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## ‘*Se ipsum expressit*’: Rubens’s self-portraits as public statements

The earliest known self-portrait by Peter Paul Rubens shows him in the company of five men (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> The circumstances surrounding the genesis of this painting are as obscure as its original function, not least because not all the other sitters have been identified beyond doubt (see cat. 7). Along with the artist himself, only his brother, Philip, depicted next to him, and Justus Lipsius, Philip’s renowned tutor, who appears behind them at the right edge, can be named with certainty. Even so, the painting is clearly in the nature of an ‘*album amicorum* composed with brush and paint’.<sup>2</sup> Relatively informal, it was presumably aimed at a circle of viewers limited to those depicted and their friends.<sup>3</sup> Rather different is the picture known as the ‘*Four Philosophers*’, in which Rubens presents himself, his brother and Lipsius (who had both died in the intervening period) as the embodiment of ideal human society (fig. 4).<sup>4</sup> In this later painting, which survives in a number of versions, the artist gives expression to his intellectual ambitions by showing himself in the company of three highly esteemed philologists.<sup>5</sup> Educated circles were doubtless familiar with Lipsius’s physiognomy from one of the many portrait engravings of him,<sup>6</sup> and readers of his work could discover several allusions to his writings in Rubens’s painting – allusions that, of course, also testified to the artist’s learning.<sup>7</sup> Rubens stands slightly apart from the three scholars, clearly not partaking of the close relations that exist between them. In other words, though physically near them, he does not appear as their equal. In all the images Rubens painted of himself he was concerned to obey the dictates of decorum and uphold such distinctions, social and otherwise. Yet he never depicts himself as a painter. He shows neither himself at work

nor the tools of his trade nor his studio: the focus is always on his intellectual accomplishments and horizons.<sup>8</sup> In both the Mantua friendship painting and the ‘*Four Philosophers*’ evidence that he is their creator is restricted almost entirely to the motif of the artist looking over his shoulder at the viewer, a well-established way of indicating authorship.<sup>9</sup>

Other self-portraits dating from Rubens’s early career have presumably disappeared. There may have been some among the paintings that hung in the house of the artist’s mother, who in 1606 made over to him all the pictures there (including portraits) that were ‘fine’ and painted by him.<sup>10</sup> A picture of a painting sold at auction in 1867 as a self-portrait by Rubens, unsigned but inscribed ‘*Aetatis mei XXI. 1599*’ (my age twenty-one, 1599), remains unlocated.<sup>11</sup> It is more than doubtful whether this really was a Rubens self-portrait:<sup>12</sup> the claim was probably made in the hope of it fetching a higher price. Images of the young Rubens did exist, however, as the inventory of the painter Abraham Matthys’s estate indicates. On 2 September 1649 this listed under no. 84 an early self-portrait by Rubens: ‘*Het Contrefeytsel van Ruebens in syn jonckheyt van hem selven gedaen*’ (The portrait of Rubens in his youth done by himself).<sup>13</sup> To modern readers the wording ‘portrait ... done by himself’ appears unusual and awkward, yet it occurs often in contemporary inventories and sale catalogues – evidence that the term ‘self-portrait’ did not exist in Rubens’s day.

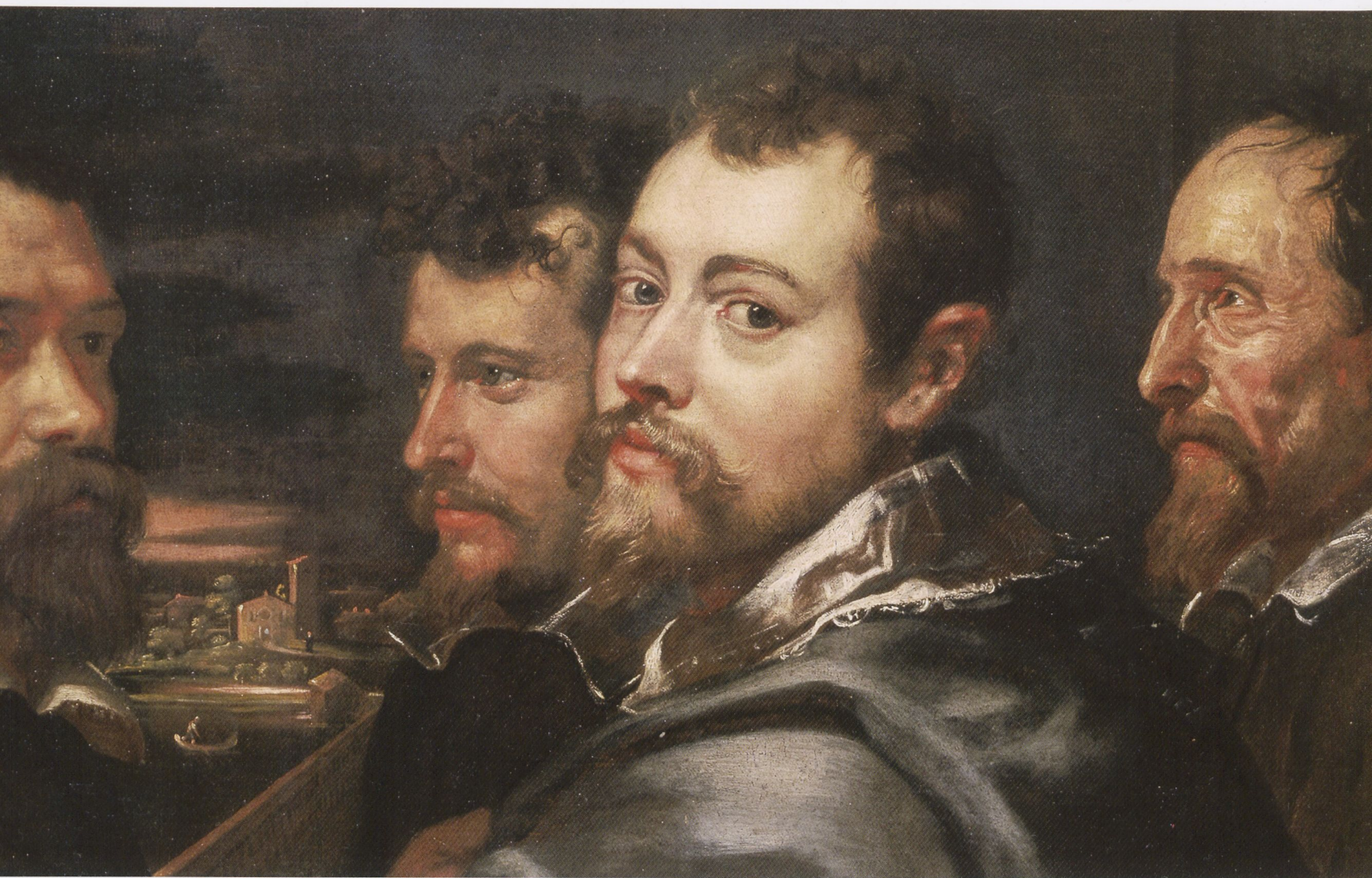
It would probably not have occurred to contemporaries that a self-portrait might explore the subject’s psychological being. The idea encountered in writing on art, especially of a popular nature, that artists’ self-portraits express directly their view of their personality does not do justice to the forms

