gave the impression of being suspended in the air and must have been dressed in abundant and moving drapery. Unfortunately, Anton Gheringh's painting of the *Interior of St Walburga's* (Fig. 63) is not clear enough to give us an idea of the angel's actual position or the attributes held in either hand. We can only guess that it repeated, in reverse, the image preserved in Flint (No. 26; Fig. 91).

29. **Study for the Figure of Christ on the Cross: Drawing** (Fig. 92)

Black and white chalk, brown wash; 528 × 370 mm.

London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. Inv. no. Oo.9-26.


In this drawing Christ is seen from just below the waist with his head raised, mouth open and eyes looking imploringly toward heaven. His arms are almost straight up, following the traditional medieval arrangement. His hair falls loosely on his head. There is an indication in black chalk of another arm just to the right of his right arm. A hand is partially indicated along the upper right edge of the sheet. Christ's right arm is cut off at the side and top, as is the other hand. This suggests that the sheet was originally larger and was probably cut on at least three sides, if not four.

J.G. van Gelder has suggested that the drawing was probably made c. 1613-14 and notes that it has the same watermark as Rubens's Study of Psyche of c. 1612-15,1 and Flying Angel of 1613-14.2 In spite of Jaffé's attempt to link it with the Bob Jones Crucifixion (Fig. 97), the drawing cannot be connected with a specific painting by Rubens.3 It certainly seems to have been made after a live model. The thin and precisely drawn forms of the London drawing are similar to Christ's figure in the Munich Crucifixion of c. 1612 (No. 40; Fig. 124), from which time it must date.


30. Christ Expiring on the Cross
(Fig. 96)

Oil on canvas; 221 × 121 cm. Inscribed below in the centre: N.R.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 313.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of the Recollects; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815).


COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 59 × 43 cm. PROV. Sale, Berlin (L. Spik), 8-9 July 1976, lot 352; sale, Berlin (L. Spik), 10-12 July 1983, lot 381.
(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 71.5 × 50 cm.; signed: Martin 1845. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 27 Feb. 1981, lot 11.
(3) Painting, Bordeaux, Musée, inv. no. 295; canvas, 104 × 74 cm. LIT. Descamps, Vie, 1753-63, I, p. 322; Descamps, Voyage, 1769, p. 208; Piot, Rapport, 1883, pp. 22, 23, 316, no. 37; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 85.


Christ is placed on the Cross against a slate-grey sky with the eclipse of the sun in the upper left corner. A view of the City of Jerusalem below (probably not by Rubens), contains, among other monuments, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre just to the right of the Cross. The titulus above Christ's head is written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Just beneath the scroll, Christ's sorrowful and imploring face looks up toward heaven, suggesting the moment when he uttered the words, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Rubens might also have wished to suggest the instant just before Christ's death when he cried out, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'.

Rubens chose to portray the Saviour without a crown of thorns and without the wound in the side of the torso. However, blood flows from the wounds inflicted by the nails, which are four in number as discussed by Justus Lipsius. Rubens attached Christ's hands to the Cross by placing the nails between the wrists and the palms in the carpal bones. This is a departure from the traditional manner of piercing the palms, and the innovation was strongly criticized by the clergy in Antwerp who believed Zachariah's writing (13:6): 'What are these wounds in your hands?'. It is also possible that Rubens's predilection for the correct anatomical representation of his subjects might have been inspired, in this case, by his having seen the Turin shroud. The shroud clearly depicts Christ's wounds in the same way found in Rubens. Given Rubens's insatiable curiosity concerning the past, it is more than likely that he saw the relic in Turin, which could have awakened him to the proper method of securing Christ to the Cross. The shroud was exhibited annually in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on 4 May in front of the Palazzo Madama, Turin.

Christ's legs are parallel while the feet, each secured with a nail, overlap as described in St Bridget's Revelations.

Christ's arms, contrary to that found in the atelier pieces and the later copies, are shaped like a broad 'Y' in relation to the arms of the Cross. This configuration is similar to what one finds in the Elevation of the Cross for St Walburga's (No. 20; Fig. 61), as is the rendering of Christ's head and body. Both faces bear painful upward glances and their idealized, Hellenistic torsos may be a distant remembrance of antique sculpture such as the Laocoon, which Rubens copied on more than one occasion. Because of these stylistic similarities with the Christ in the St Walburga Elevation, it is probable that the Antwerp Crucifixion was executed around 1610-12.

Apart from the stylistic affinities with the Antwerp Elevation the type of Cross used is also similar. During his stay in Italy, Rubens used a planed-down piece of wood for the stem of the cross—the 'crux immissa'. But shortly after his return and beginning with the Antwerp Elevation, the pole takes on the shape of a tree trunk. This type is part of a long medieval tradition which was especially popular in Germany. It survived into the sixteenth century in works like Hans Baldung Grien's Christ on the Cross with the Virgin and Saints John and Mary Magdalene of c. 1505-7 and Albrecht Dürer's Crucifixion of 1511 for the Large Passion. This medieval cross including vines occurs on at least one occasion in Dutch art in Jacob Cornelisz's Christ on the Cross of 1528 which served as the coat-of-arms for the Amsterdam Rederijkerskamer. The Cross shaped as a tree with the two arms planed down appears earlier in Flemish art, as in a signed drawing by Lambert Lombard, dated 1553, of Christ on the Cross.

In the early sixteenth century, it was common to place Christ on a Cross the staff of which was tree-shaped but planed down around his legs and feet. This type seems to have replaced the staff shaped entirely as a tree; it can be found early in the century in works by Hans Baldung Grien, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden. It also became popular in Antwerp and is present in altarpieces representing multi Figured crucifixions by Pieter Aertsen in 1546 and c. 1554, and by Frans Floris since about 1554. This form for the shaft of the Cross continued to appear during the second half of the sixteenth century in the Netherlands, North
and South. For example, Pieter Aertsen's sons Pieter Pietersz. and Aert Pietersz. working in Haarlem and Amsterdam used it on occasion\(^{23}\) as did Hendrick Goltzius.\(^{23}\) However, it was even more extensively utilized in Antwerp during the last two decades of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth century in engravings by Crispin van de Passe the Elder,\(^{24}\) in designs by Martin de Vos\(^{25}\) and in engravings by the Wierix family.\(^{26}\)

The tree-trunk form often appears in Netherlandish art of the sixteenth century, but Rubens probably used it for a specific reason. Because of his strong predilection for historical truth, it is not impossible that Justus Lipsius' essay of 1595, *De Cruce*, was a factor in determining the shape of Rubens's cross. In this work, Lipsius wrote that the rounded tree trunk was the archaeologically correct form.\(^{27}\) He also said that four nails were the right number according to Roman antiquity, and this is the number present in Rubens's painting.\(^{28}\) Furthermore, by using this shape for the stem of the Cross, Rubens alludes to the long-established idea of the Cross as the *Tree of Life*. That this idea was behind Rubens's tree-trunk form for the Cross is further shown by the fact that he repeated the very same type for his Crucifixion found on the back of the chasuble worn by the priest in the *Last Communion of St Francis of Assisi*.\(^{29}\) This concept of the *Tree of the Cross* comes from John 15:1-7, in the words of Christ, beginning 'I am the true vine'. This became popular in medieval art and was later adapted by the Franciscans with great enthusiasm and by the Counter-Reformation as well.\(^{30}\)

Rubens's single-figured composition with Christ alive on the Cross, his head raised, looking up with imploring eyes, placed in front of a dark sky with the City of Jerusalem below, presents an image not found in Flemish art until the start of the seventeenth century, in the work of the Antwerp-trained artist Geldorp Gortius. Geldorp's *Crucifixion* in Cologne (Fig. 100; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, inv. no. 119467) was probably painted sometime during the restoration of 1597-1602 for the room in the upper storey of the Town Hall.\(^{31}\) Jerusalem is not included in the image, but Geldorp's depiction of Christ's posture, his head glancing up to the right, his dramatic facial expression with imploring eyes, the position of his arms and the form of the Cross bear a striking resemblance to Rubens's painting in Antwerp of around eight to ten years later. There is no documentary evidence that Rubens visited Cologne during the years around 1610-12. And there are no early prints after the *Crucifixion* by Geldorp, who had left Antwerp for Cologne in 1579. The striking similarity between the paintings by Geldorp and Rubens is difficult to explain. Perhaps Rubens visited the Town Hall in Cologne sometime shortly after his return from Italy in 1608. It is also conceivable that both artists used a now-lost prototype executed sometime before 1579 in Antwerp, perhaps by one of Geldorp's teachers, Frans Francken the Elder or Frans Pourbus the Elder. The possibility does exist that both artists independently arrived at the same solution.\(^{32}\)

There are no extant examples of this type of Christ on the Cross\(^{33}\) known to me before the seventeenth century in Netherlandish art where the Saviour is still living and imploring heaven. This type of ecstatic expression, the focal point of the painting, is very much in the spirit of Federico Barocci, whose work Rubens studied when he was in Italy.\(^{34}\) It is especially evident when one compares Rubens's version with Barocci's painting of c. 1604.\(^{35}\) It is also difficult to explain how the first-known Dutch painting of this type by Cornelis van Haarlem relates to this development. Cornelis Cornelisz.'s *Crucifixion*, monogrammed and dated 1600, cannot be connected with the Flemish examples cited above nor with Barocci. It is very likely that he arrived at his solution independently.\(^{36}\)

An oil sketch for Rubens's painting was recorded as having been in the collection of H. de Steenhuyse, sale, 1860, sold for 1500 francs.\(^{37}\)

The Antwerp painting of *Christ Expiring on the Cross* was the starting point for several later Crucifixions executed by unknown followers of Rubens. These works also borrowed motifs from Rubens's design of 1631 for the engraving by Pontius of *Christ on the Cross, Victorious over Death and Sin* (No. 32, Copy 9; Fig. 102). This
combination of elements from two different works by Rubens is seen in a painting from his workshop (Fig. 98; London, Wallace Collection, inv. no. P 71). The influence on this work of Rubens's early Antwerp example is clear in the positioning of Christ's head, in the type of torso, in the rendering of the drapery, in the placement of the legs and in the presentation of the text on the scroll. On the other hand, the vertical emphasis in the arrangement of Christ's thin arms and the landscape below are more closely related to Rubens's Crucifixion of c. 1631.38 A version of the subject from Rubens's workshop now in the Bob Jones University Collection, Greenville, SC (Fig. 97) also contains similar details from both the Antwerp painting and the Pontius engraving but the landscape differs.39 The same can be said for a drawing sold at auction, Amsterdam (Mak van Waay), 3 May 1976, lot 95. This sheet is very close to the Bob Jones painting in Greenville, especially in the rendering of the sky and the inclusion of the skull and pieces of wood to support the base of the Cross. The drawing may be a copy of the Bob Jones painting, or perhaps both were made after a lost composition by Rubens.

3. Mark 15:34.
6. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 192.
11. Cf. the copy of Rubens's lost Elevation of the Cross, Grasse, Chapel of the Municipal Hospital; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, II, pp. 65-68, no. 112, fig. 35.
12. For an example see the 1309 Crucifixion, Cologne, Church of St Maria-im-Kapitol (J.J.M. Timmers, Symboliek en Iconografie der Christelijke Kunst, Roermond—Maastricht, 1947, p. 94, fig. 59).
13. Hollstein (German), II, p. 82, no. 12, repr.
14. Ibid., VII, p. 109, no. 120, repr.
15. Hollstein (Dutch and Flemish), V, p. 37, no. 162, repr.
17. Hollstein (German), II, pp. 81, no. 11, 82, no. 12, 85, no. 50.
18. Repr. in Hollstein (German), VII, pp. 19, no. 23, 109, no. 120, 144, no. 179, 145, no. 80, 148, no. 183, etc.
19. Repr. in Hollstein (Dutch and Flemish), X, p. 216, no. 32.
21. For Floris’s paintings in Arnstadt, Wiesbaden, Städtisches Museum and Zoutleeuw, Church of St Leonard, see Van de Velde, Floris, 1975, I, nos. 55, 79, 81, II, figs. 21, 32, 33.
24. See, for example, Hollstein (Dutch and Flemish), XV, p. 136, no. 78.
30. Ibid.
33. For a later Flemish adaptation of Rubens’s work, see Gaspar de Crayer’s Crucifixion, Ghent, Church of St Martin, discussed in H. Vlieghe, Gaspar de Crayer, I, Brussels, 1972, pp. 170-171, no. A 117, fig. 114.
34. For details, see Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, pp. 52-53 and passim.
35. In Madrid, Prado; see [Cat. Exh.] Mostra di Federico Barocci (Urbino, 1535-1612) (Museo Civico, Bologna, 1975), Bologna, 1975, pp. 210-211, no. 256, repr.
36. Panel. 96 x 69 cm.; monogrammed and dated 1600; whereabouts unknown. PROV. Dealer Douwes, Amsterdam, 1928; photo in The Hague, R.K.D., no. L. 2245.
38. There is a copy of the London Crucifixion in Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 7048.
30a. Christ Expiring on the Cross:
Drawing (Fig. 95)

Black and red chalk on brown paper; 230×300mm.
Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: J.A.G. Weigel, sale, Stuttgart (Gutekunst), 15 May 1883, lot 273, repr. (as Van Dyck).

COPY: Engraving by J.C. Loedel


On the basis of the illustration reproduced in the 1883 sales catalogue, Burchard rightly suggested that this drawing of Christ's head and shoulders was a study by Rubens for the Antwerp Crucifixion (No. 30; Fig. 96).

There was a second study for the Head of Christ listed in the Ottley collection, sale, London (Mrs Scott Jr and Mr T. Philipe), 4 April 1803, lot 57. The Ottley drawing was described as 'very fine' and executed in black chalk. It was probably the sheet exhibited in London, Burlington House, Royal Academy of Arts, WInter Exhibition, 1879, no. 437, as by Rubens and in the J.P. Heseltine collection. Because this drawing was not illustrated in the catalogue, it is impossible to determine its relation, if any, to the Antwerp painting.

31. Christ Expiring on the Cross
(Fig. 93)

Oil on panel; 105 × 76 cm.
Private Collection, Madrid.

PROVENANCE: Cardinal Valenti, sale, Amsterdam, 28 Sept. 1763, lot 14, sold for 1225 florins; Leendert de Neufville, sale, Amsterdam, 1765, bought by Kok for 4,000 florins; Gottfried Winkler, Leipzig, 1768; C. Price, Esq., 1778; G. Hibbert, Esq., 1802; Sir Simon Clarke, Bart, 1829; Sir Simon Clarke, Bart, sale, London (Christie's), 8-9 May 1840, lot 88 (as Van Dyck), bought by Woodin for 57 gs.; Mrs Holloway; A.L. Nicholson, London; José Vigeveno, Amsterdam, 1924; Hitler collection, no. 3242, 1939-45; A.L.G. Vigeveno, sale, London (Sotheby's), 7 July 1976, lot 104, repr.


COPIES:
(1) Painting, Rome, Villa Albani.
(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 35 × 24 cm. PROV. Coll. Delaroff, Sidorow, Lübke; sale, Berlin (Lepke), 16 Nov. 1926, lot 133.

(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 103 x 72.5 cm. PROV. Richmond, Cook Collection, inv. no. 326. EXH. Luton Museum, Old Masters from the Cook Collection, 1951, no. 20.


(8) Painting after Copy 6, whereabouts unknown. PROV. G. Rochlitz, Paris.

(9) Painting, whereabouts unknown. PROV. Dealer A. De Heuvel, Brussels, c. 1950.

(10) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 103 x 66 cm. PROV. Private collection, Düsseldorf.

(11) Painting. Antwerp, Krefirma, 1972; canvas, 108.5 x 73.5 cm.

(12) Painting, whereabouts unknown. PROV. Sale, London (Sotheby's), 7 July 1976, lot 104.


(14), (15), (16), (17), (18), (19), (20), (21)


Christ is nailed to the Cross with his arms stiffly raised in a Y shape. He looks beseechingly up towards heaven. There is no text on the scroll above his head, and he is nailed to the Cross with three spikes. Here Rubens departs from his usual use of four nails in favour of Byzantine and Gothic traditions.1 The tree-trunk type of the Cross is characteristic of Rubens's style after his return from Italy.2 A gentle breeze activates the drapery around Christ's waist, and he is surrounded by a stormy sky. The sun is in the upper left, while in the bottom left there is a hill with a large clump of foliage and a palm tree silhouetted against the sky. Jerusalem is suggested to the right.

Burchard examined the Madrid painting in 1928 and again in 1951, after it had been returned. In the meantime it had been over-cleaned. Burchard also observed a pentimento along the right leg and foot. Originally, they were farther to the left. Burchard believed this painting to be entirely by Rubens and dated it around 1614. Judging from the reproduction in the catalogue of the exhibition in Madrid in 1977, I would agree with Burchard's attribution.

Rubens's impressive and dramatic representation of Christ continues the type he used in his Antwerp Crucifixion of c. 1610-12 (No. 30; Fig. 96). However, there are obvious changes in the Madrid painting. Christ's upward gaze is more passionate, his arms are more vertical and the drapery on the left curves up at the bottom, imparting a greater sense of movement.

The Madrid picture is the basis for Rubens's drawing of c. 1631 of Christ on the Cross, Victorious over Death and Sin in Rotterdam (No. 32; Fig. 101), as well as many seventeenth-century copies cited above. Olsen has identified Rubens's Crucifixion in Pannini's 1749 painting of The Gallery of Cardinal Valenti.3

In Kreuchauff's description of this Crucifixion in 1768, he wrote that the composition has been preserved in Schelte à Boltswert's engraving. However, when one compares Kreuchauff's delineation of this painting with the print, this statement is difficult to maintain. In the beginning of his text, Kreuchauff wrote that Christ is completely turned and stretched out on the post, that his blood streams down
over the white drapery and that his eyes are not completely closed. The two preserved prints of this theme listed in Schneevogt do not correspond to Kreuchauf's account.4

2. See under No. 30.
4. Bolswert executed two engravings of the Crucifixion based upon Rubens's designs. One, after Rubens's Christ in the Toulouse Museum (V.S., p. 44, no. 43; Van den Wijngaert, Prentkunst, 1940, p. 32, no. 43), and the other a frontal composition but with Christ's head falling down to the left (V.S., p. 45, no. 304).

32. Christ on the Cross, Victorious over Death and Sin: Drawing (Fig. 101)

Black chalk, dark grey oil paint, touches of red ink and grey, white and greenish-yellow body-colour, traced for transfer, squared in black chalk, on tan paper; 585 x 367 mm.

Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen. Inv. no. Rubens 3.


COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 46 x 26 cm. PROV. Rome, Duke Bindo Fedi, c. 1588.
2. Painting, Koblenz, Mittel-Rhein Museum; panel, 68.5 x 53.5 cm. LIT. Städtisch-Lang'schen Gemälde-Sammlung zu Coblenz, 1874, no. 97; Schweers, Cat. Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1962, II, p. 839.
4. Painting, M. van der Marck, Roermond; canvas, 90 x 63 cm. [not 17th century].
5. Painting, Darmstadt, Dr G. Mittelstadt, 1963.
7. Painting, Limburg (Belgium), Zolder, Rectory. LIT. Burchard-d'Hulst, Tekeningen, 1956, p. 96.
9. Engraving by Paul Pontius (Fig. 102), dated 1631. LIT. V.S., p. 44, no. 295.
10. Painting, after Copy 9, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 65 x 56 cm. PROV. S. Woodfoorde?, R.A. (as Van Dyck); Antwerp dealer S. Hartveld, 1927; sale, Antwerp (S. Hartveld), 21 Jan. 1929, lot 43.


Christ is nailed to a tall tree-trunk with his arms stretched out on a cross beam above his head which is turned upwards to the right. It is the moment when Jesus cries out 'Father into thy hands I commend my spirit'. On Christ's right, an angel strikes the image of Death holding a sickle, while to Christ's left a second angel holds a monster's wing, representing Sin, which is about to hit him. The lonely scene takes place before a dark and dramatic sky containing the eclipse of the sun in the upper left and the City of Jerusalem below.

Writing to Peiresc on 31 May 1635, Rubens claimed that he had retouched the engraving several times. It is also not impossible that the chalk drawing, given its poor quality, was done by another hand. This sheet was the preparatory design for Pontius' engraving of 1631 (Fig. 102) which Rubens mistakenly dated 1632 in the letter of 1635 to Peiresc. The engraving closely follows the drawing, except that it is slightly wider on the right side. A proof of the print is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (No. 32a; Fig. 103).

By extending Christ's arms vertically above his head, Rubens uses the Y-shaped medieval form which he had utilized for his representations of Christ Dead of the Cross (Nos. 40, 41; Figs. 124, 125). Shortly after the Antwerp Crucifixion (No. 30; Fig. 96), he probably introduced this so-called Jansenist type in the lost Tongerloo altarpiece (No. 33).

Rubens continues his use of the tree-trunk and four nails to fasten Christ to the Cross and he adds another two nails above to attach the scroll. Rubens did not repeat this motif in his painted autograph works of this subject, but it is found in the shop piece in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.

By his own explanation on the proof in Paris (No. 32a; Fig. 103), Rubens has chosen to represent the moment when Christ commends his body to God. It is the instant of his victory over Death and Sin. In this design, Rubens has departed from the usual manner of depicting Christ victorious. In the past, in representations of Christ Triumphant over Death and the Devil, the Saviour was generally rendered as Christ Resurrected standing clean and pure on the symbols of Death, Sin or the Devil. This can be found, for example, in Christ Triumphant of 1590 by Martin de Vos (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten) or the subsequent examples executed by Rubens during the second decade of the seventeenth century and the modello of 1627-30 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. However, in the Crucifixion, Christ hangs on the Cross while the flying angels fight his battle. In the past, angels were often present, carrying chalices in order to collect the Redeemer's blood as it flowed from his wounds. Here, in order to clearly illustrate Rubens's message of victory over Death and Sin, the angels have been changed into fighting forms that assume positions found earlier in Rubens's oeuvre dealing with the triumph of good over evil. Rubens's angel striking death and the configuration on the opposite side which includes Sin are almost direct quotes of the angel to the left of St Michael and the two struggling forms in the bottom left of his own modello of 1620-21 for the Fall of the Rebel Angels (Brussels, Musées Royaux) for the ceiling decoration of the Jesuit church in Antwerp.

Neeffs has suggested that this Crucifixion, without the angels destroying Death and the Devil, was used for the central predella of the large altarpiece representing the Adoration of the Magi, executed for the Church of St John, Mechlin.
2. For the meaning of the City of Jerusalem below and behind Christ, see under p. 34.


4. Ibid. The Rotterdam drawing of 1631 has been dated c. 1610 in G. Schwartz, Rembrandt: His Life, His Paintings, London, 1991, p. 88, fig. 78.

5. One might add that the landscape is closely followed in the Rubens atelier Crucifixion, London, Wallace Collection (Fig. 98).

6. For a discussion of this motif, see under pp. 31, 124-5.

7. See pp. 32-3, for details concerning the nails.

8. Two nails were also used to attach the scroll in Boeitius à Bolswert's engraving of 1631 (Fig. 117) after Rubens's Coup de Lance in Antwerp (No. 37; Fig. 110) and the design for it in the National Gallery, London (No. 37e; Fig. 116). Rubens used one nail in the Antwerp Elevation (No. 20; Fig. 61).


10. This oil sketch was for the high altar of Antwerp's church of the Carmelite Fathers. The altarpiece was executed by Gerard Seghers (Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 224).


12. Martin, Ceiling Paintings, 1968, pp. 56-57, where he also cites other Rubens paintings containing figures in similar positions. Also see Glück—Haber­ditzl, Handzeichnungen, 1928, no. 140. One can also add to these examples, the figure with the raised arm striking Blindness in Rubens's modello for The Triumph of the Church, Prado, Madrid (De Poorter, Eucharist, 1978, I, pp. 327-330, no. 11b, II, figs. 151, 152). This figure moves in a manner akin to Ruben's angel destroying Sin.


32a. Christ on the Cross, Victorious over Death and Sin: Retouched Engraving (Fig. 103)

Black and brown ink, brown wash, white-chalk highlights; 608 × 386 mm. Inscribed in brown ink by Rubens along the lower edge: Luca Cap XXIII Clamans voce' magna IESVS ait Pater in manu­s lacus ('Jesus crying with a loud voice said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Luke 23:46').


PROVENANCE: P-J. Mariette (Paris, 1694-1774), purchased from the latter's estate by Hugues-Adrien Joly, Keeper of the Cabinet des Estampes.


Rubens has touched up the right side of Christ's torso and the trees in the bottom left with brown wash. There is also white-oxidized chalk on the backs and sides of the angels on the right, on the devil, on the right arm of the angel on the left, on the outer edge of the moon and on the trees in the bottom left. The crown of thorns is drawn with brown ink and white chalk. The text below is written in brown ink above the traces of pencil. The letters on the scroll above Christ's head are also done in brown ink.

33. Christ on the Cross

Oil on canvas; c. 344 × 172 cm.
Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: ? Duke of Buckingham, York House, 1627; ? purchased for the abbey at Tongerloo, 1648; probably destroyed by the French army when they devastated the abbey in 1794.

CATALOGUE NO. 33.

In general, Rubens's types of the Crucifixion can be divided into three groups: those that follow the Antwerp model (No. 30; Fig. 96), those that depend upon the Madrid rendition (No. 31; Fig. 93) and those that combine elements from both, such as his design of c. 1630-31 in Rotterdam for Pontius' print of 1632 (No. 32; Figs. 101, 102).

In contrast to the thinner and more delicate rendering of Christ's body, which can be associated with Rubens's work beginning with the Crucifixion of c. 1614 in Madrid, stand the more robust figures of Christ executed just after Rubens's return from Italy. His Christ in the Antwerp Crucifixion is a more solid, idealized and three-dimensional form than in the later representations beginning with the Madrid picture. In this way, the Antwerp example is more reminiscent of antique sculpture such as the Belvedere Torso and the Laocoon, which Rubens studied and drew. This use of antique sculpture to create a paradigm of form is evident also in Rubens's Christ in the Elévation of the Cross of 1610-11 (No. 20; Fig. 61). Although not as skilfully executed, this same quality is present in several Crucifixions painted in Rubens's atelier: Greenville, SC, Bob Jones University Collection (Fig. 97);2 London, Wallace Collection (Fig. 98),3 which must date after 1632 because the landscape is almost an exact copy of the one in the Pontius print executed in that year (Fig. 102), also a drawing sold in Amsterdam (Mak van Waay), 3 May 1976, lot 95. All of these copies are based in some way on Rubens's Crucifixion in Antwerp. This is especially evident in the rendering of Christ's body and his drapery. On the other hand, these copies also appear to have borrowed motifs from Rubens's Crucifixion of c. 1614 in Madrid and his study for the 1632 Pontius engraving. This is especially noticeable in the more steeply raised arms using the medieval or so-called Jansenist prototype, while the sky has become more dramatic. Rubens's change toward a more dramatic landscape and the introduction of the Jansenist type of Christ, beginning with the Madrid picture, is present in all of the Crucifixions associated with Rubens after c. 1614. It is possible that the lost Tongerloo painting is reflected in one or more of these copies. Because the Bob Jones painting and the drawing sold in Amsterdam derive from both the Antwerp and Madrid types, it is possible that they might closely reflect the destroyed Rubens painting for Tongerloo. Furthermore, the drawing is very close to the Bob Jones painting, except for slight changes in the landscape. Consequently, it is conceivable that these two works might even be copies of the picture which Rubens originally proposed to Sir Dudley Carleton in the letter of 28 April 1618. In this letter, Rubens discussed the details of an exchange of his paintings for antique sculpture in the Carleton collection. At the end of the letter, the artist included a list of these pictures and their value. The letter states that the works were all in Rubens's house and the fifth item was described as follows: 'Fiorini 500. Crucifisso grande al pari del naturale stimato forse la meglio cosa chio facessi grandi...12 x 6 piedi' (500 florins. Crucifixion, life size, considered perhaps the best thing I have ever done...12 x 6 feet). Carleton wrote back to Rubens on 7 May 1618 saying that the Crucifixion was too large for the small houses of the Netherlands and England, and that he would instead rather take the painting of St Sebastian.5

Mathieu Anthonissen, the guardian of the Refuge in Antwerp sponsored by the Abbey of Tongerloo purchased, for 590 guilders, a Crucifixion measuring 12' x 6'. This painting was presented sometime before 27 November 1648, to Abbot Wichmans at Tongerloo. Rooses has suggested that the picture was acquired at the sale of the Buckingham collection in Antwerp in 1648. This cannot have been the case. The Buckingham paintings, gems and jewels arrived in Antwerp, via Amsterdam, around September 1648. Judging from the documents recently published by Duverger, it becomes clear that the duke tried desperately to preserve his father's collection in its entirety. The duke succeeded until the summer of 1650 when he was forced to sell. The works were not dispersed at a public auction but privately. The major portion was acquired by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. On the other hand, because the
Tongerloo Crucifixion format was so large, it could be identical with the painting Rubens had proposed to sell to Sir Dudley Carleton in 1618 but Carleton had refused on account of the size. Furthermore, there is no evidence that this picture was sent to England, or that it was the Crucifixion in Buckingham's collection at York House in 1635. 9


34. Christ on the Cross Addressing His Mother, St John and St Mary Magdalen: Oil Sketch (Fig. 104)

Oil on panel; arched at top and spandrels at sides are covered with plain brown paint; 51 × 38.5 cm. Antwerp, Rockoxhuis.


(13) Engraving attributed to J.B. Barbé. LIT. 
V.S., p. 47, no. 325.


Christ Saviour is secured to the Cross with four nails and placed in the centre of the composition. The nails, contrary to Rubens's other representations of this theme, pierce the centre of Christ's hands and not the area between the wrists and the palms. His arms are spread out in a modified Y position continuing the medieval form which Rubens used so often in his earlier works. Christ's body is unblemished and his head, without a crown of thorns, inclines to his right. The Saviour seems to be in communication with the Virgin and St John. Neeffs' engraving after this modello is inscribed 'ECCE MATER TUA. JOAN 19', which clearly informs us of Rubens's source. In John 19:25-27, Christ Speaks from the Cross to the standing Mary and John saying: 'Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!'. St Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the Cross to the right and her two arms embrace it as she kisses Christ's left foot. Just to the right of Christ is a mounted Roman soldier in full armour talking with a turbaned and bearded man further to the right. Between and slightly behind them there is a head of a man with intense eyes, holding a lance and wearing a fur cap. A bareheaded soldier is placed to the right of the horse's head and supports himself upon a spear. He looks up ardently at Christ. To the former's right Rubens has placed a bearded, armoured Roman soldier standing sideways with his left arm akimbo and his right holding a spear. He, too, stares off in deep concentration. Rubens has included a bridge and a tower in the lower left background. The sky is cloudy and dark and on the upper left the moon passes over the sun.

The erect postures of the Virgin and St John and the placement of Mary Magdalen at the foot of the Cross is an arrangement often used in late sixteenth-century engravings of the Crucifixion. However, the Virgin and St John were usually placed on opposite sides of the Cross.1

Rubens, following John 19:25, does not depict the Virgin fainting ('spasimo') but standing erect, as was mentioned in Franciscan literature.2 According to Knipping, the majority of seventeenth-century writers described the Virgin as standing erect. This also appears to have become firmly established in engravings published during the last quarter of the sixteenth century and is continued in the seventeenth century by Rubens and others. Rubens seems to have first shown the Virgin in this posture in the 1616 Missale Romanum illustration engraved by Cornelis Galle (Fig. 106).3

Rubens's modello is fully coloured, and because of this, it was most likely a study for a larger painting. Burchard believed that it was originally made as a study for the altarpiece in the Chapel of the Holy Cross of the Parochial Church of St Michael in Ghent. The archives of St Michael's, published in part by Ph. Kervyn de
Volkaersbeke, tell us that the church administration wanted Rubens to execute this commission. In 1627, the priest, a certain Bauters, ordered a painting for 800 guilders from Rubens to decorate the aforementioned chapel and stipulated that it should be XIII feet high (approximately 417 cm.). However, for unknown reasons, Rubens never completed this commission. Perhaps the work was not finished because of his diplomatic missions to Spain in 1628 and to England in 1629-30. Van Dyck then received the commission and his picture (Fig. 107) hangs in the Chapel today. He was paid 800 guilders sometime between 23 July 1629 and 25 July 1638, probably closer to 1629-30, by which time the painting must have been completed. Van Dyck has followed Rubens's arrangement of the figures with Christ in the centre, the Virgin and John to the left, the soldiers to the right, Mary Magdalen embracing the foot of the Cross, and the eclipse in the upper left. Yet Van Dyck's interpretation has lost the emotional impact of Rubens's oil sketch.

Neeffs's engraving after Rubens's oil sketch (Fig. 105) contains two important iconographic changes. The engraver has added a crown of thorns and used three instead of four nails.

A second Crucifixion (Fig. 108), about half the size of the Rockox painting and attributed to Rubens, also depicts Christ addressing the Virgin, St John and St Mary Magdalen. This small panel was formerly owned by the J.M.B. Guttmann Galleries in Los Angeles and is now in a private collection, New York. The Saviour is in the centre of the composition and is attached to the Cross with four spikes. As in the Rockox picture, each spike pierces the centre of his hands, which is unusual for Rubens. In the left margin, St Peter holds an inverted cross and the keys, while behind him and to the left is St James the Major wearing a pilgrim's hat and holding a staff. To the right of St James, stands St Philip supporting a cross on his shoulder. St Mary Magdalen kneels and embraces the foot of the Cross with her right arm and with the other Christ's left leg. Opposite her, the Virgin, with a sword plunged in her side, sinks to the ground and looks up at Christ. She is supported by St John who, in profile stares mournfully up at the Saviour. In the bottom-right corner, the kneeling St Francis looks up at Christ. A crowned figure stands above St Francis holding a sceptre and possibly an orb. This might be an emperor or, as suggested by Held, perhaps King David.

To his right is the helmeted St George carrying a flag and to his right stands St Andrew supporting his attribute, the diagonal cross. The scene is placed in a highly finished and detailed painted frame of a type not found in Rubens's autographed oeuvre.

M. Jaffé was the first to attribute this picture to Rubens. He based his conclusion upon a relationship with Rubens's bozzetti for the Triumph of the Eucharist, in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. The Cambridge bozzetti are similar in size, and they are also framed by elaborate architectural members but of a completely different type.

Stylistically, the Crucifixion is extremely crowded, and the figures are placed in an unclear space. In both the Cambridge bozzetti and the Crucifixion, the participants are arranged in a stage-like space. However, the figures in the Cambridge bozzetti move easily in space. They wear loose and free draperies made up of a variety of shapes created by lively and varied brush strokes. The Crucifixion is marked by a flatness of form and a lack of variation in the drapery. The anatomical details such as the heads, hands and feet lack the verve and spirit of those found in the Cambridge bozzetti. Christ's body is flat and the parts poorly articulated.

Corresponding to these stylistic problems are some inconsistencies in the iconography which Rubens would never have permitted. We know that he was a devoted worshipper of the cult of the Virgin, and that he carefully considered his iconographic representations of her. In this small Crucifixion, the Virgin is collapsing at the foot of the Cross and is portrayed with a sword in her side—the Mater Dolorosa. Such representations of the Virgin with a sword in her side frequently occur, but not in the Crucifixion. She has been depicted with her side pierced by a sword or swords when seated on a mound before an empty cross, when supporting Christ on her lap in front of a vacant cross, when standing alone or when seated and
enframed by scenes of the Passion.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, the Virgin sinking down to the ground in sorrow and not standing erect in the Crucifixion was, as far as I know, not a formulation used by Rubens. It is also of interest to note that this 'spasimo' of the Virgin was not part of Franciscan ideals.\textsuperscript{15} They stressed the text of John, 19:26, which said that she was 'standing near the Cross'. Because Rubens was exceptionally careful in the iconographic content of his works, it is hard to believe that he would include the collapsing Virgin in a picture containing St Francis or in a painting that may have been commissioned by a Franciscan monastery.\textsuperscript{16}

Because of the stylistic weaknesses of this small panel and its iconographic inconsistencies, I would suggest that it is not by Rubens but by some other later Antwerp artist in his style, perhaps Abraham van Diepenbeeck?

A third Crucifixion (in Paris, Louvre), has been attributed to Rubens. But as proposed by Burchard, Glück and the 1977 Louvre catalogue, it is by Anthony van Dyck.\textsuperscript{17}

1. See, for example, the engravings by the Wierix family illustrated in Knipping, Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, pls. 38-39.
5. The extract from the register of 1627 reads as follows: 'Inschelices is in gevolghe van de voorgae ende resolutie by lasten veld door mynheer den pasleur Bauters besteed aan Sr. Pnuel Rubens, tot Antwerpen, het maakten ende schilderen vande Auctaer tasten capelle van H. Cruysse, totter hoochde van de Kruysse, totter hoochde van de hertuuk des H. Smaanne en paert des H. Smaanne, ende deerheen door de grooten leen heech van tuercke, voor de somme van acht honderd gulden' (Ph. Kervyn de Volkaersbeke, op. cit., p. 93, n. 1).
14. For examples, see Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, figs. 775, 779-790.
16. For the suggestion that this painting might have been commissioned by the Franciscan Order, see Madrid, Palacio Velasquez, Pedro Pablo Rubens, 1977-78, p. 99.

35. Christ on the Cross with the Virgin, St John and the Magdalen

Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: Commissioned by the Infanta Isabella in Brussels as a present for Sir George Calvert, Secretary of State to James I of England and delivered to London in 1622; 1625 Sir George presented the Crucifixion to the Duke of Buckingham at York House.

The existence of this painting was discovered by Professor A.J. Loomie, Fordham University, in a series of letters preserved in the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna. This correspondence between Jean Baptiste van Male, the Infanta Isabella's diplomatic agent in London and Charles della Faille, premier secretary at her court in Brussels, brings to light the circumstances surrounding this hitherto unknown painting.

On 29 October 1621, Van Male wrote to Della Faille that an important English gentleman would like to obtain a Crucifixion with Our Lady, St John and the Magdalen measuring one aulne high (69.5 cm.). One also learns that this painting was to be a gift, that it would enhance Brussels's position in England and that it was to be paid for by the Treasury in Brussels. Throughout the correspondence, the Englishman's name is never mentioned except in code form. However, Loomie has identified him as Sir George Calvert, Secretary of State at King James's Court. Van Male, on his own, asks if Della Faille could arrange to have Rubens make the picture. On 3 December 1621, Van Male wrote again to Della Faille assuring him that the patron was a Catholic and owned several paintings of Our Lady and other saints which he greatly valued. On 25 May 1622, Della Faille wrote from Brussels that the Infanta Isabella had Rubens send the painting to him and that it was between fifteen and sixteen pieds high. Della Faille goes on to say that the picture was more suitable for a church than for a private hall or small room. This letter was followed by two more from Van Male, dated 4 June 1622 and 1 October 1622, describing the arrangements for shipment to England and the great delight of the collector upon receiving the painting.

The painting arrived at Calvert's house in late September 1622. By 1624, Calvert was out of favour at the Court in London because of the Duke of Buckingham's intrigues. In order to reconcile himself with the Duke of Buckingham, Calvert resigned his office as Secretary of State and presented the Rubens Crucifixion to the Duke in 1625. In a letter to Buckingham dated 23 January 1625, Calvert, among other things, described the painting as being 'large' and approximately '10 foote deapth and some 7 or 8 foote brade'. What happened to Rubens's work after it was presented to the Duke of Buckingham is not known. It is not listed among the Buckingham paintings in the 1635 inventory of the Duke's pictures, nor is it cited in the list of Buckingham paintings sold at auction in Antwerp in 1649-50.

36. Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves (Fig. 109)

Oil on panel; 295 × 190 cm.

**Toulouse, Musée des Augustins.**

**PROVENANCE:** Main altar, Church of the Capuchins (Church of St Anthony), Antwerp; removed to Paris in 1794; Paris or Versailles (1795-1802/3); dispatched to the Toulouse museum in 1802 or 1803.


(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown, larger than the original. **PROV.** Church of Capuchins (Church of St Anthony), Antwerp. LIT. M. Rooses, in *Rubens-Bulletijn,* V, 1910, p. 294, no. 295.

(3) Painting, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts; canvas, 254 × 137 cm. **PROV.** Acquired prior to

(4) Painting, Glückstadt (Kreis Steinburg Church); canvas, 176 x 114 cm.; dated on the frame 1655 and inscribed with the donor’s name Knut Lorenzen.


(7) Anonymous engraving, Christ on Cross and landscape. Lit. V.S., p. 44, no. 293.


