

Aristocracy and Noble Business: Some Remarks on Rubens's Financial Affairs

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Peter Paul Rubens returned from Italy to his native city in December 1608; less than a year later he was appointed court painter to the Archdukes.¹ The face of Antwerp had changed much during his absence, but the structures of power had remained unaltered. Political life was still dominated by the same families, many of whom of noble descent. Rubens, as the son of the well-respected lawyer Jan Rubens, had been on socializing terms with these families since his youth. At the time of his return, the fortunes of the city lay in the hands of a small circle made up of members of the urban nobility; in particular Nicolaas Rockox, as the mayor responsible for external affairs (*buitenburgemeester*), and Hendrik van Halmale, who dealt with internal issues (*binnenburgemeester*). The power structures within the city's administration, the *College van burgemeesters en schepenen*,² had in essence remained the same as in the days of Jan Rubens, with positions being handed down from fathers to sons to grandsons.

The tendency for Antwerp's administrative ruling class to keep everything 'within the family' is admirably demonstrated by

the marriage in 1590 of Jan Brant to Clara de Moy, the eldest daughter of his colleague, the town-secretary Hendrik de Moy. The family ties were to become even more complex, for De Moy's youngest daughter Maria married Philip Rubens on 26 March 1609, while a few months later, on October 3, Peter Paul married Isabella, the daughter of Jan Brant.³ Hendrik de Moy had been well acquainted with Jan Rubens and had composed a letter testifying to his outstanding service to the city prior to Jan's departure from Antwerp because of his religious beliefs.⁴ Taking into consideration that the names of those who governed the city remained the same for generations, one can hardly resist the temptation to compare the family structures in seventeenth-century Antwerp with those of the mafia.⁵ They all knew each other, knew who owed what to whom, and stayed, more or less, within the set bounds of their own class.

It seems that Rubens's main objective following his return was to enter into close contact with Antwerp's elite, to carve out a position for himself within the city's pre-eminent political and social hierarchy. All

extant contemporary documents and testimonies suggest that he paid particular attention to those activities that could further his social standing. Clear proof of this desire for social integration is his enrolment on 29 June 1609 in the so-called Guild of Romanists (*Confratrum collegii Romanorum apud Antwerpienses*).⁶ Four years later, he succeeded the painter Hendrik van Balen as senior master of this brotherhood. He personally wrote a report detailing his time of service and administrative duties, recording at the same time the holy masses for which he had been responsible and the traditional banquet that had taken place in his house; he added that no bill need be issued for this meal because he had already met all costs. An addendum to Rubens's report, written in another hand, contains the information that Rubens presented the brotherhood with two large paintings on panel showing, respectively, Saints Peter and Paul, patron saints of the brotherhood as well as the artist's. These pictures were kept in the house of the senior master and displayed on festive occasions in the guild's chapel in the Cathedral. Through his membership and also his generosity, Rubens was thus able to strengthen his social position, which received another important boost when he became a member of one of the religious sodalities. It is unknown when exactly Rubens became a member of the *Sodalitas latina maior*, which was attached to the Jesuit College, and which brought together all those whose proficiency in Latin meant they could pray and converse together in that language. In any case, in 1623 he is listed, together with Balthasar Moretus, as one of the *consultores*.⁷ Rubens systematically sought out and maintained contact with the well-educated citizens of Antwerp, who at the same time substan-

tially influenced the cultural life of his time and country. Included among them were Nikolaas Rockox, Jan van de Wouwer, Jan Brant, Philip Rubens, Jan Hemelaer, Caspar Gevaerts and Frans Sweerts, not forgetting the Jesuits Andreas Schott and Canon Laurens Beyerlinck. The common practice of attending church services and religious feasts, the regular gatherings throughout the church year, the festive banquets and meals contributed to the strong sense of solidarity among the city's elite.

Moreover, it was becoming increasingly common for those members of the urban patrician class who worked for the city's administration to adopt a more aristocratic lifestyle and to participate in leisure activities that had previously been reserved for the gentry and nobility. They entertained in their country estates, devoted themselves to horse riding and hunting. At the same time they surrounded themselves with beautiful objects, and many dedicated themselves to *artes et scientiae*. In keeping with this aristocratic ideal, it was considered improper to engage in any form of physical labour, and frowned upon to work for money.⁸ And although the costs incurred through the performance of one's political duties and position were reimbursed, these dignitaries were in no way dependent on this money. The political and cultural elite of Antwerp lived to a great extent on the profits derived from their real estate, from the revenues paid by the city or private individuals and from the capital raised through rents and leases. This was how the parents of Philip and Peter Paul Rubens lived before their exile; and the two brothers continued to maintain this way of life.

Thanks to his position at the Brussels court and his marriage to the daughter of the reputable *oud-schepen* Jan Brant, Rubens

quickly achieved the social position he so eagerly sought. As the son of a member of Antwerp's high society, this was a natural and fitting position for Rubens, whose manual profession as a painter was however considered an inappropriate occupation. Numerous traces of his desire to participate in the aristocratic way of life that his fellow citizens enjoyed are to be found in Antwerp's archives. It was the law that all business negotiations related to inheritance or real estate within the city had to be documented by the town's lawyers.⁹ Every undertaking had to be described in two identical contracts, in addition to which a note detailing the contents of the contract was drawn up and added to the files. The contracts were legally binding only after the deal had been registered in the so-called *schepenregister*. We therefore know that Rubens – like all the other members of the wealthy aristocracy – repeatedly made his way to the Town Hall to have his business contracts registered by the *stoelklerken*. Usually these were notaries, who quite often also maintained private offices. At times the demand was so great that up to twelve *stoelklerken* were employed.