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Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1622–23. Detail of cat. 2.  
The Royal Collection / H. M. Queen Elizabeth II



Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait in a Circle of Friends from Mantua*, 1602–04.  
Detail of cat. 7. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne





Peter Paul Rubens, 'The Honeysuckle Bower'  
(*Rubens and Isabella Brant*), c. 1609.  
Oil on canvas, 178 × 136 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich

and functions of such images in the early modern era. Self-examination in painting demands psychological insights of a kind that simply did not exist in Rubens's lifetime.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps verbal accounts point up more clearly than visual images the limited possibilities available for depicting character. Based on familiar biographical writings of classical antiquity – Plutarch, for instance, or Cornelius Nepos – such accounts outline personalities and characters principally in terms of types. Descriptions of personality, interspersed with verbal topoi and classical quotations, seek to provide the reader with examples serving as either models or deterrents.<sup>15</sup> Nowhere was this more true than in autobiographies. Contemporary audiences entertained expectations of these quite different from those now current, neither assuming that everyone had the right to report in public on their most intimate experiences, nor anticipating that an autobiography would convey an image of the self perceived as the subjective truth.<sup>16</sup> To give an account of one's life and personality entirely for its own sake would have registered as a mark of narcissistic self-indulgence. By the standards of the day, a 'valid' work could be produced only by linking (auto)biographical details to mythical or historical exemplars.<sup>17</sup> Early modern artistic discourse took its cue from rhetorical convention and will thus not have prompted anyone to view self-portraits as wholly subjective representations.<sup>18</sup> Artists and their public lacked both a feeling for images of that kind and the vocabulary to describe them.

These attitudes did nothing to prevent images of artists from becoming popular collector's items. In Florence, for instance, Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici had amassed an extensive selection of artists' portraits that could be visited in Rubens's day.<sup>19</sup> Over almost a century this developed into a unique collection that focused not only on physiognomic records, but also, and above all, on examples of specific artistic styles. Indeed, interest in portraits, including those made by artists of themselves, generally revolved not least around their style: artistic discussion centred, in fact, on stylistic *subtilitas*.<sup>20</sup> In the fifteenth century the humanist Antonio Averlino, called Filarete, had noted in his treatise on architecture that stylistic distinctions were nowhere more apparent than in portraits by various artists of one and the same person.<sup>21</sup> Artistic forms





revealed the identity of their creator rather as handwriting disclosed the identity of the writer.<sup>22</sup>

Rubens's portraits, too, have always been viewed as evidence of his painting style. In addition, even his earliest documented self-portraits convey an image of himself conceived in social terms – an image that he cultivated carefully. He consistently presented himself as a high-born gentleman and was generally recognized as such. Acceptance of this image served, in turn, to lend weight to it. An early biographer, his contemporary Giovanni Pietro Bellori, for instance, noted that Rubens always appeared as a nobleman during his stay in Italy. Bellori describes him as a tall man of fine manners and distinguished bearing who wore a gold chain around his neck and, 'come gli altri Cavalieri' (like the other cavaliers), moved about the Eternal City on horseback.<sup>23</sup> Notice was taken of this aristocratic demeanour and knowledge of it spread by written accounts. In fact, the effect of writing about Rubens, which began early in his career, can scarcely be overestimated. The first example comes from Gaspar Schoppe (Scioppius), who in 1607 declared himself unable to decide what to praise more about Rubens, 'his painting, in which he occupies the highest rank – inasmuch as anyone does in our day – or his knowledge of the humanities, his exquisite taste and the exceptional charm of his conversation and his manner'.<sup>24</sup> Two years later, the artist's brother lauded him in verse as someone as astute as he was learned (cat. 14).<sup>25</sup> Such eulogistic texts abetted the reputation Rubens acquired as an artist through the widespread dissemination of his paintings in the form of prints and dominated perceptions of his person during his lifetime. The view of him conveyed by contemporary writing is thus inseparable from his visual self-promotion. This close link between words and images was particularly obvious in the tomb of Rubens's mother in St Michiel's, Antwerp. By 1610 at the latest the artist had installed a large painting there that he had brought with him from Italy.<sup>26</sup> The inscription beneath the picture, which performed a memorial function while providing information about the creator of the painting, was published as early as 1613 and thus became widely known (cat. 15).<sup>27</sup>