As he had done earlier, Rubens nailed the Sav­our to a tree-shaped staff and placed his arms above his head in a modified Y-shaped medie­val form. He is crowned with thorns, and, above, is the titulus inscribed INRI.1 The position of Christ’s head and his facial expression are similar to that found in Rubens’s Christ on the Cross, Victorious over Death and Sin (No. 32; Fig. 101). This suggests that Rubens has portrayed the moment when Christ exclaims ‘Father into thy hands I commend my spirit’. Rubens has rendered Christ’s torso without wounds, but blood does pour forth from the penetration of his hands and feet by the four
nails. Here Rubens repeats the antique formula espoused by Lipsius, and once again he places two of the spikes between the wrist and the palm as he had done earlier, suggesting a connection with the Turin shroud. Christ's drapery does not continue around the staff of the Cross as in the Coup de Lance (No. 37; Fig. 110) but is tucked in behind his back. However, as in the latter, a rope encircles his waist and continues around the wood.

Christ is flanked by the two thieves, Dismas and Gesmas. As he did in the Coup de Lance, Rubens employs both the Roman use of ropes and the Counter-Reformation use of nails to secure the thieves to the cross. The bad thief, Laocoön-like in his monumentality and dramatic pattern, is almost the mirror image of the good thief in the Coup de Lance.

Below the thieves, Rubens has placed St John the Evangelist on the left edge, while to his right the Virgin, in profile, reaches up toward Christ. The Virgin is a type found in Rubens's drawing of a Young Woman with Raised Arms, which was done after life and used in the painting of c. 1635, The Massacre of the Innocents, and the oil sketch of c. 1634, The Apotheosis of the Archduchess Isabella. On the other hand, St John the Evangelist, with his hands covered by drapery and head bent forward in profile supported by his covered hands, is a type which Rubens began using c. 1615-20. He appears first in the Missale Romanum of 1616 (Fig. 106), then later in a sketch for The Last Communion of St Francis of Assisi, and finally in the Coup de Lance of 1620.

St Mary Magdalen kneels to the left of the Cross and supports herself by placing both arms around the foot of the staff. Her extraordinary love for Christ is sensitively rendered as she looks at him. Rubens has placed two kneeling soldiers to the right of the cross. Burchard has suggested that these soldiers are a close variation on the pair in the lower-right foreground of Titian's General Del Vasto Addressing his Soldiers of 1540. The figure with the left arm curved back toward the head and the right arm behind the back is also present in the lower right of the Beheading of St Paul, Rubens's sketch of c. 1635-37.

Until 1900 this painting had been dated c. 1613, the year the Church of the Capuchins was inaugurated. By the turn of the century, however, it was clear that this freely painted scene must have been executed c. 1635. It was not painted during the early years of the second decade of the seventeenth century, when Rubens's brush was hard and precise. It is also evident that Rubens did not complete this work as suggested in 1765 in the Beschrijvinge, where it was proposed that Jordaens finished the commission. It seems to me that Rubens painted the figure of Christ, the head and the hands of St Mary Magdalen, the arm, head and armour of the centurion in the right foreground and the helmet of the soldier behind him. The thieves are Rubens's concept, but they were probably not executed by him, perhaps by Jordaens. The Virgin and St John are so damaged that it is impossible to tell whether they were originally by Rubens or painted after his design by a member of the shop such as Jordaens.

1. For the inconsistent use of this derogatory symbol in the 17th century, see Mâle, Art Religieux, 1932, p. 273.  

37. The Crucifixion (Coup de Lance) (Fig. 110)

Oil on panel; 429 × 311 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 297.

PROVENANCE: High altar of the Church of the
Recollects (St Francis) in Antwerp; removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); given to the Antwerp museum in 1816.

COPIES: (1) Painting by Pieter van Lint, whereabouts unknown. LIT. Duverger, Musson, 1968, p. 187.

(2) Painting, Dordrecht, dealer; canvas, 125 × 91.5 cm.

(3) Painting, Douai Museum; canvas, 135 × 92 cm. PROV. Old prison of the City of Douai, lit. Douai, Musée. Catalogue des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Dessin, Gravure et Lithographie Exposés dans les Galeries du Musée, Douai, 1869, p. 139, no. 337.


(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 85.5 × 59 cm. prov. Sale, Amsterdam (Frederik Muller & Cie), 27 Oct. 1927, lot VII.

(7) Painting, whereabouts unknown; 56 × 45 cm. prov. Sale, London (Sotheby’s), 17 April 1957, lot 181 (as Delacroix after Rubens).


(9) Painting, Nîmes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. IP 401; 72 × 55 cm.

(10) Painting, Christ on the Cross Flanked by the Virgin and St John, figure of Christ is copy of Antwerp Christ, Weesp, M. de Weerd; panel (?), 88 × 64 cm.

(11) Painting, Tongeren, Commissie van de Openbare Onderstand, on loan to the Stedelijk Museum, inv. no. 9; canvas, 148.5 × 127.5 cm. prov. Tongeren, Beguinage; since 1934 in St Jacobsgasthuis; since 1963 on loan to the Museum. EXH. 100 jaar Sint-Amandsberg. Avonden in het Begijnhof, Sint-Amandsberg, 1972, no. 33; Kunst en Oudheden in Limburg Z., Sint-Truiden, 1973, no. 67. LIT. A. Dusar, Limburgs kunstbezit van prehistorie tot classicisme, Hasselt, 1970, p. 239.

(12) Painting, Paris, Paul Botte, 1962 (as Gericault after Rubens); 195 × 130 cm.

(13) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 48.5 × 37 cm. prov. Wuppertal, M. Heuscher, sale, 30 Jan. 1963, lot 82. LIT. Ehrlich White, Delacroix, 1967, pp. 44, 46, no. 8, fig. 17 (as Delacroix).


(15) Painting, private collection, St Amandes-Eaux, 1914.


(17) Painting, Ecaussinnes-Lalaing, Church of St Aldegonda, second half of 18th century or start of 19th century; canvas, c. 200 × 140 cm. (with frame). LIT. J.M. Lequeux, Province de Hainaut, Canton de Soignies. Répertoire Photographique du Mobilier des Sanctuaires de Belgique, Brussels, 1979, p. 36.

(18) Painting, attributed to H. Leys, Brussels. B. van der Schelden, 1959.

Aufgaben der Galeriebeamten', Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst, N.F., XXI, 2, 1910, p. 291 (as Rubens); K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, p. 453 (as after the Antwerp Coup de Lance); Cat. Vienna, Gemäldegalerie, 1938, p. 52, no. 876 (as Van Dyck); Cat. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1973, p. 59, pl. 90 (as Van Dyck).


(21) Painting, Head of Good Thief, Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Carnegie Institute, Museum of Art (as P.P. Rubens); panel, 35.75 x 36.2 cm. PROV. Berlin, R. Ernestei. LIT. Knackfuss, Rubens, 1907, p. 82, fig. 67; H.B. Teilmann, 'Head of a Man by Peter Paul Rubens', Carnegie Magazine, L, March 1976, pp. 108-117, repr.; Bodart, Rubens, 1985, p. 185, no. 647 (as Rubens); Jaffé, Rubens, 1989, p. 251, no. 544 (as Rubens).

(22) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 102 x 73 cm. PROV. Sale, Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts), 15-17 June 1982, no. 756, repr.

(23) Painting, Nantes, Coll. Y.C. Henoret; copper, 24 x 34 cm.

(24) Painting, Geraardsbergen, Hospital Sacristy, inv. no. Os 16; canvas, 240 x 178 cm. PROV. Probably from Geraardsbergen, Sint-Margriet-begijnhoflaan. LIT. Van der Heyde e.a., Kunstpatrimonium Geraardsbergen. Abdijs-hospitaalstadhuis. Schilderijen, Geraardsbergen, 1985, pp. 82-83, repr.

(25) Painting, attributed to W. van Herp, Crésy-sur-Aix (Savoie), Château de Loche, R. de Mouxy de Loche; canvas, 130 x 93 cm.


(27) Painting, Leiden, O.F. Kooreman, 1965; canvas, 116 x 147 cm.

(28) Painting, Almelo, J.H. Grobben, 1964; canvas, c. 112 x 89 cm.

(29) Painting, Tegelen (Venlo), L. Bizmans-Franssen; panel, 145 x 120 cm.

(30) Painting, Denver, Colorado, The Denver Art Museum; copper, 40 x 31 cm.

(31) Painting, St Francis of Assisi Kneeling in Adoration before the Crucified Christ, Vaduz, Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein, inv. no. 60; panel 78 x 47 cm. PROV. Vienna, Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein. LIT. Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, III, p. 333, no. 112 (as Van Dyck); Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 104, no. 305 (as Rubens); E. Dillon, Rubens, London, 1909, p. 108, pl. XLVIII (as Rubens); K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, p. 170 (as Rubens); K.d.K. Van Dyck, 1931, p. 27 (as Van Dyck?); Seilern, Corrigenda and Addenda, 1971, p. 67, fig. 72 (as Rubens or Van Dyck).

(32) Drawing by E. Delacroix of right half, Hanover NH, Dartmouth College, Hood Museum of Art, inv. no. 962.109; pen, ink and wash, 206 x 146 mm., inscribed ‘E.D.’ in bottom left of centre. PROV. Acquired by the Museum in 1962. LIT. Treasures of the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, New York, 1985, p. 88, no. 68, repr.

(33) Drawing by E. Delacroix of arms and legs, Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, inv. no. 62.353; pen, brush, brown ink, 215 x 322 mm. PROV. Paris, E. Delacroix; Pierre Geismar, sale, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 15 Nov. 1928, lot 11; Georges Aubrey, sale, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 11 March 1933, lot 40; Washington DC, John S. Thacher; New London, Conn., Mr and Mrs Winslow Ames. EXH. De David à Manet, Gallery Balzac, Paris, Feb. 1924, no. 97; Dessins et
CATALOGUE NO. 37.


(39) Engraving (Fig. 117) by Boetius à Bolswert; 1631; 604 x 428 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 336.

(40) Engraving by F. Ragot. LIT. V.S., p. 48, no. 334.

(41) Engraving by an unknown artist and published by T. Nolpe. LIT. V.S., p. 48, no. 335.

(42) Engraving by Campion. LIT. V.S., p. 48, no. 336.

(43) Anonymous engraving, published by Franciscus van den Enden. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 337.
(44) Engraving, in reverse, by B. Kilian. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 338.
(45) Engraving, in reverse, by M. Aubert. 1722. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 339.
(47) Engraving by Tringham, Antwerp, Rubenshuis, inv. no. P 1010.
(49) Engraving by Ger. Van der Gucht. LIT. M. Rooses, in Oeuvre, 1886-92, IX, p. 246, no. 12.
(50) Lithograph by D.J. Desrîchez and Gérard van Genk. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 98.

**LITERATURE:**


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Christ with long hair and a beard is crowned with thorns. His head is falling to the left. He is dead on the Cross. His right side has been pierced by Longinus's lance. On Christ's right and left are the two thieves, Dismas and Gestas, writhing in agony. Rubens combines the Roman tradition of tying the thieves to the cross with the Counter-Reformation tradition of nail-
ing them to the cross. A soldier, standing on a ladder, is about to break the legs of the bad thief. This action was explained by Lipsius, who wrote that the breaking of the victim’s bones is a special type of execution, especially ‘brutal and vile’. A Jewish custom made it mandatory for the crucified to be taken down from the Cross and buried before nightfall. Consequently, the process of death was hurried along. Down below and to the left a mounted soldier rests on his pawing horse and watches the tragic event. St John the Evangelist, the Virgin, and Mary Cleophas stand on the opposite side. In the centre, at the foot of the cross, kneels the beautiful and emotional Mary Magdalen with arms raised. Behind her to the left and below the hill stand two spectators, a young man and an elderly turbaned figure seen from the chest up. Behind them is a vague indication of Jerusalem in the distance. On the far left and behind the horsemen two spears are visible. The sky is dark because the sun, in the upper left, is covered by the moon.

The Saviour is secured to the Cross with four nails, as was Rubens’s custom. His arms are spread out in a Y-shape and not raised vertically. By doing this Rubens uses the form of the early Antwerp Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61) and Christ Expiring on the Cross (No. 30; Fig. 96). He also includes the titulus with three languages. Contrary to his previous crucifixions, Christ’s drapery is no longer a small covering but is more ample and encircles the staff of the Cross. This covering also serves to support the body—as does the rope around his waist, which was to be repeated in Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves of c. 1635 in Toulouse (No. 36; Fig. 109). The tree-trunk shape of the Cross is a clear allusion to the idea of the Tree of Life which Rubens has referred to in his earlier works.

In the representation, Rubens has carefully followed the text of John 19:32-34 which reads: ‘The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and straightway came out blood and water’. This image of Christ being stabbed on his right side has a long history in art beginning with the Rabula Gospels in 586 AD. In ancient literature and according to the Church Fathers, the Doctors and Theologians, the wound symbolized the birth of the Church in the same way that Eve was born from Adam’s side. Furthermore, the wound denotes the opening of the door of life out of which came the Sacraments of the Church without which one could not enter the true life. The blood flowing from the wound is stressed by Rubens as he clearly depicts the moment of the withdrawal of the spear.

Rubens, faithful to the text of John 19:25, includes the three Marys. Although there was a long tradition of representing her in a collapsed state at this moment in history, the Virgin is seen standing as described in John and in Franciscan literature. Her position is reminiscent of the one she assumed on the left wing of the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61), which was also used in Van Dyck’s (?) Crucifixion of c. 1617 in the Louvre. St Mary Magdalen, kneeling at the foot of the Cross, follows a long-established tradition. Yet the heartfelt piety and the love for Christ in her face and gestures is thoroughly Counter-Reformation in spirit and only achieved with such a high degree of believable passion by Rubens. The weeping St John is a type that Rubens had worked out earlier but turned toward Christ in Christ Dead on the Cross (Fig. 106) for the Missale Romanum of 1616. The same figure is also present on a sheet of Studies of Monks, Cardinals and a Woman, on the verso of the drawing of c. 1618 in Antwerp, Stedelijk Prentenkabinet. Above, on the right, the agitated and dramatic movement of the bad thief, with head raised and arms tied behind his back, suggests a more credible rendering of the exaggerated and mannered figures of the sort present in the work of Marten van Heemskerck. Rubens’s bad thief, as found in Van Heemskerck, has a monumental character similar to the Laocoon, which Rubens had copied and later translated into pictorial images on more than one occasion. Burchard has suggested that the horses in the Coup de Lance recall those in Titian’s Adoration of the Magi of c. 1560 (Madrid, Prado), while the motif of the ladder and the
half-length figures in the distance point to Tintoretto’s *Crucifixion* of 1568 (Venice, San Cassiano). Janson also sees a connection with Tintoretto’s San Cassiano painting in the presentation of the three Crosses and their placement in depth.12

Rubens’s Christ is arranged on a diagonal with arms outstretched, his hair falling on the left, wearing a crown of thorns and with his feet slightly overlapping. In this way he is similar to Rubens’s representation of Christ in *St Francis of Assisi in Adoration Before the Crucified Christ* of c. 1618, preserved in a copy in Vaduz, Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein.13 Rubens also used a diagonal composition for his drawing of *Christ Crucified with the Two Thieves* of c. 1616 in London, British Museum (Fig. 118).14 The figures, however, are posed in an entirely different manner.15 The position of the horse’s head in the left foreground will be used again by Rubens in the background of the lost *Martyrdom of St Paul*, known from the oil sketch.16 One might also add that Jordaens used the figure of Christ for his *Crucifixion* in Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts.17

Rubens must have had some help from his atelier in the completion of this altarpiece. The uneven quality in the rendering of some of the figures seems to show at least one other hand at work. This can be seen in the figures of St Mary Cleophas and the two spectators at the foot of the Cross.18 It is also possible that St John the Evangelist, the Virgin and the soldier on the ladder were not painted by Rubens but touched up by him, especially the faces. Longinus’s head was probably painted by Rubens, while his horse and his mounted colleague in front of him were by Van Dyck. The latter, with reason, has been given credit for having executed a large share of this composition.19 Müller Hofstede believes that Van Dyck executed the entire picture, which was, however, planned by Rubens.20 Burchard maintained that Van Dyck painted the Virgin, St John, St Mary Magdalen and the heads in the middle distance behind and at the foot of the Cross. He viewed them as similar in concept to those found in Van Dyck’s Louvre *Crucifixion*.21 One might also add that the same can be said for Van Dyck’s *Christ on the Cross with Two Thieves* in Mechlin, Cathedral of St-Rombouts.22

Nicolaas Rockox commissioned the picture for the high altar of the Franciscan church (Minderbroederskerk), Antwerp, and paid for it as well as for the construction of the Altar. We know that on 14 September 1619, Melchior van Boven, an Antwerp sculptor, contracted with the master stone cutter from Namur, Jean Brigade, for the delivery of the stone for the high altar at a price of 1,300 guilders.23 The architectural structure containing the *Coup de Lance* was a simple portico standing on two pedestals and made up of red, black and white marble. The bottom pedestal contained two blank spaces for the coats-of-arms of Nicolaas Rockox and his wife Adriana Perez. There was a small niche in the plain predella below. The painting was flanked by two composite columns and two pilasters. The entablature above was decorated with medallions and an angel’s head with garlands and cornucopias. St Andrew carrying a cross and an open book kneels to the left on a volute, and on the right volute, St John kneels with an eagle and an open book. Between the two saints, a socle, flanked by consoles, contains a sculpture of the Virgin who stands on a crescent and holds a crucifix in her right hand and a lily branch in her left. She is crowned with a fan-shaped halo containing nine stars.24 The completed work was presented to the church in 1620. The inscription on the left side of the pedestal supporting the columns reads: ‘Hanc Christo posuit Consul Roccoxius aram, Expressit tabulam Rubeniana manus. 1620’. The text on the right or Epistle side says: ‘Seu dextram artificis, dantis seu pectora cernas, Nil genio potuit nobiliore dari. 1620’.

Rubens’s composition appears to have had a very strong attraction for Eugène Delacroix. We know that he visited Belgium in 1838 and again in 1850. During his stay in Brussels from 6 July to 14 August 1850, he made several excursions to Antwerp. Delacroix’s *Journal* entries of 10 and 11 August inform us that he went to Antwerp to study the works of Rubens, and that he was attracted to Rubens’s *Coup de Lance* so much that he made at least five drawings, a pastel and possibly a painting after the composition.25 Several
of these designs were made directly in front of the Rubens, while others were executed from memory.26 It is very likely that the drawing in the Hood Museum was one of those copied directly from the original. The quick, sketchy, lively, scribble-like application of the pen which simply indicates the major shapes and forms, suggests the work of an artist making notes in front of a painting. The same can be said for the studies in Chicago and Paris. On the other hand, the more detailed and worked out rendering of the forms in the Pierpont Morgan drawing and the Louvre copy in pastels suggest that they were done from memory but aided by the sketches made in Antwerp.27 It is likely that the drawing of Christ in Bremen was also executed in Delacroix’s atelier—this time not from memory but after Boetius à Bolswert’s print of Rubens’s Coup de Lance (Fig. 117). In this sketch, as in the print but not in the painting, Christ’s right arm is shorter, his drapery extends beyond his body and appears to be blown by a gentle breeze, blood drips down from the wound and his right hand is pierced by a spike placed in the palm. All of these copies by Delacroix testify to his deep interest in Rubens’s ability to create dramatic, emotional and monumental figures. Delacroix, the supreme Rubeniste, translates the seventeenth-century idiom into a nineteenth-century style which is less detailed and even more suggestive in its dramatic impact.

1. J. Hewitt, The Use of the Nails in the Cross, Cambridge, Mass., 1932, pp. 40-44; Mille, Art Religieux, 1932, p. 275. Rubens did the same thing in Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves, Toulouse (No. 36; Fig. 109); see also Glen, Rubens, 1977, p. 59.
6. Ibid., p. 19.
7. Ibid.

37a. The Crucifixion (Coup de Lance): Drawing (Fig. 112)

Pen and brown ink; 206 × 164 mm. Inscribed bottom right of centre P.P.R., partially cut, a thin piece of paper was added at a later date to the left-hand margin.—Verso: figure of Christ and outline of another, possibly the bad thief; stamp with mark of Museum Boymans, Rotterdam. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen. Inv. no. Rubens 4.

PROVENANCE: E.J.O. Boymans (Rotterdam, 1767-1847); bequeathed by him to the City of Rotterdam.
EXHIBITED: Wereldtentoonstelling voor koloniën, zeevaart en Oud-Vlaamische Kunst; afdeeling der Oud-Vlaamische Kunst, Antwerp, 1930, no. 394 (as Van Dyck); Amsterdam, 1933, no. 74, repr.; Rotterdam, 1933, no. 13, repr.; London, 1950, no. 41; Antwerp, 1956, no. 91; Moscow, 1974, no. 95, repr.; Antwerp, 1977, no. 150, repr.


The Saviour, shown to the left of centre, is dead on the Cross with his head falling forward, his legs fully extended, with feet overlapped and, following medieval tradition, with arms almost straight up. His drapery, as is found in the altarpiece, covers Christ's loins and continues around the shaft to help secure him more firmly to the Cross. His left side, contrary to the altarpiece, is pierced by a spear held by a figure below whose arm is raised and head looks up. A second lance is placed parallel to the latter; it may have made the wound above the one with the lance still in Christ's side. Although the Saviour is not depicted frontally, the type resembles Rubens's pictures now in Munich and Mechlin (Nos. 40-41; Figs. 124, 125). Mary Magdalen is swiftly indicated to the left at the foot of the Cross. Rubens was not sure how near she should be placed to the shaft. At first she was slightly further back and to the side; then she was brought closer in a more heavily inked-in form.

On Christ's right, Rubens has indicated the good thief as a simple vertical form with head and body seen frontally and following the lines of the shaft. The bad thief is on Christ's left. His torso is arched and his head and shoulders fall over the top of the arms of the cross. The head appears to drop to the right while his left arm is placed over the bar and curves back down toward the shaft. Rubens seems to have been uncertain about the arrangement of the thief's legs. Originally they were more constricted, but this was changed. The right one was almost completely straightened while the left became even more compressed and foreshortened. This is evident in Rubens's use of the dark ink along the bottom edge of the thighs and the crevice at the knee. Just beneath the bad thief's feet, there is a ladder with a figure facing front and holding a stick with both hands. The positions of his arms and his body have been altered several times. His body originally seems to have been placed higher on the ladder. Holding on to the ladder, directly beneath this figure, Rubens has placed a woman, a repetition of the Magdalen type. At first she was a little lower, as indicated in the lightly sketched head. Behind and to the right of the bad thief, the artist has sketchily included a contorted figure with his arm behind his back. This is possibly another idea for the figure holding the cudgel above his head and standing on the ladder. It is difficult to see a relationship between this hastily outlined figure as a preliminary idea for Longinus's pose in the altarpiece. The horizontal line drawn in beneath the figures in and surrounding the two crosses could indicate the limits of the bottom part of the composition.

A comparison between this very early sketch for the altarpiece in Antwerp with the modello in London (No. 37c; Fig. 115) reveals several important changes. In the drawing, Christ's left side is pierced by the lance while in the oil
In making this alteration, Rubens returns to the medieval concept. The artist has also moved Mary Magdalen from the left to the right side of the Cross. In the grisaille her arms do not embrace the foot of the Cross and she is placed behind it, while in the drawing and the altarpiece she is slightly in front and her arms encircle the wood. Further changes can be seen in the group on the ladder. The soldier about to strike the bad thief is frontal in the drawing while in the modello and the finished painting he is seen in three-quarter profile, his body lower down on the ladder and he holds the baton in a hand that is not above his head but back and down to the left as in the quick sketch to the right in the drawing. The woman on the ladder in the drawing stands to the right of the Cross in the grisaille but is eliminated in the final version. She is probably one of the three Marys. The bad thief is basically the same figure as in the drawing but his head is resting on the cross in the two oils.

On the verso Rubens has sketched, also in pen and ink, the figure of Christ, but he is frontal with arms spread out above his head, as in the earlier Antwerp Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61) and Crucifixion (No. 30; Fig. 96). This Y-shaped arrangement of the arms is a change from the vertical emphasis on the recto and reflects the oil sketch (No. 37c; Fig. 115). The posture of Christ on the verso was used for the sketch and the altarpiece. The verso of the drawing also contains to the right an outline of a figure which is possibly a sketch of the bad thief, but his posture is completely different on the recto.

1. As pointed out in Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 451, under no. 118, Rubens first conceived this type of Christ on the Cross in the right background of the centre panel in the Louvre modello (No. 20a; Fig. 62) for the Elevation of the Cross in Antwerp.


A young man, facing the viewer, carries a ladder over his left shoulder. His left arm and hand help to support the ladder. His body is shown in three-quarter length, seen from the left, and moves from right to left. This figure is placed behind the central cross in Rubens's preparatory oil sketch in London for the Coup de Lance (No. 37c; Fig. 115) and its copy in Aachen. However, Rubens omits this figure in the finished composition, as does the drawing (No. 37e; Fig. 116) for the Boisvert engraving of 1631. As Held observes, Rubens probably omitted this figure in the altarpiece in order to place the centurion's horse closer to Christ and to avoid cluttering up the centre of the composition.1 Held believes

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**37b. Man Carrying a Ladder: Drawing (Fig. 114)**

Black chalk heightened with white body colour; 342 x 270 mm. Below left, Albertina mark (L. 174).

**Vienna, Albertina. Inv. no. 8.298.**

**PROVENANCE:** Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (Moritzburg near Dresden and Vienna, 1738-1822).


A young man, facing the viewer, carries a ladder over his left shoulder. His left arm and hand help to support the ladder. His body is shown in three-quarter length, seen from the left, and moves from right to left. This figure is placed behind the central cross in Rubens's preparatory oil sketch in London for the Coup de Lance (No. 37c; Fig. 115) and its copy in Aachen. However, Rubens omits this figure in the finished composition, as does the drawing (No. 37e; Fig. 116) for the Boisvert engraving of 1631. As Held observes, Rubens probably omitted this figure in the altarpiece in order to place the centurion's horse closer to Christ and to avoid cluttering up the centre of the composition.1 Held believes
that this drawing further enhances the attribution to Rubens of the London oil sketch. The Viennese sheet is so characteristic of Rubens's style that if the London modello was by Van Dyck, it presupposes an extremely involved method of working together. The drawing was probably made c. 1619-20, just before the London sketch.


37c. The Crucifixion (Coup de Lance):
Oil Sketch (Fig. 115)

Oil on panel; 65 x 50 cm. The panel consists of two boards joined vertically around 23.5 cm. from the left.—Verso: burnt devices of Antwerp.

London, National Gallery. Inv. no. 1865; on loan from the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Franciscan monastery prior to 1753 (Descamps, Vie, 1753-63, I, p. 322); possibly purchased from the monastery in 1794 by M. Schamp d’Aveschoot, Gent; in any case part of his collection by 1830; M. Schamp d’Aveschoot, sale, Ghent (Regermorter), 14ff. Sept. 1840, lot 235, purchased for 2330 francs by Smith for G. Blamire; G. Blamire, sale, London (Christie’s), 7 Nov. 1863, lot 69, bought by Smith for 23 gns.; George Mitchell; bequeathed by him to the South Kensington Museum in 1878; on loan to the National Gallery, London, since 1895.


This grisaille is composed in a manner similar to the altarpiece (No. 37; Fig. 110), but there are significant differences. The greater number of figures in the sketch conveys a crowded impression. Rubens has also placed a bareheaded, standing soldier supporting a large shield resting on the ground between the two horses on the left. In both the sketch and the altarpiece Christ is secured to the Cross by four nails, his drapery encircles both his body and the staff of the Cross and his long hair falls to the left. In the sketch, however, Christ does not wear the crown of thorns, and the drapery flutters in the breeze to his right. The two spectators behind and at the foot of the Cross do not appear in the sketch; instead, Rubens included a young man carrying a ladder while facing left, a woman to the right of the Cross and a helmeted horseman above her and to the left of the bad thief. Along the right margin of the sketch, behind Gesmas, Rubens has painted a hill and a bare tree. Mary Magdalen, who kneels to the right in back of the centre Cross, raises both arms to heaven and looks up. In the altarpiece, her body is in front of the Cross, she leans against it, her arms encircle the tree-like staff and one of them touches Longinus's horse. In the grisaille, the soldier on the ladder is bareheaded and his arm does not curve out, so that the baton overlaps the Saviour's left leg as in the altarpiece. St John's forehead is visible and his head looks down so that it is hidden by the drapery, while in the altarpiece the entire right side of his face is visible. The two versions of the image reveal differences in the Virgin's interlaced fingers, and in the figure of Mary Cleophas, who is in profile with hands apart in the sketch, while in the altarpiece her face is almost frontal and her hands are clasped. On the left side of the altarpiece, Longinus's horse is higher than in the sketch, closer to the Cross, farther back in space and more strongly foreshortened. In the sketch, the good thief's cross is higher and he is closer to Christ. The thief's right forearm does not drop down in the finished work. A piece of Christ's drapery flutters in the breeze in the modello and not in the finished work. Because of these numerous differences between the oil sketch and the altarpiece, Martin suggests that the London modello was not Rubens's final study for the Coup de Lance, but rather his first idea to be presented to Rockox. Yet when one considers Rubens's manner of working, there are often major changes between a presentation modello and a finished work—as for example in the Louvre oil sketch (No. 20a; Fig. 62) for the Antwerp Elevation.

The general concept of the composition may well be an adaptation, in reverse, of Rubens's drawing of c. 1616, Christ Crucified with the Two Thieves (Fig. 118; London, British Museum). The manner in which Christ is placed on the Cross and the ample drapery encircling his loins appears earlier in Rubens's work. This full drapery and the design of the Christ figure are first evident in Rubens's oeuvre shortly after his return from Italy, as seen in the thief in the right background of the 1610 Louvre modello for the Antwerp Elevation of the Cross. This type of Christ figure is also present in other works that Rubens made in the second decade of the seventeenth century. But now, as in the London drawing, the drapery encompasses both Christ and the staff of the Cross; and two nails, not one, are used to secure his feet.

This sketch has been attributed to Rubens, to Van Dyck, and to the School of Rubens. The arguments against an attribution to Rubens are difficult to maintain. Although Van Dyck very likely executed several of the figures in the altarpiece, his hand cannot be recognized in this grisaille. Burchard and d'Hulst proposed that it was by Van Dyck because Bellori stated that the latter 'made sketches for Rubens after works by Rubens in preparation for engravings'. This argument in favour of Van Dyck cannot be maintained because there is no engraving that precisely follows this composition. Held rightly argues for an attribution to Rubens on the grounds that the changes between the grisaille and the completed work are those that one
usually finds in Rubens's modelli. Held also points out that the man carrying the ladder does not appear in the altarpiece and that the study of this figure in Vienna is by Rubens, as agreed by all. If the oil sketch was by Van Dyck, then, according to Held, the manner of collaboration between pupil and master would have been extremely complicated.

2. Judson—Van de Velde, Title-pages, 1978, I, p. 173, no. 35, II, fig. 117; Müller Hofstede, Modello, 1969, pp. 139, 140, fig. 2, dates the sheet c. 1602. Gregory Martin (op. cit., p. 196) suggests that a source for the arrangement of the scene might be the relevant part of Veronese's Calvary in Venice, Accademia, and that Rubens's riding soldier in the left foreground could be based upon the pair in Veronese's Calvary in Paris, Louvre. I find these possible Veronese sources difficult to believe.

J. Müller Hofstede, op. cit., p. 139, fig. 3.
4. Cf. Rubens's workshop, St Mary Magdalen at the Foot of the Cross, Schaffhausen, private collection, published as original of c. 1612 by J. Müller Hofstede (op. cit., pp. 136-140, figs. 1, 7); Rubens's workshop, St Francis of Assisi in Adoration before Christ on the Cross, Vaduz, Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein, no. 60 (Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, no. 101, fig. 176).

For various opinions concerning the attribution to Rubens, see under Literature.


See under No. 37.


37d. Christ on the Cross: Drawing
(Fig. 122)

Pen, brown ink, black chalk and brown wash; 335 × 150 mm.
Amsterdam, Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: E. Wouters, sale, Amsterdam (Frederik Müller & Cie), 15-16 June 1926, lot 171, repr.; Amsterdam, Ernst Proehl; Amsterdam, Lemberger.

EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 75, repr.


Christ is seen in profile full-length on the Cross. His head falls on his chest and his hair hangs over his face. He is crowned with thorns, and there is a halo above his head and the suggestion of a wound on the left side. His legs are straight, his feet overlap and are nailed to the Cross with one spike. His position is similar to Christ's on the recto of the Boymans sheet (No. 37a; Fig. 112) and in the oil sketch (No. 37c; Fig. 115). However, the Crown of Thorns is omitted in the grisaille but returned in the altarpiece. The drapery in the Lemberger sheet uncovers Christ's hip unlike that in the painted version.

There is a resemblance between the Lemberger drawing and the figure of Christ on the recto of the Boymans sheet. This is evident in the relatively thin torso, in the placement of the legs and in the more vertical position of the arms. Pentimenti are visible on Christ's right leg in the Lemberger drawing which suggest that originally the artist conceived the leg as bending at the knee and projecting out, which later became straight in the Boymans sketch, the London modello and the Antwerp altarpiece (No. 37; Fig. 110). This suggests the possibility that the Lemberger drawing may be the earliest known design for Christ in the surviving series of studies for the Coup de Lance.

37e. The Crucifixion: Drawing
(Fig. 116)

Black chalk, grey and brown washes, grey body colour, red chalk, heightened with white body colour; indented for transfer; 603 × 432 mm.

PROVENANCE: P. Crozat (Paris, 1665-1740); Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); Sir Robert Peel, London, by 1854.

CATALOGUE NO. 37e.


Christ, crowned with thorns, is placed on the centre cross. He is shown in profile to the left. His hair is falling over his forehead. His right side is pierced by a spear held by the mounted centurion, Longinus. A second helmeted Roman shown in profile on horseback, is placed in front and to the left of the latter and looks up at Christ. Three spears are visible in the background along the left margin. Christ is flanked to his right by the good thief and to his left by the bad thief. Rubens incorporates the Roman custom of tying the thieves to the cross with the Counter-Reformation concept of nailing them to the cross.1 Christ, on the other hand, is secured by four nails and a rope. St Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the Saviour's cross while a soldier, carrying a baton, ascends the ladder next to the bad thief. St John, the Virgin, and one of the three Marys are standing in the right foreground corner. A turbaned figure and a boy are placed behind and at the foot of the Cross with only their heads visible. The sky is cloudy and the moon passes over the sun in the upper left corner.

This drawing is a copy of the altarpiece (No. 37; Fig. 110), formerly in the Church of the Recollects, Antwerp, for the 1631 engraving by Boetius à Bolswert (Fig. 117).2 The drawing, possibly by Bolswert, is in the same direction as the print and the altarpiece. But the design differs from the finished work in several details. In the drawing and the print, Longinus holds the spear along the top, while his forearm helps to support it. He embeds the point firmly in Christ's torso. Three spears are visible in the upper left corner and Christ's drapery flutters in the breeze. The fluttering drapery recalls the London grisaille (No. 37c; Fig. 115). In the London sheet as well as in the London grisaille, the soldier on the ladder does not wear a helmet and the position of his left arm has been altered. The titulus is higher in the drawing and secured by two nails.

This drawing was probably executed by an assistant in Rubens's shop or the engraver Bolswert with pen and brush. Rubens then touched up this sheet with body colour and possibly with wash.3 The design must have been completed c. 1630, shortly before the engraving dated 1631. Stylistically it is similar to the Descent of the Holy Spirit of c. 1626 in London, British Museum, which was very likely drawn by Paul Pontius and retouched by Rubens.4

38. The Three Crosses: Oil Sketch (Fig. 123)

Oil on panel, 97 × 61.5 cm.; vertical addition of 7 cm. on the left and one of 9.2 cm. on the right; horizontal extension is 29 × 45.5 cm. on the bottom.

Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen. Inv. no. 2517.


COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, transferred from panel, c. 95 × 62 cm. PROV. Milan, private collection. (2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 88 × 64 cm. PROV. E. Huybrechts, sale, Antwerp,
May 1902, lot 38; sale, Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts), 29-31 Oct. 1974, lot 226, repr.

(3) **Painting** (Fig. 119) by David Teniers the Younger, Paris, Musée du Louvre; copper, 86 × 69 cm., signed. **PROV.** Presented to the Museum in 1972 by Mr and Mrs Riechers. **LIT.** J. Foucart, 'Rubens: copies, répliques, pastiches', *Revue de l'Art*, 21, n.d., pp. 52, 55, no. 11, fig. 9; *Cat. Exh. Paris*, 1977, p. 50, no. 189, repr. (3) Painting (Fig. 119) by David Teniers the Younger, Paris, Musée du Louvre; copper, 86 x 69 cm., signed. **PROV.** Presented to the Museum in 1972 by Mr and Mrs Riechers. **LIT.** J. Foucart, 'Rubens: copies, répliques, pastiches', *Revue de l'Art*, 21, n.d., pp. 52, 55, no. 11, fig. 9; *Cat. Exh. Paris*, 1977, p. 50, no. 189, repr.


(5) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown; panel, 54.5 × 73.5 cm. **PROV.** New York, M. Knoedler & Co., 1954. **LIT.** *Art News Annual*, XXIII, 1954, p. 20.

(6) **Painting**, Christ on the Cross, whereabouts unknown; 67 × 90 cm. **PROV.** Brussels, dealer H. Finck, 1928; Luxemburg, Prof. Emil Schaub, March 1928.

(7) **Painting**, Utrecht, Archbishop’s Palace, 1933; panel, c. 96 × 60.5 cm. **PROV.** Brussels, dealer H. Finck, 1928; Luxemburg, Prof. Emil Schaub, March 1928.

(8) **Painting**, France, Port La Nouvelle (Aude), Piet Moget.

(9) **Drawing**, The Bad Thief, Würzburg, Martin von Wagnermuseum, inv. no. 24511; black chalk, heightened with white, 427 × 173 mm. **PROV.** Würzburg, M. von Wagner.

(10) **Engraving** (Fig. 121) by S. a Bolswert. **LIT.** *V.S.*, p. 48, no. 328.

(11) **Engraving by L. Spirinx**, after Copy 10. **LIT.** *V.S.*, p. 48, no. 329.

(12) **Mezzotint by R. Laurie**, after Copy 10. **LIT.** *V.S.*, p. 48, no. 330.

(13) **Engraving by an unknown artist**, published by F. de Wit, after Copy 10. **LIT.** *V.S.*, p. 48, no. 331.

(14) **Engraving by an unknown artist**. **LIT.** *V.S.*, p. 48, no. 332.


Christ, dead on the Cross, with blood flowing from the wound on his right side, is accompanied by the thieves who are seen in profile. The sketch has been expanded by an unknown hand on the left and right sides and the bottom. The original section by Rubens has suffered badly and Rubens’s touch is difficult to discern. The surface has been badly rubbed and lacks the original verve and spirit in the application of the paint that one associates with Rubens. However, in spite of the problems caused by the condition of the painting, it can be ascribed to Rubens and dated shortly after 1620.¹

Rubens has taken the type of the *Coup de Lance* representation of Christ Crucified between the thieves (No. 37; Fig. 110), and combined it with the single-figured image of Christ Dead on the Cross (Nos. 40, 41; Figs. 124, 125). By
doing this, he created new imagery—perhaps based on an Early Christian example. The multitude of figures below has been eliminated, and there is now a stark, emotional representation of the Three Crosses placed before a dramatic sky. This sense of the tragic and the loneliness of the figures, emphasized by the use of dramatic light effects, is an enlargement of the single-figure versions of the Crucifixion which Rubens painted earlier. In the Rotterdam sketch, Christ hangs from the Cross with his arms in the medieval vertical position, his head down and crowned with thorns. Blood pours from the lance wound on his right side and he is secured to the Cross by four nails while his drapery entwines around him and the Cross. Rubens has placed a titulus above Christ's head in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The good thief is on Christ's right and looks up with hope in his eyes. He too is nailed to the cross with four spikes and above his head we find a fifth, which secures an empty piece of paper to the top of the Cross. The bad thief is on Christ's left and turns his head up, his face contorted with agony. His straining movement is tempered by the cloth which helps to secure his body to the Cross.

This oil sketch was repeated in a print by Schelte à Bolswert (Fig. 121), who included the additions along the sides and bottom. It is, however, unlikely that Rubens would have made an oil sketch as a study for a print rather than a painting.

The sketch is possibly identical with the panel mentioned in the will of Jan Brant and Clara de Moy, made in Antwerp on 27 July 1637: 'Eenen gecruysten Christus mette schakers over beyde syden; op paneel, olieverve, in lijste'.

The Rotterdam sketch could have served as a model for any of several pictures cited in old inventories. A painting of this subject was cited in the inventory of the estate of Jan Brant and Clara de Moy, made in Antwerp on 27-30 July 1682: 'eenen Christus tuschen twee moordenaers'.