On 15 June 1610 Rubens and his brother Philip let *Het Moeriaenshoof*t, an estate they had inherited from their father, to the surgeon Hans Regebaert.¹⁰ This estate was situated at Borgerhout and had formerly been known as *De Vliegende Hert*. Just a few days later, Peter Paul registered his inheritance from his mother in which every item is recorded in detail.¹¹ Maria Pypelincx had apparently been living from rents and leases of houses and land, as well as from the regular payments from inheritable annuities or mortgages, which she also bought and sold.¹² By accepting their parents' inheritance, the Rubens brothers and

the children of their deceased sister Blandina also accepted the rights and duties towards their neighbours and fellow citizens. These revenues had been handed down from generation to generation and were, therefore, the defining mark of their parents' social position. On 8 July 1610 Peter Paul Rubens bought a council pension of 150 florins from a certain Adam Lermans; in doing this he made clear the extent to which he followed the way of life led by his parents.¹³ Rubens also acquired real estate. On 1 November 1610 his purchase was registered, in Amsterdam, of the spacious parcel of land on the Wapper, on which he was to build a magnificent residence.¹⁴ To fulfill the contractual obligations, Rubens was obliged to pay the sum of 8,960 florins – in addition to the rather unusual stipulations of supplying a painting by his own hand and teaching one of the vendor's sons to draw.¹⁵ What is most astonishing is that Rubens had such a huge sum of money at his disposal,¹⁶ and that he not only could meet his regular financial obligations, but even accumulate capital and invest in revenues and real estate.¹⁷ For example, on 30 May 1613 Rubens paid a hereditary tenure of 20 florins for a house on the Wapper to Godefried Vereycken, a doctor; a few days earlier Rubens had bought a mortgage of 75 florins for a house called *Den gulden Arent* in the Meyerstraat and two houses in the Hopland, while on July 7, 1614 he purchased a council revenue of 80 florins from Maria Cornelissen.¹⁸ But he was also acting on behalf of his deceased sister Blandina's children, in whose name he signed several revenue contracts.¹⁹

Rubens's financial dealings went beyond the accumulation of fixed assets; he extended his social contacts by lending money on a regular base. This, for example,

is illustrated by a document of a certain Jan Baptista Arnouts, who on 16 May 1614 agreed to pay back in six instalments the sum of 150 Flemish Pounds that he had borrowed from Rubens.²⁰ Only a few weeks later, Rubens yet again lent a further 1,000 florins to Squire Jehan Wielant, designate Governor of Goere, who was represented at the signing of the contract by Squire Jacques van Ephem, an employee at the archducal court, and Squire Peeter van Oostendorp.²¹ The very same day, Rubens lent to the aforementioned Squire Wielant an even bigger amount, to be used for building dikes: the total sum involved was 8,000 florins – interest free! For this, the Squire gave as guarantee not only his good name but also, more importantly, his real estate.²² The significance of this vast sum of 9,000 florins – Rubens's expenditure on just one day – becomes clear when compared to the paltry 500 florins which Rubens received from his position as court painter,²³ though of course this was a considerable amount for a painter at a time when the average daily income of a craftsman in Antwerp did not exceed one florin.²⁴ But even lending such an enormous amount of money does not seem to have drained Rubens's financial resources, because just a couple of days later, on 17 July, he gave Lord Anthonis van der Gracht and his son, Baron van Wangen, another 9,975 florins for dike maintenance.²⁵ Rubens's readiness to act as a financier, especially among the nobility, seems to have quickly spread by word of mouth. People were particularly eager to borrow from him, because, as can be concluded from documents, he was committed to the business ethics of the Jesuit Leonardus Lessius (1554–1623), which prohibited taking interest.²⁶ Following the conventions of his time, Rubens not only accepted real estate

as security, but also was always willing to buy off mortgages on houses.²⁷ Thus he purchased a yearly mortgage of 93 florins and 14 stuivers in June 1615, and in the following years acquired others: one of 150 florins, others of 25, 60, or 100 florins, and even one of 300 florins.²⁸ Rubens's relatives also profited from his willingness to invest his capital safely in times of crisis; one of these was Philipote de Lantmeter, to whom he lent money on several occasions, and from whom, over the years, he bought several revenues or mortgages.²⁹ All in all, the revenues and investments Rubens purchased throughout the fifteen years following his return from Italy provided him with an annual profit of nearly 2,000 florins – almost four times the amount he earned as court painter. With this regular income, it was possible to lead a life of comfort without ever having to raise a finger again.