Several years passed before Rubens followed the private image of himself among friends in Mantua with a further

self-portrait. This was the celebrated canvas now often known simply as '*The Honeysuckle Bower*', probably produced for his parents-in-law in connection with his marriage on 3 October 1609 to the eighteen-year-old Isabella Brant (fig. 3).<sup>28</sup> It shows the couple seated in the shade of a bush, he slightly higher than her. Both are dressed in lavish clothes and, apparently relaxed, incline towards each other as if by chance.<sup>29</sup> Rubens here devised an entirely new pictorial form on the basis of traditional betrothal and marriage portraits and their symbols, as elucidated under the heading 'matrimonium' in Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum liber*. The full-length, almost life-size figures underscore the claim to the status represented by the prominently featured dagger. Outside the context of the parents-in-law's house, this dagger would have constituted a breach of decorum, since bearing side arms in public was a privilege reserved for the nobility.

Visual images were both status symbols in themselves and a means of enhancing status. Without offending propriety, they could also embody claims in a (semi-)public context. For example, the Leiden scholar Dominicus Baudius provides vivid testimony to the fact that '*The Honeysuckle Bower*' was by no means a private painting carefully guarded behind closed doors. He saw it in 1612 and wrote a poem in Latin about it that was published eight years later (cat. 11). This early written document indicates how the painting was seen at the time and helped to spread Rubens's notion of himself far beyond the picture's immediate audience.

In addition to '*The Honeysuckle Bower*' Rubens created one more self-portrait relating to a specific occasion. It is mentioned in a letter that William Trumbull wrote to his fellow-politician Sir Dudley Carleton on 1 March 1623.<sup>30</sup> A self-portrait had been ordered from Rubens for the Prince of Wales, later Charles I, and was executed around that time (figs. 1 and 7).<sup>31</sup> Here, too, he depicts himself with no indication whatsoever of his occupation as a painter. Turned slightly to one side and wrapped in a black coat, he gazes out of the picture from beneath a large hat. This was how Rubens wanted to be seen – a fact emphasized by the inscription, which states that he has here represented ('expressed') himself: 'Petrus Paullus Rubens/ se ipsum expressit/ AD MDCXXIII'. The allusive







richness of the image encompasses the evening light and the rock in the background, motifs that evoke the painter's name (derived from the Latin *rubeo*, 'I am red') and the stoic ideal of *constantia* (constancy) respectively.<sup>32</sup> It has been stressed that the half-length portrait relies for its effect on restraint and understatement.<sup>33</sup> This approach would seem to match perfectly Rubens's own words in a letter he sent to Palamède de Fabri, *sieur* of Valavez, two years after painting it, in which he explained that it had been produced at the instigation of the Prince of Wales, who was a connoisseur of painting:<sup>34</sup> 'He already has something by my hand, and, through the English agent resident in Brussels, has asked me for my portrait with such insistence that I found it impossible to refuse him. Although it did not seem fitting to send my portrait to a prince of such



5

Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, c.1615.  
Oil on panel, 78 × 61 cm (original dimensions 40 × 60 cm).  
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

rank, he overcame my modesty.'<sup>35</sup> Examination of the image reveals that this modesty was basically a rhetorical gesture.

More than one commentator has claimed that Rubens used the hat to mask his receding hairline, which had embarrassed him even as a young man. One author, for example, writes: 'His premature loss of hair probably prompted him to paint himself in this picture with a broad-brimmed hat.'<sup>36</sup> In this view the hat represents an essentially modern, 'cosmetic' device aimed at preserving a semblance of virility by concealing balding perceived as unseemly. This ignores the fact that strict rules governed every aspect of pictures painted for princely portrait galleries, rules determined by the function of such paintings and applying to everything from dress to facial expression. Court ceremonial, too, determined who was permitted to wear a hat and when. It was a matter of course for men of Rubens's social status to appear before crowned heads of state with their head bared.<sup>37</sup> Rubens, it may be assumed, was fully aware of this, just as he will doubtless have reckoned with the fact that his portrait would appear in a gallery in which most of the men looking down from the walls would be bare-headed. The hat, then, even more than the scarcely visible chain around his neck, embodied a claim to aristocratic dignity. Indeed, presumably at the time he was painting the portrait he did actually apply to the Spanish crown to be raised into the nobility.<sup>38</sup> The self-portrait may thus be said to be less revealing of Rubens's character than of his efforts to construct a social identity. Similarly, it would probably be erroneous to deduce anything about the artist's personality from the fact that his paintings of himself never show him smiling. In an age when Antonius Sanderus thought to praise Archduke Albert, co-sovereign of the Spanish Netherlands, by observing that it was not easy to make him smile, no traces of a smile will be found in official portraits.<sup>39</sup> Hence Rubens's self-portraits do not disclose how he 'really' was, but at most how he wished to be seen. And the fact that the picture intended for the Prince of Wales was the image of himself that Rubens copied most frequently and the one he presented to his friends suggests that this was how he most wanted to appear.<sup>40</sup> When a correspondent of his, the French scholar Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, asked for a portrait of the artist to hang in his study, for example, Rubens sent him a replica of this painting.<sup>41</sup>



Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, c.1638–40 (cat. 4).  
Oil on canvas, 109.5 × 85 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna





Rubens probably painted a self-portrait now in Florence a few years earlier than the 'English' picture (fig. 5).<sup>42</sup> He may have intended it for his house. Certainly, it was not unusual to hang portraits of forebears and living family members in a domestic context. Providing visible evidence of social standing, they might harbour an implicit claim to aristocratic status. Any attempt to come up with a generally valid definition of what constituted 'nobility' at this time must necessarily be pragmatic.<sup>43</sup> It would have to encompass anyone who considered themselves noble and were viewed as such by their contemporaries.<sup>44</sup> Historians have examined this notion of nobility as something that, as it were, resided principally in the eye of the beholder. It was already an acceptable commonplace in legal writing of the seventeenth century.<sup>45</sup> Pride of place went traditionally to members of old and distinguished families.<sup>46</sup> Here, the age of a family's noble status complemented land ownership as the prime criterion: families needed to provide evidence of at least three generations of aristocratic ancestors.<sup>47</sup> This was a classic definition, sanctioned by Aristotle as a recognized authority in matters of political science.<sup>48</sup> The further back an aristocrat's ancestry could be traced – and that included the extent to which memories of it persisted – the higher their noble rank. At European courts it therefore became customary to document ancestors in the form of images. Eventually, the burgher class, too, adopted this practice, a development that in Antwerp vouchsafed Rubens and his workshop a large number of commissions, as many families wished to immortalize their members not only in their town residences, but also in the country houses that they had built in imitation of the nobility. The not inconsiderable number of portraits painted by Rubens of himself and his family – in addition to documented commissions and gifts – may be explained by the fact that they hung in his various properties.<sup>49</sup> Pictures showing him alone or with members of his family, such as his final self-portrait, now in Vienna, presumably belong in this context (fig. 6).<sup>50</sup>

In terms of Rubens's oeuvre as a whole, and compared to other painters, including Rembrandt, the number of his self-portraits is not especially large. This relative reluctance to produce and disseminate his image may be rooted in contemporary notions of propriety regarding the portrait.<sup>51</sup>

Particularly in a Catholic-dominated society, suspicions might arise that portraits resulted from narcissism and a self-centredness at odds with Christian belief. Had Adam not lost his primal innocence when tempted by the devil to gaze at himself in a mirror? And had Ovid not warned against self-love when describing how Narcissus became besotted with his own reflection? For the Italian cardinal Gabriele Paleotti there could be no doubt: 'Just as people who praise themselves are considered mad and vain because true praise must come not from one's own mouth, but from the mouths of others, so it seems that people are judging themselves silently as honourable, virtuous and fair when we see that they have had their portraits painted, which decreases rather than increases their reputation because it appears as ludicrous madness when they presume so much of themselves as to think that, for the delectation of the world, they are worthy to be exposed to the gaze of others, to be seen and admired ... so anyone who wishes to have their portrait made can reasonably be suspected of having been seized by love of themselves.'<sup>52</sup>

This passage and others like it must not be adduced as straightforward explanations of specific historical phenomena: they do not record responses to actual works. Yet they do shed light on contemporary approaches to images, providing evidence both of expectations and of responses and thus helping to outline a historically grounded range of possibilities within which producers and viewers of images operated. Such texts constitute exact records neither of contemporary attitudes nor of the conventions governing relations between different media, but they disclose indirectly the mechanisms that came into play when words and images interacted to convey meaning.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, they give a good idea of the significance attached to portraits.

From a modern perspective a portrait is nothing more nor less than an image of someone who actually exists. In the early modern view, however, portraits performed a variety of functions. As donor portraits, for example, they occupied a fluid transitional realm in which they mediated between the sacred and the profane.<sup>54</sup> A glance at Johann Heinrich Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon*, by far the most extensive eighteenth-century encyclopaedia, indicates just how differently portraits were seen and interpreted at the time. The article 'Portrait' reveals



how pictures of rulers were used and perceived in ceremonial contexts: 'As regards the image of a sovereign lord, it stands in audience chambers near the ambassadors, in a raised position between the baldachin and the throne, usually in the form of a half-length. It represents the sitters as though they were actually present. Hence no one should thoughtlessly turn their back on it when sitting, and no one, with the exception of ambassadors, may appear in a room containing the portrait of a reigning prince with their head covered.'<sup>55</sup> Even the censorious Cardinal Paleotti saw in the representation of an absent person for ceremonial purposes a legitimate reason for creating a portrait. Another was the wish 'to please the public, a high-ranking figure or any other person guided by dignified and Christian motives'.<sup>56</sup> It will scarcely have been a coincidence, then, that the first portrait print of Rubens – a large image reproducing the self-portrait in the collection of Charles I – dates from the year in which he was knighted by the king (fig. 9).<sup>57</sup> The knighthood served as official recognition of his public achievements and justified the dissemination of his portrait for the purpose described by Paleotti. Pontius's engraving contains no mention of Rubens as the inventor of the image or of his threefold privilege (assigned by the Spanish king, the princes of the Netherlands and the States of Holland), but Pontius was in Rubens's employ at the time and his preliminary drawing clearly betrays Rubens's intervention (fig. 8).<sup>58</sup> The engraving both increased the public impact of Rubens's portrait and raised the status of the king's painting to that of an official image.