A variant of the Rotterdam composition (Fig. 120), in a private collection in New York, was exhibited as by Rubens in 1960 in Little Rock, Arkansas, and in 1965 in Brussels. This oil sketch is probably by Jan Boeckhorst, who used it with slight changes for Christ Crucified between the Thieves and below the Virgin, St John, St Mary Magdalen and a second Mary to the right, in the Church of St Peter at Het Loo. Compared with the Rotterdam modello, Boeckhorst in the New York sketch has changed the position of the good thief and more strongly foreshortened the left leg of the bad thief. By changing the latter's posture, Boeckhorst models him after Rubens's figure in the Coup de Lance.

2. A famous early representation (c. 432-440) can be found on one of the doors of the Church of Santa Sabina, Rome. I am grateful to my colleague Professor J. Folla for pointing this out to me. Rubens may have seen these doors during his stay in Rome in the first decade of the 17th century.
6. Lettere e altri documenti intorno alla storia della pittura, raccolte di quadri a Mantova nel Sei-Settecento (Fonti per la Storia della Pittura, IV), Monzambano, 1976, p. 51.
39. Christ on the Cross with St Mary Magdalen at its Foot

Technique and measurements unknown.
Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown. 
PROV. London, L. Burchard; Farnham, W. Burchard.

(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 76 × 60 cm.
PROV. Joseph Ludwig von Mathy (1725-1802), Bishop of Thanasis, consecrated Bishop of Passau; Neu Astrawischken (near Bokelle), H. Moeller; Königsberg, dealer Arthur Ebhardt & Co.; purchased from the latter in July 1931 by Wilhelm Frommann, Königsberg.

(3) Oil sketch. Schaffhausen, Jacop Werner; panel, 73.5 × 51.5 cm.
PROV. Paris, Dr H. Wendland.

(4) Oil sketch, whereabouts unknown; panel, 65 × 41.5 cm., monogram C.G. on back.


The poor execution of all these examples, especially in the articulation of the anatomy, suggests that they are copies after a lost original by Rubens. These repetitions, except for Copy 6, render the scene in basically the same manner. Christ's head, crowned with thorns, is in profile and the left side of his face is turned toward the viewer. The Cross is placed on a diagonal moving to the left causing the body to be placed in three-quarter profile following the slanting movement into depth established by the arms of the Cross. Christ's left side has a gaping wound where it has been pierced by the centurion's spear. The Saviour is nailed to the Cross with three spikes and his arms are spread out in the modified Y-form of medieval crucifixions.

Drapery covers his loins and extends around the trunk of the Cross—as first found in Rubens's drawing of c. 1616 of Christ Crucified with the Two Thieves in London, British Museum (Fig. 118) and later in the drawing of c. 1619-20 (No. 37e; Fig. 116) touched up by Rubens, the modello (No. 37c; Fig. 115) and the completed altarpiece representing the Coup de Lance in Antwerp (No. 37; Fig. 110). This drapery motif is extremely rare and, as far as I know, appears first in Antwerp in an engraving of the same subject designed and published by Hieronymus Wierix around 1600.

Müller Hofstede has rightly suggested that the position of the Cross and the portrayal of one of the thieves in the right background of the centre panel in the Louvre modello of 1610 for the Elevation of the Cross in Antwerp (No. 20a; Fig. 62) is related to Christ's position, but in reverse, in the lost original of the Crucifixion with St Mary Magdalen. The Louvre thief is the first example of this diagonal type of Crucifixion in Rubens's oeuvre and precedes by several years the London drawing of 1614. In the copies after Rubens, St Mary Magdalen's torso is placed behind the Cross, and her head to the left of it. She is kissing Christ's feet and supports herself by embracing the foot of the Cross. The entire scene takes place before a dark background with strong light striking the bodies of Christ and St Mary Magdalen. There is a vague indication of Jerusalem in the distance. The titulus is either empty, or, as in Schaffhausen, filled with illegible writing. Rubens continues this type of figurative arrangement in the central part of the Toulouse Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves (No. 36; Fig. 109), which might have consisted originally, as Burchard suggested, of one vertical panel containing Christ on the Cross and St Mary Magdalen at the foot.

The source of this imagery, with St Mary Magdalen at the foot of the Cross and Christ crucified above, may be Italian, as Müller

(7), (8)
CATALOGUE NO. 39.

Hofstede maintains. Yet by the last decades of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century it can be found in a number of engravings, and at least one painting in the North. In several examples, St Mary Magdalen kneels on one side of the diagonally placed cross, as in Jan Sadeler's print after Frans Floris, Hendrick Goltzius' design for Jacob Matham's 1602 engraving published by the former in Haarlem and, of even greater importance, in prints by the Antwerp engravers Hieronymus and Anthony Wierix and Jan Collaert after their own designs and those by Martin van de Velde. Hieronymus Wierix departs from the above formula: going back to the long-discarded form of Rogier van der Weyden's Crucifixion in Vienna, he moves the Virgin from the side to the foot of the Cross, upon which she clings. As in the later composition by Rubens, the Virgin grasps the foot of the Cross with both arms and rests her head against Christ's feet. Wierix's scene is also of interest in that the Saviour's drapery is tied around the shaft of the Cross, as in Rubens's drawing of c. 1616 of Christ Crucified with the Two Thieves in London (Fig. 118), The Crucifixion (Coup de Lance) in Antwerp (No. 37; Fig. 110), and the studies made for the latter around 1619-20. Because of the connections with the Wierix print and the general use by Antwerp artists and others of Christ on the Cross with St Mary Magdalen, it is possible that Rubens was following earlier Antwerp examples and not Italian prototypes of this theme. Rubens and Wierix would have been attracted to the imagery of the Magdalen embracing the Cross in order to stress the idea of her intense piety and love of Christ which was so important in the Counter-Reformation.

These copies after a lost work by Rubens contain motifs used by the master in his Coup de Lance, so the lost original may possibly date from shortly after 1620. Antonio Ponz saw such a composition in Lyon in 1783, although he may have been describing the copy in Montpellier of the central part of Rubens's Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves in Toulouse (No. 36; Fig. 109). Here Christ looks up to heaven with eyes wide open, while in the copies cited above he is dead on the Cross.

1. For the placement of the wound on Christ's left see pp. 56.
2. For the significance of this see pp. 55.
3. For more details see pp. 56.
4. For the date see Judson—Van de Velde, Title-pages, 1978, I, p. 173, no. 35, II, fig. 117; for the loin cloth see Müller Hofstede, Modello, 1969, p. 139, fig. 2, who dates the London sheet c. 1602.
5. See the illustration in Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, pp. 50, 51, no. 355, pl. 45.
7. Ibid., p. 136.
8. Van de Velde, Floris, 1975, I, p. 402, no. 34, fig. 186.
12. For a painted example of this subject see Ambrosius Francken's painting in the Church of St James, Antwerp, where Christ is frontal and Mary Magdalen kneels to the left side of the Cross and encircles it with her left arm while her right is extended toward the spectator.

40. Christ Dead on the Cross (Fig. 124)

Oil on panel; 143 × 92 cm.
Munich, Alte Pinakothek. Inv. no. 339 (748).

PROVENANCE: Düsseldorf, Electoral Gallery, by 1719; Munich, Hofgarten Gallery, 1806; Munich, Pinakothek, since 1836.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 55 × 37 cm. PROV. Pressberg, Gallery Graziadio Enea Lanfranconi, sale, Cologne (Heberle), 21-23 Oct. 1895, lot 177.
(2) Painting, Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, inv. no. 14452; canvas, 143 × 92 cm.
(3) Lithograph by Piloty. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 100.
(4) Engraving by S.T. Engleheart. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 100.

LITERATURE: G.J. Karsch, Designation exacte des peintures dans la galerie de la résidence à Düsseldorf,

Rubens has placed the Saviour before a dark, cloudy background with the eclipse of the sun above. Below to the left is an indication of the Holy City and hills to the right. Christ is dead on the Cross and his hair falls on his right side. In keeping with one branch of early seventeenth-century theological thought, Rubens has omitted the crown of thorns, but included the lance wound on Christ's left side and secured him to a tree-shaped shaft with four nails. The Cross is supported by a block of wood in the bottom left. His loins are covered by a piece of white drapery that is gently raised on the left by mystical breezes.

In the Munich painting, Christ has died for the redemption of mankind and is seen here as the medieval type of the suffering Saviour. In order to attain true repentance, the victorious Christ is depicted as a heart-rending figure suspended from the Cross with blood flowing from his wounds. This Holy Blood is a subtle allusion to the idea of atonement: since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Holy Blood was said to have redeeming powers. The medieval character of this image is further stressed by the emphasis upon the verticality of Christ's arms and the unusual amount of vacant space between his head and the beams of the Cross.

The painting is medieval in concept and spirit, but Rubens breaks with the medieval tradition by placing Longinus's spear wound on Christ's left side. Beginning around the time of the Rabula Gospels of 586 A.D., the wound was consistently found on the Saviour's right side. By the early seventeenth century, scholars wrote that it did not matter on which side the wound was indicated. It is interesting to note that Rubens was not consistent in the positioning of the piercing. As we have seen, Rubens made use of details to give specific meanings to his works. In the Munich Crucifixion, it is very likely that Rubens painted the wound on the left side because it was closer to the heart. This may be connected with the theological thought that Longinus aimed his lance at Christ's heart, which became part of medieval theology in the thirteenth century with Saints Gertrude and Mechtilde. Around 1600, the devotion to Christ's heart became extremely popular, especially in Antwerp where representations of the Crucifixion were placed upon or enframed within the Sacred Heart.
first trip to Spain. Whether or not Rubens used the example of Titian or Wierix as his source, and I suspect it was the latter, he imparts a new sense of corporeality, movement and drama to the figure of Christ, thereby strongly influencing contemporary and future representations of this theme.

The Munich Crucifixion was probably painted c. 1612. It must postdate the Elevation of the Cross (No. 20; Fig. 61), where Christ's body is more robust and monumental and not thin and sensitive as in Munich. The delicate and refined quality of the Christ in Munich is similar in style to his rendering in the Deposition in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135) which was completed by September 1612.

Schelte à Bolswert made an engraving of Christ Dead on the Cross (Fig. 126). Bolswert's engraving is inscribed: P. Paulus Rubbens pinxit. / S. à Bolswert sculpsit in the bottom right corner and on the other side Casp. Huberti exc. Antverpiae / Cum privilegio Regis. The centre-bottom margin reads: PRAEDICAMUS CHRISTUM CRUCIFIXUM: IUDAIS QUIDEM SCHANDALUM, GENTIBUS AUTEM STULTITIAM; ad Cor. I.V. 23 Revo admodum atque eximio PARTI MRO F. BARTHOLOMAEO DE LOS RIOS ET ALARCON virtutum Cultori, artium fautori, hoc arte expressum virtutum omnium Exemplum D.C.Q. Martinus vanden Enden.

The inscription on the engraving says that the print was dedicated to Bartolome de los Rios and later the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand. De los Rios founded the Congregación of the Servants of Mary in the Netherlands and wrote a well-known book entitled De Hierarchia Mariana, Antwerp, 1641, with a title-page executed by E. Quellin, made under the direction of Rubens. The text on the plate also contains the words P. Paulus Rubbens pinxit., which makes it clear that the plate was either made after a lost Rubens painting or drawing.

In this image, Christ's arms are almost vertical, following the medieval tradition. His head, crowned with thorns and outlined with a halo, falls to the left. Christ's right side has been pierced by Longinus's spear and blood flows out of the wound. The Saviour is secured to the trunk-shaped cross by four nails. The City of Jerusalem is clearly indicated below and behind the Cross to the left while above the sun is eclipsed by the moon. Christ is covered with ample drapery that appears to pass around the stem of the Cross. The loose end of the cloth flutters slightly in the breeze. In the top centre, the titulus is inscribed in three languages.

The composition is similar in type to Rubens's versions of the Crucifixion in Munich and Mechlin (Nos. 40, 41, Figs. 124, 125), but the engraving is not a copy of the Munich painting.

2. For the significance of the position of the wound, the tree and the four nails see pp. $.$.
7. Ibid., p. 361.
8. For example in the Descent from the Cross, Antwerp, Cathedral (No. 43; Fig. 135), the skin is lacereated on the right side while in the modello in London (No. 43b; Fig. 137), the wound is on the left.
10. Ibid.
13. See Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, p. 51, no. 359, pl. 45. Other single-figured representations of this theme were engraved by Hieronymus Wierix after Martin de Vos prior to 1603. In one case, the Cross is framed by clouds, and in the other it is set against plain white paper (see Mauquoy-Hendrickx, Wierix, 1978-82, I, nos. 549, 549a, pl. 71).

15. Ibid., p. 7.
16. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.
17. Ibid., pp. 28, 29.
20. V.S., p. 45, no. 304, states that this engraving is a copy of the Munich Crucifixion, which is not
tenable. In the engraving Christ is crowned with thorns, the Cross is frontal and not placed on a diagonal, the drapery is more ample, the eclipse is depicted, the sky is more dramatic, the landscape is rendered in more detail, and, most important, the wound is on the right side and not the left.

41. Christ Dead on the Cross
(Fig. 125)

Oil on panel; 105 × 75 cm.
Mechlin, Stedelijk Museum. Cat. no. 136.

PROVENANCE: Mechlin, Oratory of St Philip Neri, Altar of St Nicolaas of Tolentino; Mechlin, Oratory, Altar of St Barbara; deposited for safe-keeping in the house of William Herreyns, the Director of the Academy of Fine Arts, Mechlin (1796-1825); Antwerp, Museum of Fine Arts (1825-26); Mechlin, Academy of Fine Arts (1826-44); entered the Museum in 1844.


(2) Painting, Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, inv. no. 7110.

(3) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 110 × 78 cm. PROV. H. Wedewer, Wiesbaden, sale, Cologne (Heberle), 1-3 May 1899, lot 199, repr.

(4) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 104 × 72 cm. PROV. London, dealer M. Koetser, 1951-54.


(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 70 × 41 cm. PROV. Charlottenburg, private collection, 1932; sale, Brussels, 16 Dec. 1938, lot 125.

(7) ? Engraving by P. Van Sompelen LIT. V.S., p. 43, no. 287.

(8), (9)

The dead Christ, crowned with thorns, rests his head on his left shoulder. Blood flows from Christ's hands and the lance wound in his left side. The Saviour's loins are covered with a white blood-stained cloth which gently flutters in the air on the right. Christ is secured to the Cross with four nails, and his arms are raised, establishing the medieval 'Y' configuration also present in Munich (No. 40; Fig. 124). The staff of the Cross is tree-shaped and supported at the bottom by a stake driven into the ground on a diagonal. Christ is placed in front of a slate-grey sky with the sun emanating rays visible in the right and a thin, wispy crescent moon on the left. A barren landscape is barely visible along the bottom of the composition. The Hebraic inscription on the scroll above is incorrect and perhaps the work of a restorer.¹ Like other seventeenth-century artists, Rubens did not always include the crown of thorns. This derogatory symbol² is used in the Mechlin painting, but omitted in the paintings in Antwerp (No. 30; Fig. 96) and Munich (No. 40; Fig. 124). The
same inconsistency features in theological writings of the time.3

The delicate and elegant rendering of Christ's body, the heavy eyelids and the highlighting of the drapery with small quick brush strokes suggest a date of c. 1614, when Rubens executed the two Lamentations in Vienna and The Doubting Thomas in Antwerp.4

In the list of copies, all of the pictures follow closely the representation of Christ in the Mechlin painting, but there are some slight variations in the rendering of the drapery and the landscape. Burchard thought that these pictures may reflect the lost predella (No. 24) of the Elévation of the Cross in Antwerp (No. 20). Held has suggested that this may also be the case for the Mechlin painting.5

4. K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, pp. 73, 76, 84.

42. Our Lady of Sorrows: Painting?

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES: (1) Drawing (Fig. 128) perhaps by Willem de Leeuw, Toronto, Canada, Mr and Mrs Gilbert Bagnani; black chalk, heightened with brush and Chinese white, on laid paper, 301 x 190 mm., traced for transfer. PROV. Amsterdam, Versteegh; Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); London, H.J. Scott, c. 1900; from the latter to Mrs Bagnani. EXH. London, 1835, no. 76; Cambridge-New York, 1956, no. 18, pl. VII. LIT. Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 294; M. Jaffé, 'Two Rubens Drawings Rediscovered', Art Quarterly, XVI, 1953, pp. 131, 132, 135, 136, fig. 1; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 189; Mitsch, Rubenszeichnungen, 1977, p. 38; Bodart, Incisione, 1977, p. 100.

(2) Engraving by W. de Leeuw (Fig. 130). LIT. V.S., p. 92, no. 159; Bodart, Incisione, 1977, p. 100, no. 206, repr.


Rubens's design for this composition is preserved in a drawing (Fig. 128), possibly by Willem de Leeuw, for the engraving (Fig. 130) executed by him. The engraving is inscribed in the bottom left P.P. Rubens Invent and on the opposite side Wleeuw fecit. It is uncertain whether the print was made after a lost drawing, oil sketch or painting by Rubens. The drawing, too weak to be attributed to Rubens, was made specifically for the print and most likely after a lost drawing, oil sketch or altarpiece by Rubens. In the drawing, the Virgin, on her knees, falls to the right and is supported by an angel in profile seen on the right. She looks up on a diagonal to the left with her right arm stretched out parallel to the picture plane while her left hangs down. Her fingers are outstretched and tense. On the left, an angel facing to the right and looking heavenward withdraws a sword which pierces the Virgin's breast. The foreground contains the T-shaped cross with Longinus's lance resting on the left arm and the switches for the scourging on the right. The crown of thorns is on the right side of the cross's stem and slightly further to the right are two nails from the Crucifixion.

This composition does not represent the Transoverberation of Teresa, but Our Lady of Sorrows, which was celebrated in Antwerp especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As early as 1515, the Provincial Chapter for the Netherlands proclaimed a feast day commemorating the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady, which was to be celebrated in all of the churches of the Province.2 By 1520, the Franciscans in Antwerp were particularly absorbed with this cult; they owned seven paintings commemorating the Virgin's sorrows. The pictures were popular and attracted many visitors.3 Rubens's imagery follows the tradition of depicting the Virgin's heart pierced by a sword, which corresponds to Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:35. The theme continued to be popular in Antwerp during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, particularly in the prints engraved and published by the Wierix family after their own designs and those of Maarten de Vos.4 Our Lady of Sorrows was depicted in a variety of ways. In these prints, her heart is pierced either by one sword or seven. She is found sitting on a hill and surrounded by seven tondi depicting her
seven sorrows. In other representations, the Virgin is represented in half-length, alone and seated or standing on a hill or seated before the Cross. She is also portrayed as seated before the Cross, with her heart pierced by a sword, with the dead Christ on her lap and with angels on either side holding symbols of the Passion. Rubens has chosen a moment—the removal of the sword by one of the angels—which is, to my knowledge, unique. Rubens may have adapted the two angels from the aforementioned type, but, in this case, they do not carry the instruments of the Passion. The withdrawal of the sword might be read as a symbol of the end of the Virgin's torment. A treatise published in Antwerp in 1649 by Father Josse Andries, Perpetuus Gladius Reginae Martyrum, interpreted Mary's Sorrows as an ongoing Sword which pained her heart throughout her life. Father Andries compared the latter to the 'Perpetual Cross' of Jesus. One may conclude from this that by removing the sword of sorrows the Virgin died, thereby ending her grief, just as Christ's Passion ended with his death. Andries's book did not appear until 1649, but it is possible that his ideas were common knowledge in Antwerp years before they were published and were known to Rubens.

The lost composition by Rubens may date from c. 1618-20, when the drawing in Vienna of A Young Man Holding the Hilt of a Sword (No. 42a; Fig. 127) was probably made. The latter served as a study for the angel removing the sword from the Virgin's heart. The composition of Our Lady of Sorrows was used again, with modifications, by Rubens for his St Mary Magdalen in Ecstasy (Fig. 129) in Lille, while the position of the Virgin is a close variation on the epileptic woman to the left of centre in the Miracles of St Ignatius of Loyola in Vienna (Fig. 131), from the same time.

2. Schoutens, Minderbroderklooster, 1894 - or 1908 ?, p. 261.
3. Ibid., op. cit., p. 262.
5. Ibid., pp. 139, 140, nos. 787-789, pl. 111.
7. Ibid.

42a. Young Man Holding the Hilt of a Sword: Drawing (Fig. 127)

Black and red chalk, heightened with white body-colour; 355 x 282 mm.
Vienna, Albertina. Inv. no. 8.299.

EXHIBITED: Vienna, Albertina, 1977, no. 15, repr.


In this chalk study done from life, Rubens shows a young man seen half-length, with his head looking upwards in profile to the right. His body is turned partially to the right and his left shoulder and arm are covered by drapery, as is the muscle in the upper portion of his right arm. His right hand holds the hilt of a sword. Rubens used this figure for the angel on the left in his lost painting, oil sketch or drawing preserved in De Leeuw's print representing Our Lady of Sorrows (No. 42, Copy 2; Fig. 130).

This study has been dated c. 1623-24 by Burchard and d'Hulst, while Mitsch has suggested an earlier date of c. 1615-16. It seems to me that the style suggests a date between 1618 and 1620. The use of the parallel black chalk lines to establish the shadow patterns and to impart a sense
of volume to the forms is similar to a number of designs by Rubens dating from these years.\(^3\) The similarities between the study of A Young Man Holding the Hilt of a Sword and Rubens's drawings of c. 1618-20 becomes even stronger if one accepts Logan's suggestion that the extensive use of red chalk in the Vienna sheet was added at a later date by another hand.\(^4\)

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3. Cf. e.g. the Two Franciscan Monks, Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection (Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 196, 197, no. 125, repr.); A Blind Man, Vienna, Albertina (ibid., I, p. 180; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, II, p. 32, no. 104d, fig. 13); A Man Carrying a Ladder, Vienna, Albertina (Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 189, 190, no. 120, repr.); A Man Thrusting with a Lance, Glasgow, Sir Archibald Campbell (ibid., I, p. 246).

**43-46. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS: TRIPTYCH**

### 43. The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 135)

Oil on panel; 421 × 311 cm.  
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

**PROVENANCE:** Chapel of the Harquebusiers, St Christopher, Church of Our Lady, Antwerp; removed to Paris; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to its original location on 31 May 1816.

**COPIES:**
1. (Painting by Rubens's studio) Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten; canvas on panel, 125 × 92 cm. PROV. Chapel of the Portiuncula, Church of the Franciscans, Antwerp; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); given to the Antwerp museum in 1816. LIT. De Wit, Kerken, 1910, p. 74; Descamps, Vie, 1753-63, I, p. 322; Mensaert, Peintre, 1763, I, p. 205; Beschryvinge, 1765, p. 82; Descamps, Voyage, 1769, p. 195; Paris, Musée Central des Arts, 1801, no. 527; Paris, Musée Central des Arts, 1814, p. 68, no. 592; Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 6; Piot, Rapport, 1883, p. 20, no. 29, p. 300, no. 5, p. 395, no. 25; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 108, under no. 307; Schoutens, Minderbroederklooster, 1894, p. 249; Marquet de Vasselot, Louvre, 1927, no. 115; Van den Nieuwenhuizen, Antwerpse schilderijen, 1962, pp. 66, 67, 78; Emile-Mâle, Séjour, 1964, pp. 156, 162-166, fig. 1; Montbriac, Van Brée, 1977, p. 359.
4. (Painting, triptych, whereabouts unknown) panel, 86 × 152.5 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 14 April 1961, lot 119.
6. (Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 103 × 58 cm. PROV. P. Wouters, sale, Brussels (de Roy), 1 April 1794, lot 150.
10. (Painting, triptych, Church of Schoten (Province of Antwerp). PROV. On 29 December
1648 the widow of Nicolaes de Respaigne presented this painting to the Antwerp sculptor Sebastian de Neve; in 1904 the altarpiece was broken up. LIT. Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring Antwerpen. Jaarboek, XVI, 1940, p. 119.


(12) **Painting** by Thomas Gainsborough, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 36.5 × 24.5 cm. PROV. Von Weizenfeld, Munich, 1805, no. 42. LIT. Lugt, Répertoire, 1987, no. 7015.


(41) **Drawing** (Fig. 133) by Lucas Vorsterman (?), Paris, Cabinet des Dessins du Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 20.311; black and red chalk, brown wash, ink, touched with pen, white chalk highlights, 558 × 435 mm. PROV. P. Crozat, sale, Paris, 10 Apr.–13 May 1741, lot 827; sold to Hecquet. LIT. Rooses, *Oeuvre, 1886-92*, V, p. 156 (as retouched by Rubens); A. Rosenberg, 'Die Rubensstecher', *Geschichte der vervielfältigten Künste*, ed. C. von Lützow, Vienna, 1893, p. 50; Evers, *Neue Forschungen*, 1943, p. 137, fig. 42; Lugt, *Cat. Louvre*, 1949, II, p. 1140, pl. LXIII; Bodart, *Incisione*, 1977, p. 72.

(42) **Drawing**, whereabouts unknown; 260 × 360 mm. PROV. J. Verhoeven, Lier.

(43) **Engraving** (Fig. 134) by Lucas Vorsterman, 1620; 572 × 424 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 342.

(44) **Engraving** by P. Spruyt. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 343.

(45) **Engraving** by C.H. Hodges, 1805. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 343bis.

(46) **Engraving** by F. Ragot. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 344.

(47) **Engraving** published by C. Galle II. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 345.

(48) **Engraving** published by C. Galle II. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 346.

(49) **Engraving** by Erin Corr. LIT. V.S., p. 49, no. 347.

(50) **Engraving** by Guttenberg. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 348.

(51) **Engraving** by Thouvenin. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 349.


(53) **Engraving** by J. Hunin, 1835. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 350.

(54) **Mezzotint** by Fr. Wrenck. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 351.

(55) **Engraving** by W. Lenoy. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 352.

(56) **Engraving** by an unknown artist, triptych, Antwerp, Rubens House, inv. no. P. 587.

(57) **Mezzotint** by H. Garnier. LIT. V.S., p. 51, no. 362.

(58) **Engraving** by Fr. Pigeot (attr.). LIT. V.S., p. 51, no. 363.

(59) **Engraving published** by Gérard Audran, Paris. LIT. V.S., p. 51, no. 359 (?).

(60) **Engraving published** by G. Huberti. LIT. V.S., p. 50, no. 354.

In the centre panel, the dead, rather stiff figure of Christ is the focal point of a quiet and solemn scene. Christ is being lowered gently from the Cross by his mourning followers. The situation is very different from the Elevation (No. 20; Fig. 61), where his serene and ideal self is surrounded by ugly and muscular tormentors. In this Descent, Rubens depicts Christ with his head falling on his shoulder toward the left, with his left arm firmly held by a worker above, while the right arm drops and the hand rests in an angular crevice just behind the knee cap. Christ's weightless body is placed in front of a white shroud which hangs on a diagonal from the upper right. This piece of linen is held in the mouth of one of the followers who is behind the Cross bar, standing on a ladder. A second helper is placed to the left. He carefully grips the white drapery with his left hand while delicately placing his right hand above the Saviour's left shoulder. This workman leans over the top of the arm of the Cross and rests his left foot on the ladder, while his right flies out into space. The dramatic positioning of his body is further accentuated by the drapery which also leads one back into depth.

All of the figures help to remove Christ from the Cross, but one appears to stand out more
than the others—St Mary Magdalen. She kneels in the bottom left and her beautiful and voluptuous body is in stark contrast to the dead and pale figure of Christ. St Mary Magdalen tenderly grasps Christ’s leg with her right hand and with her left hand she gently touches his wounded, bloodied foot which rests on her right shoulder with its beautifully painted drapery. Just behind her and to the left, Rubens has placed Mary Cleophas with her body turned to the right, her eyes looking at Christ, her lovely right forearm exposed, while her left arm extends behind the Magdalen’s head and grasps the drapery just above Christ’s ankle. The Virgin, with arms raised toward Christ, stands just above the two Marys.

Above the Virgin, Nicodemus (?) stands frontally on a ladder. He is dressed in richly decorated robes, and with bearded face stares intensely above and beyond Christ. He holds one end of the shroud in his right hand while the other appears to be placed behind the Saviour’s head. St John, with his right foot on the ladder, is the main supporter of Christ on the right side of the composition. St John’s head is in profile and he looks down toward St Mary Magdalen on the left. St John leans back to the right as he receives the weight of the Saviour. Joseph of Arimathea (?) stands frontally on the ladder above and to the right of St John. The former’s head is in the profile to the left as he looks out above Christ. Joseph (?) does not appear to play an important role in the physical action of the moment. In the bottom right corner, Rubens has included the basin containing the crown of thorns, the nails and the titulus held in place by the sponge. As the Gospels all agree, it was evening when Christ’s friends came to take his body from the Cross. Rubens indicates this by the light in the left background which suggests that the sun has set while the right side is dark.1

The content of the scenes depicted on this altarpiece were dictated by the terms of the commission. The work was ordered by the Guild of the Harquebusiers for their altar dedicated to St Christopher in the Cathedral in Antwerp. The Church officials would not permit the representation of St Christopher in the centre panel, but only that of Christ or scenes from the New Testament. Several church decrees were issued during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries concerning this matter. This particular prohibition began with a proclamation dated 3 December 1563, De invocatione et veneratione ac Reliquis Sanctorum et Sacris Imaginibus, XXVe Session of the Council of Trent (1545-63), and continued in the Provincial Council of 1607 and in the Diocesan Synod of May 1610.2 Moreover, the veneration of St Christopher and the legends concerning him were strongly criticized and disapproved of by both Catholic and Protestant authorities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whether or not St Christopher actually had existed was strongly questioned, and consequently he became more of an allegorical symbol than a real person.3 This allegorical aspect becomes most evident when one considers the name Christopher or Christophoros, which means Christ-bearer. This concept has been used to explain Rubens’s altarpiece since Michel first wrote about the etymology of Christopher and its connection with themes portrayed on the altarpiece.4 All these subjects illustrate Christ being carried. In this way Rubens, a serious student of ancient languages, perhaps in consultation with Rockox and others, was able to create a grand allegory centred around St Christopher without giving him the central position in the altarpiece. In the centre panel, the participants serve as bearers of Christ as they lovingly lower his body from the Cross. On the left wing, representing the Visitation, the pregnant Virgin carries the Saviour while on the opposite side Simeon supports Christ at the Presentation in the Temple. St Christopher is present to the left on the back of the altarpiece where the giant visually serves as the bearer of Christ, while to the right Rubens has placed the hermit who lights the way with a glowing lantern. Just above the hermit and to the left is a quarter moon while an owl peers out from the foliage in the top right.

The etymology of St Christopher’s name is most vividly depicted in the centre panel. Christ is borne by his most devoted followers as he is lowered from the Cross. The reality of his being is stressed by the beauty and realistic
representation of his body which is constantly restated in the celebration of the Mass. As Evers suggests, Rubens is fully aware of the fact that he had to create a divine body, and that the picture had to clearly suggest the idea of the Mass. His figures hold out their hands and arms toward Christ, but they do not touch him. Bialostocki recognizes this as a statement of participation in the action of ‘communion’ and of serving the body of Christ—that is, the Eucharist. Rubens presents the viewer with a representation of the Church community.

Christ’s body is depicted as light: there is no sense of a strong effort needed to support it. The corpse gently slides down into the receiving arms of St John, assisted by St Mary Magdalen, whose action is stressed more than that of the others. Contrary to earlier Italian examples, the Virgin does not play an important role, and she does not collapse under emotional stress. Rubens places her within the main group, and she contributes to the divine action of Redemption. The idea of presenting the Virgin erect and stately and not overwhelmed by emotion follows Franciscan literature and art, which adheres to the description in John 19:26, that she was ‘standing by the Cross’. This concept was also stressed in the Stabat Mater Dolorosa written at the end of the thirteenth century by an Italian Franciscan and which became very popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The change in the importance of the Virgin’s position reduces the emphasis on the human reactions between Christ and the Virgin in favour of those between Christ and St Mary Magdalen. The Magdalen’s new prominence is further stressed by the fact that the triptych was dedicated on her feast day, 22 July 1614, and not on St Christopher’s.

A number of scholars believe that the sources for Rubens’s Descent came from Italy. One of the important Italian works said to have been used by Rubens is Daniele da Volterra’s Descent, executed in the early 1540s for Sta Trinità de’ Monti, Rome. This fresco, linked with Michelangelo’s circle, was known by Rubens who inscribed his drawing in St Petersburg (No. 43a; Fig. 136) with a reference to Daniele’s idea of the addition of a second helper at the top of the Cross. Daniele’s importance for Rubens is discussed by von Einem, who believes that the presence of the two helpers was inspired by the work of Michelangelo’s followers—for example, the drawing in the Teyler Foundation, Haarlem. It has also been proposed that Lodovico Cigoli’s Descent from the Cross, now in the Pitti Palace, Florence but in Rome in the first decade of the seventeenth century, was an important influence on Rubens in the rendering of Christ’s body, the position of St Mary Magdalen and the helper in the upper left. Hubala, by contrast, sees a strong connection with Michelangelo in the use of the ‘pathos formula’ for Rubens’s Christ. He compares the type to Michelangelo’s Pietà in Florence Cathedral, which Rubens could have seen in the collection of Cardinal Barberini in Rome. Hubala also suggests that Michelangelo’s St Mary Magdalen plays a similar role to Rubens’s St John. Held, on the other hand, believes that Christ’s position is based upon one of the dying daughters of Niobe used on Roman sarcophagi such as The Children of Niobe, now in the Museo Archeologico, Venice, but at the Villa Borghese, Rome, early in the seventeenth century. Burchard and d’Hulst also see a connection between Rubens and the Antique, but for them Christ’s source was the Laocoön. They further propose, with good reason, that Joseph of Arimathea, who stands frontally on the ladder to the right, is a close variation on the position of the eldest son in the Laocoön group.

There are strong reasons to assume that Rubens borrowed Italian motifs for his Descent, but his northern forerunners should not be forgotten. Paintings of this theme were made throughout the fifteenth century, beginning with the Master of Flémalle and carried on by Rogier van der Weyden. These pictures have a strong sculptural quality in their manner of presentation and are similar to the scenes on wooden altarpieces. Verhaegen rightly suggests that because fifteenth-century paintings of the Descent can be connected with sculpture used to decorate altars, they were to be seen as devotional images and closely associated with the Eucharist. It seems that Rubens not only
used northern concepts for his iconography, but also motifs which are present earlier in the North than in the South. For example, the two men leaning over the arms of the Cross and helping to lower Christ's body are present in the centre panel of a *Descent from the Cross* by the Master of the Legend of St Catherine. The man in the upper right holds Christ's arm and the shroud falls down on a diagonal behind the Saviour's body in a manner similar to Rubens. St Mary Magdalen kneels in profile at the foot of the Cross and tenderly holds Christ's bloody feet, and is, in this way, akin in spirit to Rubens's Magdalen. It is unlikely that Rubens knew the Cologne painting, but its existence indicates that the aforementioned motifs were present in the North in the fifteenth century and were therefore part of the northern tradition.

Through the preserved documents, it is possible to follow the progress of the altarpiece quite closely. It took Rubens close to three years to complete the commission, which he received on 7 July 1611. The concept of the work was first reported in the documents on 13 March 1611, when the members of the Guild of the Harquebusiers in Antwerp met to consider plans for an altarpiece to decorate their altar in the Antwerp Cathedral. Shortly after that day, the Guild sent a request to the magistrates for permission to enroll twelve 'wepeelaers'. The latter, in return for a large payment to the Guild, were then exempted from watch duties and all other obligations in the Guild as well as from the duties of Churchwarden, borough warden, dean of their craft and from all service to the city militia. The Guild was forced to make such a request because they lacked the necessary funds to order a triptych beautiful enough to compete with those on the nearby altars in the Cathedral. The concept of the work was first reported in the documents on 13 March 1611, when the members of the Guild of the Harquebusiers in Antwerp met to consider plans for an altarpiece to decorate their altar in the Antwerp Cathedral. Shortly after that day, the Guild sent a request to the magistrates for permission to enroll twelve 'wepeelaers'. The latter, in return for a large payment to the Guild, were then exempted from watch duties and all other obligations in the Guild as well as from the duties of Churchwarden, borough warden, dean of their craft and from all service to the city militia. The Guild was forced to make such a request because they lacked the necessary funds to order a triptych beautiful enough to compete with those on the nearby altars in the Cathedral. On 22 April 1611, the Antwerp Board of Burgomasters and Aldermen awarded the Guild not twelve but nine 'wepeelaers'. Four of them had not yet received any charge, while the other five had, and were permitted now to purchase complete immunity from public duties. Each 'wepeelaer' paid 400 guilders and a small sum each year thereafter. With this money and other resources, the Guild felt that they could order an altarpiece from Rubens, the cost of which was estimated to be 8,000 guilders.

On 7 September 1611 the Guild met with Rubens and offered him the commission in the presence of their chairman, Nicolaas Rockox. In October 1611, the deans of the Guild made three visits to the artist's studio in order to hurry him along and to examine the panel for defects. During these visits the deans spent 9 guilders, 10 stuivers, for tips to the servants and for wine. The centre panel was finished by 17 September 1612, as it was moved sometime before that day to the Cathedral from Rubens's atelier in the house of his father-in-law Jan Brant. Shortly after 17 September and before 25 December 1612, Rubens was paid a first instalment on the triptych, but just how much is not known. It was probably more than the 1,000 guilders and a later payment of 400 Flemish pounds (2,400 guilders) that is usually cited in the literature. This December payment was a lump sum of 3,900 guilders, given to the painter, the sculptor and the panel maker. The next recorded remittance is dated 21 May 1613. On this day, the Treasurer, Dean Flessers, the sculptor and the masons, who ran numerous errands in Antwerp concerning the altarpiece and the purchase of the wood, were reimbursed 9 guilders, 12 stuivers. The wings were transported to the Cathedral on 18 February and 6 March 1614, at a cost of 7 guilders, 1 stuiver. On 22 July 1614, the feast day of St Mary Magdalen, the altarpiece was consecrated. Sometime in 1614, Hans van Haecht received his final payment, 50 guilders, for making the panels and frames. On 8 January 1615, an entry in the archives informs us that an agreement was made with Rubens, and the gilder, David Remeeus, with the former deans, concerning the finishing of their part of the altarpiece. 46 guilders and 18 stuivers were spent at this meeting. On the same day, 8 January, Rubens was paid 1,000 guilders, which was only a part of the sum due him. At an unspecified date in 1615, David Remeeus, the gilder, received 110 guilders for gilding the triptych and other additional work. In this same year, Rubens's wife was presented with a pair of gloves worth 8 guilders, 10 stuivers, a sign of the Guild's
pleasure with Rubens's work. Some six years later, on 13 February 1621, Rubens received his final payment for the altarpiece. Rubens's receipt was presented to the Guild Council by the Dean, Jan Loose, at a meeting on 15 December 1622, which included past and present deans and the Church elders. Rubens's receipt for this amounted to 400 Flemish pounds (2,400 guilders).34

Next to the altarpiece one finds the following inscription written by Cornelius Grapheus:

\[
\text{CHRISTOPHORUM}
\]

\[
\text{Age quisquis studes imitari illum per afflictionum undas}
\]

\[
\text{intrepida confessione gestato}
\]

\[
\text{Ne vero per caecas montis tenebras}
\]

\[
in diffidentiae scopulos incantus impingas
\]

\[
\text{Ad Coelistis Verbi lucernam vacillantis vitae gressum dirigito}
\]

Rubens's triptych has been restored on many occasions since its presentation to the Cathedral. The first restoration was done by a number of artists in 1623. According to the archives they cleaned the picture in situ and were given eight pots of beer at the cost of one guilder.36 A century later, in 1728, the altarpiece was cleaned by Jacques Vercauwen, and between 1750 and 1760 by Balthazar Beschey the Elder.37 The next major cleaning occurred in Paris on 1 July 1798, by Balthazar Beschey the Elder.37 The next major cleaning occurred in Paris on 1 July 1798, when the French government commissioned Michaud and Rôser to work on the painting. The triptych was returned to Antwerp in 1815 and was restored by P Van Regemorter before it was reinstated in the Cathedral. Van Regemorter began work on 22 December 1815, and completed the job along with the addition of new frames by 3 February 1816. On 8 May 1849, a commission appointed by the Belgian Minister of the Interior the previous year, reported that the triptych was, in general, in perfect condition. However, they said that certain parts had suffered, and that the centre panel should be cleaned and strengthened. Etienne Le Roy and Van Regemorter were charged with the work, but in a meeting on 3 April 1854 Van Regemorter resigned from the project. Le Roy completed the job, and the triptych was placed in the south transept some time between 10 June and the beginning of July 1856. During the years 1898-99, the Descent was completely cleaned by L. Maillard, and at the end of the First World War it received a light cleaning. In June 1946, the triptych was restored in situ by A. Van Poeck and in 1960, the altarpiece was removed from the Cathedral and sent to Brussels for a complete restoration.38
43a. The Descent from the Cross: Drawing (Fig. 136)

Pen and brown ink over black chalk and brown wash; 437 × 380 mm. Inscribed by Rubens in upper left corner: ...tetur ex Daniele Volterrano / Unus qui quasi tenens tamen relinquit / Item alius / qui diligentissime / descendit ut laturus opem. In bottom right corner, a deleted inscription in pen with the last word visible: Rubens.