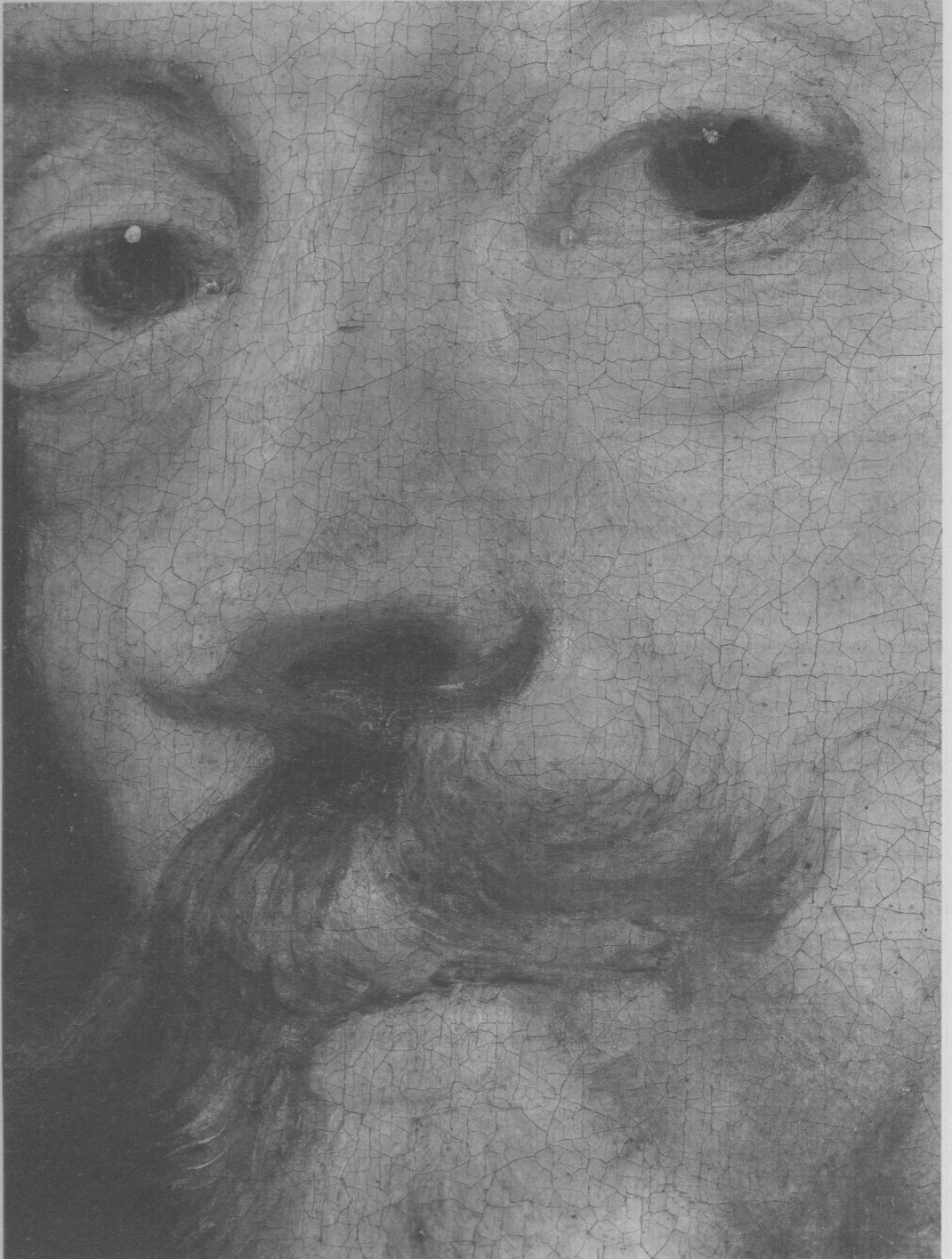
The investment of capital in mortgages, revenues and real estate was not only safe and profitable; it also strengthened Rubens's social status by integrating him into an ever-closer network of mutual obligations, a system to which his parents had already belonged. In those days, there was no official land register that identified land and estates in an alphabetical/numerical order. As a result, property was identifiable only by using the borders to neighbouring estates and the names of their owners as demarcations. Thus Rubens did not inherit an anonymous piece of land designated 'xy' but instead one marked: 'Another forest, planted with oaks and firs, including the ground and everything on it, according to the measurements undertaken there 771 *Ruten* in size, laying in the parsonage of Wilrijcke, on the high heather in Verlaer, between Peter de la Flies heritage on one side and Laurey de Pape's heritage on the

other, in the south bordering on to the *Heeren strate*, which wood the aforementioned late Jan de Lantemetere bought and received on the 9th of August Anno 1553 from Cornelia vande Locke and her family, then estimated to be worth 650 florins'.³⁰ Each and every house, estate, meadow and forest bordered on to at least two estates, houses, forests or meadows, all of which, in turn, belonged to a member of Antwerp's ruling elite. In addition, many of these estates were leased, borrowed or had mortgages on them. On each occasion, the names of all lenders, borrowers, debtors, buyers and vendors were registered and counted on every single document of ownership. Whoever took on such an inheritance of debt was obliged to pay 'for himself and his offspring, from now on and forever eternally' a certain sum of money each year. This could consist of payment to a certain widow X, or the offspring of family XY, or of the assurance that St Michael's Abbey would receive 'four Shilling, a hen and an egg'.³¹