Around the time the print was produced, but certainly after March 1630, Rubens painted the self-portrait now in the Rubenshuis in Antwerp (fig. 13).<sup>59</sup> The fact that this portrait, which hung in the artist's house, was soon copied by artists close to him indicates that it, too, possessed the character of an official image. It obviously served as the model for a small etching by Willem Panneels dated 1630, for example (fig. 11),<sup>60</sup> and for the portrait that Anthony van Dyck included in his *Iconography* (fig. 12).<sup>61</sup> Wrapped in a capacious coat, Rubens presents himself in a pose as elegant as it is casual, his facial expression alert and intelligent. Contemporaries would have registered it as an eloquent image, seeing in the bearing and the manner an expression of qualities of intellect and

character. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, for instance, in his *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura* (1584), stated that poses in images of *virtuosi* could depict characteristics such as 'excellence', 'dignity', 'composure' and 'grace'. Elaborate, animated drapery could be used to enhance and vary the pose. Gesture, too, played a part, hands embodying the human capacity for reason and verbal eloquence and signalling a keen intelligence.<sup>62</sup> Vivid facial expressions, generated by emphasizing the eyes and the forehead, were the mark of an active mind. In his version of the Rubens portrait Van Dyck granted it rhetorical pathos by adding a hand-on-heart gesture, an attestation of sincerity popular at the time.<sup>63</sup>

This portrait established Rubens's official view of himself, echoed in Panneels's etching (fig. 11) and in a bust dated 1633 (fig. 10).<sup>64</sup> The circumstances surrounding the genesis of the latter work are not recorded, but it has generally been attributed to the sculptor Georg Petel, a friend of Rubens's who may have produced it as evidence of his admiration and goodwill, either in Antwerp, in the presence of the sitter, or in Augsburg, on the basis of drawings. Doubts have recently been expressed about the authenticity of the bust, but, even if it does turn out to have been made in the nineteenth century, that would only constitute further evidence of the long-term effectiveness of Rubens's public self-presentation. For it, too, shows the painter as he wished to be seen, as a proud, status-conscious court artist wearing the chain of honour with a portrait medal that he had received in 1609 from the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, rulers of the Habsburg Netherlands.<sup>65</sup>

The known portraits of Rubens all extol his virtues in visually eloquent terms. Pictorial rhetoric, like the poetry of the time, exploited traditional tropes and quotations to convey messages in readily intelligible terms. This is apparent, for example, in a self-portrait that Rubens inserted into a depiction of the *Adoration of the Magi* (figs. 14–15).<sup>66</sup> Painted originally for the Town Hall in Antwerp, the picture had reached Madrid by 1628, when he reworked it, giving one of the added figures on horseback his own features. To show himself witnessing a biblical event was to strain the limits of decorum, excusable only by the minor status of the figure as one among many in an elaborate history painting.<sup>67</sup> Those with a knowledge of the history of Dutch and Flemish art will have recognized





7  
Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1622–23 (cat. 2).  
Oil on panel, 85.9 × 62.2 cm. The Royal Collection / H. M. Queen Elizabeth II



8  
Paulus Pontius, after Peter Paul Rubens,  
*Peter Paul Rubens*, c. 1623 (cat. 8). Black chalk, pen and brown ink  
and brown wash, heightened with white, on Isabelline paper,  
369 × 286 mm. Private collection

9  
Paulus Pontius, after Peter Paul Rubens,  
*Peter Paul Rubens*, 1630 (cat. 9). Engraving, 370 × 279 mm.  
Museum Plantin-Moretus/Print Room, Antwerp





10

Attributed to Georg Petel, *Portrait Bust of Peter Paul Rubens*, 1633. Painted plaster, h. 69.5 cm. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp

11

Willem Panneels, *Peter Paul Rubens*, 1630. Etching, 153 × 115 mm

12

Paulus Pontius, after Anthony van Dyck, *Peter Paul Rubens*, c. 1630–40. Etching, 227 × 151 mm



13

Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1623–30 (cat. 3). Oil on panel, 64.2 × 48 cm. Rubenshuis, Antwerp





14 • 15

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Adoration of the Magi*, 1609 and 1628.  
Oil on canvas, 346 × 438 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid





in this appearance an emulation of a self-portrait by Jan van Eyck (c. 1390–1441).<sup>68</sup> This celebrated court painter to Philip the Good of Burgundy (1396–1467), considered the inventor of oil painting and the founder of the Flemish and Dutch tradition in art, was thought to have included his own portrait and that of his legendary brother, Hubert, among the mounted Just Judges in the *Adoration of the Lamb* of the Ghent altarpiece.<sup>69</sup> A copy of this renowned picture was to be seen in Madrid: Philip II had commissioned it in order to give visible expression to his status as the rightful successor to the Burgundian dukes as ruler of the Netherlands.<sup>70</sup> In turn, Rubens, by evoking Jan van Eyck's self-portrait, which likewise showed the artist mounted on a grey, marked himself out in ideal terms as the successor to the most famous of all early Netherlandish court painters.<sup>71</sup> Equestrian portraits were in fact the preserve of the highest-ranking nobility and not at all appropriate to a painter. On the other hand, it was certainly permissible to raise one's own status by appearing among more eminent people, as Rubens had done in *The Four Philosophers* (fig. 4).