St Petersburg, Print Room of the Hermitage. Inv. no. 5.496.

PROVENANCE: Count Charles Philippe Jean de Cobenzl (1712-1770); bought by Empress Catherine II of Russia in 1768.


Rubens has placed the Cross to the right of centre. Christ is being lowered gently into the arms of St John. He is partially wrapped in a large white sheet which seems to support the brunt of his weight. In the top centre, an assistant stands on the ladder with his head, shoulders and left arm extending over the right arm of the Cross. He holds the sheet with his left hand and in his mouth.1 Below, and on the same ladder, Nicodemus reaches out with his left arm and...
holds the Saviour's right shoulder. Nicodemus's right forearm and hand are wrapped up in the shroud. Directly below him are two kneeling women. St Mary Cleophas is closest to the turbaned Nicodemus, and she looks up at Christ sorrowfully while grasping the cloth with her left hand. To her right and in the foreground with her back to the viewer, St Mary Magdalen reaches up with her arms to help steady the descending body of Christ. The Saviour's left foot rests on her right shoulder. Rubens has placed the Virgin to the left, slightly separated from the main group and seated on the ground with her arms spread out. She is supported from behind by a veiled woman. Originally this standing lady was closer to the Cross, as can be seen in the pen lines to the right of her present position. Her face was also changed from a more raised position, as can be seen in the shadows of her drapery. Rubens has placed a basin and a jug at the base of the ladder. There are also changes in the upper right section of the composition where, among other things, a hand seems to grasp Christ's wrist. There are also indications of figures in this area. Five fingers are visible holding the drapery just to the right of Christ's exposed foot. These fingers are also present in the modello in London (No. 43b; Fig. 137), where clearly they are those of St Mary Cleophas. However, in the drawing they could not belong to the latter, given her position.

Rubens's inspiration for this composition is very likely a combination of several sources. The general arrangement—with the Virgin placed to one side lamenting the death of her son while the centre of the scene is dominated by the Descent—is frequently found in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in both Italy and the Netherlands. Rubens has depicted the Virgin in the old-fashioned state of collapse, as he did in the Elevation of the Cross, originally painted for Sta Croce in Gerusalemme around 1601–2, and preserved in a copy in Grasse. Along with this general connection with tradition, there are clear indications that Rubens studied Italian representations of this theme. Burchard and d'Hulst stress the resemblance to Cigoli's painting of the Descent from the Cross in the Pitti Palace, Florence (this painting was started well before 1607, the year it was sent to Empoli). Rubens's kneeling St Mary Magdalen is placed in a similar position and with outstretched arms. St John, seen in profile, standing to the right with his back to the viewer and receiving Christ's body, is alike in both. The placement of the Virgin to the left, away from the central action and with her arms in a highly expressive gesture is also similar to that in Cigoli's painting. Perhaps the closest analogy between the two works is the figure of Christ, who is represented in almost precisely the same fashion, except for the reversal in the direction of the legs. However, this similarity could have been the result of both artists having studied the same prototype, Michelangelo's Pietà, now in Florence, but in Rome in the early seventeenth century. Rubens was a great admirer of Michelangelo and may have been attracted to Cigoli's painting because of its possible connection with the Pietà.

Held suggests that the kneeling St Mary Magdalen may be a variation on the kneeling woman in the left centre foreground of Raphael's Fire in the Borgo in the Stanza dell'Incendio, Vatican. It is known that Rubens copied this figure c. 1602–3 from Marco da Ravena's print on the recto of a drawing now in Berlin. It is possible that St John in the St Petersburg drawing might possibly be based, in reverse, upon the executioner in Raphael's Judgement of Solomon in the Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican. Rubens also copied this figure on the recto of the above-cited Berlin sheet.

The inscription in the upper left corner reveals that Rubens intended to complete the composition by placing two more men on the ladders as in Daniele da Volterra's well-known fresco of this subject in Sta Trinità dei Monti, Rome. This is precisely what he did in the Descent from the Cross of 1611 in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135).

The date for the St Petersburg drawing is difficult to ascertain. Several scholars have placed it very early in Rubens's œuvre, c. 1598-1604, while others believe that he drew it after his return from Italy. There is general agreement that the sheet is similar to Rubens's Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215) in
Rotterdam, both stylistically and in the use of similar motifs—but again the date for this drawing is questionable.\textsuperscript{13} The same can be said for Rubens’s drawing in Chatsworth of the \textit{Trator Announced at the Last Supper} (No. 2; Fig. 2).\textsuperscript{14} Yet in the case of this drawing, it may be possible to suggest a date between March and August 1611. Although it is not absolutely certain that the Chatsworth drawing is the one cited in the correspondence, both drawings could date from c. 1611, and the St Petersburg design would be the earliest preserved study for the Antwerp Descent.

This possibility is further strengthened by the strong similarities between the main figures in the drawing and those in the \textit{modello} for the altarpiece. Christ assumes virtually the same position in both works, as do Nicodemus, St John and the two Marys. The man leaning over the arm of the Cross in the drawing is also repeated in the oil sketch, but now he has been moved to the right side and the actions of his arms have been reversed. Although one of his arms is still extended, in the \textit{modello} it is the right arm, and it no longer holds the shroud but instead, Christ’s left arm. In the drawing, the Virgin is seated on the ground to the left and supported by one of the Marys. By separating them from the main group, Rubens continues the sixteenth-century scheme used so often in Italy by artists like Cigoli, Daniele da Volterra, and others. However, Rubens changed the Virgin’s position in the London \textit{modello} and the finished altarpiece, where she stands upright and close to the Cross, reflecting Franciscan thought based upon John 19:25, where it is written ‘but there were standing by the Cross of Jesus his Mother’.\textsuperscript{15}

43b. \textbf{The Descent from the Cross: Oil Sketch (Fig. 137)}

Oil on panel; 114 $\times$ 76 cm.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 75.


(2) \textbf{Painting}, Ms Karin Leonhardt, 1983; panel, 100 $\times$ 70 cm.


\footnotesize{1. For a discussion of the Italian sources for the latter motif see Burchard—d’Hulst, \textit{Drawings}, 1963, I, p. 65.
10. This type is found earlier in Rubens’s oeuvre in the \textit{Elévation of the Cross} for Sta Croce in Gerusalemme, preserved in the copy in Grasse. Here the figure helps to raise the Cross in the left foreground and is in reverse of St John in St Peters­burg. The same can be said for the Michelange­lesque giant in the centre of the \textit{Elévation of the Cross}, Antwerp Cathedral (No. 20; Fig. 64).
11. For the drawing see H. Mielke and M. Winner, op. cit., no. 5, pl. 5v.

Christ, in the centre of the composition, is being lowered gently from the Cross to the right of centre. Rubens has included four ladders, two against the right arm of the Cross, a third supported against the left and a fourth that rests against the centre piece. A strongly foreshortened semi-nude figure leans over the Cross at the upper left. His right leg is extended backwards and his right arm down and just above the Saviour's left shoulder. He grips the shroud in his left hand. His counterpart in the upper right holds Christ's left arm, while the other is placed on top of the arm of the cross as a means of support. This assistant firmly holds the shroud between his teeth, as in the St Petersburg drawing (No. 43a; Fig. 136). Directly beneath him and to the right of Christ, Rubens has placed Joseph of Arimathea, who stands frontally on the ladder. He does not physically aid in lowering Christ. St John is in the bottom centre foreground with his back to the viewer, gazing out of the picture. He receives the body of the Saviour. St Mary Magdalen kneels to St John's left and gently grasps Christ's left leg, the foot of which rests on her shoulder. She raises her left arm to further help support Christ. St Mary Cleophas is placed below and to the left of the Magdalen. The former's left arm passes in front of the Magdalen which makes it possible for St Mary Cleophas to gently hold Christ's left foot. The Virgin stands above on the left with both arms stretched out toward her son, while towering over her is the monumental figure of Nicodemus. He is on a ladder and concentrates his gaze on Christ. Nicodemus holds part of the shroud in his right hand while the other firmly grasps Christ under his right arm.

The London modello is an elaboration upon and an editing of the St Petersburg drawing. Rubens has made what was formerly a dispersed composition into one that is compact. There is now a strong diagonal movement following the flow of the white drapery and the body of Christ from the upper right to the bottom left. The placement of the drapery caused Rubens some problems. Originally, as can be seen in the X-ray, the shroud was painted in an almost vertical format, as in the St Petersburg drawing. Yet in order to stress the diagonal movement downward, Rubens here moved the drapery further to the right.

Rubens made several important alterations between the drawing and the modello in order to create a more perfect composition. As noted in the design in St Petersburg, Rubens did not forget to add two figures on the ladders in the modello. He also moved the bald man with the shroud in his mouth to the far right. However, with his free hand, he no longer holds the shroud, but Christ's left arm. In order to balance the composition, Rubens added Joseph of Arimathea on the right side; he also clarified the positions of the kneeling Marys. Of utmost
importance in the *modello* is the inclusion of the Virgin in the main part of the scene, while her supporting companion in the drawing has been eliminated.

The *modello* contains some significant changes when compared with its Italian prototypes, but several minor details indicate Rubens's continued interest in Italy. For example, in the St Petersburg drawing the palm of Christ's right hand is visible. This is not the case in the *modello* which is closer to Cigoli's painting, where the palm cannot be seen. It is also clear that the figure in the upper left leaning over the Cross is similar to his counterpart on the right of the paintings by Cigoli and Daniele da Volterra. Other small alterations help to solidify the scene. St John's stance is more compact in the *modello*, and this is enhanced by placing his left foot solidly on the ground and not raised up on its toes as in the drawing. It is also important to note that Rubens has added a new iconographic detail. In the drawing there is no trace of a wound in Christ's side, but in the *modello* it is included, although on the non-traditional left side. This change probably reflects contemporary religious thought in Antwerp concerning a new devotional emphasis upon Christ's heart.

The London *modello* was probably the one shown to the officers of the Harquebusiers Guild. But it seems that Rubens was not entirely satisfied with the composition, and he introduced several changes into the final work. The more important of these alterations help to emphasize the roles played by St Mary Magdalen and the Virgin. In the altarpiece St Mary Magdalen's left arm is no longer raised up to support Christ's right leg as in the *modello*. However, the X-rays show that originally Rubens planned to include the arm. It is possible that he removed it to further integrate the Virgin into the main group. In order to put together the most important participants, St John no longer looks out at the spectator but directly at St Mary Magdalen. They both receive the body of Christ. As Bialostocki observes, they are the main personages in the scene and their connection is stressed by their intense exchange of glances. Rubens also altered the position of St Mary Cleophas's left hand. In the *modello* she holds Christ's left foot, but in the altarpiece her hand is placed over the Magdalen's and grasps the drapery. It is Mary Magdalen who now firmly seizes Christ's foot. This action is appropriate when one considers her importance to the scene. Rubens has also changed the position of Christ's wound from the left side in the oil sketch to the traditional right in the altarpiece.

In order to increase the sense of free flowing movement throughout the scene, Rubens has omitted the strongly foreshortened right knee and leg of Nicodemus which was present in both the St Petersburg drawing and the London *modello*. It is interesting to note that in the altarpiece Nicodemus no longer looks down at Christ but above and beyond him. The artist has given the assistant in the upper right an elegant head of hair while St Mary Magdalen's right foot is again visible. The lower right corner has been filled in with a basin containing the crown of thorns and the *titulus* held in place by a sponge.

Several small representations of the Descent have been attributed to Rubens but they are lost. One example is the picture described as the 'model' for the famous painting in Antwerp by Rubens from the Horion collection. Another example of the subject was cited in the Jacob de Wit collection.

2. For more details see Held, Sketches, 1980, 1, p. 490.
3. For details see pp. 167.
4. For the documents see Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 114.
7. For a discussion of this see pp. 124.
8. Panel, c. 65 × 47.5 cm. PROV. Prince de Rubempré, sale, Brussels, 11 April 1765, no. 64, sold to Horion for 510 florins (P. Terwesten, Catalogus of Naamlijst van Schilderijen... The Hague, 1770, p. 399, no. 64); J.-B. Horion, sale, Brussels, 1ff. Sept. 1788, no. 14, sold for 385 florins. LIT. Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 177, no. 614; C. Blanc, Le trésor de la curiosité, I, Paris, 1857, pp. 124, 125; Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 108.
9. Painting, whereabouts unknown, presumably lost; panel, 27 × 38 cm. PROV. Jacob de Wit,
Amsterdam (inventory of 27 Nov. 1754, no. 8), sale, Amsterdam (Hendrik de Leth and Dirk van Schorrenbergh), 10f. March 1755, no. 8, sold to Schukking for 305 florins. LIT. *Künstler-Inventaire. Urkunden zur Geschichte der Holländischen Kunst des XVI., XVII. und XVIII. Jahrhunderts*, II, ed. A. Bredius, The Hague, 1918, p. 743.

43c. Head of a Young Man Turned to the Left: Oil Sketch (Fig. 139)

Oil on panel; 48 × 38 cm. 
*Private Collection, New York; on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1983.*

PROVENANCE: A. McLlwaith, 1901; Commander St Vincent Welch; Lord Plunket, Mount Offham, Kent.


This study from life depicts a young man with his head turned to the left, and his torso cut off just below the shoulders. The highlights in the hair are spontaneously rendered and scored into the panel by the back of the brush. The head is very similar to that of St John the Evangelist in the *Descent from the Cross* in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135). The details are not repeated exactly, which suggests that the head is not a copy of St John’s in the Antwerp *Descent.* The lively rendering of the hair and curls is executed with the rich full application of the paint that one associates with Rubens. In the *modello*, more of St John’s forehead and right eye are visible than one finds in the altarpiece. This intimates a slight modification by Rubens. However, the position of the head and its physiognomy in both the oil sketch and the final painting is markedly different from St John’s in the London *modello* for the completed work (No. 43b; Fig. 137). Here St John turns out toward the viewer with whom he makes direct eye contact, while in the altarpiece his expression and facial position quietly interact with the grieving St Mary Magdalen. Because of their strong similarity, it is likely that the *Head of a Young Man* served as the study for the St John in the Antwerp altarpiece.

Burchard believed that the head in the London *modello* was a copy of St John’s in the painting by Rubens’s studio of the *Descent from the Cross* for the Portiuncula Chapel, Church of the Minderbroeders, Antwerp, and now in Antwerp Museum.1

1. See under No. 43, Copy 1.

43d. Head of a Bearded Man Turned to the Left: Oil Sketch

Oil on panel; c. 67 × 51 cm. 
*Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.*


Neither Burchard nor Matejcek accepted the picture in Prague (Copy 1; Fig. 141) as an oil sketch by Rubens for Joseph of Arimathea. 1
have not seen the original, but certain weaknesses visible in the photograph suggest that it is a studio work. Compared ery. The collar is different in twith the study for Nicodemus (No. 43e; Fig. 140), the facial structure of the Prague head seems flat and lacking in articulation, as do the side of the sitter's head, his collar and draphe copy at Prague where it is not of fur as in the altarpiece. This suggests that it was not copied from the altarpiece but from a lost sketch. On the other hand, it could be the original. As in the study for Nicodemus, the age of the subject has been changed from the older partially bald type (Joseph of Arimathea) in the London modêllo (No. 43b; Fig. 137) to the younger and more forceful figure in the altarpiece (No. 43; Fig. 135). Consequently, the original head must have been completed in late 1611 or early 1612.

43e. Head of a Man Turned to the Right: Oil Sketch (Fig. 140)

Oil on panel; 51.5 x 38 cm.
Newcastle (New South Wales), Bowmore Collection.


In this life-size oil sketch, Nicodemus is placed against a greyish-brown background and looks toward the right. He is dressed in a bright crimson robe. He has light brown hair and a black beard. The head, a study from life, was executed for the Descent from the Cross sometime between the end of 1611 and the beginning of 1612. That is between the time Rubens completed the modêllo in London (No. 43b; Fig. 137) and the finished altarpiece in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135). This is clear when one compares the position of Nicodemus’s eyes in the study with those in the London modêllo and the altarpiece. In the former work, Nicodemus gazes downward while in the Study for the Head and in the altarpiece, the eyes look up. Furthermore, in the London modêllo Nicodemus is an old man with a thin face, while in the study and in the altarpiece he is much fuller in form and seen as middle-aged. In the finished work, Rubens dressed him in a red cap and an elegant costume befitting his role in history.

Generally Ruben’s studies were ‘character heads’ which he left around the studio. They were not painted for specific pictures but were used at random when Rubens needed to paint a single or multi-figured composition. However, this particular head was executed specifically for the Antwerp Descent.

It seems to be influenced by Caravagesque lighting. The shadow falls on the left side, and the full intensity of this light strikes the head from the right, as seen in Caravaggio’s Calling of St Matthew in San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome.1 Rubens used the head in several later paintings: the Descent from the Cross in Valenciennes (No. 52; Fig. 173); The Tribute Money in San Francisco;2 The Adoration of the Shepherds in Rouen;3 and the drawing of The Adoration of the Shepherds in the Lugt collection, Paris.4

1. This head is particularly close to Matthew’s.
CATALOGUE NO. 44.

43f. Head of a Woman Turned to the Right: Oil Sketch

Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPY: Oil sketch (Fig. 142), St Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. 548; transferred from panel to canvas in 1868, 63 × 49 cm. PROV. Acquired by Catherine II. LIT. A.A. Néoustroïeff, 'Rubens I ego kartiny v galerie imperatorskago Ermitazja', Staryé Gody, I, 1909, repr. after p. 82.

The St Petersburg oil sketch is probably a copy of a lost modello by Rubens made late in 1611 or early in 1612 for St Mary Magdalen.

43g. Head of a Woman Turned to the Right: Oil Sketch

Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPY: Oil sketch (Fig. 143), London, private collection; panel, 65 × 52 cm. LIT. Müller Hofstede, Kopfstudie, 1968, pp. 236-238, no. 3, fig. 168.

This London panel is probably a copy of a lost modello of St Mary Cleophas made by Rubens for the finished altarpiece in Antwerp Cathedral late in 1611 or early in 1612.

44. The Visitation (Fig. 144)

Oil on panel; 421 × 153 cm.
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

PROVENANCE: Chapel of the Harquebusiers, St Christopher, Church of Our Lady, Antwerp; removed to Paris; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to its original location on 31 May 1816.

COPIES: (1) Painting attributed to Géricault, whereabouts unknown; cardboard, 91.5 × 37 cm. PROV. Pierre Dubaut, Paris, 1935.
(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 116 × 42 cm. PROV. F. Moens, Leopoldsburg.
(3) Lithograph by Valentin Green. LIT. V.S., p. 51, under no. 360.


The inner side of the left-hand panel of the altarpiece of the Descent from the Cross (No. 43) illustrates the visit of the Virgin and Joseph to the house of Elizabeth and Zachariah. Luke 1:39-56 does not include Joseph in the visit, but he is present in the painting just behind Mary and greeting Zachariah. Elizabeth, on the right, touches the Virgin’s stomach while the latter looks down shyly with her left hand resting above Elizabeth’s and her right grasping the railing. A small barking dog stands between the two women. The placement of the figures on a landing with an arch below and a railing above is probably based upon Paolo Veronese’s Visitation. A servant girl with a basket of clothes on her head follows the group up the stairs. The scene takes place at the entrance of what appears to be an Italian Renaissance villa. Below, a small arch opens on to a view of the distant sky with a peasant walking down a staircase. Just beneath the arch, Rubens has placed a peacock, a reference to immortality.

The Virgin is the dominating figure in the scene. Her pregnant condition is stressed by the prominent position of her stomach, the placement of her left hand and the pointing finger of Elizabeth. This emphasis upon the Virgin’s role as a carrier of Christ corresponds to the other scenes on the altarpiece where Christ is borne by his supporters.

Rubens expanded this composition some twenty years later in his oil sketch of c. 1632-33 of the Visitation in Prague, Národni Galerie (Fig. 147), which was engraved by Pieter de Jode II (Fig. 148). In the engraving, the postures and gestures of the Virgin and Elizabeth are virtually the same as in the earlier work. In the Prague sketch, however, the composition has been opened up. The strong vertical space restrictions caused by the structure of the altarpiece have been eliminated. The architecture is considerably broader, and continues beyond the actual confines of the picture frame. Zachariah has now been moved behind the Virgin and...
CATALOGUE NO. 44.

The Visitation was completed early in 1614. It is known that the wings for the altarpiece were transported from Rubens's atelier to the Cathedral on 18 February and 6 March 1614. However, it is impossible to determine which of the two panels was sent first.3

1. Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This was first noticed by Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverf-schetsen, 1953, p. 42; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 38, fig. 9.

2. See under No. 43.


44a. The Visitation: Oil Sketch
(Fig. 145)

Oil on panel; 50 x 26 cm.
Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 198.

PROVENANCE: ? Martin Robyns, sale, Brussels, 22 May 1758, lot 7 ('synde de Visitatie of Bezoeking van de Heilige Maagd, bestaande uit vyf Figuren, 1 voet 8 duim x 1 voet 3 duim'); ? sale, Paris (Chariot and Constantin), 19-21 Nov. 1810, lot 78; acquired for the Museum in the London art market by W. von Bode in 1890.

COPY: Painting, whereabouts unknown. PROV. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum (photograph in Rubenianum, Antwerp).


The Virgin stands in the left foreground and extends her right arm to Elizabeth, who grasps it with her right hand. The Virgin stands erect and looks down into the face of the bending Elizabeth, who is standing on a step before her house. Zachariah is behind her and to the right, and his left hand rests on her back. He gazes intently down at Joseph who is behind his wife and slightly to the right. A female servant carries clothes in a basket balanced on her head and supported with her left arm. She is visible behind the Virgin along the left margin. Rubens has placed a small dog, a traditional symbol of faithfulness, between the two main figures in the foreground.

This modello is different from Rubens’s wing for the Antwerp altarpiece in format, point of view, scale and details, but it was probably his first idea for the project. It is conceivable that it was originally meant for another commission which was never executed, then used by Rubens as the starting point for the Antwerp altarpiece.

It has been suggested that the drawing with studies for a Visitation in Bayonne, Musée Bonnat (No. 44b; Fig. 146) stands between the Strasbourg modello and the final modello for the altarpiece in the collection of the Courtauld Institute (No. 44c; Fig. 150).1 In the drawing, the earliest sketches in the sequence of development2 are to be seen from above, which is the same vantage point used in the Strasbourg modello. It is only in the final sketch, the one closest to the Courtauld modello, that one looks up at the figures. Elizabeth is bent far more dramatically in the Strasbourg scene and the two designs in the bottom
CATALOGUE NO. 44b.

centre and upper right in Bayonne than she is in the sketch in the upper left of the Bayonne sheet or in the Courtauld picture. The Virgin's outer drapery in the Strasbourg modello is entirely different from that used in the Bayonne sheet or the Courtauld modello. For these reasons and those put forward by Haverkamp Begemann, Count Seilern and Burchard—d'Hulst, the Strasbourg modello appears to be the first in the sequence of designs for the Visitation wing in Antwerp and most likely dates from late 1611 or early 1612. Because of the similarity to Rubens's Visitation in the Missale Romanum border décoration (Fig. 149; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library), in the simple type of architecture with foliage on the overhang, in the placement of Zachariah behind Elizabeth, and in the inclusion of the dog with head turned up toward the Virgin, the Strasbourg panel must date close to 25 September 1612, when Theodoor Galle cut the plate containing the Visitation.3


This drawing was originally almost twice as large and also contained studies for the Presentation in the Temple. The left side is in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (No. 45b; Fig. 154), and the right in London, Courtauld Institute Galleries (No. 45a; Fig. 153).1 The entire sheet was, therefore, a series of studies for the outer wings of the Descent from the Cross in Antwerp Cathedral. The verso of this sheet contained studies for a man holding the shaft of the Cross, connected to Rubens's triptych of 1610-11 of the Elevation of the Cross (Nos. 20e, 20f, 20g; Figs. 69, 71, 70).

The Visitation fragment was for the left wing and documents, in part, Rubens's thoughts concerning the composition and its evolution. Benesch, followed by Burchard and d'Hulst, has suggested a plausible progression in the drawing, but it is not possible to know how it was actually conceived by Rubens.2 His initial thought was probably the scene in the top centre, with Elizabeth in the doorway holding the partially opened door with one hand. The next sketch might be the one in the bottom left where Elizabeth also holds the door open. The next step in the evolution of the composition could be in the bottom centre where the Virgin is erect and Elizabeth bows before her. The bold and free use of the pen and wash is continued in the upper right where Elizabeth, bent over, descends the stairs. Rubens has placed another figure between and above them. Elizabeth's movement and posture is repeated above and to the right.

Elizabeth descending, the upright position of the Virgin and the sense that the viewer must

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44b. Studies for the Visitation: Drawing (Fig. 146)

Pen, brown ink and brown wash; 265 x 360 mm. Above on the left in Rubens's hand an unreadable inscription; below in the right corner, by a later hand, RUBB.

Bayonne, Musée Bonnat. Inv. no. 1438.

PROVENANCE: L. Bonnat (Paris, 1833-1922); bequeathed by him to the City of Bayonne.


look up at the figures are all elements present in the Strasbourg modello (No. 44a; Fig. 145). These characteristics are common to the first three sketches, but they are changed in the one in the upper left. In this group Elizabeth, on the right, is more erect although still slightly inclined, as she would appear in the London oil sketch (No. 44c; Fig. 150). The Virgin stands to the left and is dressed in a costume similar to the one she wears in the later painted versions. Joseph's head is behind her and to the right as he would appear in the sketch. Rubens also enlarged the space between the two groups in the drawing as well as adding clouds above, indications of a trellis decorating the architectural memberings and placing the group on a new vantage point with the spectator looking up at them. All of these changes would be enlarged upon and developed in the London oil sketch, for which the configuration on the left in the Bayonne sheet is the preliminary concept.

There are also several studies of heads in this drawing. One is in the centre above Elizabeth's, three more can be seen in the bottom right corner. The latter are similar in style to the heads of St Christopher in the sheet of Two Studies for St Christopher of c. 1613 in London (No. 46a; Fig. 160) and those in Rubens's drawing of the Traitor Announced at the Last Supper, recto, in Chatsworth (No. 2; Fig. 2). If this is acceptable, then it is possible that the Chatsworth sheet was not executed around 1604-7 as proposed by Held but after Rubens's return from Italy, c. 1611-12, as suggested by Burchard—d'Hulst. These scholars see a connection between the two outer heads in the bottom right corner of the Bayonne drawing with Joseph and Zachariah in Pieter de Jode II's proof print with corrections by Rubens for the Visitation, Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris.

1. For the reconstruction see Held, Drawings, 1986, pp. 73, and Cat. Exh. Wellesley, Mass., 1993, p. 186, figs. XIa-XIIb.
3. For the connection between the figures in the upper left and Rubens's design for the border of the Missale Romanum of 1613 in New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, see Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 105; Judson—Van de Velde, Title-pages, 1978, I, p. 95, and for the relationship with the Strasbourg modello see Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 104.

44c. The Visitation: Oil Sketch (Fig. 150)

Oil on panel; 83 x 30.5 cm.

London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 16.

PROVENANCE: Prince Giovannelli, Venice, 1732; acquired by Count Seilern c. 1933; bequeathed by the latter to the Courtauld Galleries in 1978.

EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 2, repr.

The main participants in this *modello* are standing on a porch, which has an overhang supported by two Doric columns. Elizabeth is in the right foreground. She leans toward the Virgin, who is advancing from the left. Elizabeth extends her right arm toward Mary with her finger pointing at the latter's stomach. Elizabeth's other arm is placed parallel to her waist. The Virgin grips the iron guard-rail with her right hand while the other rests on her chest. Joseph is standing behind the Virgin and his head can be seen to her left. He is in the act of receiving Zachariah's greetings. The latter's head is only partially visible behind and to the right of Elizabeth and his two hands firmly hold Joseph's right. In the centre, a small barking dog separates the group while on the far left a servant with a basket on her head follows closely in the footsteps of Mary. The entire group stands on a bridge-like platform with a rusticated arch below, through which there is a grazing donkey and to the right trees and what appears to be a staircase.

This composition is an elaboration of the group on the left in the Bayonne drawing (No. 44b; Fig. 146), but only in this stage has Rubens solved the problems of the placement of the arms and hands and the type of architectural setting. For the latter with its staircase, platform and railing supported by an arch, Rubens seems to have looked to Venice—possibly to the Visitatie, attributed to Paolo Veronese now in Birmingham, Institute of Fine Arts, but during the seventeenth century in the Church of San Giacomo, Murano.¹

The Seilern oil sketch is very close to the final conception on the left wing of the altarpiece, and therefore must be the study Rubens presented to the Guild for their approval. The date for this *modello* is difficult to determine from the documents, but c. 1612-13 would be most reasonable. We know that by September 1612 the centre panel was installed in the Cathedral and that by 21 May 1613 there had been problems in providing suitable wings.²

The *modello* is very close to the composition on the altarpiece, but there are several differences. As Held pointed out, the altarpiece wing stresses the Virgin's pregnancy.³ Her body is turned so that there is a greater emphasis on her stomach. This is further enhanced by the highlighting of Elizabeth's fingers, one of which touches Mary. The Virgin's left hand is also lowered and along with Elizabeth's hand acts as a frame for her stomach. The relationship of the two women is further stressed by placing the servant girl further down on the steps⁴ so that she no longer touches Mary. The basket is set further forward on the servant's head in the altarpiece, and, in this way, reinforces her movement upward which helps to direct the viewer's eye toward the main participants. In the altarpiece the arch below is smoother and less rustic, and the donkey is eliminated in favour of a column. Rubens adds a peasant descending the stairs, an open landscape and a broader treatment of the sky. In the right foreground there is a peacock, a symbol of immortality, and three roosters.

4. Ibid.

45. **The Presentation in the Temple** (Fig. 151)

Oil on panel; 421 x 153 cm.
Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.

PROVENANCE: Chapel of the Harquebusiers, St Christopher, Church of Our Lady, Antwerp; removed to Paris; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to its original location on 31 May 1816.

(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 116 x 42 cm. PROV. F. Moens, Kinshasa.
(3) Grisaille, whereabouts unknown; panel,
63 × 49 cm. PROV. Mrs Condé, Biarge, France. 
(4) Engraving by P. Pontius, 1638; 646 × 491 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 18, no. 48.


This scene takes place on the inner right wing of the altarpiece of the Descent from the Cross (No. 43), and is based upon Luke 2:22-38. The richly robed Simeon stands to the left of centre and looks up toward heaven. He gently carries the young Christ who has just been handed to him by the Virgin standing to the right with her arms still outstretched. Joseph kneels in the foreground and looks up at Simeon and the child. The father is about to present ‘a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons’ for sacrifice according to ‘the law of the Lord’.1 Just behind the Child in the centre, the old prophetess Hannah, dressed in dark mourning clothes, looks down at Christ. Two unknown young women stand behind the Virgin and to the left while two men peer over Simeon’s right shoulder. The young man on the left has the facial features of Nicolaas Rockox, who was chairman of the Guild of Harquebusiers in 1611, the year the commission was awarded to Rubens.2

As can be seen in the other panels of this altarpiece, the dominant message is that of supporting the Saviour. He is tenderly but firmly held by Simeon, the most monumental figure in the panel. Simeon’s role is further stressed by the placement of the hands of the Virgin and Hannah below Christ, thereby reiterating the idea of sustaining the Child.3

Prior to the execution of this composition Rubens made several preparatory drawings and at least one oil sketch.4 It is also possible that the painted Study of a Head, Copy 5 above, might be the modello for the head of Nicolaas Rockox placed behind Simeon on the left. However, because I have not seen the original, or a photograph after cleaning, it is impossible for me to discuss the attribution.

The Presentation was finished early in 1614 and the wings were transported to the Cathedral on 18 February and 6 March 1614.5

3. For more details concerning this, see pp. $$. 
4. See Nos. 45a-45d; Figs. 152-154, 156.

45a. Studies for the Presentation in the Temple: Drawing (Fig. 153)
Pen, brush and brown ink; 242 × 238 mm. 
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 56.

PROVENANCE: P. Langerhuizen Lzn (Crailoo near Bussum, 1839-1918), sale, Amsterdam (F. Müller & Co.), 20 April—1 May 1919; Victor Koch, London; Count A. Seilern (London, 1901-1978); bequeathed by him to the Courtauld Institute Galleries in 1978.

EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 71, repr.

This drawing is a fragment of a much larger sheet. It was originally part of a design containing yet another sketch for the Presentation in the Temple, now in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (No. 45b; Fig. 154) and one for the Visitation in Bayonne (No. 44b; Fig. 146). The verso of these sheets originally contained figure studies for Rubens's triptych of 1610-11 of the Elevation of the Cross (Nos. 20e, 20f, 20g; Figs. 69, 71, 70).

According to Benesch and Burchard—d'Hulst, the left part of the Courtauld sheet was Rubens's first idea for the composition. This group depicts the figures in reverse of the painting. The Virgin, in profile, is placed to the left kneeling on the steps. She presents the Christ child to Simeon who is turned slightly to the right with his head, shaped as an oval, looking upwards. The prophetess Anna is shown in outline between Mary and Simeon. Joseph kneels in the foreground with his back to the spectator and his heels visible. Benesch believes that Joseph's kneeling position and the placement of his feet were based upon similar figures in Caravaggio's Madonna of the Rosary in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, while Held suggests a connection with Caravaggio's Madonna di Loretto in Rome, Sant'Agostino. A Venetian source may be proposed—for example one of the many versions of the type found in the work of Jacopo Bassano, who also influenced Caravaggio.

Rubens has repeated the same group in a second sketch just to the right, and this composition shows a clear direction toward the finished right wing of the altarpiece. Rubens reverses the position of the Virgin, who now stands on the right and is turned in profile to the left as she would be in the modello and the painting. Simeon remains in the same place facing the left, opposite to the stance that he will assume in the later composition. However, Rubens appears to have changed the attitude of Simeon in the first sketch with some wash and an oval-shaped indication of the head in pen which causes the head to look to the right. This is the direction in which the head will be turned in the final work. In the second sketch, Anna is vaguely indicated by the oval-shaped lines between the heads of Simeon and the Virgin. Joseph is again placed in the centre foreground with his back to the spectator and his dirty heels exposed.

The drawing was probably executed after the centre panel was finished in September 1612 when Rubens started the preparations for the wings.

2. O. Benesch, loc. cit.

45b. The Presentation in the Temple: Drawing (Fig. 154)

Pen, brush and brown ink; 214 × 142 mm.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Inv. no. 52.214.3.

PROVENANCE: Mr and Mrs Janos Scholz, New York; presented by them to the Museum in 1952.


LITERATURE: O. Benesch, 'Beiträge zum Werke des Rubens', Alte und Neue Kunst, III, 1954, p. 9, fig. 1; Jaffé, Chef-d’oeuvre, 1958, p. 20; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, pp. 24, 69, 70, 105, no. 28, pl. 34, fig. 50; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, p. 102; Martin, Altarpieces, 1969, p. 46, fig. 27; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 52, pl. 188; Held,
CATALOGUE NO. 45b.

Sketches, 1980, I, p. 493, under no. 358; Held, Drawings, 1986, p. 98, no. 72, p. 197, pl. 73; Cat. Exh. Wellesley, Mass., 1993, pp. 185-187, no. 43, pl. 43.

This drawing elaborates upon the Courtauld sheet (No. 45a; Fig. 153). The Virgin stands below and to the right of Simeon, who holds the Christ Child and looks up to the left. Joseph kneels in the centre foreground in a position akin to the one he assumes in the Courtauld sheet, only now the pigeons are more clearly visible in his left hand. Hannah is placed to the left of Simeon looking down at the Child. Her attitude is similar to the first Simeon in the Courtauld sheet whose head was turned to the right by the addition of some wash and pen lines. The final solution was still not reached in the Metropolitan drawing, as there are modest differences in composition between it and the modello in the Courtauld Galleries (No. 45c; Fig. 152). In the modello, Simeon is turned to the right while Hannah stands below him and to the right. The Virgin is the only figure in the drawing close to her counterpart in the modello. Joseph kneels in front of the latter, but he is placed to the right side and in profile. In the modello, Rubens also adds two men behind Simeon along the left margin and two women along the right side behind Mary.

The drawings on the verso of this sheet have been identified as studies for Rubens's triptych of 1610-11 of the Elevation of the Cross (Nos. 20e, 20f, 20g; Figs. 69, 71, 70).

45c. The Presentation in the Temple: Oil Sketch (Fig. 152)

Oil on panel; 82.5 × 30.5 cm.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 17.

PROVENANCE: Prince Giovanelli, Venice, 1732 until c. 1933; dealer Vitale Bloch; purchased by Count Seilern from Bloch in 1935; bequeathed by the late Count Antoine Seilern to the Courtauld Institute Galleries in 1978.

EXHIBITED: Amsterdam, 1933, no. 3.


Rubens has placed his figures in an architectural setting with rounded arches supported by heavy columns decorated with antique capitals. Simeon stands on the steps to the left of centre holding the Christ Child. He faces to the right and his head is raised up towards heaven. The Virgin is below and to the right with arms outstretched and her hands placed just beneath Simeon's elbow. She is in profile looking up towards the Child. The prophetess Hannah stands between Simeon and the Virgin with her face very close to Christ and her left hand raised. Joseph is in the right foreground and kneels on his right leg. Two female heads are visible along the right margin behind the Virgin, while two men are present behind Simeon to the left. The bearded man may be a hastily sketched—in portrait of Nicolaas Rockox, the chairman of the Guild of Harquebusiers when it commissioned the altarpiece on 7 September 1611.1

The oil sketch in London is a further development of the composition worked out in Rubens's drawing now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (No. 45b; Fig. 154).
However, Rubens has made several important changes. Simeon no longer turns to the left. His body faces to the right and is in a higher position in relation to the Virgin and Joseph. As a result of this elevation of Simeon, the Virgin looks up at the Child and not down as in the Metropolitan and London drawings (Nos. 45a, 45b; Figs. 153, 154). In the oil sketch, Hannah is placed between Simeon and the Virgin while in the Metropolitan drawing she is to Simeon’s left. The prophetess in the modello returns to the position that she occupied in the first design for this composition in London. Joseph’s position has been changed in the oil sketch, where he is seen in profile kneeling on his right leg. In the earlier drawings, he rests on both knees with his back to the spectator and the soles of his feet visible. Rubens added two figures along the left and right margins in the oil sketch as well as an architectural setting.

The differences between the drawings and the London oil sketch are so strong that it is possible, as Held suggested, that a further drawing or oil sketch was executed by Rubens before the London oil sketch. This idea is further substantiated by the existence of two oil sketches for the Visitation (Nos. 44a, 44c; Figs. 145, 150). Rubens followed the London oil sketch closely in the altarpiece, and it was probably made in 1613. For minor corrections of the oil sketch made by Rubens for the completed altarpiece, see No. 45; Fig. 151.


This sheet of studies was made for the Presentation in the Temple (No. 45; Figs. 151, 155) in Antwerp. The pair of hands in the upper left are Hannah’s, the head in profile in the top centre is Joseph’s and the head and hands below are Simeon’s.

It is very likely that the Vienna drawing was executed after the composition had been worked out in the London oil sketch (No. 45c; Fig. 152). This is especially evident in the rendering of Simeon’s hands. In the oil sketch the positioning of the fingers was not established and only three of them are visible, with a large amount of space between them. However, in the drawing all five fingers are articulated and are repeated this way in the altarpiece. The hands and fingers in the oil sketch are in general carelessly laid on, and they seem to have been worked out in the drawing for the finished wing. The same can be said for the heads, except that Simeon appears much younger. Because the drawing was probably executed after the modello and shortly before the shutter was started, I would confirm a date of 1613.1

46. **St Christopher and the Hermit**  
(Figs. 157, 158)

Oil on two panels, each 421 × 153 cm.  
*Antwerp, Church of Our Lady.*

**PROVENANCE:** Chapel of the Harquebusiers, St Christopher, Church of Our Lady, Antwerp; removed to Paris; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to its original location on 31 May 1816.

**COPIES:**
1. *Painting* by Jacques de Roore, whereabouts unknown.  
   PROV. ? Ordered for Louis XV of France by Jan van Opstal.  

2. *Painting,* whereabouts unknown; canvas, 115 × 86 cm.  

3. *Drawing,* Lier, J. Verhoeven; chalk, measurements unknown.

   LIT. V.S., p. 96, no. 17.