It is evident that this repetition of names had its function within the life of the communities and various social groupings, because by implication it helped preserve existing social boundaries. The description of such boundaries and obligations simultaneously defined the social identity of a family within the social hierarchy. It is in the nature of such proceedings that in all documents and testimonies the same names occur repeatedly, for they belonged to the small yet financially well-off group of elite who also determined the political destiny of the time. The several legal documents related to the possessions of Peter Paul Rubens read like a 'Who's Who' of Antwerp's high-society. But Rubens not only bought property, he also sold it and in doing so increased his dispos-

able income. For example, he sold from his mother's inheritance on his own behalf and on behalf of his nephews and nieces the estates *De Proesthove* and *De Beerendans*, both of which lay on the outskirts of Antwerp.³² The huge number of well-documented transactions allows us to conclude that Rubens was involved in large-scale financial dealings. The City Archives only contain records of those transactions relating to mortgages and real estate, but it is very plausible that Rubens also traded on the stock exchange, although as yet no documents have been discovered to prove this. Moreover, only Rubens's capital investments in Antwerp are reasonably well documented. Apart from his investments, he seems to have had larger amounts of money at his disposal, as he was obviously always willing to grant interest-free loans of astonishingly high amounts to a select number of people.

Though the documents testify to Rubens's readiness to lend money on such a large scale, a completely contradictory account is given by his later biographer, the German Joachim von Sandrart, who wrote in 1675: '... daß er [Rubens] das baare Geld gar zu hart in Händen halte' ('... that he [Rubens] kept a particularly tight grip on his money'). He added, as a nice euphemism for avarice, that Rubens was 'nicht von Gebenhausen', which may be roughly translated as 'his was not a generous household'.³³ Even if apocryphal, one should not consider Rubens's enthusiasm for lending money as simply an act of charity. As we have seen, interest-free loans helped him establish his position within aristocratic circles, and his ensuing popularity well made up for the financial losses. All those who borrowed from Rubens were in his debt – in every sense of the word. His contemporary Von



1. Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-portrait* (detail), Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Sandrart cannot suppress a certain degree of admiration when describing this mutual enhancement of honour and efficiency that was an essential feature of Rubens's accumulation of his legendary wealth. Therefore the biographer is not really criticizing Rubens's parsimoniousness, but rather is interpreting it as an expression of his virtue and as proof of the artist's special 'wit and intellect'.³⁴ To underline Rubens's astuteness as a businessman and to draw attention to the role of *Fortuna* in his success, Von Sandrart cites a naval disaster that caused a number of bankruptcies in Antwerp, but from which Rubens emerged unscathed;³⁵ for Von Sandrart, Rubens's talents were superior even to those of bankers and traders. Although Von Sandrart's report might not actually refer to a concrete situation, his report fits extremely well with the descriptions of Rubens's entrepreneurial activities that are contained in the documents and sources. Moreover, this report quite appropriately illustrates how Rubens's successful financial exploits considerably enhanced his reputation among his contemporaries, which of course further increased his fame. Rubens was famous for being rich and successful, which made him even more successful and therefore even richer – or, to quote Von Sandrart again: 'Rubens knew, in addition to his own art / how to make the greatest use of other disciplines and activities / and thus to plan for himself the path that leads to riches'.³⁶ Von Sandrart was nevertheless convinced that the artist's wealth was not based on the income from his post as court painter nor from the profits of his other business enterprises; quite the opposite: Rubens's enormous affluence was founded on his never ceasing diligence as a painter.

As the extant documents clearly show, however, Rubens really did owe a consider-

able part of his income to financial transactions. Nevertheless, the sale of his paintings was his most prominent source of income, one that supplied him with 100 florins a week on average. Very soon after his return to Antwerp, Rubens was extolled as an exceedingly talented artist, as 'a good painter, called the god of painters' by the trader Jan le Grand in a letter written in March 1611 to an acquaintance who was looking for an Antwerp painter of good repute to take over a commission for the Abbey of Winoksbergen.³⁷ In support of his enthusiastic recommendation, Le Grand pointed to all the paintings by Rubens's hand that graced the city's public buildings: *The Adoration of the Kings* in the Town Hall, *The Ecstasy of Saint Gregory* at St Michael's Abbey, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Holy Sacrament Altarpiece* in the Dominican church of St Paul, and finally the famous *Raising of the Cross* in St Walburgis. How Rubens had achieved these commissions and how he organized the production and distribution of his paintings is the subject of another essay. At this stage, I would simply like to point out that Rubens ran an extremely efficient workshop in which production was organized according to a clear division of labour. He was thus able to realize high profits without creating the impression that he was working hard for his money. By reducing his contribution to a commissioned piece to devising the composition in an initial (oil) sketch and adding the final touches at the end, he was able to achieve an immense output of paintings, for which he could charge reasonably moderate prices, and nevertheless realize high profit margins. Zirka Zaremba Filipczak coined these business modalities as 'high income but fair prices'.³⁸ Though much could be said on this subject, at this

point I will confine myself to a short summary: Rubens could rely on an extraordinarily large income derived from the sale of his paintings, his income as court painter and the huge profits that came from the administration of his numerous properties. As a court painter, he was not required to pay taxes nor other levies; Rubens thus enjoyed the privileges of a nobleman and earned approximately as much as one. Placing this in the right perspective makes it all the more understandable that in 1613 Rubens inquired after the findings of a very special legal case in Genoa.³⁹