The small number of portraits of Rubens, and the single-mindedness with which the artist communicated his view of himself in pictorial terms, meant that the image of himself which he established persisted after his death. An early instance is the portrait first issued around 1649 by the publisher Jan Meyssens and reprinted in 1662 in Cornelis de Bie's *Gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilderconst* (fig. 16).<sup>72</sup> It is based on a portrait by Van Dyck and thus derives indirectly from Rubens, as does the image that the German painter and writer on art Joachim von Sandrart included in his *Teutsche Academie* (1675–80; fig. 17).<sup>73</sup> Both embody the view of himself that the artist promoted during his lifetime and that had also been disseminated in writing. Rubens clearly succeeded in his efforts to establish a lasting reputation as a person of rank and irreproachable character.





- <sup>1</sup> Huemer 1977, pp. 163–66, no. 37, fig. 115 (with full bibliography). For more recent literature, see cat. 7 in the present volume.
- <sup>2</sup> The phrase is used by Justus Müller Hofstede in Cologne 1977, I, pp. 80–81. The first scholar to call the painting a 'friendship picture' was Klaus Lankheit; see Lankheit 1952, p. 27.
- <sup>3</sup> Bomford 2000, pp. 15–16.
- <sup>4</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 128–32, no. 117; Bomford 2000, esp. pp. 12–44 and 97–101; Heinen 2010 (with further bibliography).
- <sup>5</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 128–29, lists seventeen early copies of the painting.
- <sup>6</sup> For engraved portraits of Lipsius, see Leman 1997–98, pp. 216–29, nos. 90–110.
- <sup>7</sup> Heinen 2010, pp. 25–68; Bomford 2000, esp. pp. 12–13; Morford 1997–98.
- <sup>8</sup> Mai 2002, p. 116.
- <sup>9</sup> Raupp 1984, pp. 181–219.
- <sup>10</sup> Génard 1877, p. 373: 'met de schilderyen dieder zijn van mij, want ten en zijn maer conterfeytsels, allen dandere schildereyen, die fraey zijn, behooren Peeteren toe diese ghemaect heeft' (with the pictures of mine in there, for they are only portraits, [while] all the other paintings, which are fine, belong to Peter [Paul], who made them).
- <sup>11</sup> Evers 1943, p. 321; Müller Hofstede 1962, p. 286.
- <sup>12</sup> Vlieghe 1987, p. 151 n. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> Denucé 1932, II, p. 123; Duverger 1984–2009, 6, p. 47.
- <sup>14</sup> Raupp 1980, p. 7.
- <sup>15</sup> For conventions in autobiography, see Enenkel 2008, and, for biography in general, Dyck 1991. For portrait painting, see Van der Stighelen 2010 and Adams 2009.
- <sup>16</sup> Enenkel 2008, pp. 2–3.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 27.
- <sup>18</sup> For pictorial rhetoric in the early modern era, see Warncke 1987; Warncke 2005; Heinen 2008; Heinen 2009a.
- <sup>19</sup> Prinz 1971.
- <sup>20</sup> Preimesberger, Baader and Suthor 1999, p. 265.
- <sup>21</sup> Grassi and Pepe 1994, p. 908.
- <sup>22</sup> Filarete 1972, I, pp. 28–29 (lib. I, fol. 5v–6r): 'Ho veduto io dipintore e intagliatore ritrarre teste, e massime dell'antidetto illustrissimo Signore Duca Francesco Sforza, del quale varie teste furono ritratte, perchè era degna e formosa più d'una da ciascheduno, bene l'appropriarono alla sua e assomigliarono, e nientedimeno c'era differenza. E così ho veduto scrittori, nelle loro lettere essere qualche differenza. Donde questa sottilità e proprietà e similitudine si venga, lasceremo alli sopradetti speculativi dichiarare' (As a painter and engraver, I have seen portraits painted – especially of the aforementioned most illustrious Duke Francesco Sforza, who has frequently been portrayed because his head was dignified and beautiful beyond comparison – portraits which, although excellent likenesses, were nonetheless different. And I have seen writers too whose descriptions show differences. I leave it to the said speculative minds to explain where these subtleties, idiosyncrasies and similarities come from.)
- <sup>23</sup> Bellori 1672, p. 246: 'Fù egli di statura grande, ben formato, e di bel colore, e temperamento; Era maestoso insieme & humano, e nobile di maniere, e d'habiti, solito portare collana d'oro al collo, e caualcare per la Città, come gli altri Cauallieri ...' (He was tall, well-built, and of handsome coloring and constitution; he was dignified as well, and kindly, and noble in his manners and dress, being wont to wear a gold chain about his neck and to ride about the city like other knights and titled persons ...). Trans. Bellori 2005, p. 205.