5. *Engraving* by C. Van Tienen.  
   LIT. V.S., p. 96, no. 18.


The exterior wings of the closed altarpiece form a single composition representing *St Christopher and the Hermit.* On the left panel, St Christopher, a monumental, Herculean figure, nude except for the drapery hanging from his waist and enveloping his shoulders, carries the Christ Child. The weary saint steps out of the water directly toward the spectator. His intense expression makes direct contact with the viewer, and he supports himself by the large club beneath his right arm. St Christopher’s left hand is set back on his waist while his elbow projects forward. The Christ Child, framed by wind-blown drapery, sits on the saint’s left shoulder with one leg forward and the other back. The young Saviour looks off to the right at the hermit who holds a shining lantern and stands on a rocky shore, which rises up steeply behind him. In the upper left corner, Rubens has included a three-quarter moon. The powerful light from the hermit’s lantern illuminates the figures on the left, and in this way connects the two panels. St Christopher and the Child are brightly lit, but behind them are dark clouds which drop to the dimly lit horizon line behind St Christopher’s knees.

Rubens based this configuration upon the text in the *Golden Legend* (25 July) where the scene is described as taking place at night. Christopher, as found in this composition, is described in the *Legend* as being a man of great size. He wanted to serve the strongest king on earth, and after much searching he learned that Christ was the most powerful of monarchs. Christopher then set out to find this king and met a hermit who preached to him and taught him about Christ. The hermit said that the king whom Christopher wanted to serve demanded that he fast in his honour and offer him many prayers. Christopher could not do this, and the hermit proposed that this large and powerful man live beside a dangerous river and offer to carry people across. After many days by the river, Christopher was asleep in his hut when he heard a child’s voice cry out ‘Christopher, come out and carry me across the river!’. He ran outside twice and found no one, but on the third call, there was a small child who asked to be taken across. Christopher placed the child on his shoulders, picked up his staff and started off through the water. The water rose slowly and the child became ‘heavier than a leaden weight’. The further they progressed the higher the water rose and the heavier the child became. Christopher was so tired that he thought he would fall; but he finally reached the other bank and said ‘Child, thou hast put me in dire peril, and hast weighed so heavy upon me that if I had borne the whole world upon my shoulders, it could not have burdened me more heavily!’. And the child answered ‘Wonder not, Christopher, for not only hast thou borne the whole world upon thy shoulders, but him Who created the world. For I am Christ thy King, Whom thou servest in this work!’
In this painting, Rubens has vividly rendered the exhausted giant walking slowly up the river bank with his precious burden. This scene represents the major message of the altarpiece, the bearing of Christ, which is implicit in the meaning of Christopher: Christ-bearer. There are several preliminary studies for the outer wings of the altarpiece, and the final composition was completely worked out, with a few minor changes in the Munich oil sketch (No. 46c; Fig. 159). The left panel was used, but with changes, by Jacob Jordaens for his painting of c. 1630, St Christopher Carrying the Christ Child.3

Rubens finished the panels by February and March 1614, when they were removed from his workshop in his father-in-law’s house to the Cathedral, on 18 February and 6 March 1614.4 The church records dated 18 July 1614 say that at a meeting of the chapter two of the canons, Van Eynatten and Willems, would visit the bishop. At this meeting, the two canons were to inform the bishop of the objections of their colleagues concerning the nudity of St Christopher and to convince him to take some kind of action. It is not clear that the bishop agreed to do this, and it is entirely possible that the matter was never discussed with Rubens. It might also be added that the change in the amount of drapery between the oil sketch and the final version is negligible and cannot be explained by objections concerning the nudity of the saint.3

2. Ibid., pp. 378, 379.

46a. Two Studies for St Christopher:
Drawing (Fig. 160)

Pen and brown ink; 267 × 167 mm.
London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. Inv. no. Gg. 2-231.

PROVENANCE: Presented to the British Museum by the Revd C.M. Cracherode in 1799.


In the two sketches, the Christ Child straddles St Christopher’s right shoulder; his left leg is visible while the right is not. The young Christ supports himself by placing his two hands on the saint’s head. In the top group, Christ, full faced, looks down to the right while St Christopher’s head is in three-quarter profile glancing in the opposite direction. His right shoulder, arm, wrist and hand are depicted as they will be, but in reverse, in the oil sketch (No. 46c; Fig. 159) and in the altarpiece (No. 46; Fig. 157). The lower set of figures show Christ looking down and to the left in three-quarter profile as does Christopher. Only the upper part of Christopher’s right shoulder is seen.

Both sketches contain elements that closely resemble the St Christopher executed around 1598-99 by Adam Elsheimer, the best version of which is probably the painting in St Petersburg.1 In the upper group, the position of Christ’s legs and right arm are remarkably close to Elsheimer’s. The same can be said for Christopher’s head and right arm with bent wrist placed against his side. In the bottom drawing, there is a strong kinship between the two artists in the placement and posture of Christ’s body, in the turning of his head as well as the manner in which Christopher’s head turns to the left. All this suggests that Rubens knew Elsheimer’s composition in Rome and had it in mind when executing this preparatory sketch around 1613. The upper sketch intimates that Rubens was
planning a monumental figure for the altarpiece.

Rubens's interest in the Antique and in Michelangelo are also evident in this sheet—particularly in St Christopher's broad right shoulder and muscular arm, which may be related to his studies of the Hercules Farnese (Fig. 162). The positions of Christ and St Christopher suggest, as first proposed by Martin, that they were originally meant to occupy the right half of the closed altarpiece.


46b. St Christopher: Drawing (Fig. 164)

Pen, brown ink and brown wash; 290 × 168 mm.
Frankfurt am Main, Städelisches Kunstinstitut. Inv. no. 2991.


St Christopher is seen full-length and turned to the left, seemingly mounting the bank of a river with his right foot while the left is still in the river. He supports himself by holding a large staff with both hands. The staff is in the water and to the left. The Christ Child is seated on Christopher's left shoulder with both of his legs visible. The Child looks off to the right and appears to be wearing a cape that flutters in the wind. Christopher is also covered by drapery around his waist and down his back, which would be further elaborated upon in the Munich oil sketch (No. 46c; Fig. 159).

This drawing, if in fact it is by Rubens, is considerably closer to the oil sketch than to the British Museum sheet (No. 46a; Fig. 160). Christopher's head is now frontal and the Christ Child assumes a position with legs spread and head slightly turned to the right. Christopher's torso and legs are powerful and muscular and suggest a monumental antique form which in the Munich oil sketch will come to resemble the Hercules Farnese. The drawing probably dates from shortly before the oil sketch, c. 1613-14.

An X-ray of the Munich oil sketch shows that Rubens originally used the motif of the Young Christ supporting himself by placing his hands on the head of St Christopher.

1. For strong negative opinions concerning the attribution of this drawing to Rubens see Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 443 and Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 495.

46c. St Christopher and the Hermit: Oil Sketch (Fig. 159)

Oil on panel; 77 × 68 cm.
Munich, Alte Pinakothek. Inv. no. 72.


COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 61.5 × 50 cm. PROV. Van Goethem, Bruges; Gallery Sedelmeyer, Paris, April 1897; sale, Paris (Gallery Sedelmeyer), 3-5 June 1907, no. 44, repr. LIT. Rooses, in Rubens-Bulletijn, V, 1897, p. 73; Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953, p. 43; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 495.

(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 68 × 55 cm. PROV. Sale, Berlin (Lepke), 12 Nov. 1918, no. 46, pl. 5.

EXHIBITED: Rotterdam, 1953-54, no. 12, repr.; Oslo-Bergen, 1955, p. 84; La découverte de la lu-
mière des Primitifs aux Impressionistes, Bordeaux, 1959, no. 115, repr.


Following the story in the Golden Legend, Rubens sets the scene in the dark of night. In order to emphasize the importance of St Christopher's burden, a strong ray of light emanates from the hermit's lantern and strikes Christ, must be seen as an early study for the outside of the altarpiece. The relationship between the two figures in the drawing and this oil sketch is different as they are looking in opposite directions. The only similar aspect is the rendering of St Christopher's shoulder, arm and hand but they also are in reverse. On the other hand, the drawing in Frankfurt (No. 46b; Fig. 164), moves in the same direction as this oil sketch. St Christopher's torso and the emphasis on the monumental type of anatomy are similar, as is the position of the Child, who is covered by flowing drapery.

The echoes of Michelangelo and the antique sculpture of Hercules Farnese found in the upper sketch of the London drawing are even stronger in the Munich modello. The saint in the oil sketch bears a striking resemblance in the stance, in the treatment of the musculature and in the turn of his head to the second figure from the right margin in Rubens's Baptism of Christ of 1604-5 (Fig. 163; Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten) and the drawing for it in the Louvre, Paris. This giant is derived in part from Michelangelo's Last Judgement in the Vatican, Sistine Chapel and the cartoon for the Battle of Cascina.2 The relationship between St Christopher and the Hercules Farnese in Naples is also evident.3 Rubens made several drawings of this famous work discovered in Italy in 1540 as well as an oil sketch based upon it after his return from Rome.4 In the modello for St Christopher, Rubens has placed the staff in the same position as Hercules' club in the Milan drawing (Fig. 162)5 and also curved the saint's left arm around his back in the same manner as in the Hercules. However, these similarities are all in reverse of the antique Hercules.

The Munich modello is so close to the finished
composition on the outside of the Antwerp altarpiece that it must be seen as Rubens's final study. However, there are some slight changes and additions. Rubens reduced the size of the hermit in the altarpiece—perhaps in an effort to further stress the monumentality of St Christopher. He added a moon in the upper left as well as plants and salamanders in the right foreground of the Hermit panel. Rubens also included shells and an octopus in the bottom of the St Christopher panel, and a section of cloth between the saint's legs which might have been in response to complaints about his nudity.

4. Haverkamp Begemann, Olieverfschetsen, 1953, no. 16, pl. 16.
7. For a detailed discussion of these animals, shells and plants see Glen, Rubens, 1977, pp. 81-84.

47. The Descent from the Cross:
Drawing (Fig. 165)

Pen, reddish-brown ink and wash; 220 x 160 mm.

Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 794.1.2542.

PROVENANCE: Marquis de Robien; bought by the Museum at the end of the 18th century.


LITERATURE: T. Lejeune, Guide de l'amateur de tableaux, II, Paris, 1864, p. 328; Catalogue des Tableaux, Dessins, Bas-Reliefs & Statues exposés dans les galeries du Musée de la ville de Rennes, Rennes, 1884, C.120, no. 3 (as A. van Dyck); Jaffé, Chef-d'oeuvre, 1958, p. 18, repr.; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, pp. 68, n. 1, 95, 111; Burchard—d'Hulst, Draw-

Eight figures participate in the lowering of Christ's body from the Cross. On the right, Rubens has placed one ladder in front of the left arm of the Cross and a second one behind it. The latter supports a figure who leans over the arm of the Cross and holds the shroud in both hands and in his mouth. The figure below on the right, seen full face with his head inclined to the right, holds the shroud with both hands just beneath Christ's legs. His left foot is gently touched by a kneeling woman in the lower right who might be St Mary Magdalen. Her left arm is also visible as she holds it up toward the Saviour. Above, and to the right of Christ, a second woman, also perhaps St Mary Magdalen, is in profile and is about to kiss the Saviour's left hand. St John the Evangelist stands to the left and appears to support the full weight of Christ's body as he does in the Lille pictures (Nos. 48, 48a; Figs. 166, 167). St John leans back on his left leg which is firmly planted on the ground and raises his right one for support on the ladder. His position clearly emphasizes the importance of his role as the main carrier of Christ. Just beneath St John and in the left corner, a woman, perhaps St Mary Magdalen or St Mary Cleophas, spreads a cloth on the ground. Above her and to the left, the Virgin stands in profile with her arms stretched out toward Christ whom she barely touches with her right hand. In the upper part of the drawing, Rubens has stationed a helper who appears to stand on a ladder behind the arm of the Cross and leans over in order to support Christ. The assistant holds up the Saviour's right arm with his left hand, while the other passes under the shroud supporting Christ's back.

There has been much controversy over the dating of this study in Rennes and its position in the development of Rubens's many compositions of this theme. Müller Hofstede and Held
see it as a study for the Antwerp Descent of c. 1612 (No. 43; Fig. 135), while Burchard and d'Hulst believe that it is a preparatory sketch for the Lille Descent (No. 48; Fig. 166) and Białostocki dates it shortly after the Antwerp altarpiece. However it is difficult to agree with Burchard—d'Hulst that the Rennes design is a study for the Lille composition. Certainly, there are elements in the sheet that look forward to the Lille Descent, but the differences are too great to see a direct line from the Rennes drawing to both the oil sketch and altarpiece in Lille.

The arguments by Burchard—d'Hulst and Bialostocki in favour of dating the Rennes sketch after the Antwerp altarpiece are the most convincing. As Bialostocki observes, a comparison of this sheet with the modello and the altarpiece in Lille demonstrates a reasonable series of compositional changes leading from the drawing to the modello and finally to the altarpiece. Throughout the Rennes drawing there are clear instances of the borrowing and the reversal of motifs present in the Antwerp Descent. This is especially evident in the figure of Christ, who, in the drawing, has become elongated, thin and with a less contorted torso. By doing this, Rubens has created a more gentle 'C' curve rather than the more violent 'S' form in the Antwerp altarpiece, which contorted the body in a manner reminiscent of the Laocoön. In the Rennes sketch, Christ's body is arranged on a diagonal, rising from the bottom right to the top left. This movement is aided by the gradual upward swing of his right arm with its curving wrist and foreshortened hand, all of which is a clear recollection of Daniele da Volterra's Descent in Rome. In the Rennes sketch, Christ's body is arranged on a diagonal, rising from the bottom right to the top left. This movement is aided by the gradual upward swing of his right arm with its curving wrist and foreshortened hand, all of which is a clear recollection of Daniele da Volterra's Descent in Rome. In the Rennes sketch, Christ's body is arranged on a diagonal, rising from the bottom right to the top left. This movement is aided by the gradual upward swing of his right arm with its curving wrist and foreshortened hand, all of which is a clear recollection of Daniele da Volterra's Descent in Rome. In the Rennes sketch, Christ's body is arranged on a diagonal, rising from the bottom right to the top left. This movement is aided by the gradual upward swing of his right arm with its curving wrist and foreshortened hand, all of which is a clear recollection of Daniele da Volterra's Descent in Rome. In the Rennes sketch, Christ's body is arranged on a diagonal, rising from the bottom right to the top left. This movement is aided by the gradual upward swing of his right arm with its curving wrist and foreshortened hand, all of which is a clear recollection of Daniele da Volterra's Descent in Rome.

In this upper zone, only one figure, the man holding the shroud in his teeth in the top right, is in the same position as his counterpart in the Antwerp altarpiece (No. 43; Fig. 135). Moreover, the drapery that the latter holds establishes a stronger diagonal from the upper right down and behind Christ's back. This shroud fills in the empty space where earlier Nicodemus stood. In the Rennes design, there is no ladder in the left front containing supporting figures above St John, and consequently he now appears to support the full weight of Christ. This feeling is enhanced by the placement of Christ further to the left and not in the centre of the scene. St John maintains, on the other hand, a supportive position much the same as that he assumed in Antwerp, but his posture and position in the composition have been altered. In the drawing, he gives the impression of opening up and leaning back to the left more vigorously. This is in contrast to the tense and more upright St John in Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135). Rubens also seems to have changed the location of St John's right leg several times in the sketch in an effort to find a position that clearly indicates the sense of support needed for this foot. The importance of St John's physical effort is continued and equally stressed in the Lille modello and altarpiece (Nos. 48, 48a; Figs. 166, 167).

In the Rennes design, the Virgin remains on the left as she was in Antwerp. However, now, because Christ's torso has been reversed, she is able to touch him with her right hand. This new sense of intimacy is carried even further in the Lille oil sketch, where Christ's right arm now hangs down on the left as does his head, which make it possible for the Virgin to hold Christ's arm and to touch his head with hers. The Rennes drawing suggests that Rubens was even more interested in a change of position for St Mary Magdalen. In the Antwerp Descent she kneels in the bottom left and holds Christ's left leg. In the drawing, Rubens seems to have experimented with several possible positions. She appears in the bottom right with arms outstretched and touching Christ's feet in a pose similar to that in the Antwerp Descent, but on the opposite side. St Mary Magdalen could also be the woman kissing Christ's left hand, or the one kneeling in the bottom left. In any case, by the time Rubens finished the Lille modello, he had solved the problem of the Magdalen's placement. He combined the pose of the figure in the bottom left of the drawing with the action of the woman kissing Christ's hand to the right of centre when creating his St Mary Magdalen for the Lille Descent.
48. The Descent from the Cross
(Fig. 166)

Oil on canvas; 425 × 295 cm.
Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. P. 74.

PROVENANCE: Painted for the high altar of the Church of the Capuchins, Lille; transferred to the Museum of Lille in 1803.

COPIES: (1) Painting, Jean Delmelle, Liège; canvas, 71 × 41 cm. LIT. J. Delmelle, Copie Ancienne ou Esquisse-Modèle? à propos d’une découverte, Liège, s.d.


Rubens has included nine people who, in a variety of ways, support the removal of Christ's body from the Cross. The Saviour's arched form, a modified 'C' curve, marks the centre of the scene. Contrary to the earlier Antwerp Descent of 1612 (No. 43; Fig. 135), where Christ seemed to slide gently down, in Lille the bulk of his weight seems to rest firmly on St John's chest and left shoulder. The latter stands in the bottom centre with his right foot firmly planted on the ground and the other on the second rung of the ladder to the right as in the Antwerp Descent. The back of St John's head and part of his lower right jaw are visible. Below John and to the left, kneels St Mary Magdalene, her head shown in profile to the right; she appears to be kissing Christ's wounded right hand. Just behind her left shoulder, St Mary Cleophas looks up toward the Saviour. The position of her head and the dramatic expression on her face suggest that Rubens turned back to the representation of St Mary Cleophas in the early St Petersburg drawing for the Descent (No. 43a; Fig. 136). This figure also appears to be similar, but in reverse, to that of St Mary Magdalene in the upper section of the drawing in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (No. 49; Fig. 170). She would be used again for St Mary Cleophas (?) in the painting in St Petersburg, which also portrays the Descent (No. 55; Fig. 180). The Virgin stands directly above St Mary Cleophas in the Lille painting, and for the first time touches Christ by firmly grasping his right arm with her two hands. Her head, seen in profile, is now raised up and touches Christ's. An elderly lady is behind and to the left of Mary. This figure, new to the subject, is shown in profile to the right; her tense hands suggest the uneasiness of the moment.1 Behind her, a second ladder is placed against the back of the right arm of the Cross. Halfway up and seen from the side, a man is stepping down. This same ladder also supports the elderly figure (Joseph of Arimathea?) who leans over the right arm of the cross and firmly holds the edge of the shroud with his left hand, while it spills over his right forearm. On the opposite arm of the Cross, Rubens rests a second ladder, but this time in front of the left arm of the Cross. At the top, a semi-nude figure holds Christ's left forearm with his left hand while the other encircles the upper trunk and firmly grasps the right arm of the Cross. Just beneath him, the turbaned Nicodemus stands and looks toward Christ while holding the latter's shroud with both hands. On the ground in the centre foreground lies a copper basin with the crown of thorns, the nails, a sponge and a bloody cloth.

The painting appears to have been executed by Rubens's workshop after the Lille modello (No. 48a; Fig. 167); but, as was his practice, the master touched up the more important figures such as Christ, St Mary Magdalen, the men at the top of the Cross and the heads below.

Under Rubens's direction, the composition for the finished altarpiece was changed. When compared with the modello, one sees that the artist has added the old woman on the left, placed Mary Cleophas in three-quarter profile, included the accessories in the copper basin, continued Christ's drapery over the right shoulder of Nicodemus, added the titulus in three languages, and extended the sleeve of the figure in the upper left beneath Christ's shroud. There are also minor changes in the rendering of the draperies. As pointed out by Liedtke, this Descent clearly refers to the Eucharist. This is emphasized by Mary Magdalen whose lips touch the blood coming from Christ's wound and by the placement of St John's face next to Christ's bloody gash.2

It is most probable that the Lille altarpiece was still being worked on in March 1617. On 10 March 1617, Paolo da Cesena, the General of the Capuchin order, wrote from Madrid complaining that the members of his order residing in the Netherlands abused the rule of poverty. He also said that he was disturbed by the rich decorations found in certain monasteries. More important for us is his further statement: 'Che si è fatta fare un' imagine da un famoso pittore per il luogo di Cambray, che vale quattrocento ducati, senza altri
ornamenti. Un’altra se ne fà hora per il luogo di Lilla, del stesso [medesimo?] prezzo e forse maggiore. Un’altra per il luogo d’Anversa, quasi del medismo valore...' (For Cambrai an image has been ordered to be made by a famous painter, which is worth 400 ducats, without other ornaments. Another one is at present being made for Lille, for the same price and maybe larger still. Another one for Antwerp, almost of the same value...).

From this text, Hildebrand concluded that Rubens was the artist referred to by Paolo da Cesena (although his name is not specifically cited). His conclusion is supported by the fact that Rubens was, at this time, busy executing altarpieces for the cities he mentions. The letter makes it clear that the Lille Descent had not been completed by 10 March 1617, the date on the letter, and that the artist had been paid at least 400 ducats. The Church at Lille was not consecrated until 16 October 1616, which, even if the letter of 10 March 1617 is disregarded as evidence for dating the painting, makes it clear that the altarpiece could not have been finished before 16 October 1616.

1. For other examples of this type see Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 124 and Bialostocki, Descent, 1964, p. 516, n. 19. It is possible to add to this group the old woman in the Adoration of the Shepherds, Fermo, San Filippo Neri, in the oil sketch of the same theme in the Hermitage, St Petersburg, in the painting for the Church of St Paul, Antwerp and in the drawing in the Fodor Collection, Gemeentemusea, Amsterdam (see Burchard—d’Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 73, 74, no. 41).


4. Ibid., p. 728.

48a. The Descent from the Cross:
Oil Sketch (Fig. 167)

Oil on panel; 54.5 x 41.5 cm.
Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. P. 66.

PROVENANCE: ? William Wilkins, sale, London (Christie's), 7 April 1838, lot 6, sold to Johnson for 27 pounds, 6 shillings (A. Graves, Art Sales from the Early Eighteenth Century to Early in the Twentieth Century, III, London, 1921, p. 118); Hamilton Palace Collection, sale, London (Christie's), 8 July 1882, lot 1014, purchased by C. Sedelmeyer for 105 pounds; purchased by the Museum in 1893 with financial aid from the Brasseur Foundation.

COPY: Engraving by P. Clouwet. 570 x 429 mm.
LIT. V.S., p. 51, no. 364.


Christ is being lowered gently from the Cross by seven figures either standing on the ground or on the two ladders. An eighth person, barely visible, steps down the ladder in the left background. The focal point of the action, Christ, is stressed, as in the earlier works, by the placement of the white shroud beneath, around and
above his body. This piece of white fabric helps to carry the Saviour as his arching body is lowered into St John’s arms. The latter supports Christ on his left shoulder and chest while holding Christ’s leg at the knee. Below St John and to the left, the kneeling St Mary Magdalen, a close variation on the figure in the Antwerp Descent of 1612 (No. 43; Fig. 135), embraces Christ’s right hand and appears to kiss it. Just behind her, St Mary Cleophas, seen in right profile and on her knees, looks up at Christ. Her right hand, with fingers outstretched, is raised behind the Magdalen’s back while her left arm reaches up and grasps the Saviour’s upper arm. The Virgin stands above the two Marys, and, for the first time, her profiled head touches Christ’s. She also firmly grips the Saviour’s upper right arm with both hands. This relationship is more intimate, both spiritually and physically, and perhaps is a further reference to the seventeenth-century thought that ‘she stands fixed to the place’ and not in a state of collapse as in earlier times. In the upper left, an elderly, partially bald man leans over the right arm of the Cross and firmly holds the shroud in his left hand while the white linen runs over and behind his right forearm. His colleague to the right stands on a ladder which leans against the front of the left arm of the Cross. He cautiously grasps Christ’s left forearm with his left hand while with the other he holds the top of the left arm of the Cross. Below, Nicodemus, his slanted back to the viewer and turbaned head turned in profile to the left, holds on to the shroud with both hands. In the bottom-centre foreground lies a copper basin with a piece of white linen.

This modello marks a clear departure in the rendering of Christ’s body from Rubens’s Descent of 1612 in Antwerp. In the earlier work, Christ assumes a complicated ‘S’ curve with his head placed parallel to his shoulder. In Lille, the Saviour takes the form of a gently arching ‘C’ curve with the head falling back and down. In the later work, Christ is much lower in the composition and St John appears to support the full weight of his body. Rubens has also changed the Virgin’s position in the Lille modello. She is no longer a peripheral figure as in Antwerp, but now she is placed close to Christ with her head touching his and her arms actively supporting him. This modello marks a clear departure from Rubens’s earlier Antwerp Descent in the rendering of a more supple and lyrical composition. Whereas Christ is set apart from the other figures in the Antwerp version, his ‘C’ curve positioning places him in direct touch with the Virgin and the two Marys. The Lille scene is no longer seen as a strictly liturgical image but is placed at a more human level with a stress upon Christ’s pain and the mournful sadness of his followers.

Rubens, however, did not make a clean break with his earlier rendering of this scene in 1612. There are details which he reused in the modello. St John rests one of his legs on the ladder to the right; St Mary Magdalen is in the same position in both works, but in Lille she kisses Christ’s hand and not his foot. It is also evident, as pointed out by Bialostocki, that the upper part of the Lille modello and altarpiece (No. 48; Fig. 166) is a reversal of the Antwerp composition.

If one accepts the letter written by Paolo da Cesena on 10 March 1617, as referring to Rubens’s Lille altarpiece as being unfinished, and remembers the church was consecrated on 16 October 1616, then a date of late 1616 or early 1617 would be appropriate for the oil sketch.

1. As he did in the Rennes design (No. 47; Fig. 165), Rubens reduced the number of ladders from four in Antwerp to two.
3. It is possible that Rubens had in mind the antique figure of Patroclus from the group representing Menelaus and Patroclus, Villa Ludovisi, Rome (S. Reinach, Tableaux inédits ou peu connus tirés des collections françaises, I, Paris, 1906, p. 498, no. 2084; Bialostocki, Descent, 1964, p. 518, n. 29). The Christ figure also bears a striking resemblance to 15th-century wooden sculptures of this theme. For example see the Descent from the Cross by an anonymous sculptor in the Museum at Arras, where Christ’s body and head are arranged in a similar manner to the Lille configuration.
48b. Nude Man partially seen from the back: Drawing (Fig. 168)

Black chalk with white highlights, on bluish-grey paper; 280 × 262 mm.; on the right, parts of the paper have been cut and replaced. Inscribed in brown ink on bottom left by a later hand: P.P. Rubens.

Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen. Inv. no. V. 26.

PROVENANCE: J.D. Boehm (Vienna, 1794-1865); E. Wauters (Paris, 1846-1933); F. Koenigs (Haarlem, 1881-1941); presented to the Museum in 1940 by D.G. van Beuningen.


A nude young man is seen from the back, from just below the waist. He is placed on a diagonal in almost pure profile to the right. His right arm, bent at the elbow, is in the foreground. In this sheet Rubens follows Annibale Carracci’s practice of drawing figures ‘from life’ in the studio that are later incorporated into his paintings. This particular nude has been connected with the semi-nude figure supporting Christ in the Grasse copy of Rubens’s lost Elevation of the Cross of 1602. However, Burchard was the first to see a relationship between the Rotterdam study and the figure of St John in the Lille Descent.

It appears most likely that the Rotterdam drawing was executed between the Lille modello for the Descent (No. 48a; Fig. 167) and the completed altarpiece (No. 48; Fig. 166). In the modello, St John’s hair is long and runs down the back of his neck, but in the drawing and the altarpiece, Rubens has trimmed the hair at the neck. Furthermore, in the modello, it is still possible to see the right side of St John’s face, while in the study and the painting only the side of the jaw is visible. It is also clear that the position of St John’s right hand and the foreshortening of his elbow have been carefully worked out in the drawing and repeated in the altarpiece.

The style of the Rotterdam drawing with its soft and subtle shading is very different from the strong contrasts of light and shadow established by the contours and chalk in Rubens’s Italian studies of nude figures. There is a drawing in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (No. 20h; Fig. 72) of a nude in a similar position to the figure in Rotterdam, which has been dated as early as 1602, but which has been considered here as a preparatory for the Antwerp Elevation of the Cross of 1610-11 (No. 20; Fig. 61). 1

1. Cat. Exh. Rubensentoonstelling, J. Goudstikker, Amsterdam, 1933, no. 73.
2. Burchard—d’Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 97, 98, no. 57, pl. 57; see above under No. 20h.

48c. Man Turned to the Left and Holding a Piece of Drapery: Drawing (Fig. 169)

Black chalk, white highlights on brownish paper; 435 × 337 mm.

CATALOGUE NO. 49.


Burchard has suggested that this study might possibly be for the figure (Nicodemus) standing on the lower part of the ladder on the right in the Lille Descent. Whether or not this is the case is highly debatable, as there are many differences between the drawing, the modello and the altarpiece. The greatest difference is the placement of the shroud, which falls over the figure's right shoulder in the two paintings and over his left in the drawing.

49. The Descent from the Cross: Drawing (Fig. 170)

Pen, brown ink and brown wash; 345 x 233 mm.—Verso: St Andrew in full length. Just to the right of centre the number 3 in an old hand; at bottom left the number 6 in a late 19th or early 20th-century hand.

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library. Collection of Mr and Mrs Eugene V. Thaw.

PROVENANCE: Mrs G.W. Wrangham; Edward Wrangham; dealer Baskett & Day, London, 1972; New York, Mr and Mrs Eugene V. Thaw.


As Held has pointed out, Rubens began this design with the head of Christ which is visible in the bottom left. This head is, however, upside down. For some reason, Rubens did not like this beginning, so he reversed the paper and very likely began to draw the upper group. This configuration contains the body of Christ supported on the right by the Virgin whose left arm passes beneath Christ's and firmly grasps his torso. In the bottom right, Rubens has placed the kneeling St Mary Magdalen who looks up toward the Saviour while supporting his legs. Down below on the right, the second design has been expanded and contains three men on ladders surrounding Christ along with the Virgin and St Mary Magdalen. The latter is now kneeling below and to the left of Christ while the Virgin, although smaller in scale, maintains roughly the same position as in the upper scene. On the ladder to the left, Rubens has
added a partially bald elder (Joseph of Arimathea?); to the right is a turbaned figure (Nicodemus?); above him a third helper leans over the arm of the Cross and holds Christ.

Ludwig Burchard believed that the upper sketch was the latest of the two, but Held and others seem to be quite right in reading it the other way around. Held points out the similarity in style between the upside down head of Christ and the one above, as well as to the analogies in the compositions between the bottom section and the Boston drawing of the Descent from the Cross (No. 50; Fig. 171). The latter appears to be, with some differences, the final study for the St Petersburg painting (No. 55; Fig. 180).

Bialostocki interprets this design as the start of a new type of Descent from the Cross by Rubens. However, this new direction is a reversal of the position of Christ in the Lille pictures, just as the Lille designs were a reversal of the Antwerp composition (No. 43; Fig. 135). Nevertheless, in the upper part of the Thaw sheet, Christ's body is straighter and the torso does not have the gentle downward C-curve characteristic of the Lille pictures. It is only Christ's head which falls more violently to the side in the New York sheet. The Virgin, in this part of the drawing, is in much the same relationship to Christ as in Lille, but her arm now passes under Christ's left arm and grasps his body. In the lower composition, St Mary Magdalen has been changed. She is now to the left of Christ and embraces his legs which, as Bialostocki observes, brings her closer to her Antwerp counterpart.

Because the drawing, using the Lille arrangement as a starting point, clearly marks a change in Rubens's vision of this theme and because the sheet of studies is closer to the St Petersburg painting (No. 55; Fig. 180) and more distant from the one in Lille, this design must have been done around 1618. Rubens not only rearranged the figures in the design, but now the emphasis is more upon the supporting relationship between the Virgin, St Mary Magdalen and Christ while St John, for the first time, plays no role. This tendency becomes even more evident in the later representations of this theme. The placement of the Virgin to the right in a position of honour fits in well with Rubens's strong regard for Mary. In another work, Rubens explained her new position by quoting Psalm 45:9, 'at your right hand stands the queen.' The reinstating of St Mary Magdalen as a principal supporter of Christ is also a clear reference to the strong veneration she received in Antwerp during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.1

2. Ibid.
5. See Nos. 57; Fig. 181.
6. Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40, II, p. 8. For the general reverence in which the Virgin was held by the City of Antwerp see ibid., pp. 8, 9 passim.

50. The Descent from the Cross: Drawing (Fig. 171)

Pen, brown ink and brown wash on buff paper; 357 x 216 mm. Inscribed in the lower left corner P.P. Rubbens F'.

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Inv. no. 20.809.

PROVENANCE: Thomas Hudson (London, 1701-1779); Sir Thomas Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); L. Brooke, 1872; Henry Adams; Henry P. Quincy; purchased by the Museum from Mrs H.P. Quincy in 1920.


In this drawing, not known to Burchard, Christ occupies the centre of the action with his stiff body placed on a slight diagonal to the right. His head collapses back on his left shoulder, causing his hair to fall down. He is supported by the Virgin who is just below him to the right.
Her left arm, firmly supporting his waist, passes beneath Christ's dangling arm, while her right extends behind him. St Mary Magdalen kneels below to the left and holds Christ's legs in both arms. She leans back as a counterweight to his body. Behind her, on the left, Rubens has placed a ladder which is supported by the top centre of the Cross. A partially bald and bearded elder, Joseph of Arimathea, places his left arm behind Christ, holding the shroud with the other and Christ's right arm resting on his shoulder. Just above Joseph, one finds the left arm of the Cross with a head vaguely sketched in. On the other side a turbaned figure, Nicodemus, leans over the arm of the Cross and gently grasps Christ's right shoulder. Originally Nicodemus held the upper arm of the Saviour. His left arm is placed on the arm of the Cross, and this along with his intense downward gaze recalls the figure in the same position in the Antwerp Descent (No. 43; Fig. 135). St John stands on the ladder just below Joseph and above the Virgin. His head and back were originally placed slightly further to the right. His posture and stance on the ladder recall Joseph of Arimathea (?) on the right in the Antwerp altarpiece.

As Held has pointed out, the Boston sheet comes directly out of the bottom composition in the Thaw drawing (No. 49; Fig. 170), but with some obvious changes. Especially important are the more physical posture of St Mary Magdalen and the repositioning of St John and Nicodemus.1 It is also interesting to note that the Virgin in the Boston drawing is not based upon the one at the bottom of the Thaw drawing but upon the one at the top. These new additions make it clear that the Boston design was the preparatory design for the St Petersburg painting of 1618 (No. 55; Fig. 180).2 This is especially evident in the positioning and grouping of the top three figures, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and St John the Evangelist. However, Rubens does not follow the Boston sheet when designing the women.

51. The Descent from the Cross: Oil Sketch (Fig. 172)

Oil on panel; 48.5 × 52 cm.; additions of 6.5 cm. above and 2.5 cm. below.
St Petersburg, Hermitage. Inv. no. 7087.

PROVENANCE: Johan van der Marck, Leyden, sale, Amsterdam (H. de Winter & Jan Yver), 25 August 1773, lot 276, sold to Van Leyden for 165 florins; M. Van Leyden, Amsterdam, sale, Paris (A. Paillet & H. Delaroche), 10 Sept. 1804, lot 77, sold to Le Brun for 251 francs; Count Schuvaloff (Shuvalov); acquired by the Hermitage in 1925.


Christ is in the centre of the composition, surrounded by seven figures. The Saviour's body forms a graceful arch that serves to unify the group. His head falls toward the earth initiating a downward movement, which is continued by his left arm.1 Just beneath him and in the right foreground, St Mary Magdalen reaches up to Christ; she appears to be the main source of support. To her left, a young woman, perhaps St Mary Cleophas, gently holds Christ's left foot and looks up with imploring eyes. Just to the left of Christ and behind the shroud, stands the Virgin with arms outstretched, touching the cloth with her right hand and Christ's body with the other. An unidentifiable male head is placed between her and the Saviour, while behind the Virgin is a ladder bearing Joseph of

Arimathea. He reaches out toward Christ with his left arm. The shroud appears to be folded over his right forearm and hangs down parallel to his legs. On the opposite ladder, Nicodemus, wearing a turban, leans down toward Christ. The shroud runs from Nicodemus's shoulder around Christ's torso. Just how Nicodemus's arms serve to support Christ is difficult to see. St John, beneath Nicodemus, steps gracefully toward Christ. He is seen in profile and his arms seem to disappear behind the Saviour's back.

The design, which stresses a horizontal format, is different from all of the other representations of this subject executed by Rubens or his workshop. Consequently, Held believes that it was not a preparatory sketch for an altarpiece, but more likely for a predella. The small size of the panel makes it improbable that it served as a predella itself. Given the long tradition in Netherlandish art for the horizontal format when painting this subject, it is possible that Rubens and his atelier experimented with this type of composition for a large altarpiece.

Contrary to Rubens's earlier renderings of this theme, Christ's body is an arch-like shape rising from the left to the right which unites the scene. The configuration of his body recalls, but in reverse, the arching and collapsing dying Adonis in the drawing of Adonis Dying in the Arms of Venus, London, British Museum, which Rubens very likely copied from the Hellenistic sculpture representing Menelaus and Patroclus.

St Mary Magdalen, on the other hand, is a type that is found c. 1500 in Flemish sculptured representations of the Descent, such as one in Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, and in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian art as well. She repeats the Magdalen in Rubens's drawing for the Descent from the Cross, St Petersburg (No. 43a; Fig. 136), which Held has rightly connected with the woman in the foreground of Raphael's Fire in the Borgo and which Rubens drew on a sheet of sketches in Berlin. Mary Magdalen's companion to the left (Mary Cleophas?) repeats the Magdalen figure in the top configuration of Rubens's drawing for the Descent from the Cross, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library (No. 49; Fig. 170). One might also add that Mary Cleophas (?) in the St Petersburg modello, with her outstretched arm and her torso parallel to the picture plane, is a modification of the Virgin in the right foreground of the drawing for the Descent in Boston (No. 50; Fig. 171). Finally, the rendering of Joseph of Arimathea in the St Petersburg modello repeats his counterpart in the earlier drawing in New York.

The composition of this oil sketch stresses, as Bialostocki astutely observed, the close relationship between St Mary Magdalen and Christ. She is clearly his real support at this moment. Yet the lowering of Christ's body into her hands stresses her love and despair rather than the opposition of life against death as Bialostocki suggests. During the first decades of the seventeenth century Mary Magdalen symbolized penitence, and her cult grew extensively.

Judging from the photographs, the St Petersburg oil sketch appears to be a studio piece. There are obvious weaknesses in the rendering of the figures that make it difficult to see Rubens's hand. It could have been made by a pupil after a lost drawing by the master, possibly under his supervision. The rearrangement of the figures in a more medieval manner, but with a dynamic Baroque movement and a clear emphasis upon the relationship between St Mary Magdalen and Christ along with reflections of contemporary literature, suggest the creative genius of Rubens in the composition. Held, on the other hand, places the sketch among 'doubtful attributions', because of what he considers to be the odd role of the Virgin, the vague indications of the mechanical lowering of Christ's body and the purely decorative character which Held does not find elsewhere in other works of the same time.

I agree with Bialostocki in his placement of the St Petersburg modello in the sequence of Descents painted in Rubens's atelier. He has reasoned that this oil sketch must stand between the St Petersburg altarpiece and the group of pictures painted for Kalisz, Arras and St-Omer. This proposed development becomes even more logical when one considers the fact that the modello is connected compositionally with the altarpiece in the same museum and has used motifs from the early St Petersburg
drawing. This connection with the past, combined with the fact that it marks a clear change from all the earlier drawings and altarpieces, and looks forward to the versions of this subject done in the early 1620s, make the St Petersburg modello a pivotal work.

The modello is important to the painting formerly in Kalisz and that in Arras (Nos. 53, 54; Figs. 174, 176). This is evident in the rendering of Christ's torso, head and arms, in the placement and posture of St Mary Magdalen, in the positioning of St John, which is the same as that of Nicodemus in the modello, and in the arrangement of the Virgin who replaces St John in the oil sketch. The St-Omer composition (No. 57; Fig. 181) is similar to those in Kalisz and Arras, but with slight changes. Because of the close connection between the St Petersburg modello and the altarpiece of c. 1618 in the same museum as well as with the Arras painting (which was completed sometime before 1621), it is possible to suggest a date of c. 1618-19 for this atelier piece. Burchard, on the other hand, dates the panel from the years around 1610-1612.