It was there that some years earlier the successful painter Giovanni Battista Paggi had parted in disagreement with the Genoese guild of painters.⁴⁰ In the autumn of 1590, the guild sought to prevent Paggi from selling his pictures in Genoa by requesting that the senate renew an old law that forbade anyone who had not been apprenticed by a local master for a period of at least seven years to import paintings or practice the craft of painting. Paggi was of noble birth and self-taught, and a very belligerent character. Since at the time of the lawsuit he was living in Florence – having been banned for manslaughter – he was represented by his brother, to whom he wrote a letter containing some important arguments as to why he, a noble, self-taught person, could not be excluded from practicing the art of painting:⁴¹ ‘Because I cannot be present, you could defend this position and explain that art can indeed be very well learned without a master, because the studying of art concentrates foremost upon theory, which in itself is in most parts based on mathematics, geometry, arithmetic, philosophy and other noble sciences that can be learned from books’.⁴² To the horror of the Genoese guild, the magistrate accepted this

point of view and declared in a long-winded Latin decree of 10 October 1590 that painting was free absolutely everywhere and, because of its being one of the seven liberal arts, was noble *per se*. For that reason it should be considered suitable even for lords and kings.⁴³ The verdict raised great interest beyond the borders of Genoa. ‘So great was the honour attributed to the art of painting, above all due to the good success especially by the two Paggi brothers’, Raffaele Soprani wrote a few years later, ‘that Rubens, living in Antwerp, when he saw how a poor young nobleman driven by meanness had been charged for practicing this craft for his livelihood, ordered a copy of the arguments and theses uttered forth in the reported lawsuit and of the explanation given at that time, with which he defended his fellow citizens’.⁴⁴

That Rubens was not making inquiries on behalf of a noble friend, but took a personal interest in this court ruling, has never been doubted.⁴⁵ But until now it has been suggested that he asked for this information in 1613 with a view to preparing himself to assume his future position within the social circle of the nobility.⁴⁶ This point of view has to be corrected in the sense that it was his *craft* or *profession* that needed special legitimization within the autocratic social circle of which Rubens was already a member. It was not about securing his own aristocratic privileges in a civil society, but far more about the vindication of his painter-profession and proving that it in no way would obstruct his leading the life of a *seigneur*. Citing the example of the Genoese nobleman, Rubens was able to silence all those who considered the art of painting unworthy of a true nobleman. Long before he was ennobled in 1624 by Philip IV, which

formally conferred on him the status of a nobleman, Rubens had been leading a *seigneur's* life as a member of the aristocratic society of his hometown (Fig. 1). This life style could not be improved upon; even he was subsequently knighted; which

was basically the legal acknowledgement of his father's status. Rubens was by birth a member of Antwerp's urban elite and it was to this class and their social values that he adhered to – even though he was to gain even greater prestige during his later years.