- <sup>24</sup> Scioppius 1607, fol. 110v: 'Amicus quide[m] meus *Petrus Paulus Rubenius*, in quo vtrum commendem magis nescio, pingendi ne artificium, ad cuius ipse summam, si ætatis huius quisquam peruenisse intelligentibus videtur, an omnis humanioris literaturæ peritiam politumque iudicium cum singulari sermonis & conuictus suauitate coniunctum.' See Büttner 2006, p. 191 n. 104.
- <sup>25</sup> Rubens 1608, pp. 122–24; Clei 2013, esp. pp. 224–28.
- <sup>26</sup> Büttner 2006, p. 40.
- <sup>27</sup> Sweertius 1613, p. 144: 'matri-virgini, hanc tabulam à se pictam, de suo ornatam, pio affectu ad opt. [imæ] matris sepulcrum commune cum vxore Isabella Brant sua sibi die Petrus Paulus Rubens L. [ibens] M. [erito] D. [edit] Ipso D. [edicavitque] Michaelis Michaelis Archangeli, Anno M. DCX' (Together with his wife Isabella Brant, Peter Paul Rubens has dedicated to the Virgin Mother this picture painted by him and installed with pious affection at the tomb of his virtuous mother at his own cost, of his own free will and justly, on the day he deemed suitable, the day of the divine Archangel Michael, in the year 1610).
- <sup>28</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 162–64, no. 138, pls. 184–88; Renger and Denk 2002, pp. 253–55, no. 334. See also the essay by Hans Vlieghe in the present volume, pp. 18–37.
- <sup>29</sup> See the essays by Hans Vlieghe and Cordula van Wyhe in the present volume, pp. 18–37 and 98–121.
- <sup>30</sup> Rooses and Ruelens 1887–1909, 3, p. 134, no. 312: 'My L. Davers, desyreing now to have his Creation of Bassano againe; because Rubens hath mended it very well; doth by a Ire commande me to traete wth him, for his owne Pourtrait, to be placed in the Princes Gallery.'
- <sup>31</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 153–57, no. 135. For discussions of the painting that are as detailed as they are judicious, see Müller Hofstede 1992b and Müller Hofstede 1992a.
- <sup>32</sup> See the convincing interpretation by Müller Hofstede 1992b.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 108.
- <sup>34</sup> The commission may actually have represented a diplomatic move on the part of the English. The Prince had just put an end to negotiations to marry Maria, Infanta of Spain, and, with the prospect of war with Spain looming as a result, the English court may have wished to win over Rubens, who was known to enjoy good relations with the co-sovereign of the Spanish Netherlands, Archduchess Isabella. Renger 1977, pp. 76–77, no. 49.
- <sup>35</sup> Rubens to Valavez, 10 January 1625, in Ruelens and Rooses 1887–1909, 3, p. 320, no. 367: 'Il a eu quelque chose de ma main et m'a demandé, par l'agent d'Angleterre résidant à Bruxelles avec telle insistance mon pourtrait, qu'il n'y eut aucun moyen de le pouvoir refuser encores qu'il ne me sembloit pas convenable d'envoyer mon pourtrait à un prince de telle qualité mais il forza ma modestie' (trans. Saunders Magurn 1991, pp. 101–02). Among the 'honourable reasons' for sending someone one's portrait mentioned in 1582 by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597) was 'per compiacere al publico o a qualche personaggio grande o ad altre persone mosse da degni e cristiani rispetti, si giudicasse ciò convenirsi' (to please the public, a high-ranking figure or any other person guided by dignified and Christian motives). Paleotti 1961, p. 338.
- <sup>36</sup> Blanchebarbe 1992, pp. 195–96, no. 158.
- <sup>37</sup> Spanish ceremonial allowed of one exception for *grandes*, who were permitted to keep their hat on in the presence of the king if no other head of state was present. Pfandl 1924, p. 45.
- <sup>38</sup> Müller Hofstede 1992a, p. 119.
- <sup>39</sup> Verberckmoes 1998, p. 137.
- <sup>40</sup> Vlieghe 1987, p. 156.
- <sup>41</sup> Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-portrait*, 1623, oil on canvas, 80 × 60 cm, Australian National Gallery, Canberra. See Jaffé 1988, pp. 20, 59–63; Vlieghe 1987, pp. 153–57.
- <sup>42</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 151–53, no. 134.
- <sup>43</sup> De Win 1980, p. 392; Janssens 1980, p. 449; Van Nierop 1984, pp. 22–29.
- <sup>44</sup> De Ridder-Symoens 1980, p. 410; Van Nierop 1984, p. 23.
- <sup>45</sup> Cornelis de Bie mentions this in 1662 (p. 134): 'Dat sy oock behoorden de ghemeyn opinie der menschen een weynich in te volghen ter wijlen den Edeldom meest bestaet inde opinien ghelijck de Latinisten segghen. *Nobilitatem ipsam opinionibus consistere & Famam publicam constituere aliquem quasi in possessione jngenuitatis*. Soo bestaet den Edeldom oock inde opinie ende al ghemeyne Faem' [marginal note: 'Tiraque de nobil. cap. 10. num. 6.'].]