3. Cf. e.g. Rogier van der Weyden's Descent, in the Prado, Madrid, known also through many 16th-century copies.
7. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 519.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 515.
15. Ibid., p. 519.

52. The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 173)

Oil on canvas; 320 × 195 cm.
Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 46.1.15.

PROVENANCE: Acquired by the Church of St-Géry, Valenciennes in September 1803; purchased from St-Géry in 1886 by the Valenciennes Museum.


EXHIBITED: Brussels, 1910, no. 342; Paris, 1936-37, no. 110.


Christ's body is gently arched to the right from the waist up, as in the painting formerly in Kalisz and those in Arras and St-Omer (Nos. 53, 54, 57; Figs. 174, 176, 181). His legs are straight and stiff, emphasizing a downward vertical movement. Above him and straddling the right arm of the Cross, a worker, half nude, bends over to the right and pulls on the nail holding Christ's left hand to the Cross. With his left hand, this man holds Christ's left forearm. Part of the shroud encircles the worker's left arm. The cloth progresses over the left arm of the Cross beneath Christ's left arm, winds around
his chest, then over Nicodemus's left and right shoulders and is held in the latter's right hand. Nicodemus is bearded, wears a turban and stands on a ladder resting against the trunk of the Cross. On the opposite side, St John the Evangelist, with his back to the spectator, is on a second ladder. With his left hand, St John holds the shroud that envelops Christ's chest. The Saviour's head rests on St John's shoulder and arm. Below and between Christ and St John, the Virgin stands firmly on the ground gazing up toward her son. She supports St John's left arm with hers, while the right encircles Christ's back. She is preparing to receive the Saviour's full weight. On the left side, St Mary Magdalen kneels in the foreground, gently holding Christ's left foot and ankle. St Mary Cleophas (?) is just above the Magdalen and with an impassioned gaze looks up at the Saviour. Above her, one finds Nicodemus and to the left at the level of the latter's foreshortened knee, an unidentifiable standing figure whose fingers grip the ladder beneath Nicodemus.

Christ assumes a position similar to that one finds in Kalisz, Arras and St-Omer, but there are important changes. His left arm and not his right is placed on a diagonal moving up to the right. This resembles Christ's movement in the centre panel of the Antwerp altarpiece (No. 43; Fig. 135). It is, however, different from the latter and all other versions by the fact that the hand is still nailed to the Cross. Once again, Rubens may well have had German Gothic examples in mind, where the torso is also gently arched to one side, the legs set in a vertical position, and one hand nailed to the Cross with a worker trying to pull out the spike.

Even closer to the early Antwerp version is the placement of Nicodemus on the ladder to the left of Christ. In each work he holds part of the shroud and supports Christ under the upper part of his right arm. The face with a large bushy beard is similar in both Valenciennes and Antwerp, and is probably an adaption of Rubens's Study for the Head of Nicodemus (No. 43e; Fig. 140). Rubens also seems to return to the earlier Antwerp Descent in the placement of Saints Mary Magdalen and Mary Cleophas (?) in the bottom left.

Iconographically, the emphasis on the most important figures in relationship to Christ has changed. St John once again has a physical role in helping to lower Christ, but it is the Virgin who is the most important figure. She is placed at the centre where the action will culminate. It is she who will receive her Son into her arms. Rooses believed that the Descent was executed for the Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Chaussée, but according to the sources this is not correct. The painting is not mentioned in 1639 by H. d'Oultreman, who only describes the church relics, nor in 1650 by Simon le Boucq, who does cite Martin de Vos' 1599 triptych which is in the church. Le Boucq also describes a dorsal by Abraham Lottmann (1614-1617). If the painting by Rubens had been in Notre-Dame-de-la-Chaussée, it certainly would have been included in at least one of the above texts. As a matter of fact, the only source that connects the altarpiece with Notre-Dame-de-la-Chaussée is an inventory of 6 June 1801 (17 Prairial, An IX) of the pictures stored in the Academy at Valenciennes, and is described as follows: 'De la Paroisse de la Chaussée. Un tableau sur toile, représentant une descente de croix, de l'école de Rubens, de 10 pieds 6 pouces, sur 5 pieds 6 pouces [316 × 166 cm.]. Remis dans le corridor du musée et ensuite aux mar­guilliers de St-Géry, par ordre du Préfet. Reçu No 2'.

A source of 1825 confirms the fact that there were two splendid paintings by Rubens in St-Géry ('deux superbes tableaux de Rubens, qui fai­sait avant la révolution, un des principaux orne­ments de la magnifique église de St Amand: comme il y en a un qui est peint sur les deux faces, il pose sur un pivot et tourne à volonté'). These pictures in St Amand are part of Rubens's St Stephen's triptych. It is possible that the Descent was not mentioned because it was considered to be a school work, but it was most assuredly in St-Géry. However, even if the Descent had come from Notre-Dame-de-la-Chaussée, there is no proof that it was painted for that church.

This altarpiece was certainly conceived by Rubens, executed by his workshop and touched up by the master. Rubens's hand may be seen in the kneeling St Mary Magdalen, part of the Virgin's drapery and Christ's body. Because of the
similarity in the position of Christ with that in the Kalisz, Arras and St-Omer paintings (Nos. 53, 54, 57; Figs. 174, 176, 181), it is most likely that the Valenciennes painting was made at the same time. Furthermore, the Virgin’s position in those compositions was growing in importance and seems to culminate in the Valenciennes picture. For these reasons, I would suggest a date of c. 1620.

2. Ibid.
3. Cf. e.g. A. Stange, Deutsche Malerei der Gotik, III, Berlin, 1938, fig. 93, VI, fig. 1.
6. H. d’Oultreman, Histoire de la ville et comté de Valenciennes, Douai, 1639, pp. 441, 442.

53. The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 174)

Oil on canvas, transferred from panel; 320 x 212 cm.
Destroyed.

PROVENANCE: ? Purchased by Piotr Zeromski for Ladislas IV (?) of Poland c. 1619; Chapel founded by Zeromski in the Church of St Nicolas, Kalisz, 1633; destroyed by fire on 17 December 1973.

COPIES: (1) Oil sketch (Fig. 175), private collection, Brussels; panel, 48 x 35 cm.


The number of participants in this scene has been reduced to five. Christ is in the centre, with his torso arched to the right, head hanging down, and legs stiff and straight. His body is enveloped by the shroud, thus helping to achieve the sense of a form suspended in space. His right arm is on a diagonal moving toward the upper left, where it is firmly held by Nicodemus. The latter also grasps the drapery with his right hand. The Virgin receiving Christ’s body is not on the left side as in Arras and St Petersburg (Nos. 54, 55; Figs. 176, 180) but is on the right, as in Valenciennes (No. 52; Fig. 173). Her left arm reaches out and catches part of the shroud, while the other passes beneath Christ’s left arm supporting it and his head. St Mary Magdalen kneels in the centre foreground with her back to the viewer. Her head and arm are raised toward Christ. She reaches for the shroud with her left hand and Christ's head with the other. On the ladder above the Virgin is St John the Evangelist, who has been relegated to a minor position in the action. This reduction of St John’s importance in the physical task continues the trend of the drawing (No. 43a; Fig. 136), the paintings at Arras (No. 54; Fig. 176) and St Petersburg (No. 55; Fig. 180) and the St Petersburg oil sketch (No. 51; Fig. 172). In the Kalisz picture, the Holy City is visible in the distance for the first time. The left foreground contains a copper basin
with the titulus and a sponge. In front of the basin are the crown of thorns, the nails and a hammer.

As first suggested by Bialostocki, the Kalisz composition follows directly out of the St Petersburg oil sketch. This is especially clear in the gentle curve of Christ's torso, in his falling head and in the positions of St Mary Magdalen, the Virgin, who has been moved to the opposite side, and St John. Bialostocki rightly stresses the idea that Christ's body is not very logically portrayed when one realizes how many people appear to be supporting him. This denial of the physical reality of Christ directs us to the spiritual aspect of the scene. It is a clear allusion to Christ's Resurrection and the idea of Redemption which he embodies. The importance of St Mary Magdalen and the Virgin is emphasized, as in the Arras and St Petersburg paintings. In Kalisz, as well as in Arras and later in St-Omer, the main focal point is the relationship between Christ and St Mary Magdalen. The latter is portrayed as the personification of all human frailty and sin who looks to Christ as the Saviour.

Christ's position with his legs straight, his torso curved and his head sagging down is not new. It can be seen throughout German painting of the Gothic period. This presentation of Christ is also found sporadically in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian art. However, Rubens's Christ is idealized and not the contorted, twisted and stiff configuration of his forerunners. Rubens appears to combine earlier German and Italian formulae with the idealism of the Antique and the Italian Renaissance, for example the work of Mantegna, which he knew so well. Mantegna's workshop executed a woodcut of the Descent which depicts Christ's torso, head and legs in a position similar to that in the Kalisz picture.

The Kalisz painting was not executed by Rubens, but it was certainly made under his direction and retouched in part by him. Rooses sees Rubens's hand in the shroud and in the Saviour's body. As Bialostocki observes, the composition is logical and all of the participants are intertwined. Diagonal movements are initiated by the arms of Nicodemus and St John while the Virgin's arms lead up to Christ's head.

The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 176)

Oil on canvas, 280 × 205 cm.
Arras, Church of St John the Baptist.
CATALOGUE NO. 55.

PROVENANCE: Arras, Abbey of St Vaast; Arras, St-Géry.


(2) **Drawing** (Fig. 177), Rubens's shop, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Print Room, inv. no. IV.6; blue, yellow and red chalk, 335 × 236 mm.


The Arras Descent is almost precisely the same as the one formerly in Kalisz (No. 53; Fig. 174). However, in the Arras painting, the trunk of the Cross is higher up in the picture, the Virgin’s drapery contains fewer folds just beneath the waist and the arrangement of the buildings and light effects in the landscape are different.

Judging from the photographs, I would cautiously propose that the drawing in Copenhagen (Fig. 177) is a copy of the Arras picture, not of the version in Kalisz. This seems plausible when the Virgin's drapery in the three works is compared. The folds of her drapery beneath the waist are much more broadly treated in Copenhagen and Arras than in the more detailed rendering in Kalisz. The turn of St Mary Magdalene’s torso and the treatment of her drapery in Copenhagen and Arras are closer to one another than those in Kalisz. Burchard, on the other hand, has suggested that the Copenhagen drawing might have been after a lost modello by Rubens.

The picture in Arras, like the one in Kalisz, was executed in Rubens's workshop. However, Rubens seems to have retouched Christ's body and the shroud. The painting does not date from c. 1625 as proposed by Rooses but earlier, sometime just before 1621.

2. Ibid.

55. The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 180)

Oil on canvas; 297 × 200 cm.

St Petersburg, Hermitage. Inv. no. 471.

PROVENANCE: Lier, Church of the Capuchins, after 14 October 1628; removed to Paris in 1797 or 1798; acquired before 1809 by Joséphine de Beauharnais; purchased in 1814 by Tsar Alexander I.


(2) **Painting**, Church of S. Giovanni d'Origlione, Palermo. LIT. V. Migliore, Itinerario per le vie, Piazza ecc. della città e contorni di Palermo, Messina, 1824, p. XV; Fokker, Werke, 1931, p. 104.

(3) **Watercolour** by Abraham van Strij, whereabouts unknown; pencil and watercolour, 64 × 43 cm. PROV. Sale, New York (Christie's), 7 Jan. 1981, lot 51, repr.

(4) **Painting**, Church of Landsberg (Bavaria). LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, V, p. 317.


Rubens has reduced drastically the number of participants in this *Descent* when compared with the rendering of the same subject in Lille (No. 48; Fig. 166). There are now only five figures helping to lower the body as opposed to nine in Lille. In the version under discussion, Christ's figure is no longer arranged in a graceful 'C' curve but is straighter and stiffer. The intricate flowing rhythms that connected the figures in the previous works have been eliminated in favour of a composition made up of two clear diagonals, starting with the Virgin on the left side and St Mary Magdalen on the right. The figures are pushed close to the foreground plane and there is no indication of a background. In this work, the arms of the Cross are for the first time not visible. All the action is compressed around Christ.

Rubens uses three ladders, as in the Boston drawing (No. 50; Fig. 171), but the one on which St John stands is placed at a greater angle to the Cross, in order to create more space for St Mary Magdalen. She assumes the position occupied by the Virgin in the Pierpont Morgan (No. 49; Fig. 170) and Boston designs. She is in profile, looking up at Christ and gently holds his right wrist with her left hand, while with the other she firmly supports him under his left arm. Her position, the stress upon her physical beauty and the richness of her clothes are a continuation of the type found earlier in the versions of the *Descent* at Antwerp (No. 43; Fig. 135) and Lille (Nos. 48, 48a; Figs. 166, 167), except that now she is on the right side of the painting. The Virgin, on the other hand, assumes her normal place to the left of Christ, which is the opposite of that in the Pierpont Morgan and Boston drawings. Her physical relationship to Christ has also changed in the painting. Her head is no longer in close proximity to his, and his body does not lean down toward her. In the St Petersburg work, the Virgin still embraces Christ, but he falls away from her. The physical relationship that characterizes the drawings is eliminated in favour of a more spiritual connection. This clearly goes back to the role assumed by the Virgin in the earlier paintings of this theme.

The upper zone of the altarpiece closely follows the disposition of the figures in the Boston design (No. 50; Fig. 171). Joseph of Arimathea stands on the ladder above the Virgin. The white shroud passes over his shoulder around Christ's back and is held in Joseph's right hand. Christ's right arm rests on Joseph's left shoulder. In the top centre, Nicodemus's left hand holds the Saviour's right shoulder, which is a minor change from the drawing where Nicodemus's other hand supports Christ. Just beneath Nicodemus, St John appears to hold up Christ's back.

Judging from the photograph, I would agree with Rooses in assigning Christ's body and the shroud to the hand of Rubens. St Mary Magdalen also seems to be entirely by the master. The remainder of the work appears to be by a gifted pupil, with some touching up by Rubens. The picture very likely dates from the year 1618.
scene, as Bialostocki observes, becomes a 'Last Farewell'.


56. The Descent from the Cross

Oil on canvas; 264 × 186 cm.
Lost.

PROVENANCE: Presented in 1650 to St-Géry, Arras, by Jean Widebien of Arras and his wife Marie de Douai; Arras Cathedral, since 1792; destroyed in the First World War.

COPIES: (1) Painting (Fig. 178), Rubens's atelier; whereabouts unknown; panel, 116 × 80 cm.
   (2) Anonymous engraving, published by N. Lauwers (Fig. 179). LIT. V.S., p. 51, no. 366.


The Arras composition is almost identical with the painting in St Petersburg (No. 55; Fig. 180).

They both contain five figures helping to lower the body of Christ. St Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the Cross to the right and supports Christ's left shoulder with her right arm, while she gently holds his left forearm with her left hand. The Virgin stands on the opposite side with her right arm holding Christ's left side while the other encircles his back. Joseph of Arimathea stands above the Virgin on the left. His left arm extends beneath Christ's and grips his right shoulder. The shroud passes around Joseph's neck and bunches up in his right hand. In the upper right, the turbaned Nicodemus looks down in profile toward Christ and with his left hand he appears to hold Christ's right shoulder. St John the Evangelist is placed on the ladder to the right in a frontal position and supports the Saviour's head.

The Arras painting virtually repeats the arrangement in St Petersburg, but there are a number of changes. The artist or artists, under the direction of Rubens, placed the composition farther back in space than in the St Petersburg canvas and the drawing in Boston. A sense of the hill is now suggested by the inclusion of a more detailed rising earth, of the spikes and of the crown of thorns. A cloudy sky is clearly indicated in the upper left. The composition is slightly tighter on the right, because the ladder is straighter and its base is included. In this second version, the shroud no longer passes behind the Virgin's face, but is restricted to a small area behind her head and neck.

According to Rooses, who saw the painting, it was totally redone and nothing was left of the original. He suggested that it was probably painted by a pupil and retouched by Rubens shortly after the completion of the St Petersburg picture.


57. The Descent from the Cross (Fig. 181)

Oil on canvas; c. 400 × 300 cm.
St-Omer, Church of Our Lady.
CATALOGUE NO. 57.

PROVENANCE: Presented in December 1623 to the altar of the Chapel of St Mary Egyptiaca in Church of Our Lady, St-Omer, by Canon Cami­cel.


In this painting, Christ is attended by six figures. Three men above help to lower his body. Again the main support is the shroud which en­circles Christ's torso. His legs are closer to the earth than in the other works discussed, and his feet almost touch the ground. He is received by St Mary Magdalen, who kneels in the centre foreground. Now her left arm encircles Christ's legs while the other reaches up and supports his chest. The Virgin, who kneels for the first time, supports Christ's left arm with her right while she reaches out to catch him with the other. As in the Kalisz, Arras and St Petersburg paintings (Nos. 53, 54, 55; Figs. 174, 176, 180), the Virgin and St Mary Magdalen play the main roles in receiving Christ; once again, the Mag­dalen's position alludes to the sinful world reaching out to be saved by Christ's sacrifice.¹ St John the Evangelist stands behind and to the left of the Virgin. He vaguely helps to support Christ's chest and head with his left arm, while looking out of the painting with an empty ex­pression.

The St-Omer Christ does not have a curving torso; he is stiff and placed perpendicular to the ground, which forms a right angle with his torso. This arrangement, along with Christ's posture and rigid right arm, recalls once again German Gothic renderings of the subject.² Yet contrary to the German Gothic type, Rubens imparts a new and more supple movement to his corpulent figures which are entirely seventeenth-century in concept.

Rubens does include an opening into the landscape in the painting in St-Omer, but the figures are placed in the centre of the scene and not the different grouping of the Kalisz and Arras paintings (Nos. 53, 54; Figs. 174, 176).

The St-Omer painting, like those in Kalisz and Arras, was painted in Rubens's workshop under his supervision and later touched up in part by him. Christ, St Mary Magdalen and the Virgin were partially executed by Rubens as well as the arms of the uppermost figures. St John the Evangelist's face is so badly damaged that it is hard to say whether or not it was origi­nally by Rubens.

According to a Chronicle of St-Omer written between 1594 and 1623 by Jean Hendricq, Rubens's Descent from the Cross was given to the Cathed­ral of St-Omer by Canon Cami­cel in December 1623.³ Jean Hendricq, who witnessed the event, writes that the picture was placed on the Altar of St Mary Egyptiaca.⁴ Rubens's paint­ing has been confused with another Descent from the Cross executed by an unknown artist for 250 florins, and installed in the newly restored Chapel of St John the Evangelist in December 1612.⁵ This 1612 entry was sent to Rooses by the priest of the Cathedral who mistakenly said the picture was by Rubens. In 1839, E. Wallet, who knew the texts of 1612 and 1623, assumed that the Rubens picture had been placed in the Cathedral in 1612 and that in 1623 it was removed from the Chapel of St John the Evangelist to that of St Mary Egyptiaca.⁶ Wallet's text appears
to be wrong for a number of reasons. If the painting by Rubens had been in the Cathedral as early as 1612, Jean Hendricq would more than likely have included this information in his Chronicle entry for December 1612. Wallet also informs us that a picture by Arnould de Vuez (1644-1720) was later hung in the Chapel of St John the Evangelist. Vuez’ work must have been placed in the Chapel at a very late date as a replacement for the 1612 Descent by an unknown Antwerp artist which had not been removed from the Chapel of St John in 1623. Furthermore, the style of Rubens’s altarpiece is hardly compatible with his work executed in 1612. Its place in the evolution of this type of composition suggests a date of c. 1621-22, or at least after the Kalisz and Arras paintings.

2. Cf. A. Stange, Deutsche Malerei der Gotik, III, Berlin, 1938, fig. 95, VI, figs. 1, 25, 126, VII, figs. 51, 62, VIII, fig. 146.
4. Ibid., p. 326.
6. E. Wallet, Description de l’ancienne cathédrale de Saint-Omer, St-Omer—Douai, 1839, pp. 27, 28.
7. Ibid.

58. The Lamentation (Fig. 182)

Oil on copper; 27.5 x 24 cm.—Verso: seal of the Colonna family.
Jacksonville, Florida, Cummer Gallery of Art.


COPIES: (1) Sale, Budapest, 6 Oct. 1920, lot 443, repr. (as Palma Giovane).


CATALOGUE NO. 58.

The Saviour is the centre of attention and his body is on a diagonal from the upper left to the bottom right. He rests on the shroud, which appears to be placed on top of a solid object, perhaps a stone. The Virgin is behind Christ and to the left. Her head, in profile, leans down and to the right towards Christ's head which is thrown back. Her left hand rests on his upper left arm and the Virgin's right hand touches Christ's right biceps. Above and behind the Virgin, a standing woman raises her drapery-covered left hand to her face and below one of the Marys kneels down with her back to the viewer. Her head turns to the right and her right arm passes beneath her chin. In the bottom right, another Mary, perhaps St Mary Cleophas, is seated on the ground, bending forward and down to the left. She holds Christ's right leg with both hands and is about to kiss it. Above her is the blond St Mary Magdalen with bare breasts, her head and eyes passionately turned up toward Christ's head and her left arm and hand dramatically foreshortened. To her right, another Mary is visible. Her grief-racked body bends down onto Christ's left leg and her head rests on her clasped hands. St John the Evangelist is above. He is placed sideways to Christ with his left arm and hand foreshortened; his hand holds the shroud. His right arm appears to move back into space and to be covered by part of the drapery that continues beyond his left hand. St John gazes intently down toward the feet of the Saviour. To the left of John, Nicodemus (?) looks intently at Christ with his folded hands visible just beneath Christ's left wrist. Joseph of Arimathea (?) stands above Nicodemus and stares down at the Saviour's face. Both of Joseph's hands are visible and are in front of him in a dramatic open gesture. The left half of the scene takes place before a hill or at the entrance to a cave, while the right has a Venetian-like blue-white sky behind and above the figures.

Rubens departs from the usual manner of rendering this theme. He does not place Christ in the Virgin's lap as had been customary since Michelangelo, nor does he depict Christ seated on a sarcophagus and supported by the Virgin and mourned by angels. Rubens does not follow the same design for the Lamentation that Correggio introduced in his painting of 1522, but presents an original arrangement. Christ's body is laid out on the shroud and, except for his right arm, remains in much the same position that it assumed when on the Cross. This new vision stresses the Counter-Reformation emphasis on the sorrow of the participants. This type of mourning scene can be compared with the strong representation of grief found in the mythological group of Hero Mourning the Death of Leander (Fig. 183; New Haven, Conn., Yale University Art Gallery). It is just this subject that Rubens painted c. 1602-5, about the same time as the Lamentation. However, there are no connections between these pictures, except that they both accentuate the pathos of the story through dramatic gestures, postures, facial expressions and light effects.

Stylistically, the Lamentation fits in well with Rubens's oeuvre of c. 1601-2, especially with the small painting, also on copper, of the Judgement of Paris (Fig. 184; Vienna, Akademie der bildenden Künste). This is particularly noticeable in the use of Venetian colours. An early date for the Lamentation is further established by its similarities with other youthful pictures by Rubens. The rough style of painting and the figure types resemble that which we find in the bozzetto of c. 1605 for the Martyrdom of St Ursula and the Virgins (Mantua, Palazzo Ducale). Nicodemus (?) is much the same type and his head is in a position akin to the soldier just above Paul in the Conversion of St Paul (Courtrai, private collection), while the shape and position of the head of Joseph of Arimathea (?) repeats his counterpart in the Borghese Lamentation (No. 59; Fig. 185). St Mary Magdalen's impassioned eyes, looking up toward heaven, are similar in spirit to the Virgin's eyes in the Borghese Lamentation. Müller Hofstede also sees a connection between the three Marys at Christ's feet and those found in Enea Vico's engraving of 1548 after Raphael's Lamentation.

The poor surface condition of the Florida painting makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not it was meant to be a finished picture, a modello for a lost painting, or a bozzetto. However, because the Lamentation was painted around the same time as Rubens's Judgement of
Paris (Vienna, Akademie), it is possible that they both served a similar purpose. The Vienna picture was, in all likelihood, a bozzetto containing Rubens's preliminary ideas for the large finished painting of this subject, executed c. 1601 (in the National Gallery, London). It is, therefore, conceivable that the Lamentation in Florida was also a bozzetto. On the other hand, the Lamentation appears to be a completed composition, and in 1824, contrary to what we see today, it was described by Buchanan as 'a beautiful small picture'.

There are several other small paintings on copper executed by Rubens at about the same time. These suggest that he was probably experimenting with this expensive type of support as a result of his contact with Adam Elsheimer and Jan Brueghel.

The Lamentation carries the seal of the Colonna family. Ruben's brother Philip was Cardinal Ascanio Colonna's librarian and secretary from 1605 onwards. Because of this fact, Müller Hofstede has suggested that Philip possibly acted as the mediator in the sale to the Cardinal of this picture which was painted a few years earlier.

3. Parma, Galleria Nazionale; for details, see No. 59.
6. Freedberg, Christ after the Passion, 1984, pp. 110-114, no. 29, fig. 64.

59. The Lamentation (Fig. 185)

Oil on canvas; 180 x 137 cm.
Rome, Galleria Borghese. Inv. no. 411.

PROVENANCE: ? Rome, Church of Sant'Agostino; Scipione Borghese (Rome, 1578-1633).


Christ is in the centre of the picture, with the shroud placed beneath and around his body clearly displaying the wounds. He is propped up on a diagonal going from the bottom centre to the upper left. The Saviour's head falls back to the left and is supported by the Virgin's right arm. Her right hand holds the shroud. She is directly behind Christ, supports his full weight and appears to be falling to the right against St John the Evangelist. Her left hand delicately holds up the shroud, while she is held under her left arm by the left hand of St John. The latter is shown in three-quarter profile looking passionately to the left beyond the Virgin. Beneath St John and to the right, St Mary Magdalen seems to be seated sideways on the lid of the sarcophagus. She is a mournful figure, looks down to the right and wipes away her tears with the back of her left hand. Her other hand holds Christ's fingers just beneath the wound. St Mary Cleophas kneels below and to the left of St Mary Magdalen. St Mary Cleophas' head is turned toward Christ's left hand, which she is about to kiss. Her hands are clasped together in prayer and contemplation and are to the left of St Mary Magdalen's bare breast. Joseph of Arimathea stands on the opposite side, to the left of the Virgin and just above Christ's head. His right hand is raised, while the other is invisible. He is in profile and looks down to the right toward St Mary Magdalen. All of the participants are closely arranged together behind and on the sarcophagus which contains a cupid on the left or short side with his left foot placed on an altar containing a fire. The background has a temple with columns and a pediment and all is framed by drapery which is held together with a garland (?) along the right edge. The front of the sarcophagus shows a second cupid, holding an inverted torch in his left hand and leading a ram toward a pile of logs with the other. On the far right, just beyond Christ's left leg, another cupid is seen from behind with his head turned back to the left and his arms raised. The upper edge of the sarcophagus is decorated with acanthus leaves, and the bottom edge has a meander pattern. The crown of thorns rests against the left end of the sarcophagus while to the left and just beneath the crown, the three nails that pierced Christ's hands and feet can be seen. The entire scene is placed close to the foreground with a dark Venetian sky, while just behind the Virgin to the left, rays of Holy Light descend from above.

Rubens has broken with the usual manner of representing the *Lamentation* by depicting Christ leaning on the Virgin and not sitting on her lap. This new type of relationship between mother and Son was first established by Correggio in his *Lamentation* of 1522, a copy of which was in Rubens's estate. The placement of Christ on a stone or a sarcophagus and supported by his followers is, on the other hand, found quite often in North and Central Italy during the sixteenth century. It stresses the idea of the *Lamentation* as a symbol of the Eucharist. It is of interest to note that the Correggio type of *Lamentation* does not appear again until Rubens's *Lamentation* in the Galleria Borghese and Annibale Carracci's painting in the Louvre of 1602/3-1607. But Rubens does not depict the Virgin on the ground as Correggio does, or seated, as in Carracci's painting. She is standing and falling back toward St John. Rubens also changes the position of her face and eyes by turning them up toward heaven, as if she is asking the Lord to account for what he has done to her. According to St Antonio of Florence, the Virgin intercedes for the world by attracting God's attention to the Passion of her son which is also her own passion.

Christ's body has not yet been washed, and we are present at the moment before its anointment. This takes place on a sarcophagus and not over the Stone of Unction. In northern art this imagery can be found as early as the middle of the twelfth century, and it becomes standard in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The sarcophagus is equated with the altar and consequently the Stone of Unction. This in turn symbolizes the Eucharist, the transubstantiation of Christ's flesh and blood into the consecrated bread and wine. The Stone of Unction,
here seen as a sarcophagus, and upon which the holy flesh and blood of the Saviour is placed, is symbolic of the Christian altar. This emphasis upon sacrifice and death is further reinforced by the scenes on the sarcophagus. The cupids are a type found on many antique sarcophagi, but they are not taken from a known example. Rubens has rendered them imaginatively, and the themes clearly reiterate the message above: sacrifice and death. The inverted torch carried by the cupid on the front of the sarcophagus is an ancient symbol of death. The weeping cupid on the short side of the sarcophagus stands before an altar with a fire symbolizing the soul. Death is suggested once more by what appears to be a garland running along the outer edge of the tomb. The sculptured imagery alludes to the soul, death and sacrifice, thereby further reinforcing the imagery above.

This painting was attributed to Van Dyck until 1909, when Haberditzl proposed that it was a youthful work by Rubens, and that Christ's proportions and the rendering of St Mary Magdalen belonged to the sphere of Otto van Veen. Haberditzl observed that the Virgin is identical with the St Helen in Grasse and that the entire painting can be compared with Rubens's Antwerp Baptism. Ludwig Burchard added that the head of St John the Evangelist and the strong contrasts of light and shadow, creating a smooth, almost stone-like form, are similar in treatment to the young soldier in the Mocking of Christ of 1601-2 in Grasse. The spotted light, the highlighted foliage and the dark sky with blue, white and red highlights are Venetian and recall most specifically the light effects achieved by Tintoretto. It is the same type of chiaroscuro that Rubens used in the other works he made during his early years in Italy.

The head of Christ recalls the bearded and hairy types executed by his teacher Van Veen, but Rubens imparts to the body a new monumentality and elegance based upon his study of the Antique. This is very different from Van Veen's thin and overly elegant types. The dangling position of Christ's legs may well be an adaptation from Mantegna's figure of Silenus in the print of the Bacchanal, which Rubens knew and copied, or Mantegna's Bacchanal with a Wine Vat where Silenus' legs are in much the same position as Rubens's Christ but in reverse.

In contrast to the other figures in the painting, St Mary Magdalen appears extremely elegant in her rich clothes, in the exotic twist of her body and in her exaggerated hand gesture. She recalls the mannered women that Rubens painted before he visited Italy, in works such as the Lamentation of Adonis (Paris, private collection) or the Adam and Eve (Antwerp, Rubenshuis), which still bear the strong impact of Van Veen. However, St Mary Magdalen's pose is closer in position to Lodovico Carracci's St Catherine in the Vision of St Catherine (London, Bridgewater House), than any of the other early figures by Rubens or Van Veen.

The style of Rubens's Lamentation can be closely associated with his altarpiece of 1601-2 originally painted for Santa Croce in Jerusalem, and also with his teacher, Otto van Veen. It must therefore date from the years 1601-2, preferably 1602.

Burchard has suggested that perhaps Rubens's Lamentation was originally painted for the chapel which now contains Caravaggio's Madonna di Loretto in the Church of Sant'Agostino, Rome. It is known that in 1603 the Cavalletti family acquired the chapel, which had been previously dedicated to St Mary Magdalen and decorated with the Pietà délia Fiametta. Caravaggio's Madonna di Loretto was in place by September 1603. There was a proposal to present the aforementioned Pietà to Cardinal Borghese in March 1606. Who painted this Pietà is not stated in the documents, but it is conceivable that it might have been Rubens's Lamentation of 1602.

1. For an example of the traditional representation, see the Lamentation, Augustinermuseum, Freiburg/Br. by Otto van Veen, illustrated in J. Müller Hofstede, 'Zum Werke des Otto van veen 1590-1600', Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, VI, 1957, pp. 127-173, fig. 2.
5. For details, see Graeve, 1958, pp. 229-233.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 231.
11. Ibid., pp. 229-231.
12. Ibid., p. 229.
15. For the literature of the garland as a symbol of death, see Judson Van de Velde, Title pages, 1978, I, p. 152.
18. Vlieghe, Saints, 1972, II, pp. 62-64, no. 111, fig. 34.
19. Cf. the Baptism (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), the Transfiguration of 1604 (Nancy, Musee des Beaux-Arts), and even earlier works like the painting of 1601-2 for Santa Croce in Jerusalemme, Rome (now in Grasse), the Assembly of the Gods of 1602 in Prague, and the Conversion of St Paul of c. 1602 (Courtrai, private collection).
20. Cf. Rubens's drawing of the Belvedere Torso, Rubenshuis, Antwerp, c. 1601-2; Van der Meulen, Antique, 1994, II, pp. 56-58, no. 37, III, fig. 75.
22. First suggested to me by M. Winner. Rubens's drawing is in the Louvre, Print Room (Burchard d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 112, 113, no. 67.
24. This type was probably used also for the figure of Zeus in the centre of An Assembly of the Olympians, Prague, Castle, 1602.
26. For an illustration of the painting by Lodovico Carracci, see H. Bodmer, Lodovico Carracci, Burg bei Magdeburg, 1939, fig. 30.

60. The Lamentation (Fig. 186)

Oil on panel; 34.5 x 27.5 cm.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Inv. no. 798 K.

PROVENANCE: Prince Paul Demidoff, 'San Donato', Florence, sale, Florence, 15 March-10 April 1880, lot 1075; acquired by the Museum in 1880.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, c. 32 x 32 cm. PROV. Sale, Paris (Le Brun), 1791, lot 85. LIT: Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 328; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 497.

EXHIBITED: Brussels, 1910, no. 302; Paris, 1936-37, no. 53.


Christ is placed parallel to the picture plane on a shroud which covers a bier. His right arm hangs down, his eyes are closed and his wounds cleaned. St Mary Magdalen and St Mary Cleophas stand behind the Saviour and express their grief through dramatic gestures. St Mary Magdalen is on the right and looks up toward heaven. Her arms are raised and her hands seem to tear at her hair in grief. St Mary Cleophas, her hair falling over her face, is on the left with her elbows on the bier and with her right hand beneath her hair and the left visibly supporting her head. Two large torches are placed in the far right to provide light for the cave.

The X-rays indicate that Rubens made a number of changes in the arrangement and sizes of the figures. In the beginning, Rubens's figures were grander in size. The Saviour's shoulder was originally where his head is now, while the head is visible in the dark area just above. Rubens also painted a head in three-quarter profile to the right and slightly higher than the original position of Christ's head. Above the latter and still further to the right, the X-rays revealed another head full-face placed between the woman glancing upward and the first large taper.

The configuration with two despairing women placed above and behind a body stretched out parallel to the picture plane is not entirely new for Rubens. He had done this in Italy in Hero Mourning the Death of Leander of c. 1605 (Fig. 183; New Haven, Conn., Yale University Art Gallery), where Leander is placed in the centre of the scene and just above him are two distraught Nereids. The figures in these works are not exactly alike, but they are certainly similar in spirit and attitude. The Saints Mary Magdalen and Cleophas are also similar in their gestures and expressions to the Marys in Rubens’s Lamentation in Jacksonville (No. 58; Fig. 182). Held has drawn attention to the connections between the Berlin panel and the drawing in Rotterdam of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215). In each work, the body of Christ is in a similar position, the shroud covers part of his head and a torch lights the scene. The unique composition of the Berlin panel with Christ stretched out on the stone parallel to the picture plane, with the inclusion of the two Marys and with the use of two large tapers to illuminate the scene is present earlier in Antwerp in Hieronymus Wierix's engraving of the same subject. Although Wierix's image as the starting point for his dramatic Baroque interpretation of the earlier and stiffer late sixteenth-century representation. The use of the torch as a light source is North Italian, and both Rubens and Wierix might have had the works of Jacopo Bassano in mind.

It is difficult to establish what this small panel was intended for. It would be surprising if it were a sketch for a large altarpiece, as it does not fit into the type of iconography used for altars. As Burchard suggested, it may well have been part of a predella or an oil sketch for one; perhaps a type like Simone Martini's Berlin predella of the Lamentation, translated here into a dramatic Baroque composition.

Stylistically this painting is similar to the works executed shortly after Rubens's return from Italy; it probably dates from c. 1611. This proposed dating is reinforced by the scientific report that the panel cannot be earlier than 1608-9. The Berlin panel may be dated after Rubens's return from Italy and it appears to be related to the Antwerp Elévation (No. 20; Fig. 61). Since it contains several elements that are also present in the drawing of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body in Rotterdam, these two works were most likely done around the same time, c. 1611.
CATALOGUE NO. 60.


7. The two Marys are similar in style to the mourning women on the left panel of Rubens’s *Elevation of the Cross*, Antwerp, Cathedral (No. 20; Fig. 61).


61. The Lamentation (Fig. 187)

Oil on canvas; 150 x 205 cm.
Vaduz, *Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein*.

PROVENANCE: Acquired between 1767 and 1780 by the Prince of Liechtenstein.

COPIES: (1) Pieter Soutman (?), drawing (Fig. 188), whereabouts unknown; black and red chalk, grey wash, white highlights, reinforced with pen and brown ink, 266 x 390 mm. PROV. Sale, London (Sotheby’s), 22 Nov. 1974, lot 111.

(2) Engraving by Pieter Soutman, 315 x 396 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 54, no. 390.


In this composition, the full-length figure of Christ is placed on the Stone of Unction, which contains pieces of wheat. On top of this is the shroud which encircles Christ’s left hip, passes beneath the right and left legs and is picked up by the right arm of the bald-headed Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph, shown in profile to the right, looks intently at the Saviour’s face. Nicodemus is behind Joseph and to the left. Nicodemus is shown also in profile and wears a turban. The Saviour’s right arm is held up by Joseph, while his body falls back toward the Virgin. She stands behind him and to the right. With her right thumb and index finger she gently extracts a thorn from his forehead, while her left index finger closes Christ’s left eye. St John is to the right of Mary and holds her left elbow with his left hand. A mourning female figure, with hands clasped beneath her chin, can be seen between the Virgin and St John. This tearful face, inclined slightly to the right, might very well be St Mary Magdalen. To St John’s right, there are three more Marys mourning the Saviour. The oldest one, St Mary Cleophas (or Salome?), bends down at his knees and wrings her hands with grief, while above her St Mary Cleophas (or Salome?) kneels down, supporting her mournful face with her hands. Behind the altar and to the right, a youthful Mary (perhaps St Mary Joses) turns her tearful eyes up toward heaven.

Rubens’s *Lamentation* follows the tradition of medieval Italian biblical illustrations where the scene becomes part of the Virgin’s *Lamentation*. This carries on into sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian art and is especially noticeable in North Italy. The most important element in
this kind of Lamentation is the inclusion of the Stone of Unction. As Graeve first noted, Rubens knew this theme,² which places Christ on the Stone of Unction and the Virgin close by. In reintroducing this element into northern art,³ Rubens follows the general arrangement which he probably learnt from his study of North Italian art and especially that of Venice and its surroundings.⁴ However, Rubens made some important innovations. Christ's body is on the Stone, but it has not yet been cleaned. The Virgin is just starting this process by pulling out a thorn from his forehead and closing his eyes. These two innovative actions go back to medieval beliefs discussed in the Revelations of St Bridget, which were republished in the Homilies of Juan de Cartagena and reintroduced into the early seventeenth century in Mallonius' Jesu Christi crucifixi stigmata.⁵ As in other works, Rubens reveals his knowledge of contemporary religious thinking, acquired from his own reading and from discussions with his learned friends.⁶

Rubens not only reintroduced the Stone of Unction into seventeenth-century northern art but also added wheat to the top of the Stone. This further stresses the concept that Christ's body is to be read as an important symbol of the Eucharist in the Lamentation. The Eucharistic reference implied by the inclusion of the wheat returns to a basic element of Christian symbolism, which reached a high point in the Corpus Christi ceremonies of the late Middle Ages.⁷ This type of complicated Eucharistic symbolism was developed in the North by Hugo van der Goes and is most clearly seen in the centre panel of the Portinari altarpiece in Florence, Uffizi Gallery. Here the Christ Child lies upon the wheat which is placed on the ground. Panofsky wrote that 'the sheaf of grain, placed behind the two vessels, refers to the idea centred around his birthplace. Its name, Bethlehem (which means House of Bread), was connected with 'I am the bread which came down from heaven' (John 6:41) and therefore, with the Incarnation and the Eucharist'.⁸

The position of Christ's body resembles the design of figures in other paintings made by Rubens or his studio, such as the versions of the Lamentation in Vienna (No. 62; Fig. 189) and Antwerp (No. 64; Fig. 192); Christ in the Holy Trinity of c. 1613-15;⁹ Lazarus in the drawing of c. 1618, the Raising of Lazarus;¹⁰ the recumbent figure on the left in Rubens's Dresden oil sketch for the Miracles of St Francis of Paola; the figure on the right in the modelli of the same subject in Munich and in Winchcombe, Sudley Castle, all dating from c. 1627-28;¹¹ and the reclining invalid in the centre of the Miracles of St Benedict of c. 1630.¹² The attitude of the three Marys recalls those in the Vienna and Antwerp Lamentations mentioned above. The placement of the Virgin's head in relation to Christ's and the withdrawing of the thorn closely resemble those in the half-length composition of the theme also in Vienna (No. 63; Fig. 191). Vlieghe has pointed out the dependence of the De Bryun Lamentation (Maastricht, private collection), upon the Vaduz picture.¹³ The foreshortened body of Christ, placed on a diagonal with the soles of his feet visible, is remarkably similar to Pordenone's Christ in the Lamentation in Cremona Cathedral.¹⁴

The figures are too weak to have been painted by Rubens, but he was certainly responsible for the composition and the iconographic innovations. The painting probably dates c. 1613-14, perhaps just before the more successfully composed Vienna Lamentation, signed and dated 1614 (No. 62; Fig. 189).