NOTES

- 1 This essay is a much reduced version of one chapter of my book *Von der Kunst, berühmt zu werden: Formen und Funktionen der Konstruktion sozialer Identität am Beispiel des Malers Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)*, which was submitted as *Habilitation* in November 2004 at the University of Dortmund. I thank Kristin Belkin, Fiona Healy and Cordula van Wyhe for their critical reading.
- 2 In 1608 the following were members of the *College*: the *Ridders* Blasius de Bejar, Nikolaas van Mechelen, Jacob de Santa Cruz, Anthonis van Berchem, Hendrick van Etten, Lancelot t'Seraerts and Jacob Dassa, the Squires Nikolaas de Herde and Christoffel van Etten, furthermore six other burgers without aristocratic titles. P. Génard, *P.P. Rubens. Aanteekeningen over den grooten Meester en zijne bloedverwanten*, Antwerp, 1877, pp. 493–494.
- 3 Stadsarchief Antwerpen [SAA], PR 195 (O.-L.-Vrouw: Huwelijksregisters 1589–1612), fol. 1371r. – SAA, GF 75 (Genealogisch archiefonds Familie Rubens), fol. 2r–3bis.
- 4 SAA, Cert. 22 (Collectanea van de certificatieboeken 1560–1573), fol. 178r.
- 5 R. Baetens and B. Blondé, 'A la recherche de l'identité sociale et de la culture matérielle de la bourgeoisie anversoise aux temps modernes', *Histoire. Economie et Société*, XIII, 1994, pp. 531–539; B. Timmermans, 'Een elite als actor op de kunstscène: Patronen van het mecenaat in het zeventiende eeuwse Antwerpen', *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis*, LXXXIII, 2000, pp. 3–35; B. Timmermans, 'The seventeenth-century Antwerp elite and status honour. The presentation of self and the manipulation of social perception', in T. van Houdt et al. (ed.), *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period (Intersections 2)*, Leiden et al., 2002, pp. 149–165.
- 6 Emile Dilis, 'La Confrérie des Romanistes', *Annales de l'Académie Royale d'Archeologie de Belgique*, LXX, 1922, pp. 441–446; Timmermans 2000 (as in note 5), pp. 10–11.
- 7 Antwerpen, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwcollege, Bibl. No 86, A. 8.
- 8 As pointed out by B. Welzel, 'Liebesgärten', in U. Härting (ed.), *Gärten und Höfe der Rubenszeit im Spiegel der Malerfamilie Brueghel und der Künstler um Peter Paul Rubens*, Munich 2000, p. 56. – For the ideals of this 'courtly society' see N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/M., 1992 [first edition Darmstadt/Neuwied, 1969]; see also W. Thomas and L. Duerloo (ed.), *Albert & Isabella 1598–1621: Essays*, Turnhout, 1998. For the situation in Antwerp see the literature mentioned in note 6.
- 9 All transactions with real estate 'gelegen in de stad en de vrijheid van Antwerpen', and not registered in the *schepenregisters*, were 'nul ende van onweerden, ende worden alleenlick gehouden voer private onweerden, zoe dat de realiteyt daer voere gheensins en is verobligeert oft geaffecteert, noch die proprieteyt gealieneert': SAA, Pk 914 fol. 69r. – G. de Longé, *Coutumes d'Anvers (Recueil des anciennes coutumes de la Belgique*, 2), I, Brussels, 1870, pp. 194, 198 and 200.
- 10 SAA, SR 483 (Schepenregister 1610/ I: Neesen & Kieffelt), fol. 232r–v. – See also a document from September 12, 1583. SAA, SR 373 (Schepenregister 1583/ I: Kessel & Gillis), fol. 355v.
- 11 Génard 1877 (see note 2), pp. 423–435.
- 12 For the estates of Maria Pypelinx, see document from September 17, 1610: SAA, SR 483 (Schepenregister 1610/ I: Neesen & Kieffelt), sub dato. As regards the inheritance, Peter Paul and Philip Rubens acted on behalf of the children of their deceased sister. See document from August 26, 1610. SAA, Pk. 699 (Rekwestboek, 1610–1611), fol. 94v.
- 13 SAA, SR 486 (Schepenregister 1610/ IV Rubens & Uwens), fol. 297r.
- 14 A few days later purchase and details of payments were registered in Antwerp. See J.M. Montias, *Art at Auction in 17th Century Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, 2002, pp. 153–163.
- 15 *Ibidem*, pp. 154–155.
- 16 As a smart businessman Rubens did not pay the total sum at once, but in three installments during the next three years. See document from January 4, 1611. SAA, SR 494 (Schepenregister 1611/ V: Neesen, Gaverelle), fol. 3r.
- 17 Document from March 2, 1613. SAA, SR 506 (Schepenregister 1613/ V: Uwens & Neesen), fol. 295r. – Document from May 22, 1613. SAA, SR 504 (Schepenregister 1613/ III: Gaverelle & Kieffelt) fol. 113v–114v.
- 18 Document from May 30, 1613. SAA, SR 504 (Schepenregister 1613/ III: Gaverelle & Kieffelt) fol. 113v–114v. – Document from May 9, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister 1614/ V: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeek & Colijns), fol. 229r–230v. – Document from July 7, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister 1614/ V: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeek & Colijns), fol. 245r–246r.
- 19 Document from December, 17, 1613. SAA, SR 507 (Schepenregister 1613/ VI: Uwens & Neesen) fol. 142r. – Document from January 8, 1614. SAA, SR 509 (Schepenregister 1614/ II: Gaverelle & Kieffelt) fol. 31r. – In later years Rubens was also active as guardian for the children of his brother Philip and his friend Jan Brueghel. Concerning his guardianship of Philip's children: Document from September 28, 1616. SAA, SR 506 (Schepenregister 1613/ V: Uwens & Neesen), fol. 83v–85r. Document from June 1619. SAA, SR 535 (Schepenregister 1619/ I: Waerbeek, Ketgen & Guyot), fol. 90r–91v; document from August 23, 1619. SAA, SR 536 (Schepenregister 1619/ II: Cauwenberge, vanden Berghe, Rousseau, van Hove & Hemselroy), fol. 218v–219r; document from January 9, 1625. SAA, SR 570 (Schepenregister 1625/ II: Louis vanden Berghe, Rousseau, van Hove & Marcellis), fol. 491r. – Concerning his guardianship of Jan Brueghel's children, see for example a document from June 4, 1626.

