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. 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, 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. 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. 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. 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 testi-
monies suggest that he paid particular
attention to those activities that could fur-
ther 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). Four years later, he suc-
cceeded the painter Hendrik van Balen as
senior master of this brotherhood. He per-
sonally wrote a report detailing his time of
service and administrative duties, record-
ing at the same time the holy masses for
which he had been responsible and the tra-
ditional 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 infor-
mation that Rubens presented the brother-
hood 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 dis-
played on festive occasions in the guild's
chapel in the Cathedral. Through his mem-
bership 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. 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 Lau-
rens 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 sol-
licity 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 activ-
ities 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 aris-
tocratic ideal, it was considered improper
to engage in any form of physical labour, and
frowned upon to work for money. 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 stoecklerken. Usually these were notaries, who quite often also maintained private offices. At times the demand was so great that up to twelve stoecklerken were employed.

On 15 June 1610 Rubens and his brother Philip let Het Moeriaenshoft, 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 Godfried 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. 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. 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. 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, 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Rubens’s relatives also profited from his willingness to invest his capital safely in times of crisis; one of these was Philipote de Lantmater, to whom he lent money on several occasions, and from whom, over the years, he bought several revenues or mortgages. 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 Wilrijk in 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 Lantemeteere bought and received on the 9th of August Anno 1553 from Cornelia vande Locke and her family, then estimated to be worth 650 florins'.

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’.

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 disposable 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. 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’. 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
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'.

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; 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'.

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 considerable 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.

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'.

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 Riders Blasius de Bejar, Nikolaas van Me chelen, Jacob de Santa Cruz, Anthonis van Berchem, Hendrick van E rten, Lancelot t’senaerts and Jacob Dassa, the Squires Nikolaas de Her de and Christoffel van Erten, furthermore six other burgurers without aristocratic titles. P. Gérard, P.P. Rubens. Aanteekeningen over den grooten Meester en zijne bloedverwanten, Antwerp, 1877, pp. 493–494.

3 Stadsarchief Antwerpen [SAAn], PR 195 (O.L.-Vrouw: Huwelijksregisters 1589–1612), fol. 1371r. – SAA, GF 75 (Genealogisch archieffonds Familie Rubens), fol. 2r–3bis.

4 SAA, Cert. 22 (Collectanea der certificateboeken 1560–1573), fol. 178r.


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 alleenheen gehouden voer private scrituurze, zoedt de realiteit daer voere gheensins en is verbourelegt oft graffecteert, noch die proprieteryt gaeleneert’: SAA, Pk 914 fol. 69r. – G. de Longé, Coutumes d’Antwer (Revue des anciennes coutumes de la Belgique, 2), I, Brussels, 1870, pp. 194, 198 and 200.

10 SAA, SR 483 (Scheepenregister 1610/ I: Neesen & Kieffelt), fol. 232r-v. – See also a document from September 12, 1583. SAA, SR 373 (Scheepenregister 1583/ I: Kessel & Gillis), fol. 355v.


12 For the estates of Maria Pypelinckx, see document from September 17, 1610: SAA, SR 483 (Scheepenregister 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 (Scheepenregister 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.


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 (Scheepenregister 1611/ V: Neesen, Gaverelle), fol. 3r.


19 Document from December, 17, 1613. SAA, SR 507 (Scheepenregister 1613/ VI: Uwens & Neesen) fol. 142r. – Document from January 8, 1614. SAA, SR 509 (Scheepenregister 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 (Scheepenregister 1613/ V: Uwens & Neesen), fol. 83v–85r. Document from June 1619. SAA, SR 535 (Scheepenregister 1619/ I: Waerbeek, Keerten & Guyot), fol. 90r–91v; document from August 23, 1619. SAA, SR 536 (Scheepenregister 1619/ II: Cauwenberge, vanden Bergh, Rousseau, van Hove & Hemselroy), fol. 218v–219r; document from January 9, 1625. SAA, SR 570 (Scheepenregister 1625/ II: Louis vanden Bergh, Rousseau, van Hove & Marcellis), fol. 491r. – Concerning his guardianship of Jan Brueghel’s children, see for example a document from June 4, 1626.