2. This is most evident in Rubens's Entombment of c. 1614 after Caravaggio (Ottawa, National Gallery; see No. 75; Fig. 223).
3. It was present in 15th-century Flemish art in Rogier van der Weyden's Entombment in Florence, Uffizi Gallery. See Graeve, Stone of Unction, 1958, p. 227, fig. 6.
4. For 16th-century examples see ibid., pp. 229, 230.
6. Ibid., p. 283.
10. In Berlin, Print Room; Held, Drawings, 1986, p. 120, no. 132, pl. 126.
12. Brussels, Musées Royaux; see Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, fig. 125.
62. The Lamentation (Fig. 189)

Oil on panel; 40.5 x 52.5 cm. Signed on the rocks to the left behind St Mary Magdalen's back: P. P. RVBENS. F. 1.6.1.4.

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Inv. no. 515.

PROVENANCE: Marquess of Hamilton (inventory of 1638, no. 210; inventory of 1643, case 30); Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (inventory of 14 July 1659, no. 235).


Rubens has placed Christ on a diagonal in the centre of the picture, with his upper torso resting on the Virgin's legs. The Saviour lies on the shroud, under which are a bundle of wheat and scattered sheaves. The bundle is placed beneath Christ's thighs and appears to serve as a prop. His right arm is stretched out and falls on St Mary Magdalen's lap; his other arm hangs...
down and rests limply on his left side and leg. The Virgin gazes intently down at Christ's face and with her right hand she closes his right eye. Her left arm is encircled by the shroud and appears to help support his left side. St John the Evangelist kneels behind and to the right of Mary. His right arm seems to pass around her back, while the other hand gently supports her left side. To the right of St John are the three Marys. Perhaps the almost prostrated figure with her hands clasped and head down is St Mary Cleophas, next to her to the right St Mary Joses and behind, with head upturned, St Mary Salome. In the bottom left corner lies a copper basin containing a sponge; propped against the basin are the crown of thorns and three nails. All seven figures are placed at the entrance to the tomb.

As in the Vaduz painting (No. 61; Fig. 187), Rubens includes the motif of the Virgin closing one of Christ's eyes and the placement of the wheat beneath the shroud. But in this painting, dated 1614, Rubens has added a bundle of wheat which further clarifies his Eucharistic message. The inclusion of the wheat is a subtle adaptation by Rubens of a long-standing Italian motif, where the grain is placed beneath the Christ Child in scenes of the Nativity such as Filippo Lippi's "Adoration from the 1450s (Florence, Uffizi). The admission of the wheat into the Nativity as a symbol of the Eucharist is made even more explicit in Botticelli's "Virgin and Child with an Angel of c. 1469, where both the grapes and wheat are prominently displayed. However, it is the Filippo Lippi type which became popular in Florence in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries (cf. Cosimo Rosselli, "Nativity, Florence, Uffizi; Ghirlandaio, "Adoration of the Christ Child, Milan, Ambrosiana) and which Hugo van der Goes adapted for the Portinari altarpiece painted for Florence's hospital of Sta Maria Nuova. Girolamo da Carpi, on the other hand, depicts the Christ Child leaning back on wheat that is covered by a white sheet suggesting the future shroud. For a still further variation on this type, see Marco Palmezzano's "Adoration (Milan, Brera), where the Child sits on the ground with his back resting against a bundle of wheat. He holds three strands of wheat in his right hand and points to heaven with his raised left hand.

It is likely that Rubens was aware of this earlier tradition and that he transferred the image of the Child resting on the wheat to that of the adult Christ. By doing this he created a new iconographical motif for the Lamentation. He also employed it for The Resurrected Christ Triumphant (Florence, Pitti Palace). Prohaska suggests that the painting may have served as an Anachtsbild or a small portable altar.

In this Lamentation, Rubens seems to use the dramatic head of the Laocoön as the model for Christ's head. The Saviour's body, placed on a diagonal with the soles of his feet visible and legs spread apart, is an adaptation of Christ's position found in Pordenone's Lamentation in Cremona Cathedral—which, given his interest in Pordenone, Rubens may well have seen. As Balis observes, Rubens first experimented with this type of Christ on the verso of the drawing representing Silenus and Aegle (Windsor Castle, Collection of H.M. The Queen).

The Antwerp Lamentation (Copy 1; Fig. 190), which repeats the Vienna composition, has a hardness and precision in the construction of the forms that is unlike Rubens's works from c. 1614. The addition of the landscape and the placement of the figures farther back in space is also very different in concept from Rubens's Lamentations during the second decade of the seventeenth century. There, the figures are placed close to the foreground and concentrate upon the human emotions. The Antwerp picture loses the dramatic character by expanding the landscape, adding superfluous details and pushing the scene back in space. The copier also omits the innovative bundle of wheat beneath Christ, which is a most important addition in the Vienna painting. The landscape does not connect easily with the foreground as with Rubens, although the figures are an exact repetition of those in the painting in Vienna.

There are two variations of this composition by Rubens which, because of the numerous differences, were not copied directly from Rubens's original. This is most certain in the case of
the painting by Van Schagen which was most likely done in Paris at a time when Rubens's painting was in England. A picture in Pavlovsk Castle, near St Petersburg, appears to be a pastiche of Rubens's works in Vaduz, Vienna and Cambrai (Nos. 61, 62, 74; Figs. 187, 189, 216). The artist uses a similar configuration for the four principal figures that is found in the Vienna composition, but St Mary Magdalen kneels and St John stands. Christ is placed on the Stone of Unction with wheat beneath the shroud, as in the Vaduz painting. On the other hand, St Mary Cleophas (?) kneels over Christ's feet and sponges them in the Pavlovsk composition. She resembles the same figure in the Lamentation in Cambrai and in the sketch for it in Munich (No. 74a; Fig. 217). The woman carrying the jar in the upper right is also borrowed from the Cambrai or Munich pictures.

63. The Lamentation (Fig. 191)

Oil on panel; 107.5 x 115.5 cm.; cut along both sides; additions of 7 cm. above and 3 cm. below. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Inv. no. 529.

PROVENANCE: Emperor Charles VI, 1712-1730; in the Stallburg since 1730.


(2) Painting, Church of Our Lady, Bruges; panel, 72 x 103 cm. LIT. Cat. Exh. Vienna, 1977, p. 62.


(4) Painting, Museum, Tours, inv. no. 358; 110 x 144 cm. PROV. Tours, Chapter of St Martin. LIT. P. Vitry, Le Musée de Tours. Peintures, Dessins, Sculptures, Meubles, etc., Paris, 1911, p. L, no. 358 (as after Rubens).

(5) Painting, whereabouts unknown; panel, 96 x 125 cm. PROV. Chasle, sale, Brussels (Fiévez), 16 Dec. 1929, lot 80, repr.; J. Schmitt, Paris (1937).

(6) Painting, whereabouts unknown; 72 x 104 cm. PROV. Sale, Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts), 26 March 1974, lot 72, repr.

(7) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 106 x 127 cm. PROV. G. Van de Putte-de Witte, sale, Antwerp, 19 Dec. 1932, lot 22.

(8) Painting, whereabouts unknown; 92 x 116 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Sotheby's), 30 March 1960, lot 28.
Rubens has reduced the participants to three figures represented in three-quarter length and placed close to the picture plane. Christ leans back to the right and is supported by the Virgin, who is shown in profile facing left. She holds him beneath the left arm, while with her right hand she removes a thorn from his forehead. Christ's head turns toward Mary and his eyes have not yet been closed. His body is encircled by a white shroud and the wounds in his hand and on his right side are clearly indicated. St John the Evangelist stands to the left and looks down towards Christ's side wound. He gently holds Christ's right forearm with his right hand.

The arrangement of the composition with three figures cut off at the wrist, placed close to the frontal plane and in a horizontal format goes back to fifteenth-century North Italian art.  

Although three-quarter length compositions of this theme were very popular in the North, beginning with Hugo van der Goes c. 1480 and were continued in paintings by artists like Bernard van Orley, Rubens is much closer to the Italians, because his Vienna painting only contains three figures and not the large numbers present in the pictures by Van der Goes and his followers. By reducing the number of figures to three, Rubens follows the Italian painters in forcing us to concentrate on the main participants rather than move about from figure to figure as in the northern examples.

As in the Vaduz Lamentation (No. 61; Fig. 187), Rubens depicts a new motif, the Virgin extracting a thorn from Christ's head. This, according to Mâle, comes from the Homilies of Juan de Cartagena which were reprinted by Mallonius in his Jesu Christi crucifixi stigmata (Venice, 1606). The entire painting appears to be from the hand of Rubens. The head of St John the Evangelist is very similar to that of the young man in the background of Rubens's Pasce Oves of c. 1614 and to the rider in the Wolf Hunt of c. 1614. Because of these similarities, it is possible to suggest a date of c. 1614 for the Vienna Lamentation.

1. See for example Giovanni Bellini's Lamentation in Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, and his famous representation of this theme in Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera (repr. in G. Robertson, Giovanni Bellini, Oxford, 1968, pls. XIV, XXXVIII). See also Carlo Crivelli's Lamentation on the polyptych in the Cathedral of Ascoli Piceno and the panel in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (repr. in P. Zampetti, Carlo Crivelli, Milan, 1961, figs. 47, 75). Rubens may also have seen this type of composition in the sculpture of Benedetto da Maiano where it appears beneath a Madonna and Child of 1480 in the Cathedral at Prato (repr. in L. Dussler, Benedetto da Maiano, Munich, 1924, pl. 27, fig. 35).


CATALOGUE NO. 64–68.

64–68. THE LAMENTATION:
TRIPTYCH

64. The Lamentation (Fig. 192)

Oil on panel; 139 × 96 cm.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.
Inv. no. 300.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of Our Lady, epitaph of Jan Michielsen (d. 20 June 1617), and his wife Maria Maes (d. 24 Jan. 1633); removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to Antwerp in 1815; given to the Museum by King William I in 1816.

COPIES: (1) Painting, entire triptych. Hohermuth – Aeberli, Schloss Oetlishauser, Switzerland, 1952; centre panel, 41.5 × 29 cm.; wings, 41.5 × 13 cm.

(2) Painting by E. Delacroix. c. 1850, entire triptych but with wings reversed, whereabouts unknown; centre panel, 26.5 × 18.5 cm., wings, 26.5 × 8.5 cm. PROV. G. Aubry, sale (Drouot), 1933. LIT. Ehrlich White, Delacroix, 1967, pp. 43, 44, 47, no. 9, fig. 18.

(3) Painting by R.R. Reinagle, c. 1819, entire triptych, whereabouts unknown. EXH. London, Pall Mall, 1819, no. 61.

(4) Painting, entire triptych, whereabouts unknown; centre panel, 146 × 107.2 cm.; wings, 146 × 49 cm. PROV. Sale, London (Christie's), 24 July 1981, lot 176, repr.

(5) Painting, entire triptych, where with panels reversed. D. Wiesenekker, Huizen, Netherlands; centre panel, 32 × 25 cm.; wings, 32 × 9 cm.

(6) Painting, centre panel by P.A. Verlinden executed in 1830, Antwerp, Church of Our Lady; canvas, 138 × 137 cm. PROV. Epitaph for Arnold-François de Pret and his wife Marie-Pétronille Moretus and placed in choir of the Cathedral. LIT. Rooses, Oeuvre, 1886-92, II, p. 142; Van Brabant, Rampsoed, 1974, p. 155; M. Diaz Padrón, 'Varios pintores flamencos: Hemessen, Scorel, Pietro di Lignis, G. Crayer y B. Beschey', Archivo Español de Arte, LII, no. 206, 1979, p. 120; J. Jansen, Kanton Antwerpen. I lot IV, Brussels, 1979, p. 44.

(7) Painting, centre panel, whereabouts unknown. PROV. M. d'Angelis, sale, Brussels, 15 Sept. 1763, sold for 1,000 fl. LIT. Smith, Catalogue, 1829-42, II, p. 165, no. 571.

(8) Painting, centre panel, Rijmenam, Church of St Martin; panel, 166 × 736 cm.

(9) Painting, centre panel, Limbourg, Church of St George; canvas, 138 × 95 cm.

(10) Painting, centre panel, Destelbergen, Presbytery; canvas (?).


(12) Painting, centre panel except for head of St John the Evangelist, Naples, Museo Nazionale.

(13) Painting, centre panel, whereabouts unknown; 162 × 125.5 cm. PROV. Th. Romm, 8211 Rimsting, Chiemsee, 1968. LIT. Weltkunst, XXXVII, 23, 1968, p. 1246, repr. (as Van Dyck).

(14) Painting, centre panel, J.J. Geluk, Amsterdam, 1968; canvas.

(15) Painting, centre panel, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 122 × 86 cm.

(16) Painting, centre panel, Mrs John Morley-Fletcher, New York; canvas, measurements unknown.

(17) Painting by Andreas Bernardus de Quertenmont, centre panel; panel, 155 × 106 cm. LIT. J. Jansen, op. cit., p. 54.


(20) **Drawing**, whereabouts unknown; pen and wash. **PROV.** William Young Ottley, sale, London (Philipe), 21 June 1814, lot 1566, sold for 2 pounds 6 shillings.


(22) **Engraving of centre panel by N. Ryckmans** (Fig. 194); 278 × 197 mm. **LIT.** V.S., p. 54, no. 394.

(23) **Painting by B. Beschey**, centre panel. Madrid, private collection. **LIT.** M. Diaz Padrón, op. cit., p. 120, fig. 11.

(24) **Engraving of centre panel by P. Van Cuyck**. **LIT.** V.S., p. 55, no. 395bis.


(26) **Mezzotint of centre panel by Chataigner and Masard**. **LIT.** V.S., p. 55, no. 396.


**EXHIBITED:** Paris, 1936-37, no. 59; Amsterdam—Rotterdam, 1946, no. 64.


The monumental, three-quarter length figure of Christ is placed in the foreground of the scene, on the edge of the Stone of Unction. The Stone is covered with wheat and its lower right corner occupies the bottom centre of the composition. Christ's torso is frontal, his head falls back to the right, his right arm hangs straight down with a slight bend in the elbow, while the left arm rests on his side with the hand in his lap. He leans against Joseph of Arimathea (?) and the Virgin, who raises the shroud, revealing the Saviour's head. She holds up the drapery with both hands and looks up with tears in her eyes. A bearded Joseph of Arimathea (?), on the left, is shown in three-quarter profile; he holds the upper part of Christ's right arm. Just behind the Virgin and to the left, the head of St John the Evangelist looks down at the Saviour. To the right and at the Virgin's shoulder level, St Mary Magdalen is seen with hands clasped and mournful face staring sorrowfully at Christ.
This Lamentation, the centre panel of the Michielsen epitaph, with the figures placed close to the picture plane and cut off just below the waist, is typical of Caravaggio's arrangement of a number of his biblical and allegorical scenes. However, as much as Rubens studied Caravaggio, it is most likely that his source for this composition was northern. As Eisler pointed out, there were numerous arrangements of this sort executed in the North. It is an epitaph type popularized by Hugo van der Goes and introduced into the sixteenth century by the followers of Hugo, by Bernard van Orley and by others in both the North and South.

The composition may be in the northern tradition, but the ideal beauty of Christ's torso and the position of his head, falling back to the left, come from Rubens's study of the Antique. Burchard and d'Hulst have rightly suggested that Christ's head and shoulders go back to the Laocoön, which Rubens carefully copied.

In this representation, as in the painting in Vaduz (No. 61; Fig. 187), Christ is placed on the Stone of Unction upon which are spread sheaves of wheat. It was on this Stone that the Saviour's body was prepared for burial. Here the Virgin raises the shroud and shows us Christ; as Eisler remarks, it brings to mind the words 'Ave, verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine.' The Eucharistic importance of Christ's body is also emphasized by the presence of the wheat. It serves the same symbolic purpose as in the Portinari altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, where Christ is a child. Christ on the wheat refers to Christ as a baby in the crib or on the ground and also to the future Lamentation. Christ as a baby, as shown in the painting by Hugo van der Goes, was often used in Italian art as a prefiguration of the Lamentation, for example in Ghirlandaio's Adoration of the Shepherds (Florence, Sta Trinità) and Adoration of the Child (Milan, Ambrosiana), and Marco Palmezzano's Adoration of the Child (Milan, Brera). However, Rubens was the first to actually place the dead Christ on the wheat. Panofsky's discussion of the sheaf of wheat with regard to the Portinari altarpiece is certainly applicable to the painting by Rubens.

The mystical and religious intentions of the patrons of this painting are explained by the text of Michielsen's epitaph which was placed beneath the image. The original is lost, but it was transcribed by F. Mols in the eighteenth century and preserved in a manuscript at the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels (MS 5726). It reads as follows:

Jacet hocce non jacet sepulchro
conditum non conditum
JOANNIS instar quod fuit MICHIILII
nam lege fati seculo demortuus non conjugi
MARLE pudice mente vultu MASIÆ
cuju sibi superstes ipse vivit in præcordiis
spiratij. vivus in quaterno pignore
Requiem sito viator apprecare perpetem
longos superstiti dies xynoridi
Obit A.° M:DC:XVII:XX: Junii

Eisler has succeeded in working out the text which he discovered came from John 21:21-23. In this passage Peter learns about his coming martyrdom from Christ and asks him about John's future. Christ tells Peter that 'If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee? Do thou follow me. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple was not to die. But Jesus had not said to him "He is not to die", but rather, "If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee?"'

In this text, Jan Michielsen associated himself with his patron, St John, who is depicted on the right wing. Michielsen speaks from the tomb, which is not a grave, to the living world and says that he, as did John, lives outside of the sepulchre, there is no tomb here, via the love and faith of his immediate family. Eisler goes on to say that it is also suggested that through God's love Jan Michielsen optimistically awaits his rising from the dead at the Last Judgement.

Jan Michielsen died on 20 June 1617, and it is most likely that Rubens began working on the painting shortly after Michielsen's death, say late in 1617 or early 1618.

65. The Virgin and Child (Fig. 195)

Oil on panel; 137 × 42 cm.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 301.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of Our Lady, epitaph of Jan Michielsen (d. 20 June 1617), and his wife Maria Maes (d. 24 Jan. 1633); removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to Antwerp in 1815; given to the Museum by King William I in 1816.

(3) Painting, sale, New York (Phillips), 8 June 1983, lot 46 (repr., as School of Peter Paul Rubens); oil on canvas, 136 × 44.5 cm.

(4) Painting, Diksmuide, Church of St Nicolas; canvas, 91.5 × 44.5 cm.

CATALOGUE NO. 65.

(13) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown; panel, 64 × 47.5 cm. **PROV.** Gallery Sedelmeyer, Paris, April 1897. **LIT.** Rubens-Bulletijn, V, 1897, pp. 73, 74.


(15) **Painting** by E. Delacroix, whereabouts unknown. **EXH.** Künstlerkopicn, Kunsthalle, Basel, 1937, no. 17. **PROV.** Zürich, private collection.

(16) **Painting** by Vincent van Gogh, copied from lithograph by Célestin Nanteuil (Robaut, no. 1174), after Delacroix, whereabouts unknown. **LIT.** J. Thiis, Kunst og Kultur, 1918, p. 19.


LITERATURE: See No. 65; Jaffé, Rubens, 1989, p. 171, no. 384b.

The Virgin and Child are placed on the interior left wing of the Lamentation Triptych. She is behind a parapet upon which Christ stands in profile and looks to the right. Mary supports him around the waist with her right arm and hand. With the other she props him up in the front. The Saviour is partially covered by drapery and seems to step hesitantly toward the centre panel. His feet are protected from the stone by drapery.

As Eisler has pointed out, the Virgin supporting the standing Christ Child comes from North Italian and Netherlandish sources, and the stone upon which he stands refers to the sarcophagus upon which the Man of Sorrows was placed. In this left panel, the future is evident in the Virgin's sorrowing look at the Christ Child as he stands on the base, really his tomb, with his feet placed on drapery which is like a shroud and with his intense face staring at the centre panel.

In the most faithful copies of this panel, the Virgin's right hand supports her Son's foot and not his waist. The X-rays and infrared photographs all depict Christ wearing a loin cloth as he does in the original composition.

The panel was executed by Rubens's workshop and carefully retouched by the master.

1. For this and other funerary aspects of the Virgin and Child see Eisler, Michiels Triptych, 1967, pp. 70, 72.
2. Jaffé, Christ à la Paille, 1972, figs. 9, 10.

66. St John the Evangelist (Fig. 196)

Oil on panel; 137 × 42 cm. **Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 303.**

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of Our Lady, epitaph of Jan Michielsen (d. 20 June 1617), and his wife Maria Maes (d. 24 Jan. 1633); removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to Antwerp in 1815; given to the Museum by King William I in 1816.

COPIES: (1) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 136 × 44.5 cm. **PROV.** Sale, New York (Phillips), 8 June 1983, lot 46, repr.

(2) **Painting**, study of a young man looking up to right (St John), whereabouts unknown; oil on paper pasted on canvas, 44 × 31.5 cm. **PROV.** Vincent Korda, London; M. Hevesy, London. **LIT.** Jaffé, Christ à la Paille, 1972, pp. 107, 108, fig. 4.

(3) **Painting**, study of a young man looking up to right (St John). Oslo, National Gallery, inv. no. 1355; panel, 48.5 × 42.5 cm. **PROV.** Gallery Brunner, Paris, 1912; Chr. Langaard, Oslo; presented by the latter to the Museum in 1923. **EXH.** Paris, Gallery Brunner, 1912, no. 38. **LIT.** K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, p. 461; Jaffé, Christ à la Paille, 1972, pp. 107-108, figs. 5, 6; Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet. Katalog over Utenlandsk Malerkunst, Oslo, 1973, pp. 175, 176, no. 418.

(4) **Painting**, St John, Mrs L. Bertagna; canvas.

(5) **Painting**, St John, whereabouts unknown. **PROV.** Dealer Oscar Klein, New York, 1954 (as attributed to Van Dyck).

(6) **Painting**, St John, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 55 × 46.5 cm. **PROV.** Sale, Versailles (Vente des Floralies), 7 June 1966, lot 73.
67. Christ Holding the Globe
(Fig. 198)

Oil on panel; 136 x 40 cm.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 302.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of Our Lady, epitaph of Jan Michielsen (d. 20 June 1617), and his wife Maria Maes (d. 24 Jan. 1633); removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to Antwerp in 1815; given to the Museum by King William I in 1816.


LITERATURE: See No. 65.
during the last years of the sixteenth century by Marten de Vos and his contemporaries.

1. For details see Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40, II, p. 261.
2. Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, I, pp. 54, 55, no. 32, fig. 74.
3. Ibid., p. 54.

68. The Virgin and Child (Fig. 199)

Oil on panel; 136 x 40 cm.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Inv. no. 304.

PROVENANCE: Antwerp, Church of Our Lady, epitaph of Jan Michielsen (d. 20 June 1617), and his wife Maria Maes (d. 24 Jan. 1633); removed to Paris in 1794; Paris, Musée Central des Arts (1794-1815); returned to Antwerp in 1815; given to the Museum by King William I in 1816.

LITERATURE: See No. 65.

On the exterior right wing of the Lamentation Triptych, the Virgin stands full-length on a step, holding the Christ Child on her left side. She is dressed in quasi-antique robes. The nude Christ looks up lovingly at Mary and touches her face with both hands. These figures are executed in grisaille. The grey monochrome colouring and the poses and attitudes of the Virgin and Child are reminiscent of the trumeau figures on Gothic portals or carved retables where sculpture and paintings were combined. This simulated sculpture was used often in the sixteenth century and especially by Rubens's forerunner in Antwerp, Marten de Vos. The panel was executed by Rubens's workshop.

69. The Lamentation (Fig. 202)

Oil on canvas; 131 x 130 cm.
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum.

PROVENANCE: Artaria, Vienna; Prince Paul Demidoff, Galleria de San Donato, sale, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 18 April 1868, lot 13, sold to Mme Blanche Cassin, later Marquise de Carcano for 25,000 francs; Marquis Landolfo Carcano, Paris, sale, Paris (Gallery Georges Petit), 30-31 May—1 June 1912, lot 172, repr., bought for 47,000 francs; Ch.-Léon Cardon, sale, Brussels (Fiévez), 27-30 June 1921, lot 96, purchased for 42,000 francs; Belgium, private collection; acquired in 1993 from dealer O. Naumann, New York.

COPIES: (1) Painting by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller; canvas, 79 x 64 cm., signed Waldmüller. PROV. Sale, Vienna (Dorotheum), 17-23 Nov. 1981, no. 186, repr. LIT. B. Grimm-schitz, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, Salzburg, 1957, p. 280, fig. 60.


The figures, seen from just beneath the knees, are placed close to the picture plane. Christ is on the Stone of Unction with strands of wheat beneath his drapery. He occupies almost the entire foreground plane with his head falling back to the left and his knees almost touching the bottom right edge of the painting. His right arm hangs down limply, while the other is held almost parallel to the surface of the picture by the Virgin and an elderly Mary. The Virgin is in the centre, helping to support Christ's body. She looks up toward the right with a grief-stricken expression. Her right hand is visible beneath Christ's head. St John the Evangelist stands on the far left with his right arm and hand helping to hold up the Saviour. St John is shown in profile to the right with his chin almost touching Christ's head. St Mary Magdalen is visible behind and between St John and the Virgin. St Mary Magdalen's head is shown in three-quarter profile to the left and she supports her face with her right hand. An elderly woman is on the far right. She bends her head down towards Christ's left wrist, which she holds up with one of her hands. The iconography of the scene again stresses the Eucharistic importance of Christ's body.1
Judging from the photograph, Rubens seems to have painted the main figures: Christ, the Virgin, St John and the old woman. Christ’s head, in the style of Laocoön, and his hanging left arm recall those of Christ in the Lamentation in Antwerp (No. 64; Fig. 193). The Virgin also has a similar expression. The Getty composition appears to be a loosening up of the Antwerp scene. The figures are spread out and have more space in which to move. The Antwerp composition was further enlarged in the Cambrai Washing and Anointing of Christ’s Body (No. 74; Fig. 216). Here Christ, although his body is now entirely visible, falls back and is supported by St John as in the Getty scene. The Virgin is also in a similar position in both paintings and has much the same expression. In the Cambrai painting, as in the Getty painting, one of the Marys is between and behind the Virgin and St John; her head and the placement of the hand are alike. It is possible, therefore, to suggest that the Getty painting was executed c. 1618, shortly after the Antwerp Lamentation, but before the one in Cambrai.

The Saviour’s body and its relation to the Virgin, as well as her expression, appear to have been the models for the main figures in Van Dyck’s Lamentation of c. 1618-20 in the Prado, Madrid.²

The Lamentation with St Francis
(Fig. 204)

Oil on canvas; 410 × 320 cm.
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. 164.

PROVENANCE: Commissioned by Prince Alexandre de Chimay for the high altar of the Capuchin Church in Brussels; removed to Paris in 1794; returned to Brussels in 1815.

COPIES: (1) Painting by J.B. Ketgen, Christ and the Virgin, Aarschot, Church of Our Lady; canvas, 135 × 135 cm., signed in bottom right corner: J.B. Ketgen. fecit. 1631. PROV. Commissioned by the Dean of the Chapter of Aarschot, Jan van Dongelberge. LIT. F. Van Molle, ‘Schilder J.B. Ketgen en de Pieta met Kanunnik J. Van Dongelberge 1631’, Jaarboek Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen, XXVI, 1952, pp. 72-81, fig. 49.

(2) Painting by Nicolas Hanson, Stavelot, Chapel of the Institute St-Rémy, signed and dated 1664, in reverse, reduced and with several changes, the addition of a donor. LIT. J. Philippe, ‘Rubens et la peinture liégeoise du 17e siècle’, Revue belge d’archéologie et d’histoire de l’art, XIX, 1950, p. 54.

(3) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, c. 193 × 170 cm. PROV. Sale, Brussels, 12 May 1777, lot 3.


(6) Drawing, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins du Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 20.348; red chalk, 261 × 185 mm. LIT. Lugt, Cat. Louvre, 1949, II, no. 1142.

(7) Drawing, present whereabouts unknown; black and red chalk, white chalk highlights, 454 × 352 mm. PROV. M. Van Gelder, Uccle; sale, London (Christie’s), 30 March 1971, lot 143.

1. See No. 64, for details.
2. For attribution and date see K.d.K. ed. Oldenbourg, 1921, pp. 441, 472; M. Díaz Padrón, ‘Una Piedad de Van Dyck atribuida a Rubens en el Museo del Prado’, Archivo Español de Arte, no. 186, 1974, pp. 149-156.
(8) Engraving by P. Pontius, 1628. 493 x 384 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 52, no. 368.

(9) Engraving by Schelte à Bolswert. LIT. V.S., p. 52, 375.

(10) Engraving by F. Ragot. 583 x 428 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 52, no. 372.


(14) Anonymous engraving, published by F. Landry. 655 x 447 mm. LIT. V.S., p. 52, no. 373.

(15) Engraving by Langer. LIT. V.S., p. 52, no. 374.


Christ is seated on a large block of stone and leans back to the right. His body is partially wrapped in drapery which protects him from the cold Stone of Unction, as does the wheat placed between the drapery and the Stone. His left shoulder is supported by the Virgin's knee. She looks up to the right imploringly, while her right arm and hand are stretched out in a gesture of surrender, not of protection. St Francis stands to the right of Christ with the signs of the stigmata visible on his left hand and foot. His hands are clasped, as he contemplates the Saviour. St John the Evangelist is above and between St Francis and the Virgin with his hands crossed on his chest and his head turned down toward the Virgin. St John's expression is tender and loving. Rubens has placed two old women to the right of St John, and the oldest weeps into a piece of drapery. In the bottom right of centre, St Mary Magdalen kneels with her head down contemplating two of the nails from the Cross which she holds in each hand. Her hair falls down over her face, which is seen in profile. Just beneath her left hand are the crown of thorns and the titulus resting on a stone. The other two nails are on the ground beneath her left forearm. On the left, two angels move into the scene. The one in the background points toward Christ's wound, while the foreground angel carries the lance and points to the blade which pierced Christ's side. The entire scene takes place in a cave with an opening to the left, showing a blue sky with clouds and a fir tree. The canvas is arched at the top, unlike Schelte à Bolswert's engraving, made after the painting. The borders of the engraving correspond with the seams in the canvas of the altarpiece suggesting that the portion above the topmost seam in the painting is most likely a later addition.

We know from the bozzetto in Worms (No. 70a; Fig. 205) that Rubens originally intended to paint the Virgin, St Francis, three angels and two female mourners. By the time he finished this composition, Rubens had added St Mary Magdalen and St John the Evangelist. It is possible that originally, he did not include the latter two, in order to concentrate the viewer's attention upon the Virgin's grief. However, in the
completed work, Rubens bowed to tradition in the representation of the Lamentation by including St Mary Magdalene, St John the Evangelist and mourning angels. In omitting St Francis, the composition would have followed earlier iconography. However, because he had to include St Francis in this painting for the Capuchin church in Brussels, it became necessary, for iconographic purposes, to add Saints Mary Magdalene and John the Evangelist.

The picture suffered badly from the humidity during the return trip from Paris in 1815 and, prior to that, from the work of two different restorers within a ten-year period around 1770. Rubens’s assistants probably played a major role in the execution of the altarpiece, but the main figure, Christ, is surely by the master.

This kind of imagery, with Christ’s head supported in part on the knees of the Virgin, is an adaptation of a type painted by Annibale Carracci in his Lamentation with St Francis, executed for San Francesco a Ripa in Rome sometime between 1602/3-1607. Annibale’s painting also includes St Francis, but on the left side. It is of interest to note that Rubens’s bozzetto (No. 70a; Fig. 205) for the altarpiece contains a putto pointing to Christ’s foot wound as does Annibale’s. In each case, St Francis was included because the pictures were intended for a church of the Capuchins. In Rubens’s altarpiece, Christ sits on the wheat, which clearly refers to the Eucharist and the Incarnation, as is found so often in Rubens’s scenes of the Lamentation.

In December 1587, the Capuchins established a monastery in Brussels. On 17 July 1595, their church was consecrated in honour of St Francis, which explains his presence in the painting. In 1617, the monastery received its first decoration, but it is not known precisely what form it took. On 7 April 1620, Archbishop Hovius consecrated three altars which were to replace two others. From this it is possible to conclude that Rubens’s altarpiece was executed for one of the three altars. This would date the painting sometime between 1617 and 1620.

1. The inclusion of these figures follows an arrangement established by Correggio and Annibale Carracci (see Knipping, Iconografie, 1939-40, I, p. 283).


5. For details see A. Henne and A. Wauters, op. cit., p. 435.

70a. The Lamentation with St Francis: Oil Sketch (Fig. 205)

Oil on panel; 63 x 49 cm.—Verso: Antwerp coat-of-arms in two places.

Worms, Stiftung Kunsthaus Heylshof. Inv. no. 21.

PROVENANCE: Private collection, England; Cornelis Freiherr von Heyl, Herrnsheim.

EXHIBITED: Worms, 1902, no. 592 (as Van Dyck).

LITERATURE: G. Swarzenski, Die Kunstsammlung im Heylshof zu Worms. Beschreibender Katalog, Frankfurt am Main, 1927, p. 8, no. 21 (as Van Dyck); Kleiner Führer durch die Kunstsammlungen und den Schlossgarten im Heylshof, Worms, 1966, p. 10, no. 21 (as Van Dyck); Müller Hofstede, Neue Ölskizzen, 1969, pp. 196, 197, no. 2, fig. 6 (as Rubens); C.J.H. Villinger, Das Kunsthaus Heylshof im Worms und seine Sammlungen, Worms, 1977, p. 24, no. 21, repr. on p. 29 (as Rubens); Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 498, no. 362, II, pl. 357; Bodart, Rubens, 1985, p. 167, no. 319a.

In this bozzetto, Rubens has placed Christ’s body on a diagonal; it is resting against the right leg of the Virgin. The Saviour’s head, shown in profile, falls to the right upon his left shoulder. His body is partially covered by a shroud, leaving his legs and arms uncovered. He appears to sit on a large block of stone, the Stone of Unction. The Virgin is behind Christ and her body moves to the left, counterbalancing Christ’s position. She looks tearfully up to the right. Her right arm follows Christ’s right side, her hand and fingers are stretched out above the angel’s on the left. The Virgin’s expressive left hand is visible between Christ’s head and St Francis, who kneels in deep contemplation, with hands
clasped. Above and behind him, Rubens has lightly sketched in two women. The one to the right appears to be in profile with her hair over her face, perhaps St Mary Magdalen, while the woman on the left holds a cloth to her eyes. On the far left, at the opening of the cave, are two angels. The one in the left foreground carries the lance that pierced Christ's side in one hand and points to the blade with the other. The angel behind stretches out both arms, pulling aside the drapery with the right hand and pointing to Christ's wound with the other. A third angel sits at Christ's feet.

Müller Hofstede has rightly suggested that the style of this bozzetto is conceived so much like a drawing that it should be seen as the first idea for Rubens's altarpiece with a more detailed oil sketch following. This suggestion is consistent with the observation by Mols in 1775 that there was another oil sketch in a private collection in Brussels having one more figure than in the altarpiece. The sketch measured 5 feet (150 cm.) high.

Between the Worms bozzetto and the completed painting in Brussels, there were important changes. In the former, St John the Evangelist and St Mary Magdalen are not present, while St Francis kneeling on the ground is partially cut off by the frame. Christ sits on the stone but there is no wheat beneath the drapery. The left foreground angel in the oil sketch is also cut off by the frame so that the wings are not visible, while the right hand is twisted as it grasps the shaft of the spear. Because of the major differences between the Worms bozzetto and the Brussels altarpiece, the Worms panel must be read as a preliminary design which most likely was expanded in a second, but now lost, oil sketch by Rubens which was used for the completed altarpiece.

As Müller Hofstede has proposed, Rubens took over the diagonal posture of the Virgin and Christ from Otto Van Veen's Lamentation (Freiburg/Br., Augustinermuseum). Yet Christ's hanging arm and hand are found in Rubens's Lamentation in Vienna (No. 63; Fig. 191). The general concept of the modello which includes St Francis, the angel holding and pointing at Christ's wounded foot and Christ's body supported, in part, by the Virgin's leg, goes back to Rubens's stay in Italy. He probably knew and based his design upon Annibale Carracci's Pietà, now in the Louvre, Paris, but in Rome during the early seventeenth century.

2. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 5725.
5. For details and provenance see Posner, Carracci, II, pp. 60, 61, no. 136, pl. 136a.

### 70b. Kneeling Woman: Drawing (Fig. 209)

Black chalk, white chalk highlights on grey paper, 267 x 407 mm.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum.

**PROVENANCE:** PH. Lankrink (London, 1628-1692); J.C. Robinson (London, 1824-1913), sale, London (Christie's), 14 May 1902, lot 336, purchased by Hone-Murray; Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, London; presented by them to the Museum in 1937.


St Mary Magdalen, her body in profile parallel to the picture plane, kneels on the ground to the
left. Her hair falls over her head and in front of her face. In each hand she holds one of the nails from the Cross and she looks down at them in deep contemplation.

Rubens drew this figure sometime between the Worms bozzetto (No. 70a; Fig. 205) and the finished composition (No. 70; Fig. 204). In the altarpiece she is repeated precisely as in the drawing, except for some minor changes. In the drawing, her left arm and shoulder are entirely uncovered; her right arm and hand and the nail she grips are more extended. The position of this nail has been changed in the painting, where she holds the top with the pointed end turned toward her shoulder.

In the altarpiece, St Mary Magdalen replaces the seated angel of the Worms bozzetto. It is probable that a drawing was executed for a more detailed oil sketch by Rubens which is now lost.1 This lost modello may well be the one cited by Mols,2 who mentions an oil sketch in a private collection in Brussels measuring 5 feet (150 cm.) high and containing one more figure than the altarpiece.3

2. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 5725.

70c. The Lamentation: Drawing
(Fig. 206)

Black chalk, brown and black wash heightened with oil on yellow paper, indented for transfer; 474 x 378 mm.

Paris, Cabinet des Dessins du Musée du Louvre. Inv. no. 20.184.

PROVENANCE: E. Jabach (Cologne and Paris, 1610-1695); entered the collection of King Louis XIV in 1671.


The Louvre design is basically the same composition (but in reverse) as the one used for the engraving of this subject by Paul Pontius (Fig. 207) and Schelte à Bolswert. However, there are two important changes in the drawing which make it clear that the sheet was not used for the engravings. The angel shown in profile in the left foreground looks down at Christ's wound, while in all of the extant engravings the angel is in three-quarter profile and makes eye contact with the viewer. A second major difference is the omission of St Francis from the drawing.

Rooses explained the exclusion by suggesting that the Louvre design was the first project for the altarpiece.1 This hypothesis can be discarded because the original oil sketch is now known (Fig. 205), and it does include St Francis. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the Louvre drawing was executed by Rubens, although Burchard accepted it as such. Since Lugt first catalogued this sheet as 'after Rubens', there has been considerable doubt about its attribution to Rubens. At best, it could have been executed by a talented pupil and retouched by Rubens.2 I believe that the colour additions seem too flat and the forms too repetitive for Rubens. There is also an emphasis upon the outlines and a separation of parts through contrasts of light and shadow which further suggest the work of a pupil or follower.3

2. Lugt, Cat. Louvre, 1949, II, p. 40, no. 1141, pl. LXIII.
3. Renger, Rubens Dédit, 1974, p. 146, observes that the body colour covers the lines of the Stylus and that consequently the colour must have been added by a later hand.