- SAA, SR 574 (Schepenregister 1626/ I: Waerbeek, Ketgen & Guyot), fol. 68r–69r.
- 20 Document from May 26, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister 1614/ V: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeek & Colijns), fol. 238r–239v.
- 21 Document from July 4, 1614. SAA, SR 511 (Schepenregister 1614/ IV: Gaverelle & Kieffelt), fol. 158v–159v: 'Joncker Jacques van Ephem, generael van de licenten van henne Hoocheden bynnen dese stadt ende Joncker Peeter van Oostendorp, beyde voor henselven ende voorts in den name ende vervangende Jonker Jehan Wielant, baillu der stede ende lande van Goere, dat men noemt Westvoers, bekenden dat zij ende de voors. Jo Jehan Wielant schuldich zijn ieder rechtveerdiger schuldt Sr Pietro Paulo Ruebens de somme van eenduytsent guldenen eens van twintich stuyvers Brabants stuck'.
- 22 Document from July 4, 1614. SAA, SR 511 (Schepenregister 1614/ IV: Gaverelle & Kieffelt), fol. 161v–162v: 'Compareerden Jor Jacques van Ophem, generael van de licenten van henne Hoocheden, bynnen deser stadt ende Jor Peeter van Oostendorp, beyde voor hen selven ende voorts de voors. comparanten noch in den name ende als ten nabeschreven gemechticht van Jor Johan Wielandt, baillu der stede ende lande van Goere dat men noemt Westvoeren, bij procuratie ons te desen gethoont ende gepasseert voor schepenen van Santvliet opten derden dach deser maent July, bekenden schuldich te sijn van goeder rechtveerdiger schuld Sr Pietro Paulo Ruebens de somme van acht duysent guldenen van twintich stuyvers Brabants 't stuck eens, toecommende ter causen van gelijcke somme die de voors. Sr Pietro Paulo Ruebens aenneempt voor hen comparanten ende theurder begeerten te betalen tot herdijckinge der nabeschreven landen, in handen van de voors. Sr Peeter van Oostendorp, penninckmeester der selver dijcaingie'.
- 23 Marleen Forrier et al. (ed.), *Omtrent J. Breugel de Oude, P.P. Rubens, A. van Dijk: Kunst en kunstenaars in de Rijksarchieven (Algemeen Rijksarchief en Rijksarchief in de provinciën: educatieve dienst, catalogussen, 162)*, Brussels, 1999, p. 111, no. 77. – Jules Finot, 'Documents relatifs à Rubens, conservés aux archives du Nord', *Rubens-Bulletijn – Bulletin-Rubens*, III, 1888, pp. 97–144.
- 24 E. Scholliers, 'De lagere klassen. Een kwantitatieve benadering van levensstandaard en levenswijze', in *Antwerpen in de XVIde eeuw*, published by the Genootschap voor Antwerpse Geschiedenis, Antwerp, 1975, pp. 165–166.
- 25 Document from July 17, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister 1614/ V: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeek & Colijns), fol. 189r–192v.
- 26 For further information on Rubens and Lessius, see my forthcoming book (see note 1). – My thanks to Ulrich Heinen for the reference to this reading.
- 27 H. Soly, 'Het verraad der 16de-eeuwse burgerij: een mythe? Enkele beschouwingen betreffende het gedragspatroon der 16de-eeuwse Antwerpse ondernemers', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, LXXXVI, 1973, pp. 262–280, here: 267.
- 28 Document from June 23, 1615. SAA, SR 517 (Schepenregister 1615/ IV: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeek, Louis vanden Berghe, Cauwenberge & van Hove), fol. 345v–346r. – Document from February 27, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 21v–22r. – Document from May 5, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 37r–38r. – Document from September 7, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 195r–v. – Document from October 27, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 222r–223v. – Document from August 23, 1619. SAA, SR 536 (Schepenregister 1619/ II: Cauwenberge, vanden Berghe, Rousseau, van Hove & Hemselroy), fol. 218v–219r. – In addition there are all the payments from the estate of his parents as for example the 12 florins on the grounds of the burned down house *De Beerendans* in Borgerhout. SAA, SR 535 (Schepenregister 1619/ I: Waerbeek, Ketgen & Guyot), fol. 90r–91v.
- 29 Document from December 2, 1614. SAA, SR 511 (Schepenregister 1614/ IV: Gaverelle & Kieffelt), fol. 239r. – Document from March 1, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 23r–24r. – Document from October 10, 1618. SAA, SR 530 (Schepenregister 1618/ III: Lafaille, Roose & Kimpe), fol. 212r–213r.
- 30 Document from August 7, 1576. SAA, SR 347 (Schepenregister 1576/ IV: Moy & Neesen), fol. 111r–128v: 'Item, noch eenen bosch beplant met eycken abeelen, gronde ende allen den toebehoorten, groot, navolgende der metinge daerof gedaen, zeven hondert eenentseventich roeden, gelegen binnen der prochie van Wilrijcke opte Hooge Heyde int Verlaer, tusschen Peeters de la Flie erve aen deen zijde ende Laureys de Pape erve aen dander zijde, commende zuytwaerts aen 'sHeeren strate, welcken bosch de voors. wijlen Jan de Lantmetere opten XIen Augusti anno XVcLIII voor Schepenen deser stadt gecocht ende gegreghen heeft tegens Cornleia vanden Locke met haren consorten, geestimeert zijnde op zesse hondert vijftich guldenen eens'. Cf. also: document from September 12, 1583. SAA, SR 373 (Schepenregister 1583/ I: Kessel & Gillis), fol. 355v. – document from November 19, 1638. SAA, SR 649 (Schepenregister 1638/ IV: van Huffel & Fighé), fol. 193r–v.
- 31 Maria Pypelincx, when inheriting her mother's estate, obliged herself to liabilities 'van dan voordane, eeuwelijck duerende te geldene ende te betalene sonder deen des anders cost, last oft schade'. Cf. document from October 17, 1583. SAA, SR 373 (Schepenregister 1583/ I: Kessel & Gillis), fol. 382v. – Later, when buying the house on the Wapper, Peter Paul Rubens for example also took on a great number of liabilities 'welcken commet, tsamen bedragende vijventachtentich guldenen effelijck, heeft de voors. Sr Pietro-Paulo Ruebens (die oock mede voor ons compareerde:) geloeft ende geloeffde, midts desen, voor hem ende sijne naecomelingen van nu voordane eeuwelijck duerende jaerlijcx te geldene ende te betaelen'. Cf. document from January 4, 1611. SAA, SR 494 (Schepenregister 1611/ V: Neesen, Gaverelle), fol. 2v, part of the named liabilities are 'vier schellinge een hinne ende een eye effelyk den godtshuys van St. Michiel'.
- 32 Document from September 28, 1616. SAA, SR 506 (Schepenregister 1613/ V: Uwens & Neesen), fol. 83v–85r. – Document from November 16, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister

ter 1614/ V: Uwens, Neesen, Waerbeec & Colijns), fol. 103r–105v.