Document from July 4, 1614. SAA, SR 511 (Schepenregister 1614/ IV: Gaverelle & Kieffelt), fol. 161v–162v. "Compareerden Jor Jacques van Ophem, generael der licenten van henne Hocheden, bynnyn dese stadte ende Jor Peeter van Oostendorp, beijde voor hen selven ende voorts de voors. comparanten noch in den name ende als ten nabeschreven gemocht 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 opren derden dach deser maent July, bekenden schulden te zijn van goeder rechtveerdiger schuldt Sr Pietro Paulo Ruebens de somme van acht dusyntst geldenens van twintich stuyvers Brabants 't stuk eens, toemockende ter caussen van gelicker somme die de voors. Sr Pietro Paulo Ruebens aeneempt voor hen comparanten ende theurder begeertens te betalen tot herijckingen der nabeschreven landen, in handen van de voors. Sr Peeter van Oostendorp, penningmeester der selver dijcaigie'.


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.


Martha Pupelnix, when inheriting her mother's estate, obliged herself to liabilities 'van dan voordane, eeuwelyk duerende te gelden ende te betalene sonder deen des anders cost, last off 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 commer, tamen bedragende vijventachtentich guldenens erfielijck, heeft de voors. Sr Pietro-Paul Ruebens (die ook mede voor ons compareerden:) geloof ette geliëfde, midts desen, voor hem ende syne naecumelingen van nu voordane eeuwelyk duerende jaerlijcke te geldene ende te betalen'. 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 erfielijk den godshuysen van St. Michiel'.

Document from September 28, 1616. SAA, SR 506 (Schepenregister 1616/ V: Uwens & Neesen), fol. 85v–85r. — Document from November 16, 1614. SAA, SR 512 (Schepenregister
39 For this letter and its date see the following text esp. note 44.
42 'Ma poiché io non sono presente, povertà voi difendere questo passo, dicendo che questa arte si può imparare benissimo senza maestro, consistendo il suo studio prima sulla teoria, la quale per la parte nostra deriva dalla matematica, dalla geometria, dall’aritmetica, dalla filosofia e da altre nobiliissime discipline, le quali in i libri s’apprendono': Barocchi 1971 (as in note 41), pp. 208–209.
43 '... cum maxime velint hujusmodi legibus artem ipsam obstringere, quae ubique gentium legibus libera, atque soluta sustinuetur; quippe quse sit ex septem liberalibus aribus, & per se ipsa nobilissima, ut ex eo constar, quod Principis 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 si buon successo, mercè princi pal- mente de’ due fratelli Paggi, n’arrivò alla Pittura; che lo stesso Rubens dimorante in Anversa, vedendo attribuirsi a viltà ad un povero giovane Cavaliere l’esercitare questa Pro fessione per suo sostentamento; chiese l’anno 1613, quà ad essi copia delle ragioni prodotte nella riferita causa, e dell’ott’ delle detta dichia- razione; (a) e con quelle, e con questa diisse il suo Concitta- dino'. Soprani 1786 (as in note 43), pp. 126–127, had drawn this knowledge from a collection of letters, which also also included the just mentioned letter. However, this one was lost in a tragic way: (a) Una numerosa raccolte di lettere de’ più insigni Pittori, ch siano stati, aveva fatto l’accuratissima 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 poscia in breve morì, non le poté più riavere: ed esendo pochi mesi dopo morto anche il Magnasco, per quante ricerche se ne sian fatte non si son potev più rinvenire': ibidem, p. 127, comment (a).
46 Heinen 1996, pp. 174–175, comment 13, especially p. 175, situates the request in Genoa in the context of the ambitions of Rubens’s Antwerp fellow-citizens, ‘die in großer Zahl am fortschreitenden Prozeß der Aristokratisierung betei- ligt wurden’.