70d. The Lamentation with St Francis:
Retouched Engraving (Fig. 208)

Pen and brush and dark brown ink, white body colour; 487 x 378 mm.

CATALOGUE NO. 70d.

PROVENANCE: P.-J. Mariette (Paris, 1694-1774); purchased in 1775 from the latter's estate by Hugues-Adrien Joly, Keeper of the Cabinet des Estampes.


Rubens retouched the engraving with brown body colour in the following places: Christ's chest, arms and drapery; the Virgin's neck and drapery beneath the neck along the sides; the angels on the right and the sky above them. Rubens brushed in yellow-white highlights on St Francis' right arm, Christ's shroud, the drapery of St Mary Magdalen and St John, the wheat beneath Christ, his torso and shroud, in the Virgin's drapery, next to and on the angel to the right and the sky immediately above the angel's head on the left. These corrections by Rubens were incorporated by Pontius in his engraving of 1628 (Fig. 207).

The engraving follows the painting (No. 70; Fig. 204), except for a few minor changes. St John the Evangelist places his left hand on the Virgin's left shoulder in the print, while in the painting it crosses beneath her right arm. The engraving also cuts off more of the angel's body and wings than the painting.

71. Christ Carried to the Tomb

Technique and measurements unknown. Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

COPIES: (1) Painting (Fig. 210), whereabouts unknown; panel, 40.5 x 54.5 cm. PROV. Jules Porgès, Paris; Marczell von Nemes, Budapest, sale, Paris, 17-18 June 1913, lot 69, repr.; Baron Andreas Herzog, Budapest; Paul Brane, Paris, 1953; D.N. Angelopulo, Switzerland, 1957-1963; sale, London (Christie's), 27 Nov. 1970, lot 19, sold for 11,550 pounds. EXH. Budapest, 1911; Düsseldorf, Museum, 1912, no. 32. LIT. Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 501.


(4) Painting (Fig. 213), Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, inv. no. 1888; panel, 48.5 x 63.5 cm. PROV. Count Lucchesi, 1803; Mannheimer Schlossgalerie, no. 231; acquired by the Museum in 1937. LIT. G. Parthey, Deutscher Bildersaal. Verzeichnis der in Deutschland vorhandenen Ölbilder verstorberner Maler aller Schulen in alphabetischer Folge zusammengestellt, II, Berlin, 1864, p. 418, no. 53 (as Rubens); Mannheimer Schlossgalerie, Cat., 1914, no. 231 (as Van Diepenbeek after Rubens); J. Lauts, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe. Katalog. Alte Meister bis 1800, Karlsruhe, 1966, p. 261; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, p. 502, II, pl. 465.

(5) Painting, Turin, Regia Pinacoteca; panel, 84 x 108 cm. PROV. Purchased by the Pinacoteca in 1850 from Mr Balduino, Genoa. LIT. A. Baudi de Vesone, Catalogo della Regia Pinacoteca di Torino, Turin, 1899, p. 83, no. 256 (as Gaspar de Crayer).

(7) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 100 x 132 cm. PROV. Sale, Brussels (Galerie Moderne), 20-21 Nov. 1979, lot 746, repr. (as Flemish School).

(8) Engraving by Hans Witdoeck (Fig. 211). LIT. V.S., p. 53, no. 385.

(9) Engraving by J. Schnorr von Carolsfeld; 225 x 305 mm.


Hans Witdoeck's engraving (Fig. 211) clearly shows Rubens's initial composition in reverse. In the original, Christ's body is placed on a clear diagonal, with his head to the left and his feet upper right of centre. The Saviour is carried by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. However, it is not absolutely clear which figure is which. Traditionally, Nicodemus supports Christ's head and Joseph carries his feet. As Stechow remarks, when the two men are together, Nicodemus most often wears a headpiece while Joseph is bareheaded. These two figures carry Christ, who is wrapped in drapery, toward the tomb. His right arm falls down perpendicular to the ground, while his head rests on his right shoulder. The Virgin and St John are placed behind Christ. She is to the left with her head covered by drapery and her left arm grasping the cloth at her neck. St John is to her right and his arms are covered by drapery, which he holds up to his mouth. Two Marys stand to the left. In the right foreground, St Mary Magdalen kneels at the tomb with her head resting on her clasped hands. Yet another Mary, Mary Joses (?), is in the right background carrying a bundle of wheat, a subtle allusion to the Eucharist and the Incarnation. The scene takes place within a cave with an arch-like opening in the right background, revealing a clouded sky.

Rubens is portraying the fourteenth station of the Cross. Christ is being carried to the Tomb after his body has been washed. Although it is not expressly stated in the Evangelium Nicodemi, it is specifically written in the fragment of an Evangelium Petri (vol. 24) that Joseph [Arimatheaus] 'took the Lord and washed him and wrapped him in linen'. We know from the Evangelists that Joseph of Arimathea was given the body of Christ by Pilate and that Joseph 'bought fine linen and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock. And Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid'.

The positioning of Christ's torso, head, right shoulder and arm bears a striking resemblance to the figure being lowered into a tomb in Ruben's drawing of Christ Carried to the Tomb (No. 72; Fig. 214).

Representations of Christ Carried to the Tomb were not unusual in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, all of the major examples depict Christ being carried parallel to the picture plane and not placed on a strong diagonal as he is by Rubens. The arms of Christ are also enclosed by the shroud in these earlier examples, except for the paintings of the Entombment by Raphael in the Galleria Borghese, Rome and by Titian in the Louvre, the Titian having been in Mantua in the sixteenth century. The position of Christ's torso, head, shoulder and right arm in Titian's painting is remarkably close to Rubens's Christ in the early drawing (No. 72; Fig. 214) and in the late painting preserved in Witdoeck's engraving (Fig. 211). So close in fact, that one wonders whether or not Rubens had this configuration in mind when executing the early sketch. Rubens repeated this Christ type in the Entombment of St Stephen of c. 1615-20, inner wing of right panel on Triptych of St Stephen. However, here the saint's body is placed on a strong diagonal from the bottom left to the upper right as he will appear in the later versions of Christ Carried to the Tomb, but his legs are stretched out.

In this composition, Rubens gives even greater emphasis to the wheat, which is clearly visible in the arms of the Mary behind the tomb. In Rubens's earlier compositions, Christ rests on
the wheat, which is barely seen. Now the major diagonal thrust in the painting, Christ's body, leads the eye up to the bundle of wheat, not straw. As in the earlier images, the wheat clearly refers to the Eucharist and John 6:41.

According to Smith, the original sketch for Christ Carried to the Tomb was owned by a Mr Norton, measured c. 35.5 x 82.5 cm. (14" x 32½") and was on panel. Its measurements correspond to those listed above as copies after Rubens, but whether it was by Rubens is impossible to judge. Burchard believed that the original picture was probably a predella for a Passion altarpiece. Oldenbourg suggests that the composition dates from sometime during the last decade of Rubens's life. This connection with his later work is especially clear if one compares the position of the kneeling St Mary Magdalen on the right (the left in Witdoeck's engraving) with the seated woman with her hand supporting her head to the right of the dancing couple in the Garden of Love of c. 1630-32 (Madrid, Prado), and with the kneeling allegorical figure in the right foreground of The Meeting of King Ferdinand of Hungary and the Cardinal-Infante at Nordlingen (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).

1. For details concerning the problems of identifying these two men see W. Stechow, 'Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus? Studien zur Toskanischen Kunst. Festschrift für Ludwig Heinrich Heydenreich, Munich, 1964, pp. 290, 296, n. 49 and passim.
2. For the symbolism of the wheat see under No. $5.
4. Mark 15:43-47. For close variants on this, see Matthew 27:58-61, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42. In the case of Luke, the washing of Christ's body before burial is not mentioned, only the intention to do so after the 'sabbath'.
10. Martin, Pompa, 1972, pp. 57-63, no. 4, fig. 13. For the drawing that can be associated with these two women see the sheet in the collection of Mrs FA. Drey, formerly in the Cook collection. EXH. Helsinki, 1952-53, no. 32; black and red chalk, 213 x 230 mm.

72. Christ Carried to the Tomb: Drawing (Fig. 214)

Pen, brown ink and chalk; 210 x 370 mm.—Verso: Saints Gregory the Great and Domitilla.

Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: Dealer Laporte, Hannover; Dr Rolph Grosse, Berlin; Ludwig Burchard, Berlin, London; Wolfgang Burchard, Farnham.


The centre of the sketch, on the verso of the sheet of c. 1607 representing Saints Gregory the Great and Domitilla, contains a Burial Scene which appears to be Christ Carried to the Tomb. In the right foreground, a large figure with heavy drapery turns his back to the viewer and with outstretched arms twists back toward the centre. In the left foreground, sits a sleeping figure dressed in an ample cloak. Above his right shoulder Rubens has written TOBIAS. Below him and to the right, Rubens has hastily sketched a small standing half-length man with one arm outstretched. In the bottom centre two heads are barely visible and drawn in chalk. The
top centre appears to be a representation of Christ Carried to the Tomb. The Saviour is placed in the centre just above and before the sepulchre with his head falling on his right shoulder, his right arm hanging down and his legs partially bunched up. He is parallel to the picture plane. A turbaned figure on the left, very likely Nicodemus, is seen in profile supporting Christ. On the right, a monumental form with heavy drapery and a bald head, Joseph of Arimathea, holds Christ's legs. Behind the sarcophagus, and in the centre, at least three heads have been quickly sketched in, perhaps the Virgin, St John the Evangelist and one of the Marys.

It has been suggested that this drawing of c. 1606 might be a sketch for the last act of The Seven Acts of Mercy, The Burial of the Dead. However, the inscription TOBIAS suggests that perhaps the scene is based on Tobit 1:21 and 2:9. There it is written that the dead Jews killed by King Sennacherib were secretly buried at night, and that on one of those evenings Tobit, exhausted from burying the dead, fell asleep by the wall of his house. But because of the strong similarity between Rubens's corpse and Titian's in the Entombment of 1559 (Madrid, Prado) and the general resemblance to the lost composition of Christ Carried to the Tomb (No. 71), it is more likely that this sheet is an early idea for the latter subject and not for Tobit Burying the Dead. Rubens repeated several other figures in this drawing in later compositions. The man in the right foreground appears in the Assumption of c. 1619-20 (Church of the Holy Cross, Augsburg). In the Assumption of 1625-26 in Antwerp Cathedral he is one of the apostles who stares into the empty tomb of the Virgin.

1. Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 440, believes that this figure is based upon St John the Evangelist in Daniele da Volterra's Deposition (Sta Trinità dei Monti, Rome), and that he was used for the first time in Rubens's Descent from the Cross in Valenciennes (No. 52, Fig. 173).
2. For the problem of identifying Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea see p. 166 under No. 43.
4. Titian's painting was placed in the Escorial. It is mentioned as being in the Iglesia Vieja in 1599 and 1657, where Rubens could have seen it (H. Wethey, The Paintings of Titian, I, London, 1969, pp. 90, 91, no. 37, pls. 76-78).
6. Freedberg, Christ after the Passion, 1984, pp. 169-172, no. 42, fig. 112.
7. Ibid., pp. 172-178, no. 43, fig. 116.

73. The Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body: Drawing (Fig. 215)

Pen and brown ink over preliminary design in black chalk, washed in brown and India ink; 324 x 410 mm. Inscribed below on the right: focus hic ad miscendum et myrram et aloen (pen and brown ink), the number 84.—Verso: below on the right, the mark of the Boymans Museum. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans—van Beuningen. Inv. no. Rubens 7.

PROVENANCE: Bequeathed to the City of Rotterdam by F.J.O. Boymans (1767-1847).


LITERATURE: Rotterdam, Boymans Museum. Catalogus, Rotterdam, 1852, no. 261 (as School of Van Dyck); Rotterdam, Boymans Museum. Catalogus, Rotterdam, 1869, no. 128 (as School of Van Dyck); J.Q. van Regteren Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman. I. Relations to Italian Art', The Burlington Magazine, LXXVI, 1940, p. 199; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, pp. 94-95, no. 4, pl. 5; Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 64-66, no. 36, pl. 36;
Rubens has placed Christ resting on a large rectangular block parallel to the picture plane. He is wrapped in a sheet which Joseph of Arimathea holds in his hands and mouth. Christ's back is supported by the Virgin who, in turn, is supported by St John the Evangelist. To the right of the Virgin and behind Christ, Nicodemus raises Christ's left arm. Behind him, is a young boy with rumpled hair, holding a torch which he shades with his outstretched right arm and right hand. The torch illuminates the scene, which takes place in a cave. St Mary Magdalen is to the right of the young man. She holds a basin beneath Christ's left arm and looks down intently at the wound. St Mary Cleophas, pouring from a pitcher, stands to the right.

This image illustrates the writings of the Evangelists, and especially that of Mark 15:45-47. By placing Christ and his entourage parallel to the picture plane, Rubens has continued the way of representing this theme since Mantegna. Rubens has also borrowed several motifs from earlier Italian art. This is especially evident in the action of Joseph of Arimathea on the far right who holds the shroud in his mouth as well as with his hands. Haverkamp Beugemann observes that this motif as well as the composition of the drawing can be found earlier in a print of the Entombment by Giovanni Battista Franco. Joseph's action is also present in Lorenzo Lotto's Entombment of 1512. He can also be seen holding the sheet with his teeth in an Entombment, engraved by Philip Galle after a design by Gerard van Groeninghen in 1573, which is part of a suite entitled Vita Salvatoris, no. 59. This became very important to Rubens, and he used it often after his return from Italy. It is found in the Descent from the Cross of 1611-12 in Antwerp Cathedral (No. 43; Fig. 135), in a drawing for the latter in the Hermitage, St Petersburg (No. 43a; Fig. 136), in a drawing at Rennes (No. 47; Fig. 165) for the Descent in Lille (No. 48; Fig. 166) and in a modello for an Entombment (No. 77; Fig. 224; London, Courtauld Institute Galleries).

In this drawing, Rubens appears to have borrowed another Italian idea, this time from Titian. Goldscheider compares the position of Christ's left arm and hand to Titian's right arm of the Saviour in the Louvre Entombment. Rubens also seems to have used details from the same figure in his later composition representing Christ Carried to the Tomb (No. 71; cf. Figs. 210, 212).

In addition to the Italian influences, Rubens has looked North, at the painting of Rogier van der Weyden, for the emotional content of the scene. The Virgin who falls back in grief and is held up by St John has much of the same physical pathos that one finds in the relationship between the two figures in Rogier's Descent from the Cross from the Escorial.

Other details in this design appear in works that Rubens made after his stay in Italy. Held has pointed out that the position of Christ's body with the drapery covering part of his head and the inclusion of the torch to illuminate the scene are present in the Berlin Lamentation (No. 60; Fig. 186). He also believes that the posture of the Virgin is used again in Rubens's Brazen Serpent, and also suggests that Nicodemus, who intensely peers through eyeglasses, is a type that may come from Caravaggio's Calling of St Matthew (Rome, San Luigi dei Francesi); this would help to date the Rotterdam drawing after, rather than before 1600. This type can be found in many northern examples prior to Caravaggio, and ultimately goes back to Lucas van Leyden's Old Man Reading.

Since this drawing contains a number of motifs used by Rubens after his return from Italy and it can be related stylistically to the St Petersburg drawing for the Descent (No. 43a; Fig. 136), I would suggest a date of c. 1611-12.


CATALOGUE NO. 74.

74. The Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (Fig. 216)

Oil on canvas; 398 x 280 cm.
Cambray, Church of St-Géry.

PROVENANCE: Very likely purchased by Canon Sébastien Briquet in 1616 and presented by the latter to the Church of the Capuchins in Cambray; transferred during the French Revolution to the Church of St-Aubert, Cambray, today St-Géry, and cited in inventory of 11 August 1792, as coming to St-Aubert from the Church of the Capuchins, Cambray; mentioned in a communication of Leblond of 5 August 1793, as destined for the National Museum in Paris; 17 August 1793, ordered to be sent to Paris; 1836 restored at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris; evacuated from St-Géry to the Cathedral in Cambray in 1917; transferred to Valenciennes and to Brussels in 1918 for restoration; returned to the Museum in Brussels and from there shipped to Cambray in 1919.

COPIES: (1) Painting by E. Delacroix, Omaha, Joslyn Art Museum; canvas, 71 x 53.5 cm. PROV. Sale, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 17-19 Feb. 1864, lot 166; M. Lecoq, Paris; M. Marcel Bernheim; Grabar, Zürich; dealer M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1957. LIT. A. Robaut, L'Oeuvre Complet de Eugène Delacroix, Paris, 1885, p. 475, no. 1946; Ehrlich White, Delacroix, 1967, pp. 38, 47, no. 10, figs. 31-33.

(2) Painting, Church of the Norbertine Abbey of Berne, Heeswijk-Dinther (North Brabant); canvas, 146 x 114 cm.


(5) Painting, attributed to School of De Crayer, Church of Notre-Dame, Montbrison.

(6) Painting, partial copy, on loan from a private collection to Maastricht Museum.

(7) Painting, Cambray, Museum. LIT. Réunion des Sociétés des Beaux-Arts, XII, 1888.


(9) Engraving by H. Witdooeck. LIT. V.S., p. 53, no. 240.


Christ is shown on a diagonal in the centre of the scene. His body rests on the Stone of Unction placed in front of the entrance to the tomb. The Saviour is supported on the left by St John the Evangelist, in profile. His right arm passes beneath Christ's and supports the Saviour. The saint's left hand rests on Christ's left shoulder and Christ's head falls back between St John's arms, the right hand touching her forehead. A second woman, one of the Marys, with her head in three-quarter profile to the left and her right hand touching her forehead. A second woman, also with a black head-dress, stands behind St John and to the left. In the right foreground is the kneeling St Mary Magdalen holding a basin. Rubens has placed St Mary Salome (?) above St Mary Magdalen; she is looking down at Christ's left foot while holding it with both hands. Directly above her is the turbaned Nicodemus, whose right hand rests on his left arm. Christ's drapery passes over the latter and beneath his hand. Joseph of Arimathea is behind Nicodemus. He grasps the shroud in his right hand. Above and behind the Virgin is a woman carrying a pitcher and higher up and behind her, a servant with a basket. In the bottom centre, the Crown of Thorns is placed on the titulus. It rests against the Stone of Unction. Rubens has also included the four nails beneath the Crown and to the right.

The Cambrai painting contains a number of motifs that one also finds in other works by Rubens dating from around 1615 and earlier. For example, the position of Christ's body is similar to that of Creusa's in the drawing of The Death of Creusa (Bayonne, Musée Bonnat) while Christ's head falls back in a manner resembling the way in which we find it in Rubens's Entombment of c. 1613-15 after Caravaggio (No. 75; Fig. 223; Ottawa, National Gallery). The Saviour's forearm hangs down with the wound showing in the Cambrai painting as it does in Ottawa, and there is a similarity in the head-dress worn by the Virgin and the veiled figure behind her with that of the Virgin in the painting in Ottawa. Rubens also reused the motif of the hand raised to the eyes. St John's pose in the Cambrai painting ultimately derives from the same figure in the Antwerp Descent from the Cross (No. 43; Fig. 135), where the left foot goes back on a diagonal and St John's back is arched. The same type of back is also evident in the Amsterdam drawing of the Entombment (No. 76; Fig. 222); in the latter, however, St John's right foot faces forward as in the Ottawa Entombment. His left foot in the drawing for the Entombment is raised up and the toes rest on a step, like the position of his right foot in the Cambrai painting. In both the Amsterdam sheet and the Cambrai painting, St John the Evangelist supports Christ in the same manner. His head falls back between St John's arms, the right arm passes beneath the Saviour's right shoulder and his left rests on Christ's other shoulder. The position of Christ's head and left arm are also alike in both the drawing and the painting. Actually the extended left arm culminating in the limp position of the wrist is present earlier in the drawing of c. 1611 in Rotterdam of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215). The Saviour's elbow is foreshortened as it is in the Antwerp Descent from the Cross (No. 43; Fig. 135). St Mary Salomé (?) on the right
CATALOGUE NO. 74a.

assumes a position very much like the woman carrying St Stephen's dalmatic in Rubens's Entombment of St Stephen of c. 1615-20. Christ's legs appear to be an adaptation in reverse of Rubens's drawing of c. 1611-12, Nero Contemplating the Dead Agrippina. Rubens probably borrowed this pose from Giulio Romano's Death of Procris, known from Ghisi's engraving. 

Rubens seems to be following a type of iconography particularly common in North Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is most evident in the placing of the Saviour on top of the Stone of Unction with his tearful mother helping to support him. In Graeve's words, this representation 'commemorates the Virgin's mourning, the Pietà, through the relic of her falling tears'. The Virgin is the main supporter of Christ's body as it falls across her front, and this emphasizes her position as the most important mourner. Rubens does not depict the actual moment of the washing and the anointing but that of Christ being laid on the Stone with the blood marking the wounds. Two women above carry the mixture of aloes and myrrh, the spices and the linen which Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus applied to the body of Christ.

Rubens's name is not cited in a letter written by Paolo da Cesena from Madrid on 10 March 1617, in which altarpieces in Cambrai, Lille, Antwerp and the monastery at Enghien are mentioned, but we know that pictures by Rubens were painted and installed at these places during the years around 1617. The painting in Cambrai is mentioned in the following manner: 'Che si è fatta fare un'immagine da un famoso pitore per il luogo di Cambrai, che vale quattrocento ducati, senza altri ornamenti'. From this, we can surmise that Rubens was paid 400 ducats for the Cambrai altarpiece. We also know that the Capuchin church at Cambrai was dedicated on 20 April 1615, that the altarpiece arrived there in 1616, and that it was bought from Rubens by Canon Sébastien Briquet.

2. Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Vlieghe, Saints, 1972-73, II, p. 158, fig. 117.
3. Bayonne, Musée Bonnat; McGrath, Subjects from History, 1997, II, pp. 278-282, no. 53, fig. 188.
8. Ibid., p. 728; see also under No. 48.

74a. The Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body: Oil Sketch (Fig. 217)

Oil on panel; 84 × 66 cm.; additions of 1.6 cm. on the left and 2.5 cm. on the right.

PROVENANCE: Carl Albert, Elector of Bavaria, Munich, c. 1729; Hofgarten Gallery, 1781; acquired by the Alte Pinakothek in 1836.


The differences between this oil sketch and the finished altarpiece for the Capuchin church in Cambrai are not decisive. The major change is the vertical stress in the arrangement of the figures in the final version. In the oil sketch the participants are placed farther down in the composition. Consequently, the vaulted area of
the tomb and the sky are emphasized. In the altarpiece, the woman carrying the pitcher and the one with the basket are placed higher up in the scene and closer to the foreground. The kneeling St Mary Magdalen is portrayed with a lost profile in the oil sketch, while in the painting her left eye, nose and mouth are clearly visible. In the preliminary work, her left hand and forearm are placed beneath the basin, with her fingers visible on the left side. In the painting, her left arm runs along the outside of the basin, which she firmly holds with her fingers. It is the latter position which Rubens decided to use in the Vienna drawing (No. 74d; Fig. 221), as well as the change in the articulation of the head. In the oil sketch, St Mary Salome’s fingers on her left hand rise up under Christ’s foot and are not flat as in the painting. In the modello, the woman carrying the basket wears drapery which stops at her left shoulder, while in the painting it covers part of her upper left arm. This same figure does not carry a basket that is partially opened along the sides as in the altarpiece, but one that is closed on all sides. In the modello, Rubens seems to have taken more care in painting the details of the tomb vaulting and sky. The oil sketch also includes a woman between the Virgin and St John, but she is frontal and one finger touches her forehead rather than all five fingers in the three-quarter profiled head of the painting. There is no text on the titulus in the bottom centre of the modello. Since the altarpiece was delivered in 1616, the Munich oil sketch (No. 74a; Fig. 217) for the latter. In this drawing, Rubens has carefully worked out the light and drapery patterns for St John which are only broadly indicated in the modello. The same can be said for the rendering of St John’s face in the drawing. The eyes, nose and mouth are drawn with more care and impart an intensity of expression that is lacking in the modello but repeated in the altarpiece.

74b. St John the Evangelist: Drawing (Fig. 218)

Black chalk with white chalk highlights; 465 x 260 mm.


This study for St John the Evangelist appears to have been executed just before the composition of Rubens’s altarpiece of the Washing and Anointing of Christ’s Body for the Church of the Capuchins, Cambrai (No. 74; Fig. 216), and not before the Munich modello (No. 74a; Fig. 217) for the latter. In this drawing, Rubens has carefully worked out the light and drapery patterns for St John which are only broadly indicated in the modello. The same can be said for the rendering of St John’s face in the drawing. The eyes, nose and mouth are drawn with more care and impart an intensity of expression that is lacking in the modello but repeated in the altarpiece.

74c. Nicodemus: Drawing (Fig. 219)

Black chalk with white chalk highlights; 387 x 224 mm.
Whereabouts unknown.

PROVENANCE: J. Richardson; E. Bouvier; Hugo Fleischhauer, Stuttgart, c. 1928; in 1939 in the collection of Fleischhauer’s daughter in Oslo.

EXHIBITED: Frankfurt, Städelches Institut, 1930.


This drawing appears to have been executed by Rubens after the Munich oil sketch (No. 74a; Fig. 217). It was intended for the figure of Nicodemus in the finished altarpiece for the Church of the Capuchins in Cambrai (No. 74; Fig. 216). In the drawing, the light patterns on the face and turban have been worked out for the final
figure. The head in both the design and the altarpiece is much more substantial than in the oil sketch and the features have been more clearly articulated. In the drawing, Rubens has established the finger pattern for Nicodemus's right hand with four fingers placed parallel to each other while the thumb is raised vertically. This is clearly not the case in the Munich oil sketch, where the thumb rests on the index finger and where there is a large space between the latter and the other three fingers, which point slightly downward. Nicodemus's left ear is outside of the turban and its shape is clearly rendered in both the drawing and the Cambrai painting, while in the Munich modello the ear is stuck beneath the head piece and only partially visible.

74d. St Mary Magdalen: Drawing (Fig. 221)

Black chalk with white chalk highlights; 337 x 300 mm.
Vienna, Albertina. Inv. no. 8.297.

EXHIBITED: Vienna, 1977, no. 27, repr.


In this drawing of St Mary Magdalen holding a basin while turning to the left, Rubens has worked out the kneeling figure for the bottom right side of the altarpiece of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body in Cambrai (No. 74; Fig. 216). The design makes additions and corrections to the St Mary Magdalen that Rubens first conceived in the oil sketch in Munich which was made for the Cambrai painting (No. 74a; Fig. 217). In the oil sketch, St Mary Magdalen's nose, eye and mouth are not visible, but they are in the drawing and altarpiece. In the drawing, Rubens has also worked out the drapery patterns on the Magdalen's left shoulder which were repeated in the altarpiece, but were considerably less elaborate in the modello. There is also an important change in the way in which St Mary Magdalen carries the basin. In the oil sketch her left arm passes beneath the bowl, while in the drawing and the painting she holds the side of the basin with her left hand as she will in the altarpiece. As observed by Mitsch, the light coming down from the right creates a greater sense of volume in the drawing. This is continued in the painting, but not present in the oil sketch.¹

In all the drawings connected with the Cambrai altarpiece, Rubens has made important changes after having executed the preliminary oil sketch in Munich.

1. For a detailed discussion of these changes, see Mitsch, Rubenszeichnungen, 1977, p. 64.

75. The Entombment (Fig. 223)

Oil on panel; 88.5 x 66.5 cm.
Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada. Inv. no. 6431.

PROVENANCE: Forchondt, Antwerp, 1710; Vienna, Prince of Liechtenstein, 1710-1956; acquired by the National Gallery in 1956.

COPIES: (1) Engraving by H.J. Suyderhoef. LIT. V.S., p. 54, no. 387.
(2) Engraving by J. Pichler. LIT. V.S., p. 54, no. 388.


Rubens has placed his figures in a shallow niche-like space. Christ is in the centre with his right arm hanging down, his head thrust back, his body encircled by the shroud and his wounds clearly visible. St John the Evangelist stands to the left and supports the Saviour's head and torso. The saint leans forward and looks into Christ's face. His right arm is placed beneath Christ's right shoulder and the saint's hand touches the wound. St Mary Magdalen stands above St John and looks down at Christ. The veiled Virgin stands to her right. She stares at her son and solemnly clasps her hands. St Mary Cleophas is to the right of the Virgin. She supports her head with her raised right hand. In front of St Mary Cleophas is the powerful Joseph of Arimathea, who holds Christ's legs in his two arms. On the far right, one can barely make out the turbaned figure of Nicodemus, shown in three-quarter profile holding a walking stick in his left hand. All of the participants stand on top of the stone lid, except for St John, whose right foot is on a step leading down to the tomb.

Rubens's painting is a copy after Caravaggio's painting of c. 1603 for the Chiesa Nuova in Rome, now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana.\(^1\) Rubens executed this copy after his return to Antwerp and very likely from a sketch, now lost, that he made around 1607-8 when he was working for this same church.\(^2\) Bode was the first to observe that Rubens's copy was executed in Antwerp, and most scholars have dated it c. 1614.\(^3\)

Rubens's painting closely follows Caravaggio's, but there are several important changes. Rubens has converted the scene into an actual burial. He suggests an indication of a tomb, which can be seen partially just below the stone that becomes the top of the grave. Rubens has added a niche with an arch just behind and above the participants. St John steps down from the stone; his left hand is no longer visible as in Caravaggio's, but appears to be beneath Christ's body. In this way he gives a firmer impression that he and Joseph of Arimathea are carrying Christ's body into the tomb. Rubens has also changed the position of the Virgin. She is no longer alone within the group with her right arm stretched out beyond St John, but now is much more a part of the whole and stands with hands clasped in front of her. Rubens leaves out the Mary on the far right with arms flung skyward and sorrowing face looking up toward heaven.\(^4\) He also omits the leaves in the bottom left. Rubens has changed Caravaggio's composition from one which stressed the ideas of the Stone of Unction, the mourning of the Virgin\(^5\) and the idea of a 'Last Farewell' to that of The Entombment. For Rubens, the important element was not the iconographic content but Caravaggio's new interpretation of space in an illusionistic way, where the spectator becomes part of the picture.

Several individual details in the Ottawa painting are found in other works by Rubens from c. 1611 until c. 1615. The beautiful head of St Mary Magdalen with its long Titian-like hair is present in Rubens's drawing of 1611-12 in Rotterdam of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215) and in the Courtauld Entombment (No. 77; Fig. 224). One also finds the Virgin's head in Ottawa and that of St Mary Magdalen and Christ repeated in the Amsterdam design for the Entombment (No. 76; Fig. 222) as well as the hanging shroud.

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1. For the chronology, see W. Friedländer, Caravaggio Studies, Princeton, 1955, pp. 186-188, and for the iconography see Graewe, Stone of Unction, 1958, pp. 223-238.
2. Ibid., p. 226.
3. Oldenbourg, Rubens, 1922, p. 66, n. 1. Held, however, has suggested, on stylistic grounds, that the picture dates from 1609-10 (Held, Sketches, 1980, I, pp. 53, n. 1, 109).
5. Ibid., pp. 227-230, 233.

76. The Entombment: Drawing
(Fig. 222)

Pen, brown ink and brown wash; 223 × 153 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. Inv. no. 4301.

PROVENANCE: T. Hudson (London, 1701-1779); Sir T. Lawrence (London, 1769-1830); T. Houlditch; J. Barnard; Jacob de Vos, Jbn (Amsterdam, 1803-1882); sale, Amsterdam, 22 May 1883, lot 143 (as Van Dyck); W. Pitcairn Knowles (Rotterdam, 1820-1894); sale, Amsterdam (F. Muller & Co.), 25 June 1895, lot 202 (as Van Dyck).


LITERATURE: E.W. Moes, Oude Tekeningen in het Rijksprentenkabinet te Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1905-6, pl. 29 (as Van Dyck); M. Delacre, Le Dessin dans l'Oeuvre de Van Dyck, Brussels, 1934, pp. 15, 40, 114, 184, 220, 221; Evers, Neue Forschungen, 1943, pp. 139, 140, pl. 46 (as Rubens); Seilern, Entombment, 1953, pp. 380, 381, fig. 3; Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 45, fig. 16; Held, Drawings, 1959, I, pp. 109, 110, no. 37, II, pl. 35; O. Benesch, 'Zum zeichnerischen Oeuvre des jungen Van Dyck', Festschrift K.M. Swoboda, s.l., 1959, p. 35 (as Van Dyck); Burchard—d'Hulst, Drawings, 1963, I, pp. 68-70, no. 38, II, pl. 38; Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. Selected Drawings, Amsterdam, 1965, pp. 36, 37, no. 42, fig. 42; Müller Hofstede, Review, 1966, p. 442, no. 38; Müller Hofstede, Janssens, 1971, p. 271, n. 209; Kuznetsov, Risunki, 1974, no. 23, repr.; Jaffé, Rubens and Italy, 1977, p. 58, pl. 175; Held, Sketches, 1980, I, pp. 499, 500; Held, Drawings, 1986, pp. 55, 94, 107-108, no. 98, pl. 98.

Christ's body is placed on a slight diagonal from the left to the right. He is supported by St John the Evangelist in the left foreground. St John's right arm passes beneath the Saviour's right arm pit, while his other hand grasps Christ's left shoulder. Joseph of Arimathea holds Christ's feet and looks down intently at him. Both St John and Joseph carry part of the shroud which is beneath Christ's body. A portion of the sheet is also held by Nicodemus, who is above and to the right of St John. Nicodemus looks up at the veiled and crying Virgin. Two female heads are visible to Mary's left. Below, a young boy (perhaps an angel) holds a torch which illuminates the scene, taking place in a cave. In the upper right the branch of a tree suggests an opening toward the sky.

The drawing was first attributed to Rubens by van Regteren Altena; it is based upon Rubens's copy of Caravaggio's Entombment, now in Ottawa (No. 75; Fig. 223). But in the drawing the main figures are not parallel to the picture plane. They are placed on a diagonal rising from the bottom left to the upper right. In spite of the slight change in the spatial concept, there are clear connections between a number of figures in the two works. This is evident in the Virgin and the woman to her left with the long hair as well as in the position of Christ's head, which Rubens also used in the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body. Rubens repeated the shroud which frames Christ's body, and the pose of St John in the Ottawa painting was employed again for Joseph of Arimathea in the drawing. There are also connections with other Rubens works, such as the torso of St John, which is similar, but in reverse, to St John's in the Courtauld Entombment (No. 77; Fig. 224), while the Nicodemus in the drawing becomes St John in that painting. Finally, the inclusion of the boy (angel?) with a torch comes from the earlier
Rotterdam drawing of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body (No. 73; Fig. 215).

Because of the clear borrowings in the drawing from the Ottawa Entombment combined with a new opening of the composition on a diagonal which is further developed and widened in the Courtauld Entombment, it is possible to suggest that the Amsterdam drawing dates after the Ottawa picture and before the Courtauld work, say 1615. The Amsterdam design is a little more cramped than the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body in Cambrai (No. 74; Fig. 216) and, therefore, most likely preceded it.

1. Amsterdam, 1933, no. 77.

77. The Entombment: Oil Sketch (Fig. 224)

Oil on panel; 83.5 x 61 cm.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection. Inv. no. 23.

PROVENANCE: Count von Schönborn, Pommersfelden, from at least 1719; M. Haro & Son, sale, Paris (Galerie Sedelmeyer), 30-31 May 1892, lot 46, repr.; Baron Vitta, France, from c. 1892 and still in family c. 1946; passed on to dealer Paul Brame, Paris, who owned it as late as 1953; Count A. Seilern, 1953-1978; bequeathed to the Courtauld Institute in 1978.

COPIES: (1) Painting attributed to Abraham van Diepenbeeck, Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum; panel, 83 x 61 cm. PROV. Ducal Gallery, Salzthalen, 1776, no. 43. LIT. C.N. Eberlein, Verzeichnis der Herzoglichen Bilder-Galerie zu Salzthalen, Braunschweig, 1776, p. 229, no. 43; Verzeichnis der Gemälde-Sammlung der Herzoglichen Museen zu Braunschweig, Braunschweig, 1844, pp. 46, 47, no. 127; Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 44.

(2) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 74 x 53 cm. PROV. London art market 1948. LIT. Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 44.

(3) Painting by Karl Spitzweg, Munich, private collection in 1960; canvas, 80 x 60 cm. PROV. Sale, Berlin (Lepke), 25 April 1934, lot 30, repr. LIT. Seilern, Flemish Paintings, 1955, p. 44; G. Roennefahrt, Carl Spitzweg, Munich, 1960, p. 305, no. 1522, repr.; Seilern, Corrigenda and Addenda, 1971, p. 27.


Christ is the centre of attention, as in Rubens's earlier representations of the Entombment (Nos. 75, 76; Figs. 223, 222). He is being lowered down to the closed sarcophagus beneath the stone platform. Nicodemus stands in the bottom left and with his right leg supports Christ's shoulder and upper torso. St John the Evangelist is above and to the right of Nicodemus. The saint raises Christ's left arm and glances up to the right at Joseph of Arimathea who grips the shroud in both hands and between his teeth.
St Mary Magdalen kneels to Joseph's right and gently holds the Saviour's feet. The grieving Virgin stands above and between St John and Joseph of Arimathea. She is supported on the left by one of the Marys. To the Virgin's right, a grieving Mary wipes away her tears with her hair. Behind the latter and to the right is a heavily veiled mourning woman. The figures, except for Nicodemus, stand on a stone platform with stairs leading down on the left to the closed tomb beneath the Saviour. The whole is encircled by a large vault with a view to the sky in the upper right.

Rubens's modello is a further development of Caravaggio's Entombment (Vatican) which Rubens had painted around 1614 (No. 75; Fig. 223). In the modello, however, Rubens has added several new participants and spread them out more freely over the picture surface. There is now a clear diagonal progression from the bottom left to the upper right. This break with Caravaggio's spatial concept is first evident in Rubens's drawing of the Entombment in Amsterdam (No. 76; Fig. 222), where there are also connections with the Courtauld modello. This is especially evident in the figures of Nicodemus and St John the Evangelist. The former is a close variation on St John the Evangelist in Amsterdam, while the St John in the modello is similar in pose to Nicodemus in the drawing. However, the greater sense of space in the Courtauld picture suggests that it comes after the Amsterdam design—perhaps late in 1615 or early in 1616.

In spite of the fact that the Courtauld modello has a different spatial concept than Caravaggio's Entombment or Rubens's copy in Ottawa (No. 75; Fig. 223), there is still a clear influence of the Ottawa copy upon the modello. This may be seen in the rendering of the Virgin and the Mary to her right who raises her hands to her eyes in a manner close to that found in Caravaggio and Rubens's copy. In Ottawa. On the other hand, Rubens does not remain entirely faithful to Caravaggio in the representation of the Virgin and the Marys. In his Ottawa copy and unlike Caravaggio's painting, the Virgin is supported on the left by one of the Marys who has long, flowing, Titianesque hair and looks down at Christ. This same configuration is used later in the Amsterdam drawing and in the Courtauld modello, but in the latter the figures exist more in space and are no longer cramped together.

As in several earlier works depicting episodes from the Passion, Rubens renders Joseph of Arimathea holding the shroud between his teeth. This is found in the Descent from the Cross of 1611-12 in Antwerp Cathedral (No. 43; Fig. 135), in the preparatory drawing for the latter in St Petersburg (No. 43a; Fig. 136) and the oil sketch in the Courtauld Institute, London (No. 43b; Fig. 137), in a drawing in Rennes (No. 47; Fig. 165) for the Descent from the Cross in Lille (No. 48; Fig. 166), and in the drawing of the Washing and Anointing of Christ's Body of c. 1611-12 in Rotterdam (No. 73; Fig. 215). The motif of Joseph holding the sheet between his teeth is Italian and goes back to Lorenzo Lotto's Entombment of 1512. It is repeated again in an engraving of the Entombment by Giovanni Battista Franco and is seen in the North in a design by Gerard van Groeninghe, engraved by Philip Galle and published in 1573 as no. 59 in the Vita Salvatoris.

Nicodemus's pose in the Courtauld picture, with his back leaning to the left and his right foot on the lid of the sarcophagus, is repeated by St John in the oil sketch and altarpiece of the Descent from the Cross of c. 1617 in Lille (Nos. 48, 48a; Figs. 166, 167). The position of Nicodemus's body and head is related to St John's in the Amsterdam Entombment (No. 76; Fig. 222) and in the Munich and Cambrai versions of this theme (Nos. 74, 74a; Figs. 216, 217).

Jacob Jordaens may well have had the Courtauld modello (or a lost composition based on it) in mind when composing his drawing of the Entombment (Amsterdam, Print Room).
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IN DIAEMATE QVO CORONAVIT ILLVM MATER SVA. CANT. I

Nobilis vir D. Paulo Holmaio, Senatori Antwerpensi, Artis sculpturae cultori et patrona Thed. Gallus DD

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