33 [J. von Sandrart], *L'Academia Todesca della Architettura, Sculptura & Pittura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mablerey-Künste*, Nürnberg, 1675 [II, 3], p. 293. In the partly inaccurate Sandrart-edition of A.R. Peltzer (Munich 1925), p. 159.

34 *Ibidem*, p. 290 (ed. Peltzer 1925, p. 156).

35 'Zu selbiger Zeit traffe die Stadt Antorf grosser Schaden wegen ausbleibender Spanisch- und Indianischer Flotten, die von den Feinden hinweg genommen worden/ daß also die nach Niederland vermeinte Wechsel ausgeblieben/ wodurch bey den Creditoribus wegen des Vorschusses überaus große Noht entstunden/ die viele Banqueroten zu Antorf nach sich zoge/ daß fats kein einiger ohen vermerklichen großen Schaden geblieben/ außer der von Glück begünstigte Rubens/ unangesehen er sehr große Baarschaft in Wechsel diponirt/ so doch ganz ohne Schaden und Unglück davon kommen': *ibidem*, pp. 292–293 (ed. Peltzer 1925, p. 159).

36 '... daß Rubens neben seiner eignen Kunst/ auch aus anderer Wißenschaft und Handlung seinen Nutzen fürtrefflich zu machen/ und also sich selbst den Weg zum Reichtum wol zu bahnen wuste': *ibidem*, p. 292 (ed. Peltzer 1925, p. 159).

37 A.E.E. Monballieu, 'P. P. Rubens en het "Nachtmael" voor St.-Winoksbergen (1611), een niet uitgevoerd schilderij van de meester', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, 1965, pp. 183–205, here: p. 196; Ulrich Heinen, *Rubens zwischen Predigt und Kunst: Der Hochaltar für die Walburgenkirche in Antwerpen*, doctoral dissertation University of Cologne 1994, Weimar 1996, p. 98, with further literature.

38 Zirka Zaremba Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp. 1550–1700*, Princeton, 1987, pp. 76–78. – For an in-depth discussion, see my forthcoming publication.

39 For this letter and its date see the following text esp. note 44.

40 For further information on Paggi and his law suit: Mary Newcome Schleier, in cat. Frankfurt 1992, p. 617; P. Lukehart, 'Contending Ideals': *The Nobility of G.B. Paggi and the Nobility of Painting*, dissertation Johns Hopkins University Baltimore, 1988, pp. 7–9; N. Pevsner, *Die Geschichte der Kunstakademien*, Munich, 1986, pp. 79–80; M. Warnke, *Hofkünstler: Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Künstlers*, 2nd ed., Cologne, 1986, p. 206.

41 Cf. especially the fifth letter addressed to the brother: Paola Barocchi, *Scritti d'Arte de Cinquecento*, I, Milano–Napoli 1971, pp. 207–214.

42 'Ma poiché io non sono presente, potrete voi difendere questo passo, dicendo che questa arte si può imparare benissimo senza maestro, consistendo il suo studio prima sulla theorica, la quale per la più parte deriva dalla mathematica, dalla geometria, dall'aritmética, dalla filosofia e da altre nobilissime discipline, le quali su i libri s'apprendono': Barocchi 1971 (as in note 41), pp. 208–209.

43 '... cum maxime velint hujusmodi legibus artem ipsam obstringere, quæ ubique gentium legibus libera, atque soluta sustinetur; quippe quæ sit ex septem liberalibus artibus, & per se ipsa nobilissima, ut ex eo constat, quod Principes viri, atque adeo Reges studiosi arti ipsi operam impendunt'. Decree cited following R. Soprani, *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti Genovesi*, ed. C.G. Ratti, I, Genoa, 1768, p. 136.

44 'Tal fu l'onore, che da sì buon successo, mercè principi palmente de' due fratelli Paggi, n'arrivò alla Pittura; che lo stesso Rubens dimorante in Anversa, vedendo attribirsi a viltà ad un povero giovane Cavaliere l'esercitar questa Pro fessione per suo sostentamento; chiese l'anno 1613. quà ad essi copia delle ragioni prodotte nella riferita causa, e dell' otte nuta dichiarazione; (a) e con quelle, e con questa difese il suo Concittadino'. Soprani 1786 (as in note 43), pp. 126–127, had drawn this knowledge from a collection of letters, which also included the just mentioned letter. However, this one was lost in a tragic way: '(a) Una numerosa raccolte di lettere de' piu insigni Pittori, ch siano stati, aveva fatto l'accuratissimo nostro Pittore Alessandro Magnasco. In essa ve n'era un gran numero del Vandik, e del Rubens; fra le quali si legge vano quelle scritte al Paggi in congratulazione per l' ottenuta vittoria. Questa lettere avendole il Magnasco date a leggere ad un certo Pittore delle nostre contrade, che posciain breve mori, non le potè più riavere: ed es sendo pochi mesi dopo morte anche il Magnasco, per quante ricerche se ne sian fatte non si son potute più rinvenire': *ibidem*, p. 127, comment (a).

45 Warnke 1986 (see note 40), p. 206; Filipczak 1987 (see note 38), p. 83.

46 Heinen 1996, pp. 174–175, comment 13, especially p. 175, situates the request in Genua in the context of the ambitions of Rubens's Antwerp fellow-citizens, 'die in großer Zahl am fortschreitenden Prozeß der Aristokratisierung beteiligt wurden'.