- <sup>46</sup> 'Nobility is the honor of blood in a race or lineage, conferred formerly upon some one or more of that family, either by the prince, the laws, customs of that land or place.' Peacham 1634, p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Janssens 1980, p. 464.
- <sup>48</sup> Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* (Loeb's Classical Library, 1933), 1360b [30–31].
- <sup>49</sup> His will records that there were portraits in his household. The will also stipulates that all paintings were to be sold, except the portraits of the testator's wives and of himself corresponding thereto, which are meant for their children, while the painting known as 'het Pelsken' is earmarked for 'his present wife, without her having to give or pay anything in return' ('wttgenomen de Conterfeytsels van syns testateurs huysvrouwen ende van hem selven daerop corresponderende, die hij begeert dat volgen sullen aen henne respectie kinderen, ende de schilderye genaemt het Pelsken aen syne tegenwoordige huysvrouwe sonder yet daervan te moeten geven oft intebrenghen'). Génard 1896, p. 139.
- <sup>50</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 159–60, no. 137.
- <sup>51</sup> For these, see Preimesberger, Baader and Suthor 1999, esp. pp. 265, 297–315.
- <sup>52</sup> Paleotti 1961, p. 337: 'Perciò, sì come quando uno loda sé stesso, allora si fa riputare per sciocco e vano, dovendo la vera laude non dalla propria, ma dall'altrui bocca uscire; così, quando vediamo ch'uno ha fatto ritrarre se stesso, pare che in conseguenza venghi a dare un tacito giudizio di sé medesimo, di essere persona onorata, virtuosa o bella, il che non gli accresce, ma gli sminuisce il credito, parendo sciochezza ridicola che uno presuma tanto di se stesso, che si riputi degno, per servizio del mondo, di stare in prospettiva degli altri per essere veduto et ammirato. ... uò ciascuno, in questi desiderii di essere ritratto, ragionevolmente sospettare di essere accecato dall' amor proprio, ...'.
- <sup>53</sup> Heinen 1996, pp. 15–16.
- <sup>54</sup> Hecht 2012, pp. 132–34.
- <sup>55</sup> *Universal-Lexicon* 1732–54, 3, col. 1825: 'Was das Bild eines souverainen Herrns anlanget, so stehet selbiges in denen Audientz-Zimmern, bey denen Gesandten zwischen dem Baldachin und dem Barade-Stuhl, meistens in Form eines Brust-Bildes erhöht. Es präsentiret die Person, gleich als wäre selbe gegenwärtig, daher mag auch selbigen im Sitzen nicht leicht der Rücken zugewendet werden, auch niemand in dem Zimmer, wo das Bildnis eines regierenden Potentaten befindlich, mit bedecktem Haupte, die Ambassadeurs ausgenommen, erscheinen darff.'
- <sup>56</sup> Paleotti 1961, p. 338: 'per compiacere al publico o a qualche personaggio grande o ad altre persone mosse da degni e cristiani rispetti, si giudicasse ciò convenirsi'.
- <sup>57</sup> Büttner 2006, p. 108.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 204 n. 148.
- <sup>59</sup> Vlieghe 1987, pp. 157–59, no. 136.
- <sup>60</sup> Inscribed in lower margin with five lines of Latin ('Excellentissimus Dns D. PETRUS PAULUS RUBENIUS pictorum Apelles ... misit.') and 'Fecit D.V. Studiosissimus Guilelmus Panneels. 1630.' See Vlieghe 1987, p. 158, no. 136 (copy no. 6); Voorhelm Schneevoogt 1873, p. 160, no. 46.
- <sup>61</sup> See Anthony van Dyck, *S' P. P. Rubbens*, oil on panel, 20.6 × 17.5 cm; The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Boughton House, Northants. Millar 2004, esp. p. 371, no. III.161, ill.
- <sup>62</sup> Lomazzo 1584, pp. 437–38. Raupp 1980, p. 14. See also Junius 1637, pp. 178–80, which varies Quintilian's 'decor quoque a gestu atque motu venit' (XI, 3.68) to read 'omnis certe decor a gestu atque motu venit' (all charm surely emanates from gesture and movement).
- <sup>63</sup> Raupp 1980, p. 14.
- <sup>64</sup> Scholten 2006, esp. pp. 40–41; Schädler 1985, pp. 82–86; Brussels 1977, no. 104; Feuchtmayr and Schädler 1973, no. 36.
- <sup>65</sup> Becker 2002.
- <sup>66</sup> Welzel 2004, with further bibliography.
- <sup>67</sup> Vergara 1999, pp. 19–28, 80–93; Ost 2003, pp. 78–80; Büttner 2006, pp. 103–04.
- <sup>68</sup> Büttner 2006, p. 103.
- <sup>69</sup> Jan van Eyck, *The Just Judges*, oil on panel, 145 × 51 cm; St Bavo, Ghent. Miedema 1994–98, II, pp. 204–05; Büttner 2004.
- <sup>70</sup> For this copy, painted by Michiel Coxcie in 1557–59, see Büttner 2004 (with further bibliography).
- <sup>71</sup> The connection between the two works is underlined by the horse, for, as Müller Hofstede notes, greys were 'otherwise ... assigned to ... princes and high-ranking lords'. Müller Hofstede 1992a, p. 117.
- <sup>72</sup> De Bie 1662, p. 57; Voorhelm Schneevoogt 1873, p. 162, no. 65.
- <sup>73</sup> Sandrart 1675–80, 3, pl. II (following p. 292). See Simonato 2010, p. 276.